

Unearthing ancient secrets of daily life in Roman city

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The Department of Ancient History's Dr. Arianna Traviglia will be part of a groundbreaking cooperative archeological project in which she will be exploring what life was like for the more than 100,000 people who would have lived outside the city walls.

At its height Aquilea was home to 100,000 people, but the city walls could not accommodate a population of that size.

"Most of the population would have lived outside the city walls, and that's my project," says Traviglia. "We don't know pretty much anything about what was outside the city: where the people were living, where the nice villas were, where the fancy, rich Romans were living and so on."

New technologies will also make long distance collaboration easier. "My research assistant is in Italy. We share data on the internet every day. If I have specific ideas I can send her to check and she can send me the data."

She is also hopeful that modern survey techniques, such as hyperspectral data imaging and laser scanners, will reveal far more about the city than traditional archaeological practices would normally uncover.

"Hyperspectral data looks like a picture but in each pixel is recorded in the electromagnetic spectrum in a range the human eye can't see," she explains. "For example, I can detect the difference in vegetation growth, which is a sign that there could be archaeological structures underneath."

Traviglia hopes that this agreement will help to establish further agreements and broaden the opportunities for foreign study in this field. Her department is investing in a new Archaeological Fieldwork Lab to bring the most up-to-date technologies to the classroom. "The most important thing for us is to be able to train students to use it."

Provided by Macquarie University

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