

ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY

FOREWORD

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Since Antiquity, especially if we consider the antiquarian practices examined by the studies of Momigliano (1992), Schnapp (1998) and others, it has been recognized that the study of the past (and even of the present) can be benefitted by the use of artifacts as privileged sources of knowledge. For having been transmitted to modernity in fragments, the textual tradition, despite its undeniable humanistic importance, offer us only a partial and biased view of ancient societies. Géza Alföldy (1986: 18) was emphatic about the indispensability, in our time, of archaeology for the study of Ancient history: *daß in unserer Zeit alte Geschichte ohne Archäologie nicht mehr denkbar ist* (In our time, Ancient history is not conceivable without archaeology). That "our time", however, was three and a half decades ago!

It is fundamental not to subordinate archaeology to the condition of an auxiliary or complementary discipline to history. On the contrary, as the texts of this dossier attest, the study of material culture is conducted through its proper methodologies and specificities. Although the use of technological resources in archaeology suggests the gradual specialization and deepening of its specificities, it is also undeniable that the constitution of electronic databases and computerized means (Pérez González, 2018) has contributed to the democratization and access to the archaeological document. It has benefitted Ancient history (a discipline increasingly diversified thanks to the documental enlargement provided by Archeology

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itself) and the other Human Sciences. This volume goes in that direction: archeology collaborating to a critical knowledge.

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