

EDITORIAL

The aim of *Post-Classical Archaeologies* is to provide a new and multi-disciplinary journal which avoids segmentation into pre-defined chronologies (Late Antiquity, Early and Late Middle Ages) or subjects (physical anthropology, production, zooarchaeology, archaeometallurgy), in response to approaches established in the last fifty years.

The title 'Post-Classical' Archaeologies has a double meaning. Firstly, historical: Europe, which had found a certain equilibrium for more than half a millennium through the unifying force of the Roman Empire, experienced a long post-classical period after its disintegration, during which new directions – with some common ground – developed, leading to the formation of medieval and modern Europe. We must examine these directions over time and in different European contexts.

The second meaning refers to the development of archaeological research: in this sense, 'post-classical' suggests a revision of traditional archaeological approaches. Innovation and experimentation alone cannot advance research, it is also indispensable to have clear points of reference in the face of the overwhelming succession of theoretical frameworks in recent decades, from the functionalism/rationalism on which New Archaeology was founded, to the post-processualism of the last twenty years.

Research, in our opinion, should be understood as the investigation of a multiplicity of indicators which are classified and described in all their informative complexity. Data does not exist without archaeology, a feature which brings with it degrees of uncertainty and subjectivity. As in other human sciences, different contexts yield different quantities and quality of information; for example, material remains may be conserved very differently in different physical contexts. But if objectivity is a myth, this does not mean that we must renounce a priori any documentation of the 'facts' through standardised and verifiable procedures. Rather, we must widen

our horizons in order to build knowledge with the help of scientific and technical analyses which enhance the interpretative values of materials currently available, such as the application of isotopic analysis to bones or LIDAR imaging of landscapes.

Modern archaeological research requires moving beyond traditional boundaries of research, and developing an identity beyond the stratigraphic approach upon which the foundations of medieval archaeology were built fifty years ago. It is time to adopt not just an interdisciplinary approach engaging with fields traditionally used by archaeology, such as zoo-archaeology or palaeobotanics, or the supporting disciplines of history, anthropology or ethnography, but a trans-disciplinary approach with other disciplines such as geography or production history, which offer their own specific agenda.

Each annual issue of Post-Classical Archaeologies will focus on a historiographic or scientific theme, across a broad range of subjects and chronologies. A further section will publish original papers "Beyond the theme", and a "Projects" section will present research in progress, notable for its originality, trans-disciplinary approach, or use of new methodologies.

The management of the journal, which is intended to be international and multilingual, is entrusted to a group of young researchers supported by a more senior advisory committee.

In this first volume, we present the results of a seminar, held in Padova in March 2010, which gave a voice to a new generation of archaeologists of the post-classical period. The second section of this volume reflects the thoughts of key researchers who experienced the birth of medieval archaeology in Italy in the late 1960s to early 1970s. This phase, which ended with the dramatic death of one of its indisputable fathers, Riccardo Francovich, traced its ancestry to Gian Pietro Bognetti, the methodologies of the Polish and English schools, and a reliance on historians, especially in the choice of subjects for research. Such a reliance remains an acceptable compromise to most, but in our view should be superseded by a positive engagement with all disciplines which concern themselves with the post-classical period. It is only with such a broader engagement that post-classical archaeologists will be able to build interpretative models on the basis of different sources of material, textual or ethnoarchaeological data.

By putting together the reflections of those who took part in the birth of medieval archaeology and some of those who represent their inheritance, we can now think about the origins of a new phase which forges a link between the work of the founders of the discipline and a developing "new" medieval archaeology within a new and more global approach.