

Acqua Roma - Nourisher of Life and Bearer of Meaning

International Conference
Rome, 15-16 October 2019

Istituto Svizzero

Water is a precious good. Already the ancient Romans were well aware of this fact, as they made huge investments in labour-intensive and complex infrastructures to replenish their cities with fresh water. The immensely water-consuming baths, then, belonged as much to Roman culture as the carefully staged simulations of naval battles in ancient arenas. In their hands, water became an instrument of power demonstrating to citizens and non-citizens alike Rome's dominant role in the world and, more generally, civilization's triumph over nature.

Thus, water has many qualities and serves many purposes. It has no unidimensional, straightforward meaning but is hugely complex in its significance for our understanding of present and past societies. Water can be described in terms of its physical properties, that is, measured, analysed and qualified by scientific methods. But it has also a symbolic dimension that points to its deep embeddedness in human culture. Water has been made the subject of current debates about climate change and the global distribution of natural resources, while present-day research focuses on how communities can be protected from cataclysmic events, how water movement can be transformed into green energy, and how agriculture can make best use of available water reserves. At the same time, water's key role in sustaining life is equally reflected in philosophy, literature, and religion where it often appears as symbol of origin and purity, indicating among other things transformation, profundity and the unconscious.

The Istituto Svizzero invites to a reflection about water, focusing on its cultural and scientific significance and the challenges that we face as a society in our use of natural resources. The event articulates itself in two parts: a scientific conference approaching the topic from different angles is complemented with a water treatment system – designed and constructed by the Zurich University of Applied Sciences – that provides insight into the process of turning grey water into quality-controlled drinking water.

In collaboration with the Zurich University of Applied Sciences.

Enti finanziatori:

Fondazione svizzera per la cultura Pro Helvetia
Segreteria di Stato per la formazione, la ricerca e l'innovazione
Ufficio federale della cultura
Ufficio federale delle costruzioni e della logistica

Partners:

EFG
Canton Ticino
Città di Lugano
Università della Svizzera Italiana

15.10.2019 – Day 1*Introduction*

- 10.00 – 10.20 **Joëlle Comé** and **Adrian Brändli**
 10.20 – 10.40 **Mira Bleuler** (Zurich University of Applied Sciences) and **Tumasch Clalüna** (Artist), Water Management Project for the Istituto Svizzero

Message from the UN

- 10.40 – 11.00 **William Reidhead** (UN Water), Water and Sanitation

11.00 – 11.30 *Coffee Break**Commodity and Force of Nature*

- 11.30 – 11.50 **Gilbert Wiplinger** (Frontinus-Gesellschaft), Roman Aqueducts
 11.50 – 12.10 **Giulia Giovanetti** (Ministero dei Beni e delle attività culturali), Terme e *balnea* nella Roma antica
 12.10 – 12.30 **Christian Rohr** (University of Bern), The severe flood of 1868 in southeast Switzerland and northern Italy – a turning point in water management and prevention policies?
 12.30 – 13.00 Discussion
 13.00 – 15.00 *Lunch Break*

The Sacrality of Water

- 15.00 – 15.20 **Ueli Zahnd** (University of Geneva), Disenchanted Water – Ecological Effects of the Reformation?
 15.20 – 15.40 **Adam Jasper** (ETH Zurich), The Management of Holy Waters in Bali
 15.40 – 16.00 Discussion
 16.00 – 16.30 *Coffee Break*

Water cycle and Food Security

- 16.30 – 16.50 **Maurice Borgeaud** (ESA Earth Observation), The use of satellite data for monitoring climate change and its impact of Earth water cycle
 16.50 – 17.10 **Marta Antonelli** (BCFN Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition), Water & Food: the inextricable link
 17.30 – 18.00 Discussion

16.10.2019 – Day 2*The Power of Ideas*

- 10.00 – 10.20 **Claus Beisbart** (University of Bern), Philosophical Ideas of Water
 10.20 – 10.40 **Wolfgang Struck** (University of Erfurt), A Watery Planet – Globalisation and the Oceans
 10.40 – 11.00 Discussion
 11.00 – 11.30 *Coffee Break*
 11.30 – 12.30 **Tumasch Clalüna** (Artist), Performance
 12.30 – 15.00 *Lunch Break*

Social and Economic Good

- 15.00 – 15.20 **Mara Tignino** (University of Geneva), Water Management and International Law
 15.20 – 15.40 **Antonio Massarutto** (University of Udine), Natural Resources Economics
 15.40 – 16.00 Discussion
 16.00 – 16.30 *Coffee Break*

Sustainable Waters

- 16.30 – 16.50 **Fabio Di Carlo** (University of Rome La Sapienza), Forme dell'Acqua: Dalle 'chiare e fresche dolci acque' alle Water Cities
 16.50 – 17.10 **Flavia Caviezel** (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland), In Flux – Approaching Water Ecologies with Artistic-Scientific Practice
 17.10 – 17.30 **Marcello Di Paola** (LUISS Rome), Water, Climate and Plants
 17.30 – 18.00 Discussion