



UNIVERSITY  
OF TRENTO - Italy

Department of Civil, Environmental  
and Mechanical Engineering



International Association  
for Hydro-Environment  
Engineering and Research

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## New challenges in hydraulic research and engineering

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# Flood prediction in a compound channel using machine learning techniques

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# Flood prediction

- Water surface elevation at inundated areas in respect to time
- Flood warning schemes
- Fast and accurate results
- Models
  - uncertainty
- Observed data
  - lack of data

# Flood models

- Phenomenological models
- Empirical models
- Conceptual models
- Low-fidelity models

fast but not accurate results

- Physically-based models
- Detailed models
- Fine models
- High-fidelity models

accurate but no fast results

# Flood models

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**emulators**

**trained with data  
derived by detailed  
simulators**

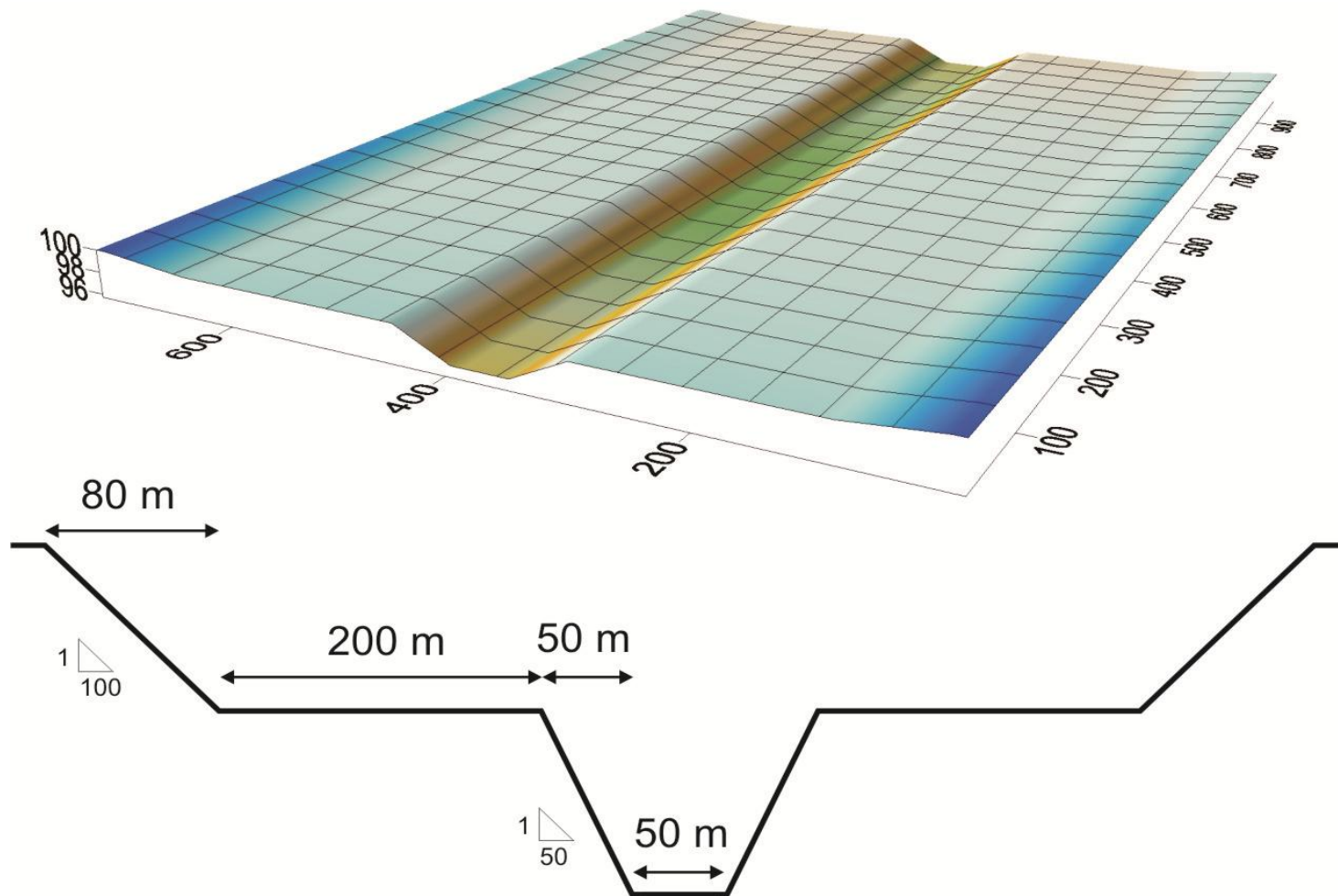
fast but not accurate results

accurate but no fast results

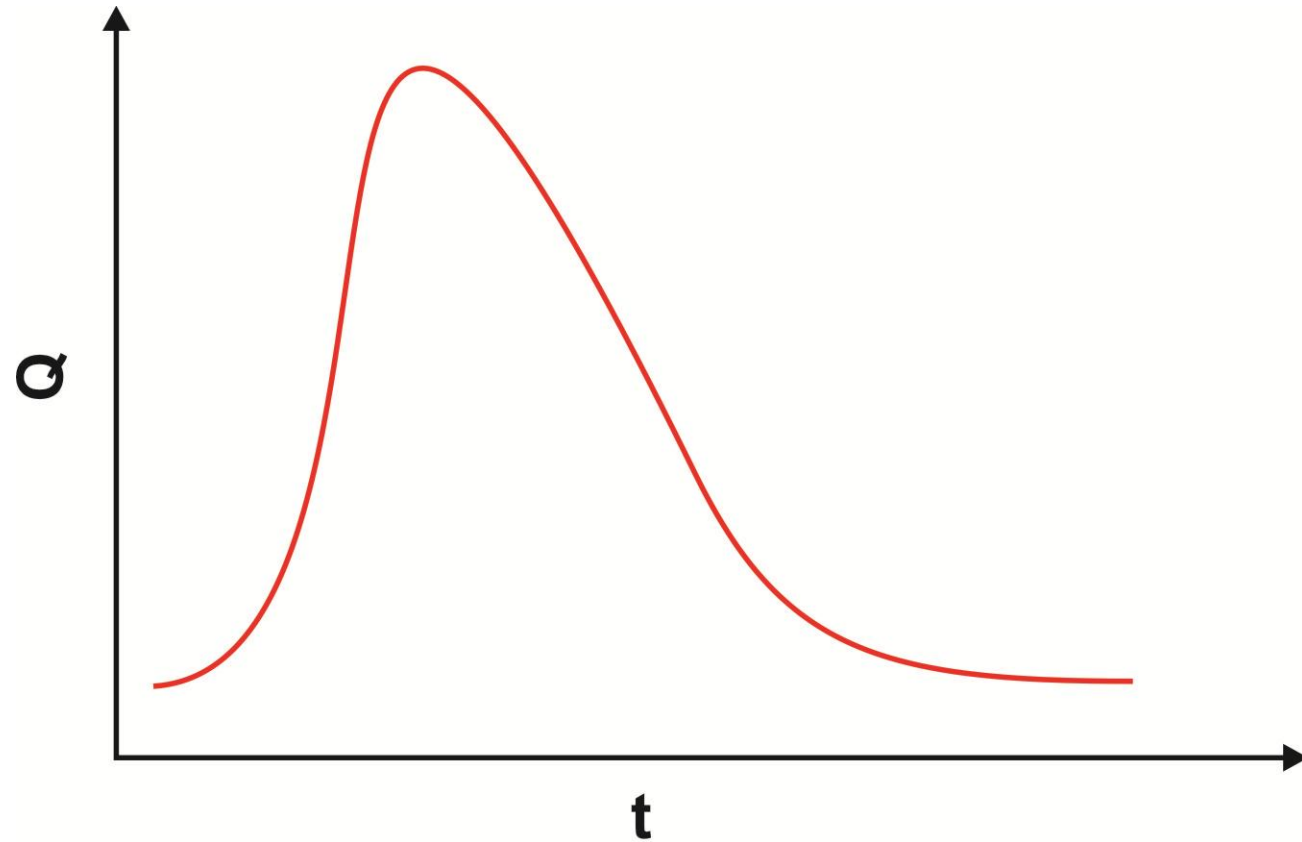
# Example

- Topography → compound channel
- Input → synthetic flood hydrograph
- Output → water surface elevation in respect to time
- Simulator → FLOW-R2D model
- Emulator → Gaussian Process based

