

pca

postclassicalarchaeologies

volume 2/2012

SAP Società Archeologica s.r.l.

Mantova 2012



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DESIGN

Paolo Vedovetto (Università degli Studi di Padova)

PUBLISHER

SAP Società Archeologica s.r.l.
Viale Risorgimento 14 - 46100 Mantova
www.archeologica.it

PRINTED BY

La Serenissima, Contrà Santa Corona 5, Vicenza

Authorised by Mantua court no. 4/2011 of April 8, 2011

		CONTENTS	PAGES
EDITORIAL			5
RESEARCH			
G. Dean	GIS, archaeology and neighbourhood assemblages in Medieval York		7
É. Jean-Curret	SIG, morphologie et archives foncières médiévales: dynamiques spatiales d'un quartier de Bordeaux aux XIV ^e et XV ^e s.		31
B. Lefebvre	The study of urban fabric dynamics in long time spans. Modelling, analysis and representation of spatio-temporal transformations		65
T. Bisschops	It is all about location: GIS, property records and the role of space in shaping late medieval urban life. The case of Antwerp around 1400		83
A. Nardini	Siena: un 'prototipo' di GIS di fine millennio a dieci anni dalla creazione		107
V. Valente	Space syntax and urban form: the case of late medieval Padua		147
C. Citter	Townscape-Landscape. The shaping of the medieval town of Grosseto and its territory (AD 600-1400)		167
K.D. Lilley	Mapping truth? Spatial technologies and the medieval city: a critical cartography		201
BEYOND THE THEME			
V. Caracuta, G. Fiorentino, M. Turchiano, G. Volpe	Processi di formazione di due discariche altomedievali del sito di Faragola: il contributo dell'analisi archeobotanica		225
P. Forlin	Airborne LiDAR Data analysis of Trentino Alpine landscapes: a methodological approach		247

DOSSIER - PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN EUROPE

- G.P. Brogiolo** Archeologia pubblica in Italia: quale futuro? 269
- J. Flatman** The past, present and future of rescue archaeology in England 279
- F. Iversen** The land of milk and honey? Rescue archaeology in Norway 299
- I. Catteddu, M.A. Baillieu, P. Depaepae, A. Roffignon** L'archéologie préventive en France: un service public original 319
- A. León** Public administration of archaeology in Spain. Notes on the current situation and future prospects 337

RETROSPECT

- A. Buko** Early Medieval archaeology in Poland: the beginnings and development stages 361

PROJECT

- P. Chevalier** *Le Corpus architecturae religiosae europaeae, saec. IV-X, en France et la base de données Wikibridge CARE* 379

REVIEWS

- G. Bertelli, G. Lepore, *Masseria Seppannibale Grande in agro di Fasano (BR). Indagini in un sito rurale (aa. 2003-2006)* - by **M. Valenti** 385
- E. Vaccaro, *Sites and Pots. Settlement and Economy in Southern Tuscany (AD 300-900)* - by **M. Valenti**
- S. Hakenbeck, *Local, Regional and Ethnic Identities in Early Medieval Cemeteries in Bavaria* - by **F. Benetti**
- J. Buckberry, A. Cherryson, *Burial in Later Anglo-Saxon England c.650-1100 AD* - by **A. Chavarria Arnau**
- N. Christie, P. Stamper (eds), *Medieval Rural Settlement. Britain and Ireland, AD 800-1600* - by **C. Citter**
- A.J. Boas, *Domestic Settings. Sources on Domestic Architecture and Day-to-day Activities in the Crusader States* - by **F. Benetti**
- A. Plata Montero, *Génesis de una villa medieval. Arqueología, paisaje y arquitectura del valle salado de Añana (Alava)* - by **J. Sarabia**
- J.D. Bodenhamer, J. Corrigan, T.M. Harris (eds), *The Spatial Humanities. GIS and the future of humanities scholarship* - by **P. Marcato**
- F. Cambi, *Manuale di archeologia dei paesaggi. Metodologie, fonti, contesti* - by **M. Valenti**
- N. Marquez Grant, L. Fibiger (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeological Human Remains and Legislation* - by **M. Marinato**
- V. Pace (ed), *L'VIII secolo: un secolo inquieto* - by **M. Camerin**
- G. Pantò (ed), *Archeologia a Chieri. Da Carreum Potentia al Comune basso-medievale* - by **M. Smanio**
- I. Ahumada Silva, *La collina di San Mauro a Cividale del Friuli. Dalla necropoli longobarda alla chiesetta bassomedievale* - by **M. Valenti**

Public administration of archaeology in Spain. Notes on the current situation and future prospects

ALBERTO LEÓN

Universidad de Córdoba, Área de Arqueología, Plaza
del Cardenal Salazar, 3, Córdoba, aa2lemua@uco.es

1. The management of archaeology: more than just a play on words

There is nothing new in stating that these are difficult times for humanities. This situation is even more pronounced in the case of archaeology, given its direct connection with and dependence on other productive sectors such as construction or real estate. The number of archaeological projects in Spain increased significantly when the national economy was buoyant, primarily funded with private capital but with debatable results. In the current structural crisis, however, the problems that may affect the development of archaeology as an academic discipline have accentuated.

Archaeology can essentially be divided into two traditionally separate areas or dimensions, which observe each other with some suspicion: on the one hand, the more traditional academic dimension focusing primarily on strict scientific research; and on the other, the dimension deriving from social demand, mainly undertaken by public institutions and, consequently, highly conditioned by political decisions (cfr. Acién 1994), focusing on heritage, since this directly concerns the material heritage of the past, understood as evidence of collective heritage and therefore brimming with significant identify features. This distinction has given rise to a perverse dichotomy that has resulted in the establishment of specific priorities in the management of archaeology in Spain.

This discipline has always been conditioned by the socio-economic context in which it has been immersed. This axiom is still completely valid today. Times have changed and the age of prosperity is over, at least the way it was understood as recently as five years ago. The dynamics of archaeology have also changed. Growing demand for more or less skilled professionals as a result of the disproportionate boom in building and the enormous investments in infrastructure and public advocacy projects exaggerated the capacity of archaeology as an economic and cultural resource. The results seem to reveal a stifling dependence on construction and an inability to base management on more solid foundations incorporating longer-term perspectives.

