

# The Double Narrative of Man and Water: Approaches and Perspectives

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## Session Description

The existence of water, or the lack of it, favors, restricts and changes flora and fauna and affects the way people live and move. Even in ancient times, people settled and worked near water, be it rivers, lakes or seas. Water provided food, served as a transportation route, regarded as both a connecting and separating element and has always been an important parameter in the natural and socio-cultural landscape. Stories about water and maritime landscapes have always had a great impact and are part of people's cultural and communicative memories.

In recent decades, ancient studies have created their own grand narrative with the intensive research of harbors and landing places as essential interfaces between land and water from various perspectives: the narrative of connectivity and networking, of mobility and economic success or failure of ancient societies. Approaches such as e.g. heterotopies, corrupting sea, small worlds, micro-regions or entanglement describe the complex relationship between people and water in the light of historical events and explain how people manage to survive and organize themselves in maritime landscapes.

The panel therefore deals with narratives in two ways: it invites scholars to present a constructive critical analysis of the aforementioned approaches and other explanatory models of recent harbor research based on case studies or contributions on methodology and theory. The aim is to assess the current state of art and to develop further perspectives on the narratives of man and water in antiquity. The focus will be on riverine and coastal landscapes and the question of what significance the proximity and relationship to water had for people in each case and how this was reflected in their material remains and infrastructures, but also in

their narratives. Comparative geographical and socio-cultural approaches are expressly encouraged.

## **Keywords**

Maritime Landscapes; Narratives; Comparative Approaches