# Topography



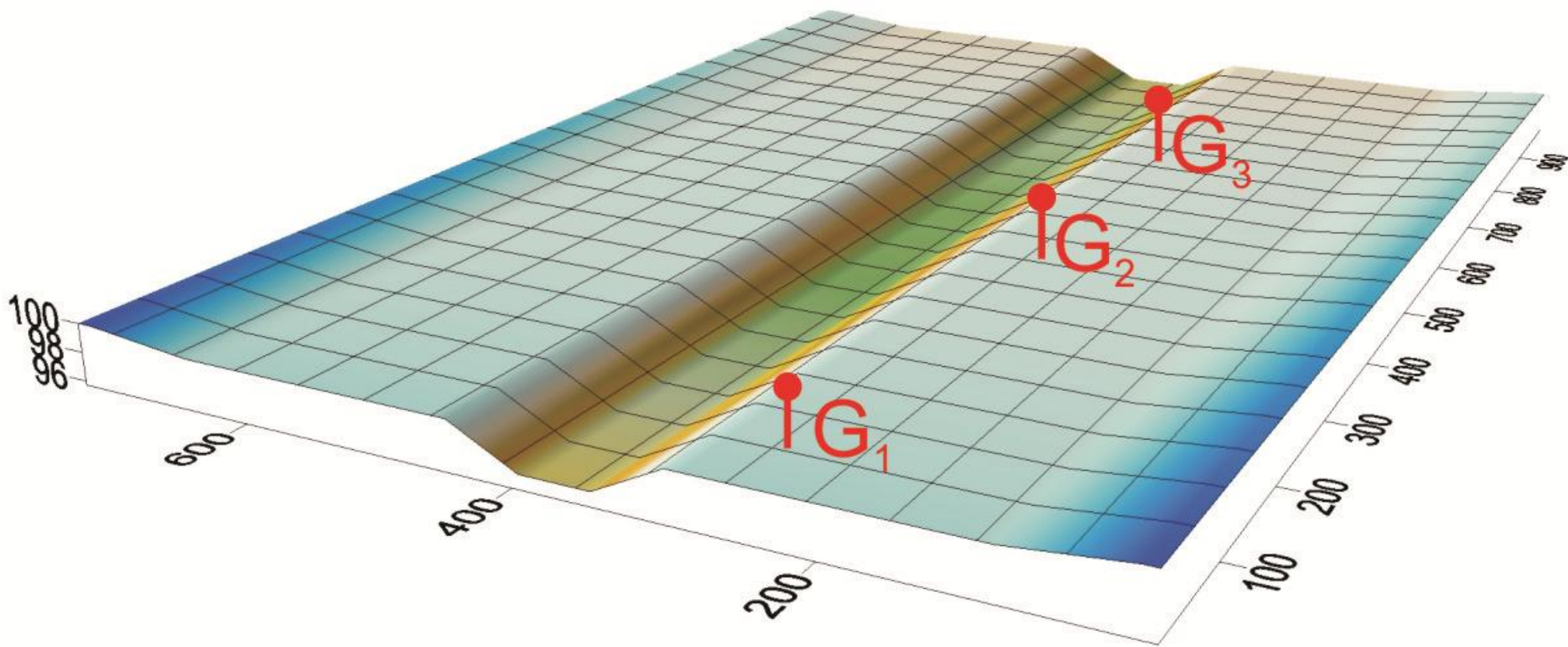
# Input



$$Q(t) = Q_0 + (Q_p - Q_0) \left[ \frac{t}{t_p} \exp \left( 1 - \frac{t}{t_p} \right) \right]^\beta$$