As a result, archaeology is no longer just an eminently commercial and administrative professional activity, it is starting to recover its more vocational dimension through greater social participation. For this reason, now is a good time to reflect on the way this process is managed, its main contributions and its most obvious limitations. No one can predict what the future holds (cfr. Almansa 2011a), but a general and necessarily personal overview of archaeology management can be provided, after undergoing profound changes in recent decades.

It is not the aim of this paper to provide exhaustive details of the different experiences in Spain in relation to the amphibologically-termed field of "Public Archaeology". The definition of this concept is so general and vague that it is impossible to address all the topics encompassed within this concept in a minimally coherent manner. In this connection, this work analyses the broader and generic scope of the Public Management of Archaeological Heritage, or archaeology management by public authorities. One basic characteristic of the situation in Spain is administrative decentralisation, resulting inevitably in a wide variety of nuances and particularities. However, this text aims to provide a general overview to at least outline the situation. This paper only focuses on those aspects most familiar to the authors, reflecting on the main constraints and problems.

First it is necessary to define the meaning of public management of archaeology and how this concept has been incorrectly understood, to the extent that it has been identified with so-called "management-oriented archaeology". Article 46 of the Spanish Constitution establishes the responsibility of public authorities to "*guarantee the preservation and promote the enrichment of the historical, cultural and artistic heritage of the peoples of Spain and of the property of which it consists, regardless of their legal status and their ownership*". Public authorities are therefore responsible for protecting Spanish Cultural Heritage.

Unlike other elements classified as Historical or Cultural Heritage, elements catalogued as Archaeological Heritage are characterised as being particularly fragile since many are unknown or underground and can therefore be more easily destroyed, either intentionally or not. This happens on a recurring basis, especially in urban areas where town-planning schemes tend to have a very aggressive and destructive impact on archaeological heritage. It follows that the authorities entrusted with protecting heritage prioritise the protection, preservation and, to a lesser extent, enhancement of these elements to the detriment of all other considerations. In turn, this aspect has gradually been identified with the management of archaeological heritage. For these purposes, public authorities have set up large teams of legal experts to ensure archaeological heritage is properly managed. One immediate consequence is that archaeology management has in most cases been reduced to its eminently administrative dimension, i.e. to resolve legal and procedural formalities, which sometimes become an end in themselves. This archaeology is therefore characterised by the bureaucratisation of procedures. The primary concern has been established in strict compliance with legislation at the expense of safeguarding the true spirit behind these laws.

Archaeology management should be deemed to refer to “*all actions aimed at promoting knowledge of archaeological heritage and its conservation and diffusion, including the organisation and facilitation of actions performed in relation to archaeological heritage*” (Querol, Martínez 1996, p. 25). The integral management of archaeological heritage must be conceived as a combination of three basic elements of similar importance: research, protection and spreading. These guiding principles are endorsed by all public institutions participating in archaeology management. However, the effective development of their programmes is something completely different. A management approach that fails to take into account any of these three pillars is clearly incomplete; this approach would be flawed and would encounter serious problems in the medium and long term. In this regard, public authorities entrusted with covering all the aspects of comprehensive archaeology management are responsible for defining archaeology policies; hence, their decisions will ultimately determine the quality of archaeological work in accordance with protection regulations, budget lines for each activity and the composition of research teams. The bureaucratisation of archaeology and the recent reliance on protection regulations has given rise to a Manichean discourse between “management-oriented archaeology” and “research-oriented archaeology” (Olmo 2002, p. 4; Vaquerizo 1994).

This definition of integral management refers to a complete cycle that must be sustainable, and a correct approach to each aspect can help consolidate the rest. Adequate protection of urban, rural or underwater archaeological heritage requires a specific approach based largely on the planning and prevention of possible impacts of planned actions on such heritage, based on in-depth and detailed knowledge of the reality of archaeology, and this knowledge must be constantly renewed. In short, "*without research it is impossible to plan or programme, perhaps not in advance but in tune with the pace of events and not react after events have happened as has occurred on repeated occasions*" (Ruiz de Arbulo 2004, p. 37).

This has given rise to so-called "Preventive Archaeology" (cfr. Martínez, Castillo 2007), which aims to establish appropriate measures to protect archaeological heritage before any activity can affect its integrity, always based on existing documentation produced by unequal research efforts. Research is therefore a priority activity in any adequate integral archaeology management policy. The enrichment, knowledge, protection and assessment of heritage, and subsequent decisions adopted regarding its conservation and spreading, will depend on this policy. Finally, the integration and enhancement of conserved remains will fulfil the social function inherent in any archaeological activity, ultimately fostering more direct awareness of, and commitment to, heritage on the part of citizens, who know, value and accept this as part of their individual and collective heritage.

2. Spain, land of laws

One characteristic feature of the public management of Archaeological Heritage in Spain is its excessive legislative compartmentalisation, the result of administrative and territorial decentralisation envisaged in the Spanish Constitution of 1978. The national legal framework was established in Law 16/1985 on Spanish Historical Heritage, which represents the first specific legislation on historical heritage since the 1933 regulations introduced during the Second Republic.

The abovementioned Law defines Archaeological Heritage as "the overall of *movable or immovable assets of a historical nature that can be studied using archaeological methodology, regardless of whether it has or has not been extracted and whether it is located on the surface or under ground, in territorial waters or on the continental shelf*" (Article 40.1). Despite the ambiguity and vagueness of this definition (cfr. Domínguez 2004), it represented a significant qualitative leap forward because it linked archaeology to the study methodology employed – in

spite of the lack of a single archaeological analysis method - and not to the age of the heritage elements in question¹.

Since the early eighties, and parallel to the publication of this state legislation, the Autonomous Communities have gradually assumed responsibility for the management of their historical heritage. These competences, which eventually became exclusive, included legislative, regulatory and executive powers. From 1990 to 2007, the seventeen autonomous communities in Spain have used these powers to draft and approve their own laws on cultural heritage in general and specifically on Archaeological Heritage in some cases (cfr. Querol 2010; Martínez 2002; Martínez, Castillo 2007, p. 189).

