

# pca

european journal of  
postclassicalarchaeologies

volume 6/2016

**SAP Società Archeologica s.r.l.**

Mantova 2016

## EDITORS

**Gian Pietro Brogiolo** (chief editor)

**Alexandra Chavarria** (executive editor)

## ADVISORY BOARD

**Martin Carver** (University of York)

**Matthew H. Johnson** (Northwestern University of Chicago)

**Giuliano Volpe** (Università degli Studi di Foggia)

**Marco Valenti** (Università degli Studi di Siena)

## ASSISTANT EDITOR

**Francesca Benetti**

## LANGUAGE EDITOR

**Rebecca Devlin** (University of Florida)

## EDITORIAL BOARD

**Gilberto Artioli** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

**Andrea Breda** (Soprintendenza BB.AA. della Lombardia)

**Margarita Díaz-Andreu** (ICREA - Universitat de Barcelona)

**José M. Martín Civantos** (Universidad de Granada)

**Girolamo Fiorentino** (Università del Salento)

**Caterina Giostra** (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano)

**Susanne Hakenbeck** (University of Cambridge)

**Vasco La Salvia** (Università degli Studi G. D'Annunzio di Chieti e Pescara)

**Bastien Lefebvre** (Université Toulouse - Jean Jaurès)

**Alberto León** (Universidad de Córdoba)

**Tamara Lewit** (Trinity College - University of Melbourne)

**Federico Marazzi** (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa di Napoli)

**Dieter Quast** (Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz)

**Andrew Reynolds** (University College London)

**Mauro Rottoli** (Laboratorio di archeobiologia dei Musei Civici di Como)

**Colin Rynne** (University College Cork)

**Post-Classical Archaeologies (PCA)** is an independent, international, peer-reviewed journal devoted to the communication of post-classical research. PCA publishes a variety of manuscript types, including original research, discussions and review articles. Topics of interest include all subjects that relate to the science and practice of archaeology, particularly multidisciplinary research which use specialist methodologies, such as zooarchaeology, paleobotany, archaeometallurgy, archaeometry, spatial analysis, as well as other experimental methodologies applied to the archaeology of post-classical Europe.

Submission of a manuscript implies that the work has not been published before, that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere and that it has been approved by all co-authors. Each author must clear reproduction rights for any photos or illustration, credited to a third party that he wishes to use (including content found on the Internet). For more information about **ethics** (including plagiarism) and copyright practices and guidelines please visit the web site [www.postclassical.it](http://www.postclassical.it).

PCA is published once a year in May, starting in 2011. Manuscripts should be submitted to [editor@postclassical.it](mailto:editor@postclassical.it) in accordance to the guidelines for contributors in the webpage <http://www.postclassical.it>

*Post-Classical Archaeologies's* manuscript **review process** is rigorous and is intended to identify the strengths and weaknesses in each submitted manuscript, to determine which manuscripts are suitable for publication, and to work with the authors to improve their manuscript prior to publication.

This journal has the option to publish in **open access**. For information please visit the web site [www.postclassical.it](http://www.postclassical.it)

How to **quote**: please use "PCA" as abbreviation and "Post-Classical Archaeologies" as full title.

**Cover image**: courtesy of Schaffhausen, Stadtbibliothek (Switzerland), Gen. 8, f. 271v – Klosterneuburger Evangelienwerk, retrieved from [www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/sbs/0008/271v/0/Sequence-1030](http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/sbs/0008/271v/0/Sequence-1030)

"Post-Classical Archaeologies" was approved on 2015-05-13 according to ERIH PLUS criteria for inclusion. Classified A by ANVUR [Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del sistema Universitario e della Ricerca].

## DESIGN

Paolo Vedovetto

## PUBLISHER

SAP Società Archeologica s.r.l.  
Strada Fienili 39/a, 46020 Quingentole, Mantova  
[www.archeologica.it](http://www.archeologica.it)

## PRINTED BY

Tecnografica Rossi, Via I maggio, Sandrigo (VI)

Authorised by Mantua court no. 4/2011 of April 8, 2011

For subscription and all other information visit the web site [www.postclassical.it](http://www.postclassical.it)

