

## **The floristic research in Italian archaeological sites**

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In Italy occur about 240 archaeological areas or parks and more than 1500 main monumental complexes; the number of individual monuments would exceed several thousand. The interest on the flora of archaeological sites in Italy dates back to the XVII Century. The scope of floristic inventories can be limited to the mere list of the plants growing into the area or this list can be accompanied by indication of the dangerousness for the monument represented by single species and the indications for their management. For this review the basic references concerning the flora of archaeological sites located in Italy were listed and classified by publication date, area, and main historical period or civilization to which the complex refers.

Overall 96 references have been collected (73 full articles, 10 chapters of book and 13 conference abstracts) referring to 47 sites. The large part of these contributions was published between 1990 and 1999. The most investigated regions are Lazio and Sicily. The complexes belonging to the Roman civilization were the most studied. This even if, in many cases, it is not easy to attribute a monument to a precise historical epoch because different buildings, over time, have been re-adapted and used by the civilizations that have succeeded each other. From what has been stated above it is evident that the botanical prospecting in archaeological areas is still very limited, lacking entirely in several regions. With the exception of the single Flavian Amphitheatre in Rome (the Colosseum), which has become a case study, there are no studies published on most of the sites and monuments in Italy. This review can be a stimulus for scholars and managers in order to undertake targeted campaigns of prospecting of the biological component occurring in these areas and of deepening knowledge on its management in order to preserve this historical and artistic heritage.