Each of these regional laws, adapted to the idiosyncrasies and peculiarities of each region's heritage, has gradually developed to form the national legal framework. Regional laws establish their own protection figures and mechanisms and management bodies, as well as their own regulations governing archaeological activities, and implementing specific aspects of the law on archaeological heritage. This has resulted in the enactment of seventeen laws on cultural heritage, with their respective regulations and administrative procedures, although these do not always contain identical provisions². Since their introduction, some laws have been revised or updated, such as the new Statute of Autonomy for Andalusia approved in 2006, which resulted in the approval in 2007 of the new Law on Andalusian Historical Heritage³.

Moreover, the implementation of these laws has been complemented by regulations governing the protection of archaeological heritage (e.g. Catalonia) and archaeological activities (e.g. Andalusia, Aragon, the Balearic Islands, Cantabria, Castile and Leon, Extremadura, Galicia, Madrid, Murcia, Navarre, the Basque Country, etc.) (cfr. Querol 2010). Some of these regulations have been revised and updated⁴, primarily in

¹ This definition paves the way for industrial heritage or emerging architectural elements to be analysed using an archaeological methodology and, therefore, as parts of archaeological heritage. However, most protection figures or mechanisms in this respect, e.g. "monuments", have never taken this dimension into account. It is also interesting to note that the Decree regulating Archaeological Activities in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia (Decree 168/2003) also incorporates the analysis of emerging structures as a type of "archaeological excavation" (cfr. DOMÍNGUEZ 2004, nota B).

² Mention must be also made of the draft amendment of the 1985 Law on Spanish Historical Heritage, which was only partially implemented after its publication. The political interests of certain autonomous communities prompted the presentation of various appeals of unconstitutionality, which subsequently prevented the full implementation of this Law (MARTÍNEZ 2002, p. 225).

³ Law 14/2007, of 26 November, on Historical Heritage in Andalusia.

⁴ In Andalusia, the 1993 Regulations on Archaeological Activities (Decree 32/1993, of 16 March, which regulates archaeological activities) was revised in 2003 (Decree 16/2003, of 17 June, approving regulations on archaeological activities). A new draft of the Regulations on Archaeological Activities has been prepared for reaching a consensus by the different professional groups involved in archaeology and is pending approval.

response to the need to adapt to a rapidly changing reality, to the demands arising from the approach to the management of archaeological heritage taking into account new needs deriving from urban dynamics, the implementation of environmental impact regulations and routine archaeological practice. These revisions incorporate new types of archaeological work, e.g. strata interpretation, imposed under town planning schemes, restoration work or recent methodological innovations (see note 1).

Archaeological heritage is affected by the activities of national, regional and local public authorities and their respective departments and services. In most cases, cultural authorities have the least decision-making power because they have smaller budgets, less capacity to generate economic activity and, regrettably, less social impact, which is largely the responsibility of archaeologists themselves. For example, public works in rural areas are the responsibility of the Ministries of Environment and Development, where archaeological heritage is regulated in Environmental Impact Statements. Town-planning actions encompassed within the scope of territorial and town-planning policies are the responsibility of local councils and defined in municipal regulations and town-planning schemes.

The existence of this entire body of legislation is clearly very positive, although it has not yet been fully implemented to an equal degree in all regions. However, what is most important is not the existence of this legislation but rather its effective implementation. For now, the only certain way to enforce archaeology protection regulations and the requirements stipulated in technical reports is to make compliance with such regulations binding, i.e. to incorporate, systematically and prior to the authorisation of any building project or the granting of any construction permit, archaeological data or the reports required by the territorial authorities responsible for supervising archaeology services.

This objective has been fulfilled in the Autonomous Community of Galicia, where Archaeological Impact Statements issued by the Ministry of Culture are mandatory. The Ministry has established specifications making it mandatory to include archaeological activities from the outset (Cerdeño, Salgado, Sagardoy 2005, p. 35). A pioneering urban model to promote compliance with municipal regulations has been applied in the city of Cordoba, where the granting of municipal building licenses is subject to the obtainment of the corresponding archaeological excavation license (cfr. Murillo 2010).

The legal framework enables protection measures to be established immediately but guaranteeing protection in the medium and long term will not only be achieved through the establishment of regulations but through greater social involvement and awareness based on training and

appropriate spreading; hence, the need for a balance to be achieved between the different actions envisaged in management policies that tend not to be homogeneous in all regional administrations.

In short, the panorama has changed considerably since 1985, from a situation in which there were virtually no regulations establishing the basis for protection of archaeological heritage, of which, as mentioned previously, there was no clear and unambiguous definition, to a scenario characterised by the multiplication of regulations, administrative decentralisation, and the wide range of jurisdictions and procedures. Another thing altogether is the provision of the technical and human resources necessary to comply with all these regulations.

3. Management: a matter of people

The diversification of regulations applicable to different regional authorities and their respective technical departments, coupled with the disproportionate increase in the number of archaeological projects stemming from compliance with the aforementioned regulations, have completely overwhelmed the departments responsible for monitoring and executing projects. However, few administrations responsible for archaeology management have increased the number of experts necessary to guarantee the proper execution of work.

The complexity of the process and the multiplication of administrative procedures require seamless collaboration and efficient coordination between the different administrations and institutions involved: central government, the autonomous communities and municipal corporations. This is always complicated but much more so when governments are controlled by different political parties. At the other end of the spectrum, albeit without any legal responsibility for enforcing protection but as organisations focusing directly on training, research and the execution of archaeological projects, are research institutions (universities, research centres such as CSIC – the Spanish National Research Council - museums) and archaeology companies themselves.

The first distinctive feature is this diversification described previously, indicating that there is nothing even resembling a single institutional collaboration model. Archaeological heritage is evidently treated differently by different autonomous communities. Solutions are individual and, as is often the case, depend more on the training, interest and involvement of experts, researchers and professionals concerned than on institutional protocols. Administrative bodies are managed by people and the success of projects depends on their level of training and commitment.

Different examples can be used to illustrate the imbalanced situation existing in rural areas, linked to environmental impact statements arising from infrastructure projects, and also within the framework of urban archaeology.

In recent decades, awareness has grown regarding environmental protection and the need to harmonise the development needs of society and natural heritage conservation. When defining landscape values, cultural heritage in general and archaeological heritage in particular are of crucial value and therefore require similar levels of protection to those afforded to natural elements that might suffer environmental impacts as result of the execution of infrastructure projects (Cerdeño, Castillo, Sagardoy 2005).

