

## Editorial

*This 14<sup>th</sup> issue of the European Journal of Post-Classical Archaeologies seeks to answer some questions about the current significance attributed to archaeology. How is the work of archaeologists being politically directed and used today, and to what extent are we aware of this? Who benefits from what we, as archaeologists, do? And how can we ensure that our research on the past remains relevant in a very uncertain present and in a future that appears progressively bleak from political, economic, social, and climatic perspectives?*

*Archaeology is becoming increasingly visible in popular media and attracts the attention of both enthusiasts and politicians, who not only understand – as they always have – the power of reconstructing the past for their own objectives, but have also begun to link archaeological sites with tourism and thus with economic benefits. However, concerns are emerging about the excessive simplification of narratives and sometimes the falsification of information, such as the fake news with which we are continuously bombarded, and not only on social media.*

*We have invited opinions from several archaeologists of various backgrounds (academic, heritage protection officials, and private professionals). They work in different European countries (England, France, Spain and Italy) with varying economic situations, which impacts the funding for research, protection, and enhancement of cultural heritage: from England, with severe budget cuts significantly impoverishing the university and heritage protection systems (Lewis, Newel), to others like Italy, where large amounts of European funds have led to a (probably fleeting) period of significant investment in culture (and archaeology). Carenza Lewis also highlights legislative changes that are reducing the protection of archaeological heritage in the face of urban development, a problem that greatly affects historic architecture threatened by interventions planned for climate sustainability – a self-evidently desirable goal, but one that can lead to the loss of historical depth in our urban centers.*

*All the papers pay attention to public participation and involvement in the research process and the need for a deeper understanding of the audiences interested in archaeological research and sites. This means improving the means and manner in which this information is conveyed, as emphasized by Gonzalo Ruiz Zapatero.*

*It is also important to reflect on the necessity for universities (at least public ones, as long as they withstand the economic pressures of rankings) in the current political and media context of “pillaging of the past” (Ruiz Zapatero) to reassert themselves as guarantors of democratic and global education. This involves expanding the target audience from students to professionals (with specific and flexible refresher courses) and not ignoring interested individuals who, without the pressure of obtaining a degree for employment but with the time to spend, wish to deepen their knowledge of their territories’ past to better understand our present (as highlighted in various contributions).*

*The miscellaneous section includes research on cities from late antiquity to the late Middle Ages: the relationship between Rome and Constantine by Chiara Croci; the urban development of Ravenna and its infrastructures by Helena Tůmová and Enrico Cirelli; and Florence, with a synthesis by Guido Vannini and a project presenting archaeoseismological analysis methods applied to the historic center of Siena, by Andrea Arrighetti and Marco Repole. In Luciano Pugliese’s article, the results of Lidar and GPR surveys on the Rocca di Garda, which identified a residential area, are presented; while Mirko Fecchio and Maurizio Marinato reflect on the validity of certain interpretations in complex analyses (of stable isotopes), centered on the Croatian coast. A broad interpretative synthesis is proposed for the southeastern plain of the province of Bergamo (Gian Pietro Brogiolo, Fabio Malaspina), the subject of numerous preventive archaeological interventions.*

*The first text of the dossier reflects on “citizen science” as a tool to increasingly involve and prepare the public in the research, protection, and enhancement of archaeological heritage (Fabio Pinna and Mattia Sanna Montanelli). This approach, involving communities in archaeological research, is now applied in countless projects in Italy (addressed in virtually every volume of our journal), including those by Francesca Frandi and Giancarlo Pastura on the relationship between citizenship, preventive archaeology, and railway works; and by Marco Paladini on the Venetian lagoon, where a meticulous analysis method was applied to questionnaires administered to a small local community to create a sort of “community map” of this territory.*

*The volume concludes with an article by Colin Rynne on the history of industrial archaeology research in Ireland, stretching to the very end of the post-classical period covered by our journal.*

*Our journal’s goal, beyond the period and the identification of the sequence of individual sites or their functional interpretation, is to reflect on the potential of investigative tools and viewpoints that allow for new interpretative hypotheses of old problems and the opening of new ones. As the dossier suggests, the future of archaeology depends on the social role attributed to it by the population and those in power. Conditions are radically changing.*