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EDITORIAL

The sixth issue of PCA presents the material from two conferences held in different European countries last year.

*The volume opens with some of the papers presented at The British School at Rome (April 2014) at a conference on The Recycling and Reuse of Materials during the Early Middle Ages. The meeting – organised by Alessandro Sebastiani (who has collaborated as guest editor for this section), Elena Chirico and Matteo Colombini – dealt mainly with productive structures related to the transformation of glass and metal in Italy (papers by Alessandro Sebastiani, Stefano Bertoldi, François-Dominique Deltenre and Lucia Orlandi). Other international experts have agreed to add their contributions to the subject: Robin Fleming on the reuse of construction material in early medieval graves, Sarah Paynter and Caroline Jackson offering a synthesis on the reuse of glass, and the team of Carmen Fernández-Ochoa in Spain presenting the early medieval productive structures at the villa of Veranes (Gijón). Two papers by Florin Curta and Michele Asolati, dealing with exchange in the Byzantine Mediterranean, have been published in the *Variae* section.*

After the catastrophe of World War II, many international institutions were founded: the United Nations, UNESCO, the European Community. All these organizations are today immersed in a transitional phase in the systemic crisis which affects the entire Western world, a crisis to which the nihilist and relativist positions have contributed and which has (rightly) delegitimated the imperialism on which the West had built its dominant position. In this crisis, the recovery of shared historical memories is increasingly revealed as a central element in the defence of a rational world, which, although it may have abandoned the utopias of the 1900s, at least safeguards the principles of freedom and the pluralism of values. Today, there is wide debate, even among archaeologists, over how to present cultural heritage in a globalized society while nevertheless pre-

...serving its multiple identities and cultures. The discussion of these matters was the purpose of the papers dedicated to the World Heritage List. This collection, guest edited by Margarita Díaz-Andreu, results from a workshop of the EU-project JPI–JHEP Heritage Values Network (H@V) held at the University of Barcelona in February 2015. The main question, summarized in the title of the paper by Díaz-Andreu, is whether the inclusion of social values and local communities in the management of cultural heritage is an impossible dream. Is it a utopian vision, typical of the historical processes which gave birth to the international organizations and their initiatives to hold back the spectre of a World War III? In many of these contributions, the watchwords still conform to this direction: the participation and involvement of stakeholders in the hope that local communities will be led to a positive valuation of assets and their public use.

The different directions of the debate move between the two poles of economic management and cultural enrichment of local communities. Too often, it is difficult to find a balance between touristic exploitation and a useful cultural proposal for local communities, as happened in the telling example of the Daming Palace in China, developed by Qian Gao, winner of the 2016 PCA young researcher award.

Direct involvement is often difficult in a globalized and multicultural society that has lost its historical roots. Most of the contributions consider that a proper balance can be found between global strategies promoted by UNESCO, based on the decalogue of general principles under which to file an application for protected sites, and the feeling and evaluation expressed by the local community (the focus of Torgrim Sneve Guttorsen, Joel Taylor, Grete Swensen on Heritage Routes and Matthias Maluck and Gian Pietro Brogiolo on organizational proposals in the interventions).

Also related to the subject of cultural heritage and the public is the project section of this issue, a homage the Poggibonsi Archeodromo. A project developed in recent years by the team of Marco Valenti (University of Siena), this is a unique living archaeological park recreated from archaeological evidence, presenting the life of an early medieval village, an initiative that clearly demonstrates the social and economic benefits of good practices in public archaeology in Italy.

Finally, the retrospect section, which addresses the history of early medieval archaeology in different European countries, is this year devoted to the fascinating recent history of early medieval Archaeology in Russia, with an extensive study by Nadezhda Platonova (St. Peterburg).