The treatment of archaeological heritage in Environmental Impact Statements in different parts of the country has been uneven. Although regional regulations generally treat archaeological heritage in a broadly similar manner, administrative procedures and bureaucratic requirements differ substantially between regions. Beyond occasional administrative coordination between technical services (the Ministries of Culture, Environment and Public Works, among others) in the execution of archaeological work, some more ambitious and comprehensive projects are developed through institutional collaboration. For example, in Galicia collaboration agreements have been entered into between the Galician Regional Government ("Xunta de Galicia"), various municipalities and the Archaeology Laboratory of Santiago de Compostela University (Criado, González 1994), and later with the Institute of Heritage Sciences (Incipit) at the CSIC, in order to carry out projects through technical assistance⁵. These plans have resulted in the establishment of the necessary foundations for the management of archaeological heritage in connection with works that require mandatory environmental impact statements. The theoretical and methodological reflections from the perspective of "landscape archaeology" have enabled working protocols to be established (Barreiro 2000), and even predictive models for the location of archaeological sites⁶ (Criado 1993). Collaboration in these projects has more than succeeded in advancing research and guaranteeing the financial viability and social integration of documented elements and enhanced heritage.

Along separate lines, collaboration between highly skilled archaeology companies and the University of the Basque Country has achieved considerable progress in knowledge of settlements dating from Late

⁵ In projects linked to gasification plans (CRIADO *et alii* 2000) or wind parks in Galicia (CACHEDA 2004).

⁶ For Andalusia, cfr. FERNÁNDEZ CACHO 2008.

Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period in communities such as Madrid⁷. However, this is an isolated initiative that does not directly involve universities in Madrid.

The situation in urban areas is even more heterogeneous. A single model is also not applied in these areas, nor is there a single body that supervises archaeology services, since these may be the responsibility of the Departments of Culture, Museums, Town Planning, etc. The Law on Historical Heritage designates town and city councils as the bodies responsible for heritage conservation and protection, specifically including archaeological heritage sites in Special Protection Plans under respective planning regulations, although their function is always subordinate to the authority entrusted with heritage protection. Certain regional laws go one step further and allow specific obligations and responsibilities to be designated to provincial councils or local municipal authorities, provided they have qualified staff to carry out the delegated functions. Once municipal town planning schemes have been approved, municipal councils can ask to be delegated the powers held by the autonomous community governments, i.e. the power to directly authorise works or activities developed or implemented under town planning schemes and that affect registered heritage or the areas around heritage sites, provided that they have Municipal Technical Committees to report on such work and activities⁸.

The disproportionate increase in emergency archaeological projects since the mid 1980s resulted in the collapse of many archaeology management systems in urban areas because the institutions and bodies that supported these initiatives were not ready to handle this avalanche of activity. Since the late eighties, combined research teams have been set up in some Spanish cities around museums or municipal archaeological services, more or less linked to scientific institutions. The most noteworthy examples include the following: the TED'A (Archaeology Workshop) in Tarragona, the Training Workshop in Alcalá de Henares, SIAM (Municipal Archaeological Research Service) in Valencia, the Municipal Archaeology Department in Zaragoza, the *Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat* in Barcelona and the *Consorcio de Mérida* (Merida Consortium) (Ruiz de Arbulo 2004, p. 36). This paper will only focus on three different models for the public management of urban archaeological heritage.

⁷ The company AREA, *Sociedad Cooperativa Madrileña de Arqueología*, has carried out numerous projects in rural areas in relation to different archaeological valuation work within the scope of environmental impact studies. In contrast to what tends to occur with salvage archaeology, when administrative reports increase administrative archives, research emanating from this field work has substantially advanced knowledge of late medieval rural population models in the autonomous community of Madrid (cfr. VIGIL-ESCALERA 2000, 2007, 2008).

⁸ Article 40 of Law 14/2007, on Historical Heritage in Andalusia.

Archaeology in the city of Barcelona is managed directly by the Barcelona City Council's Culture Division, which integrates the *Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat* (MUHBA), a body that provides maintenance, research and spreading services. Specifically, the museum's *Servei d'Arqueologia* (Archaeology Service), set up in 1980, is the body through which Barcelona City Council's Institute of Culture manages the city's archaeological heritage (Puig 2009). To ensure the proper and effective development of the process, fluid collaboration between experts from the Archaeology and Heritage Service's Control Division and the municipal architecture and town planning departments. The museum carries out research on urban archaeology itself but does not exclude the possibility of occasionally collaborating with other institutions like the University [of Barcelona]. However, the University's research priorities have so far had little in common with town planning interests and problems.

The model of reference is perhaps the Consortium of the Historical-Artistic and Archaeological Monumental City of Mérida, created in 1996 as a "*public body with legal personality and capacity to support its activities and administer the funds of the public institutions belonging to the consortium: the Ministry of Culture, Extremadura Regional Government, Badajoz Provincial Council and Mérida City Council*" (Alba 2009, p. 233). This example of institutional collaboration and the delegation of responsibilities for the management of archaeological heritage is an exception in the Spanish context, facilitated, it is true, by the fact that until recently all its members represented the same political party⁹. This situation made it easier to delegate powers without the usual obstacles due to opposition from regional governments. Since Mérida is a medium-sized municipality, this Consortium is able to manage archaeological heritage and address and coordinate most excavation work carried out on urban land. Its responsibilities include: authorising archaeological work projects; designating professionals to perform such projects; guiding, supervising and controlling the development of projects; and managing the repository of archaeological material. It is also responsible for conservation, spreading and research, in collaboration with the Archaeological Institute of Mérida (a research centre belonging to the CSIC), Extremadura Regional Government and the Mérida Consortium.

