EDITORIAL

Geographers, historians and archaeologists have long offered comprehensive analyses of past urban transformations. In so doing, each separate discipline has developed specific theoretical and methodological frameworks and distinct paths of research. Rarely though is there an attempt made to surmount the disciplinary boundaries that separate them, proposing unified directions for research. The use of spatial analysis through application of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) compels a rethinking of each of these positions, as it has in other fields. The use of these new 'spatial technologies' in historical and archaeological study makes an integrated analysis indispensable, both for those who focus on the longue durée as well as in those devoted to more specific chronological periods. In both cases GIS platforms provide the scope to integrate a variety of sources, from material culture (derived from archaeology or the study of architecture), through to documentary sources, and including texts, cartography, aerial photos, and iconography. The Research section of this second issue of PCA presents eight papers in which spatial technologies are applied to the study of late Roman and medieval European cities. Most of the contributions show different possible applications of spatial analysis to the study of the evolution of urban space during the medieval period and the contribution of an interdisciplinary approach to achieving new historical results and research directions. The sections on York, Antwerp, Tours and Padua were presented at a congress on 'Spatial Technologies and the Medieval City' in Padua, May 2012[1], organized by Alexandra Chavarría and Keith Lilley (the editors of this section). Three further cases - Bordeaux, Siena and Grosseto – have been added because of the relevance of their results. The last paper, by Lilley, offers a critical review of the relevance of recent debates in geography, regarding critical cartography, to users of GIS and other 'spatial technologies' in the production of digital maps in archaeology and history.

This second PCA also includes some reflections on public archaeology, for example on the practice of protecting the testimony of the past which is brought to light by archaeology. Although differing terminology is used — 'rescue archaeology' in the UK, 'archeologia di emergenza' in Italy, 'archéologie preventive' in France, etc - there is a common objective: to gather into informative archives scientifically correct and accessible information about the past, which archaeological practice inevitably destroys. However, the results of this archaeological practice are often very scarce in relation to the resources invested - which are also very different in the 5 countries considered (UK, France, Italy, Norway, Spain). The institutional frameworks also differ in these countries, with more or less central control or direction, and more or less room for polycentric participation. In the sphere of protection, we also need to reflect deeply on interdisciplinary approaches, a subject that we will pursue in the next volumes of PCA. It makes little sense to separate protection into so many sectors (environmental, landscape, settlement, architectural), on the basis of historical or disciplinary boxes. If we believe that the parameters for protection are not the market value of objects, but the historical significance of the testimony of the past, we can not hope for complete knowledge. However, we must avoid an interpretation which leads to a paroxysm of protection of every single piece of masonry scattered in the countryside or in the cellars of a city.

In the Retrospect section, Andrzej Buko offers an interesting reading of the development of Polish archaeology from the 19th century to the present day, when archaeology has reformulated a close relationship with history. This collaboration was prominent during the 1950s, when it proposed a reconstruction of the Polish state which echoed the beginnings of medieval archaeology in Italy and France. It is necessary to review this relationship between archaeology and history, in order to consider not only the opportunity for an interdisciplinary strategy, but also its concrete and recurrent risks: the subordination of material data to the documentary sources, which has had, and still has, deleterious consequences for archaeology.

The 'Project' chosen for this issue centres on the WIKI platform created by the French team led by Pascale Chevalier and Christian Sapin for CARE (Corpus architecturae religiosae europeae), one of the most ambitious projects concerning the middle ages in Europe to have been developed in recent years.

In a difficult economic phase, that puts at risk the very survival of Europe, this initiative, like others that involve partners of different nations, is a further benchmark for the construction of an international scientific community. This is the perspective that has guided us in the foundation of Post-Classical Archaeologies and the second issue confirms the objectives we set ourselves: a European magazine to discuss the current conditions of archaeology in different countries and to propose new research directions over broad chronological periods, from an interdisciplinary and innovative perspective, based on the contribution of new technologies.