# Output





# Simulator

- FLOW-R2D model
- Solving the 2D-SWE using FDM
- Modified McCormack numerical scheme
- Artificial viscosity is added
- Water depth threshold for wet/dry modelling
- Manning equation
  - friction modelling
  - effective slope for upstream boundaries

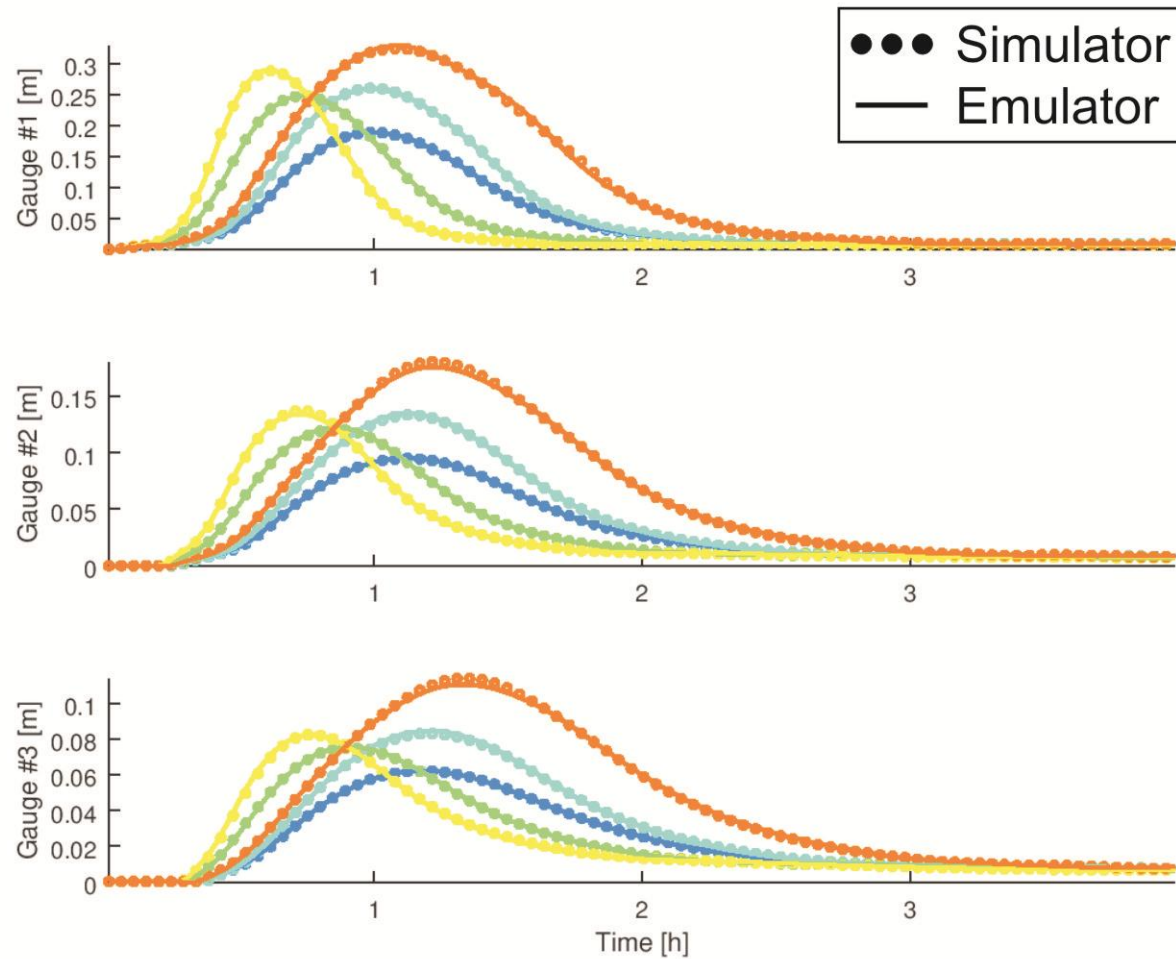
# Emulator

- 3 water depth time series
  - time-parameterized 3D curve
- Decomposition
  - time dependant singular vectors
- Gaussian Process
  - linear mean function
  - square exponential covariance functions
  - optimization of hyperparameters