CONTENTS PAGES

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	5
<b>RESEARCH - RECYCLING AND REUSE IN THE MIDDLE AGES</b>	
<b>R. Fleming</b> The ritual recycling of Roman building material in late 4 <sup>th</sup> - and early 5 <sup>th</sup> -century Britain	7
<b>S. Paynter, C. Jackson</b> Re-used Roman rubbish: a thousand years of recycling glass	31
<b>A. Sebastiani</b> Glass and metal production at Alberese. The workshops at the manufacturing district of Spolverino	53
<b>F.-D. Deltente, L. Orlandi</b> «Rien ne se perd, rien ne se crée, tout se transforme». Transformation and manufacturing in the Late Roman <i>villa</i> of Aiano-Torraccia di Chiusi (5 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> cent. AD)	71
<b>S. Bertoldi</b> Santa Cristina in Caio (Buonconvento, Si): productive reuse during the Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages	91
<b>C. Fernández-Ochoa, F. Gil Sendino, J. Salido</b> La actividad metalúrgica en el yacimiento Veranes (Gijón, España): de la villa romana al asentamiento tardoantiguo y altomedieval	109
<b>BEYOND THE THEME</b>	
<b>F. Curta</b> Postcards from Maurilia, or the historiography of the dark-age cities of Byzantium	141
<b>M. Asolati</b> trasparenze ponderali: contrappesi monetali di vetro nell'Anatolia bizantina	163

## DOSSIER - WORLD HERITAGE AND THE PUBLIC

- M. Díaz-Andreu** Introduction to the Dossier "World Heritage and the Public" 189
- M. Díaz-Andreu** Social values and the participation of local communities in World Heritage: a dream too far? 193
- Q. Gao** Social values and archaeological heritage: an ethnographic study of the Daming Palace archaeological site (China) 213
- G. Alexopoulos, K. Fouseki** Gender exclusion and local values versus universal cultural heritage significance: the Avaton debate on the monastic community of Mount Athos 235
- T.S. Guttormsen, J. Taylor, G. Swensen** Heritage values conceptualised as heritage routes. Visions and challenges towards public diversity 255
- M. Maluck** Spatial planning as a way to stakeholder involvement in cultural heritage management. Examples from Northern Europe 273
- D. Rodwell** Community values vs World Heritage values: bridging the gap 295
- G.P. Brogiolo** The UNESCO network "The Longobards in Italy. The Places of Power (568-774 A.D.)" and the Brescia case 317

## RETROSPECT

- N.I. Platonova** Problems of early medieval Slavonic Archaeology in Russia (a view from St. Petersburg) 333

## PROJECT

- M. Valenti** "We invest in Public Archaeology". The Poggibonsi Archaeodrome project: an alliance between people, Municipality and University 417

## REVIEWS

- G. Chouquer, *Les parcelles médiévales en Émilie et en Romagne. Centuriations et trames coaxiales. Morphologie et droit agraires* - by **C. Citter**
- A. Vigil-Escalera Guirado, *Los primeros paisajes altomedievales en el interior de Hispania. Registros campesinos del siglo quinto d.C.* - by **T. Lewit**
- M. Díaz-Andreu, A. Pastor Pérez, A. Ruiz Martínez (eds), *Arqueología y comunidad. El valor social del Patrimonio Arqueológico en el Siglo XXI* - by **M. del Carmen Rojo Ariza**

## EDITORIAL

*The sixth issue of PCA presents the material from two conferences held in different European countries last year.*

*The volume opens with some of the papers presented at The British School at Rome (April 2014) at a conference on The Recycling and Reuse of Materials during the Early Middle Ages. The meeting – organised by Alessandro Sebastiani (who has collaborated as guest editor for this section), Elena Chirico and Matteo Colombini – dealt mainly with productive structures related to the transformation of glass and metal in Italy (papers by Alessandro Sebastiani, Stefano Bertoldi, François-Dominique Deltenre and Lucia Orlandi). Other international experts have agreed to add their contributions to the subject: Robin Fleming on the reuse of construction material in early medieval graves, Sarah Paynter and Caroline Jackson offering a synthesis on the reuse of glass, and the team of Carmen Fernández-Ochoa in Spain presenting the early medieval productive structures at the villa of Veranes (Gijón). Two papers by Florin Curta and Michele Asolati, dealing with exchange in the Byzantine Mediterranean, have been published in the *Variae* section.*

*After the catastrophe of World War II, many international institutions were founded: the United Nations, UNESCO, the European Community. All these organizations are today immersed in a transitional phase in the systemic crisis which affects the entire Western world, a crisis to which the nihilist and relativist positions have contributed and which has (rightly) delegitimated the imperialism on which the West had built its dominant position. In this crisis, the recovery of shared historical memories is increasingly revealed as a central element in the defence of a rational world, which, although it may have abandoned the utopias of the 1900s, at least safeguards the principles of freedom and the pluralism of values. Today, there is wide debate, even among archaeologists, over how to present cultural heritage in a globalized society while nevertheless pre-*