Córdoba is also an illustrative example of a very different model, unique in Andalusia, but with serious difficulties in terms of its definitive consolidation. After difficult and even traumatic experiences in the city

⁹ This Consortium was able to survive the political changes that took place after the last local and regional elections because it had consolidated its position over a period of more than fifteen years and due to its successful development, overcoming the negative identification of archaeological heritage with a daily problem in the city.

that revealed serious shortcomings in the management of Cordoba's archaeological heritage, the previous situation could only be substantially changed through direct and effective involvement of the University [of Cordoba] in the management of urban archaeological heritage (cfr. Murillo, Ventura, Hidalgo 1998-99). The first step necessary to guarantee the participation of all institutions with scientific, executive and town planning responsibilities in relation to urban archaeological heritage took place in 1996, with very positive outcomes¹⁰ (León 2008, p. 12; León, Vaquerizo 2012). This first experience marked the beginning of close collaboration between local institutions involved in heritage protection, town planning and research and training in the field of archaeology. The University of Cordoba showed a strong commitment to the initiative from the outset, quickly assuming a leading role, shared with the Archaeology Office in Cordoba City Council's Town Planning Department. This contribution led to the signing of a cooperation agreement between the PAIDI HUM-236 Research Group, belonging to the Archaeology Department at Cordoba University (UCO), and the Town Planning Department (GMU) from July 2001 to December 2011, this agreement regulated cooperation between both institutions in the field of archaeological research in the city. The lines of work, determined primarily according to town planning requirements, were included in the same research framework. Actions were prioritised not in a haphazard manner but in line with a broader scientific project.

The approach to the integral management of heritage below ground in urban areas consisted in direct and active involvement of the University as a catalyst for and coordinator of archaeological research carried out in the city. The guiding principles underpinning the university's participation were research carried out by staff and its commitment to the social dimension of archaeology. In line with this commitment, the University was obliged to take a leading role on two fronts: leading, activating and coordinating research by establishing the necessary procedures and means to ensure this research was effective; and guaranteeing the training of future professionals in a broad context in which the work of archaeologists was not defined (cfr. Salvatierra 2004, p. 52), in order to guarantee the quality of interventions.

Remarkably, Cordoba embraced this commitment much earlier than

¹⁰ The aim was to develop the "Carta Arqueológica de Riesgo" (Municipal Archaeological Risk Charter) of Cordoba in order to establish regulations to protect archaeological heritage included in the 2001 General Town Planning Scheme. This regulatory framework has substantially improved the mechanisms for managing Cordoba's complex archaeological heritage, incorporating archaeology in municipal town planning regulations to control the main stakeholders involved in construction in urban areas, since their actions have a more direct impact on the destruction of archaeological heritage in Cordoba (LEÓN 2008; LEÓN, VAQUERIZO 2012).

other Spanish cities, identifying almost ten years earlier needs that either do not exist or are still being defined elsewhere. Many people, sometimes hypocritically, called for the University to play a direct and committed role in the management of urban archaeology (cfr. Hidalgo 2010). Based on the model applied by the TED'A in Tarragona in the late eighties, the researchers leading that project considered "*that only universities can and must be capable of monitoring the scientific management of excavation plans, constructing a common discourse between archaeology, town planning and architecture*" (Mar, Ruiz de Arbulo 1999, p. 248). This idea has recently been endorsed by other authors, arguing that universities, inspired by their scientific vocation and dimension as centres of education, can serve as the necessary springboard to encourage and activate research and establish mechanisms for the discussion and diffusion of results (Gurriarán, Salado 2009). In contrast to the normal situation in other Spanish cities, where universities, content to maintain their status as stagnant academic institutions¹¹, have not felt the "need" or moral obligation to participate directly in the management of urban archaeology, the case Cordoba should be highlighted for precisely the opposite reason: its commitment to training, research and diffusion of archaeological heritage, i.e. its commitment to areas of management for which it is responsible. It was therefore responsible, as an institution entrusted with responding to the demands of society, to tackle the challenge of leading a comprehensive research project on archaeology in the historic city of Cordoba.

This urban archaeology project was constructed as a future-oriented and permanent initiative, based on close collaboration and complementary actions between the stakeholders involved in the different dimensions of archaeological heritage in Cordoba. Unfortunately, changes in governing bodies and policies that prioritised the achievement of immediate results and short-term financial gains have resulted in this project being shelved, hopefully only temporarily.

As in most areas of life, the success of an initiative depends mainly on the level of commitment and involvement of people with responsibility in their respective areas. Once again, archaeology has been the main loser in this regard. It is important to remember that beyond institutions, as abstract and impersonal entities, the real protagonists responsible for coming up with ideas and promoting and developing projects are people – professional archaeologists, government experts or university professors - who are committed to their work, aware of their positions and

¹¹ The University, as an academic institution accustomed to its comfortable and privileged position, has based much of its research on traditional excavation campaigns carried out in depopulated areas and on the analysis of museum collections. This complacency has traditionally meant that it has been out of touch with everyday social reality, namely disputes arising in relation to urban archaeology.

the context in which they work, and committed to solving problems. Responsibility, like heritage, is collective and everyone is responsible for managing it; hiding behind any of these groups and placing sole responsibility on the shoulders of others is an act of cowardice and a lack of commitment.

4. Tipping the balance

The efforts made by different administrations to create a legal framework for protection have failed to mitigate shortcomings undermining the management of archaeological heritage. The current management model is based, as in many other countries, on emergency or rescue archaeology. As indicated previously, different regional legislation has distinguished between research or systematic interventions and activities resulting from preventive or emergency salvage work¹².

The exponential multiplication of preventive archaeological activities carried out in compliance with the guidelines established by regional and local governments has not been accompanied by the advancement of knowledge regarding the history of archaeological sites. As mentioned previously, the priority focus has been on excavation for conservation and - in the best-case scenario – enhancement purposes, while intervention for research and scientific ends has been of secondary importance (cfr. Malpica 2000, p. 56). The lack of adequate management planning has given rise to a process characterised by the proliferation of interventions that produce volumes of information unmanageable in the short and medium term for both archaeologists and the technical services of public administrations. The result, especially in urban areas, was “*an archaeology that released sites from their archaeological burden but was incapable of producing historical knowledge*” (Quirós 2005, p. 113).

Therefore, management policies should not be assessed in direct proportion to the number of actions undertaken but according to the quality of results and, in particular, their continuity over time. The “financial viability” of preventive archaeology in Spain depends largely on the resources used. In this sense, a distinction must first be made between private investment and financing with public capital.

An endemic problem of preventive archaeology in both urban and rural areas is its dependency on private financing. In all Spanish Autonomous

¹² Attention has been drawn on repeated occasions to the problem of how the majority of archaeology management models differentiate between “emergency” archaeology and “research-oriented” archaeology (cfr. SALVATIERRA 1994a and 1994b).