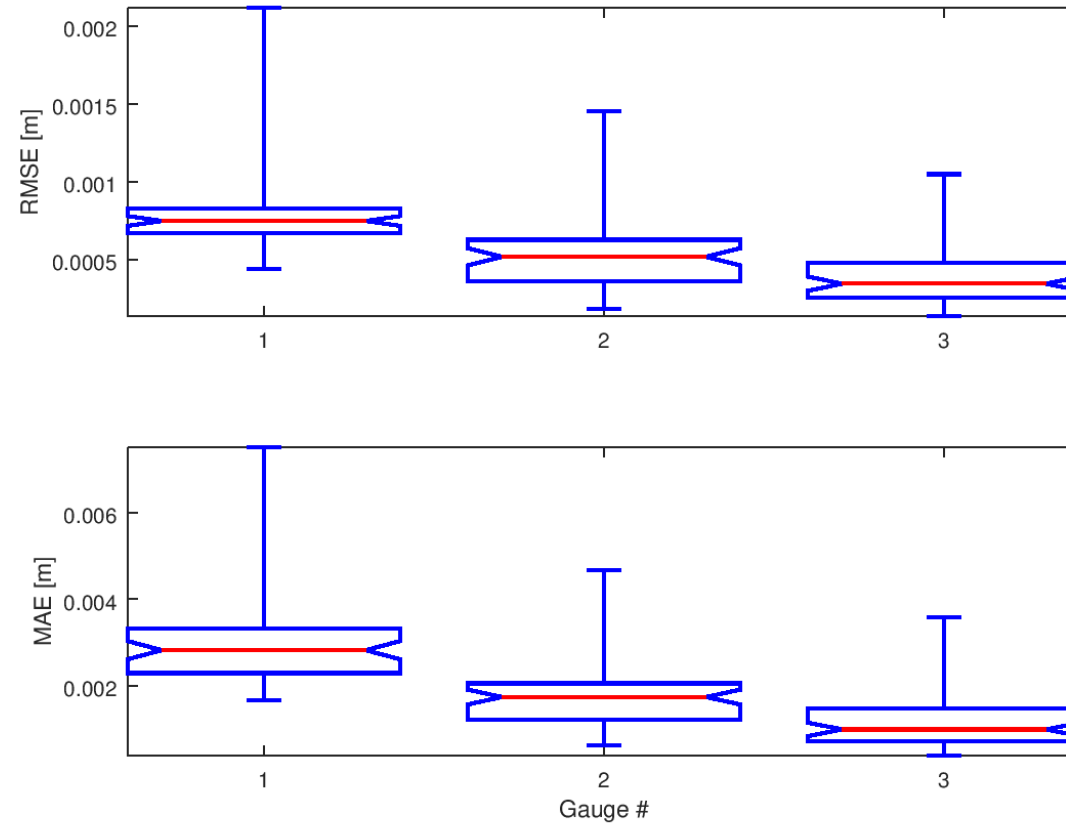
# Training phase

- Training dataset → 140 samples
- Testing dataset → 60 samples
- Parametric space →  $Q_p[400,600]$  m<sup>3</sup>/s  
 $t_p[0.5,1.0]$  h  
 $\theta[2.5,3.5]$

# Comparison



# Emulator error



# Conclusions

- Significant acceleration of the simulations
  - magnitude of hours → magnitude of seconds
- Small emulator error
- Feasible to use detailed simulators
  - flood warning schemes
  - uncertainty quantification
  - designing
  - ...
- Challenges
  - computational budget
  - time-varying input and output



# Partners & Acknowledgements



WATERWAYS



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RUB



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