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FOREWORD

In order to study spatial and functional organisation in the past, ancient enclosed areas such as enclosures, houses and courtyards offer an important source of information, whether they were limited by ramparts, walls, hedges, posts or ditches (e.g. Marion & Blancquaert, 2000; Wieland, 1995). In recent years, the understanding of the genesis and organisation of such ancient enclosed areas has been improved by the increased application of multi-proxy research programs.

In the same perspective, buried surfaces, either protected by walls, ramparts, burial mounds or urban waste deposits, are another valuable source of information for archaeologists, geoarchaeologists and pedologists. Excellent overviews on the study of such buried surfaces can be found in Goldberg and Macphail (2006) and Holliday (2004). Both research subjects are partly based on soil and life sciences in order to provide significant means for interpretation and objective comparisons between the case studies.

During the session ‘From microprobe to spatial analysis – Enclosed and buried surfaces as key sources in Archaeology and Pedology’ the potential of different methods to study these ancient buried and enclosed surfaces have been presented. Contributions of archaeopedology, micromorphology, phytolith studies, palynology, geophysics and geochemistry to this understanding have been discussed.

This first volume contains part of the papers presented during this session, in particular those focussing on archaeology, soil and life sciences applied to the study of **ancient enclosures and fields**. The second volume will focus on archaeology, soil and life sciences applied to the study of **ancient houses, gardens and courtyards**.

The first two contributions are respectively discussing the potentials and limitations of geoarchaeology to the study of enclosed surfaces (Leopold), and the application of phosphorus cartography (Devos, et al.(a)).

The other papers published in these proceedings are either case studies dealing with the study of enclosures and fields (Fercoq de Leslay, et al.; Raab & Völkel; Rouppert, et al.), or regional syntheses on the study of enclosures (Fechner, et al.; Malrain) and cultivated soils (Devos, et al. (b)).

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