Communities it is expressly established that both public and private building developers must cover the cost of archaeological work necessary to protect archaeological heritage (Martínez 2002, p. 227). Sensibly, attention has been drawn to the “polluter pays principle” in environmental law on which this financing method is based (Rodríguez Temido 2010, p. 20), i.e. it is implicitly recognised that such contributions compensate for anything this destroyed. This approach implies a perversion of management from the outset because it conditions the diagnostic and analytical functions of archaeologists, who are paid by developers, but who are not always supported by the administration responsible for protecting archaeological heritage. It also attributes responsibilities to professionals and companies based not on quality of service but on budget. As a result, this system “*has shifted the balance in favour of developers in tender award processes due to the absence or even complacency of the administration*” (Rodríguez Temiño 2011, p. 197). This means that funding is ultimately only provided for excavation work and only for work necessary on the surface and to the depth affected by construction work, without ever taking into consideration the time dedicated to data analysis and the systematisation of recovered materials. In most cases, research depends on the determination and dedication of professionals committed to their work, and carried out in their “free time”.

This brings us back to the requirement to comply with only the administrative dimension of archaeology, at the expense of the rest of the full cycle of archaeological research that necessarily concludes with the scientific publication of results. In short, the individual work of professionals, thus reducing costs to improve turnover, the fragmentation of information, difficulties in meeting research targets, etc. generally prevent equal treatment of data recovery and information processing, i.e. the amount of information and the quality of knowledge generated. As a result, the integrity of the system is flawed¹³.

As regards conservation and promotion work, the Law on Spanish Historical Heritage and regional legislation establishing so-called “Cultural 1%” funding contributed by major public works that exceed certain financial levels. This money will be used “*to fund work to preserve or enrich Spanish Historical Heritage or promote artistic creativity, preferably on the site itself or in its immediate environment*”¹⁴. Although the casuistry is extremely varied and uneven, funds deriving from this 1%, which

¹³ Examples such as the one mentioned previously (see note 7) to obtain knowledge of rural settlements dating from Late Antiquity in the centre of the Iberian peninsula are exceptions that unfortunately confirm the rule.

¹⁴ Article 68 of Law 16/85 on Spanish Historical Heritage.

can sometimes be very considerable, do not have a significant impact on research and the protection of archaeological heritage affected by construction work. Large and sudden injections of cash from such investments have often resulted in actions designed to achieve immediate impacts but lacking any continuity.

In the same vein, during the years of economic prosperity the cultural aspirations of many local corporations resulted in the excavation, restoration and development of many archaeological sites. However, when funds dried up, these sites were abandoned and have been inevitably slowly deteriorated. The outcome has not benefited heritage and has tarnished society's image of archaeology because citizens ultimately see it as an activity that requires large investments but produces low profits. The effectiveness of territorial development policies based on the development of existing heritage sites in areas affected by the crisis and their transformation into resources to revitalise local economies depends inevitably on long-term strategies and investments that ensure the continuity and sustainability of resources, combining the conservation of archaeological heritage with the conservation of local environmental and scenic heritage.

At the other end of the scale are sites that receive priority treatment from cultural authorities and stable public investment. Special figures or bodies are created for the management of these sites, similar to those of archaeological museums. This select group includes a network of archaeological sites of particular historical and, in general, monumental importance that can be opened to the public. In contrast to the isolated and sporadic actions carried out in the past, these sites have stable workforces and - more importantly - master plans that enable the integral management planning of the research, protection, conservation and spreading activities envisaged therein. For example, Andalusia has established publicly-financed Archaeological Complexes¹⁵, which are free for EU citizens. Since they do not obtain income from ticket sales, they do not have resources to reinvest in the maintenance of the sites. A similar figure, also regulated by specific legislation, is the model network of Archaeological Parks of Castile-La Mancha¹⁶.

The scenario described above reveals a marked bipolarity in investment terms, resulting in extremely unbalanced results: on one hand, the public authorities advocate a policy of reducing costs to a minimum in the

¹⁵ <http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/cultura/museos/>

¹⁶ Law 4/2001, of 10 May, on Archaeology Parks in Castile-La Mancha. This law, together the Law on Cultural Parks in Aragon, reveal special interest in the conservation and connection with the environment.

case of “preventive” archaeology; on the other, technical and human resources are provided to support a small network of archaeological sites. The management of Spain’s rich and diverse archaeological heritage¹⁷ requires a more balanced distribution of dwindling resources.

In a critical situation like the present, when already meagre public investment is repeatedly cut, alternatives should be considered to maintain archaeological research and recover collective heritage. One option that must be considered is the promotion of private investment through more favourable tax incentives for patronage than those provided under current legislation¹⁸. A unique and highly successful initiative is the innovative project developed within the framework of the Merida Monumental City Consortium, called the “*Programa Mecenas*” (“Patronage Programme”), which aims to develop the city’s heritage and the surrounding area through funds collected through contributions from participating partners - individual citizens, companies or institutions - and according to the means at their disposal. Every year these partners choose a project to be developed with their contributions. In return, they receive public recognition and tax benefits established in legislation. This achieves two objectives: citizen involvement and participation in conservation and enhancement; and the effective promotion of heritage through the regular diffusion of complete information on all activities developed in this connection¹⁹.

The concession of use and exploitation of heritage belonging to private entities is much more problematic²⁰. This alternative is at odds with the logical opposition to the risks of turning common heritage into a commodity for the benefit and enjoyment of a minority. Spanish law states that public authorities are responsible for the management of Heritage, but citizens are entitled to enjoy this collective heritage. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Treasury will allocate less and less money to meet its obligations in this sense. The solution must be based on a formula that openly incorporates private investment with public control to avoid the distortion of historical heritage in favour of immediate financial returns, prioritising spectacle and entertainment.

In any case, the current model is unacceptable. As mentioned previously, private funding - restricted to the payment of archaeological work

¹⁷ A concept that is constantly being changed and revised, and which gradually incorporates modern and contemporary heritage elements, such as those catalogued as industrial heritage.

¹⁸ Law 49/2002, of 23 December, on the tax regime applicable to non-profit organisations and tax incentives for patronage.

¹⁹ <http://www.consorciomerida.org/mecenas>.

