

Editorial

Bioarchaeology serves as a bridge between biological inquiries and archaeological explorations and in this issue of JBR recent discoveries and studies that demonstrate the multifaceted nature of bioarchaeology are presented.

Bioarchaeology offers the possibility to enrich the history of man through biological investigation in archaeology and the university laboratories dedicated to this field are demonstrating that our research is constantly engaged in scientific dissemination but with an important return for the public through a scientific divulgation.

Discoveries on so-called “proximity” archaeological funerary sites and anthropological museum collections are constantly examined to communicate scientific discoveries to the public with a certain immediacy.

In this issue, the article of Traversari et al. demonstrates the desire of anthropologists to investigate the anthropological collections with today’s methods. In particular, the study team led by Dr. Traversari brought to the attention of our readers to the anthropological collection of skulls from pre-Columbian Perú preserved at the Civic Museum of Modena and thus brought to light the question of intentional cranial deformations.

Archaeobotany is a fundamental science for the study of funerary rituals of the past and the investigations of the botanical residues found in the tombs in Roman context, the necropolis of Cittanova in the province of Modena, allowed researchers to discover cereals and legumes as grave goods in funeral ceremonies.

As regards the biological anthropology section, the authors Vanni and Fusco present the study of an infant recovered from a secondary deposition context from the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Vercelli, Italy.

It is a possible case of scurvy and the peculiarity of this case, which is nevertheless widely represented in the paleopathological literature, is the fact that despite being in a context of burials belonging to wealthy people, the children could still suffer from conditions of vitamin deficiencies.

The bioarchaeological perspectives, while exploring funerary contexts can elucidate the complexities of past human health and well-being.

Still in the documentation techniques section, the article by Mazzucchi et al. sheds light on the need to disseminate anthropological research using interactive tools such as the metaverse to reconstruct bioarchaeological contexts and virtually re-propose them in the original places of discovery, thus making the use of an archaeological context stimulating.

But bioarchaeology still has a lot of work to do, precisely so that we understand the usefulness of knowing the history of humanity by applying biological sciences to archaeological sciences. We are aware of a discouraging condition in Italy if we think about how few universities and other teachings are present in study courses.

We train students in scientific fields unaware of the evolutionary steps that have contributed to the formation of current human thought. Dr. Rossetti’s article raises this fact and encourages the teaching of physical anthropology starting from the younger classes.

In the continuously evolving domain of bioarchaeology, each new discovery serves as an enduring testament to the remarkable resilience and adaptability of the human spirit throughout the ages. From the enigmatic cranial deformations discovered in pre-Columbian Perú to the haunting revelation of widespread vitamin deficiencies among modern era burials, these findings not only enrich our historical narrative but also prompt profound

reflection on the fundamental universality of the human experience. As we grapple with the intricate complexities of past civilizations, the pressing need to incorporate bioarchaeological perspectives into contemporary educational curricula has become increasingly apparent. By nurturing a deeper appreciation of the interconnectedness between the biological and archaeological sciences, we not only illuminate the dimly lit corners of history but also empower future generations to unravel the enduring mysteries of our collective heritage. As we chart the course ahead, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to unravel the intricate tapestry of human existence, one bone at a time.

Marta Licata

Editorial in Chief

Journal of Bioarchaeological Research