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EDITORIAL

Archaeology is changing rapidly due to external influences from society that have prompted archaeologists to develop new systemic lines of research, diachronic and transdisciplinary, from the archaeology of urban and rural landscapes to that of communities, in some cases linking past phenomena with present problems and therefore pointing to the contemporary significance of archaeological investigations. At the same time archaeologists are starting to open their work to wider social groups, who become not only users but also active participants in research, thanks also to innovative forms of communication, with the aim of together building paths that extend beyond academic walls.

The European Journal of Post-Classical Archaeologies, which since its inception has placed itself at the forefront of this evolution, resumes in its 8th issue the current debate and lines of research on urban archaeology, with case papers from France (E. Lorans, X. Rodier, A.-M. Jouquand; M. Fondrillon, A. Laurent-Dehecq, with E. Morin, X. Rolland), Belgium (Y. Devos, A. Degraeve), Italy (E. Castiglioni, M. Rottoli; G.P. Brogiolo; F. Giacomello – winner of the 2018 PCA Award) and Spain (A. León). Fifty years after the diffusion in Europe of Urban Archaeology, new techniques and tools open diverse research paths, between bioarcheological and spatial analysis, or between interdisciplinary and diachronic approaches. They prompt further questions on how the history of the cities of the past can be useful today, in a phase in which very different urban models have emerged: from the megacities of regional conurbation to the development of high-rise cities, an expression of globalized financial power.

Demography has always been central to the study of the past, especially when analysed on a regional scale and with a systemic approach,

as shown by B.J. Groenewoudt and R.J. van Lanen in relation to the territory of the Rhine-Meuse delta (the Netherlands). Investigations on past populations, due to the evolution of bioarchaeological analysis such as isotopic analyses and DNA (discussed in previous issues of PCA), are radically transforming early medieval funerary archaeology, since we are finally able to verify the origin of those buried in relation to the groups that make up European human geography. Linked to this line of research L. Lamanna reconstructs the kinship of those buried in an early medieval Italian cemetery (Montichiari, Brescia) thanks to the identification of particular physical elements of the skeletons.

Landscape studies and particularly environmental analyses (to which PCA has already devoted several issues) continue to shed new light on old problems such as the end and transformation of Roman villas. In the case of the exceptional complex of Noheda (Cuenca), one of the largest and richest residential rural building ever discovered in Spain, the palynological studies enabled the reconstruction of anthropic dynamics and vegetation around the villa during its occupation and in the later period, showing a continuity of exploitation (M. Valero Tévar).

Contributions by M. Asolati, M. Kenawi, G. Marchiori on the documentation of coins in archaeological contexts, A. Cosseddu on the Museo Nacional de Arqueología Subacuática of Cartagena (Spain), and by M. Valenti on North American Public Archaeology complete the volume.

The project section has been reserved for the recently developed ARIADNE project, which aims to make archaeological data more easily discoverable, accessible and re-useable across institutional, national and disciplinary boundaries of archaeological research, of which the second phase (ARIADNEplus) is about to begin.