²⁰ The cultural industry has been one of the most buoyant economic sectors in recent years. This accounts for the large number of companies interested in working in that field due to the potential profits that can be obtained and, in particular, the benefits that investing in culture can have for their image.

carried out by developers of new construction projects - is justified due to the destruction of part of archaeological heritage and the performance of archaeological activities are subject to market directives.

5. Lights and shadows in unstable times

As with weather forecasts when conditions are extremely unstable, this analysis of the actions undertaken in connection with archaeological heritage management in times of crisis cannot be categorical and is therefore open to different interpretations. Any management model can be evaluated or interpreted in two ways: positively and optimistically; or negatively and pessimistically. Obstinate clinging to either interpretation entails obvious risks: self-complacency in the case of the former; and gratuitous and destructive criticism in the case of the latter. This paper does not intend to endorse either interpretation, it simply reviews the most positive aspects in the opinion of the authors and existing shortcomings, the lights and shadows of the current model, aware that this is a partial and by no means exhaustive interpretation. This review examines the structural problem highlighted previously, namely the enormous cultural heritage that must be managed by public authorities with increasingly limited capabilities and resources, for which priorities are normally established according to principles that are not strictly related to heritage.

Management policies adopted in Spain in recent years have advocated a reduction in interventions favouring investment in conservation and enhancement and supported a transformation of the traditional model within the framework of so-called "Preventive Archaeology", with mixed results in urban and rural areas. This has ultimately led to a decrease in research activity, mainly due to the reduction or suppression of systematic projects that were promoted until the early nineteen nineties²¹. Thus, the main source of archaeological information in Spain has basically been limited to emergency actions undertaken in urban areas.

On the basis of the above, the main shortcomings of this model can be summarised as follows:

- The lack of uniform management procedures in both rural and urban areas.
- The minimisation of the costs of preventive archaeology, borne by the developers of construction projects. In our opinion, this is one of the major shortcomings of the current model.

²¹ At least those financed by the Regional Ministry of Culture of the Andalusian Regional Government (cfr. SALVATIERRA 1994a; RODRÍGUEZ TEMIÑO 2004).

- The conscious and perverse distinction between management-oriented archaeology and research-oriented archaeology, transforming archaeology into an administrative and commercial activity where the role of experts in regulations has taken precedence over the professional qualifications of archaeologists themselves.

- The lack of institutional collaboration, to the extent that universities and research centres have been left out of management planning, their role being controversially limited to training for professionals and the development of occasional projects in rural areas. The most active role has been delegated to the technical services of competent authorities, which have not always considered research to be their responsibility, nor have they facilitated the work of those who did plan to carry out research, resulting in an unbalanced struggle to maintain control of archaeology.

- The exponential development of urban archaeology at the expense of systematic research projects. However, integral action plans have been lacking in most cities, which are divided into many independent sites, and the information obtained - regardless of its quality - has not been articulated in a coherent manner to provide more in-depth knowledge of the historical reality of urban areas.

- Archaeological research has taken different paths to archaeology as a profession, as evidenced by the clear imbalance between the number of projects undertaken and the scientific results obtained. This process resulted in a succession of inter-related field projects, without insufficient time was allocated to processing information and publishing results; naturally researchers were not very interested in such non-remunerated work because it was not profitable and because they did not have enough time to devote to such enterprises (cfr. Rodríguez Temiño 2006, p. 161).

- In short, despite efforts to transform the approach into model to promote the preventive management of archaeological heritage, the fact is that the main actions have been conditioned by the resolution of immediate problems created by archaeology. In other words, under the current model short-term programming, urgency and haste have prevailed over longer-term planning. To avoid this situation, teams must be created whose continuity is not influenced by political and economic vagaries.

However, not all is dark on the horizon. There are also positive aspects in the management of archaeological heritage, including most notably the following:

- Progressive decentralisation of the management of archaeological heritage, resulting in more effective knowledge and supervision of needs in this area.

- The involvement of all public administrations in the management of archaeological heritage, albeit with different degrees of responsibility. In

this respect, municipalities can play a leading role, even though they would have limited powers. The creation of archaeology services in major historical cities and in many medium-sized towns is a major achievement, although their continuity, as mentioned previously, is seriously impaired by their reliance on real estate activity.

- The establishment in each autonomous community of the legal framework necessary to regulate archaeological heritage protection. However, this proliferation of rules and regulations merely complicates procedures and reduces archaeology to its purely administrative dimension.

- One major achievement in this respect has been the inclusion of archaeological heritage in territorial and town planning regulations, although this provision is not yet binding in all cases.

- Uneven scientific results have been obtained. Cities such as Merida, Valencia, Barcelona, Alcalá de Henares, Zaragoza, Gijón, Cartagena or Victoria (cfr. Rodríguez Temiño 2004, pp. 304-324) have shown how archaeological research in urban settlements can provide a better understanding of the “darkest” periods of historiography. Interest in town planning from a diachronic and stratigraphic standpoint, inspired by the approach adopted in Italy, has allowed traditional chronological barriers to be overcome and brought the focus in research on the transformations that took place in towns and cities during Late Antiquity and the Late Middle Ages.

- Finally, one very positive aspect has been the greater awareness of cultural heritage in general and archaeological heritage in particular, and the economic potential of this heritage as a resource for tourism. In this respect, attention must be drawn to the work carried out in cultural sites and parks. However, in the absence of adequate future-oriented planning, this resource may become a double-edged sword, tarnishing society’s image of archaeology and eventually undermining heritage itself.

The overall picture is not very encouraging, especially considering the panorama that awaits archaeology in the coming years: a slowdown in preventive archaeology due to the decline in new construction projects, cuts in research budgets, the breaking up of research teams and, in short, a large group of professionals with grim job prospects. Maybe now is the time to rethink the model.

6. Are there alternatives? Future prospects for Spanish archaeology

It is impossible to predict what the future holds for the management of archaeological heritage in Spain, but it is safe to say that the crisis will mark a “before” and an “after” for archaeology as we have known it in recent years. For some authors, this would be the ideal situation to

“reinvent” archaeology (Rodríguez Temiño 2011, p. 198; Brogiolo 2006). In any case, this would be an important point of inflection, a “change of scenario” in which the discipline should nevertheless not relinquish its core scientific and social principles.