*...serving its multiple identities and cultures. The discussion of these matters was the purpose of the papers dedicated to the World Heritage List. This collection, guest edited by Margarita Díaz-Andreu, results from a workshop of the EU-project JPI–JHEP Heritage Values Network (H@V) held at the University of Barcelona in February 2015. The main question, summarized in the title of the paper by Díaz-Andreu, is whether the inclusion of social values and local communities in the management of cultural heritage is an impossible dream. Is it a utopian vision, typical of the historical processes which gave birth to the international organizations and their initiatives to hold back the spectre of a World War III? In many of these contributions, the watchwords still conform to this direction: the participation and involvement of stakeholders in the hope that local communities will be led to a positive valuation of assets and their public use.*

*The different directions of the debate move between the two poles of economic management and cultural enrichment of local communities. Too often, it is difficult to find a balance between touristic exploitation and a useful cultural proposal for local communities, as happened in the telling example of the Daming Palace in China, developed by Qian Gao, winner of the 2016 PCA young researcher award.*

*Direct involvement is often difficult in a globalized and multicultural society that has lost its historical roots. Most of the contributions consider that a proper balance can be found between global strategies promoted by UNESCO, based on the decalogue of general principles under which to file an application for protected sites, and the feeling and evaluation expressed by the local community (the focus of Torgrim Sneve Guttorsen, Joel Taylor, Grete Swensen on Heritage Routes and Matthias Maluck and Gian Pietro Brogiolo on organizational proposals in the interventions).*

*Also related to the subject of cultural heritage and the public is the project section of this issue, a homage the Poggibonsi Archeodromo. A project developed in recent years by the team of Marco Valenti (University of Siena), this is a unique living archaeological park recreated from archaeological evidence, presenting the life of an early medieval village, an initiative that clearly demonstrates the social and economic benefits of good practices in public archaeology in Italy.*

*Finally, the retrospect section, which addresses the history of early medieval archaeology in different European countries, is this year devoted to the fascinating recent history of early medieval Archaeology in Russia, with an extensive study by Nadezhda Platonova (St Peterburg).*

# “We invest in Public Archaeology”. The Poggibonsi Archaeodrome project: an alliance between people, Municipality and University

MARCO VALENTI

Università degli Studi di Siena, Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche e dei Beni Culturali, via Roma 56, 53100 Siena, [valenmar@unisi.it](mailto:valenmar@unisi.it)

The Poggibonsi Archaeodrome is an ongoing project which aims at the creation of an open-air museum based on a full-scale reconstruction of a Carolingian Age village, excavated by the University of Siena on the same hill. This paper traces an extensive profile of this experience, discussing its conceptual basis within the framework of Public Archaeology and stressing its innovation and the ground-breaking effects within the local and national panorama of cultural assets management. A close synergy between scholars, local administrators and citizens creates a fertile ground for a greater awareness and a more mature approach to heritage promotion.

**Keywords:** Middle Ages, open-air museums, living history, storytelling, heritage promotion

*Il progetto dell'Archeodromo di Poggibonsi ha l'obiettivo di creare un museo open-air basato sulla ricostruzione a scala reale di un villaggio di età carolingia, scavato dall'Università di Siena sulla stessa altura. Questo articolo delinea le caratteristiche di questa esperienza, discutendone la base concettuale nel contesto della Public Archaeology, ponendo l'accento sull'aspetto e gli effetti innovativi all'interno del panorama locale e nazionale nella gestione dei beni culturali. Una stretta collaborazione tra studiosi, amministratori locali e cittadini può creare un terreno fertile per una maggiore consapevolezza e un approccio più maturo alla promozione del patrimonio.*

**Parole chiave:** medioevo, musei open-air, living history, storytelling, promozione del patrimonio culturale

## Premise

The park of Poggio Imperiale in Poggibonsi (prov. Siena, Italy) is an archaeological and monumental area of 12 hectares, delimited by the walls of a never completed 16<sup>th</sup> century fortress, built by Lorenzo de' Medici and planned by the architect Giuliano da Sangallo. It includes an archaeological area extended over 2 hectares, which represents part of a much larger long-term context dating from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD and investi-

gated by the University of Siena for over fifteen years, starting in 1993.