We do not believe in universal recipes or panaceas to resolve the serious problems facing archaeology today. However, we do believe that adequate management is much more than just weathering the storm and waiting for better times. Rethinking the future of archaeology management requires coherent and careful planning of resources distributed evenly between research, conservation and promotion of archaeological heritage, based on an approach that substitutes short-term interests for a medium and long-term reflection, establishing priorities not dictated by market directives.

Recent analyses of the most pressing needs of archaeology in Spain (cfr. Almansa 2011) agree on various key aspects: improvements in training and qualifications, the recovery of research, the creation of stable teams working on global projects, the involvement and collaboration of different institutions and professional sectors involved, the maintenance of public funding, the vindication of the social dimension of archaeological heritage and the strengthening of spreading activities.

Universities are strongly criticised for the formative shortcomings of future professionals. They failed to produce the new qualified archaeologists demanded by a growing labour market. Their education programmes had become obsolete because they only offered traditional specialisations without taking into account real needs. Job opportunities afforded by the widespread execution of preventive archaeological projects meant that many young graduates joined this growing labour market without proper methodological training or adequate practical experience, and the competent authorities failed to establish levels of quality in results (cfr. Gurriarán, Salado 2009). Although these criticisms are justified, it is also important to consider the root of the problem and highlight the risks involved in treating archaeology as an eminently administrative and entrepreneurial activity. The solution is to find ways to reduce this marked separation between technical or administrative activity and research. Some authors believe that a clearer distinction would have to be made between the administrative and labour management of scientific research (Ruiz de Arbuló 2004, p. 37). Thus, in cities administrative management would be handled by municipal or regional services, while scientific coordination could be delegated to universities. However, other authors argue that government experts should play a greater role and participate more directly in scientific research (Hidalgo 2010). Indeed, both options are valid provided scientific rigor and the purpose of archaeology, namely the generation

of historical knowledge, are maintained. As a minimum, the information contained in archaeological sites must not be lost.

In the sphere of urban archaeology this approach would overcome the simple dichotomy between preservation and destruction. The most immediate challenge to ensure more effective and operative management and produce relevant scientific and heritage-related outcomes necessarily requires consideration to be given to several key aspects. The first basic requirement is cooperation between different institutions responsible for research, protection and diffusion of archaeological heritage. This paper has insisted that a fluid relationship between professionals and experts from the different agencies involved depends more on human rather than purely institutional factors. Secondly, it is important to acknowledge the need to integrate all activities in a clear and unified urban or territorial project, in which archaeology is taken into account in all town-planning schemes and applicable regulations. To this end, responsibility for the management of archaeological heritage must be delegated to local administrations with appropriate technical services, providing them with the necessary technical, legal and financial resources to fulfil their responsibilities. More importantly, the continuity and permanence of these teams must be guaranteed, avoiding the immediacy and haste characteristic of moments of peak construction or town-planning activity. In other words, preventive actions must not be driven by any sense of urgency or improvisation. Unfortunately, the experiences of projects such as TED'A in Tarragona or the more recent project in Cordoba are good examples of this precarious dependence. Ultimately, archaeology management should not be seen as a difficulty or an administrative formality but as a service demanded by society and managed by delegated public authorities. In this respect, the model applied in Merida is paradigmatic insofar as it has overcome a management approach conditioned by immediacy and urgency to resolve the "archaeological problem", establishing "*a philosophy that sets a sustainable course rather than merely "surviving" daily routines, targeting the evaluation round of the academic year or the possibility of changing approach every four years, and coinciding with the election of institutional representatives in our democratic system*" (Alba 2009, p. 235). The creation of these types of consortia or similar public bodies should no longer be an exception but the norm.

However, the future of archaeology must undoubtedly be supported by a strong commitment to spreading work as a means of achieving maximum public participation. As indicated in the preamble to the Spanish Historical Heritage Act: "*All protection and promotion measures established by the law only serve a purpose if they eventually lead an increasing number of citizens to view and enjoy the works that are the heritage*

of the collective capacity of a nation". Therefore, research is only meaningful if it is reinvested in the society that finances and supports it. This requires a firm commitment to the social dimension of archaeology, which entails, as mentioned previously, promotion and collaboration in the design and development of educational activities and the diffusion of archaeological heritage to guarantee its conservation. In other words, the social responsibility dimension of science and, more specifically, archaeology must also be consolidated (cfr. Azkárate 2011, p. 9).

New opportunities opened up by the economic crisis include most notably "Public Archaeology"²², which is based on interaction between archaeology and the public, i.e. society in general. This concept has two dimensions: the primarily commercial dimension of archaeology adapted to the growing demands of English-speaking and European consumer societies; and the search for active citizen participation in order to transform the society in which it is integrated.

One risk of focusing on the tourist and commercial dimension of heritage is the gradual distancing of the population inheriting that legacy. Heritage elements integrated in cultural tourism products tend to be enjoyed by foreign visitors, but the sustainability of heritage must be based on greater awareness and active involvement, i.e. the capacity to accept heritage as one's own, as a sign of one's identity and forging an emotional bond with it. This must be based on cultural education and spreading through festivals, historical recreation days, circuits or archaeological tours, etc. A fine example of a successful promotional activity is the annual "*Tarraco Viva*" festival in Tarragona, a cultural event that reconstructs and celebrates the Roman period of history. A more modest and voluntary diffusion project with a similar objective is "*Arqueología somos Todos*" ("We are all Archaeology"), promoted by the Sísifo Research Group at Cordoba University, which aims to show Cordoban citizens the results of research carried out over ten years of collaboration under the agreement signed between the Town Planning Department and Cordoba University (the "GMU-UCO" Agreement)²³.

In short, the aim is to redesign the structure of archaeological heritage management, initially by establishing solid foundations that must naturally be supported by society as the custodian of such a rich cultural legacy. This requires enormous doses of imagination. Desperate times require drastic solutions: "*A grandes males grandes remedios*".

²² In reality, this is an English term coined in the early 1970s and recovered recently (cfr. McGimsey 1972; Schadla-Hall 1999, Ascherson 2000, Matsuda 2004, Moshenska 2009, Almansa 2010 y 2011b).

²³ <http://difusion2012.arqueocordoba.com/2012/03/primer-entrada.html>

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