The archaeological sequence of the site revealed the slow formation of an early medieval settlement, the rise of an “almost town” between 1155 and 1270 AD and a failed attempt of Emperor Henry VII (in 1313) to found a new city on the ruins of the previous one<sup>1</sup>.

This context has been the object, since 2003, of a heritage development program carried out by the local Municipality, focused on the fortress citadel and on the spaces enclosed by the walls; an enterprise which has had an alternate history of successes and failures until in 2014 a proactive and innovative project started, based on a complete reconsideration of the approaches towards the public.

Besides revitalizing the heart of the fortress (its citadel) and renovating the walls (for over a kilometer and a half), this new approach also heavily focused on experientiality, trying to involve the highest possible number of potential users of these historic spaces. In fact, taking up an old idea of the 1997 park masterplan, we started to set up an open-air museum centered on one of the most interesting archaeological presences among those traced on the hill during the excavations: the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century manorial village and its settlement structures (Valenti 2015).

Such an effort is something really new for our country; not in its form, but surely for its contents and for the relationship with the public, as well as for the cultural heritage politics context in which it fits.

In these pages I will not go into theoretical speculation on Public archeology, a now immediately identifying definition of a series of practices. In my mind, as in that of many, Archaeology is always public, by definition. But if we want to tag the Archaeodrome experience with a label, “my” Public Archaeology stands close enough to the conception of Peter Ucko’s school, especially for what relates to communication and economy: I firmly believe that Archaeology should help bring development<sup>2</sup>.

My cornerstones are to plan heritage improvement policies as a part of the knowledge production process and to contribute, by communicating, to the cultural and economic growth of a community. I am convinced, as recently said by Daniele Manacorda, that «culture is not a value in itself (...) culture is a relational value; and if it loses this relationship, we will talk about it only among us»; followed by «centrality of communication does not mean to change our jobs, it means doing our job all the way»<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See, among many: VALENTI 1996; FRANCOVICH, VALENTI 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Large bibliography can be found in VANNINI, NUCCIOTTI, BONACCHI 2014; BONACCHI 2014. Regarding the recent evolutions of Public Archaeology see the considerations of Neal Ascherson in: <https://gasmasquerade.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/neal-interview.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Daniele Manacorda at the presentation of the book *Archeostorie*, Rome – Museum Pigorini, 10-4-





Fig. 1. The longhouse: residence of the landlord.

Therefore, at the Archaeodrome, we want to tell stories of the past, which are significant for a wide audience, so helping a qualitative value increase of the “Archaeology” brand; to provide fun and stimulating immersive experiences, always based on serious research; to create a need of Archaeology by making our narrations understandable. For me it is a kind of “back to the future” choice: after years in which I involved my team in leading-edge digital archaeology experiences, the Archaeodrome means returning to the values of materiality and practical skills, trying to make them one of the means of economic growth of a territory. These are the points on which I will focus in the following pages.

## 1. The Archaeodrome

The Poggibonsi Archaeodrome is a project that pursues an in-progress full scale reconstruction of the 17 structures found during the

2015. A complete transcription of the talk can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/archeostorie/dicono-di-noi-daniele-manacorda-museo-pigorini-10-4-2015/1621081674795149>.

excavation of deposits related to the Carolingian age village. To date, the available funds allowed us to build a longhouse (residence of the landlord), a peasant hut with farmyard and hen house, the blacksmith's forge, a bread oven, two barns and the vegetable garden; and also some temporary sheds for craft activities, destined in the near future to be replaced by other huts and a large wooden granary on elevated platform.

The project, backed up by the Siennese Museums Foundation and the City of Poggibonsi, started in 2014 with a small share of public funds. The first lot of the village was inaugurated the same year, in October, while the second lot followed in January 2016 (openings, respectively, on 18-19 October 2014 and 15-16 January 2016). We are already committed to raise funds in order to continue towards completion of the village.

The cost of the operation is to date extremely "ethical", having spent around € 40,000.

In the reconstructions, strictly based on excavation data, we implemented the following steps: careful review of excavation records and interpretations; interaction and confrontation with structural engineers in order to refine the reconstructive hypothesis on the basis of our ideas, paying special attention to the size and height of the posts, the shape and depth of the postholes, as well as their spatial arrangement; production of the definitive hypothesis; safety plan for the construction site; finally, the actual reconstruction work.

During this last phase, apart from respecting the choices dictated by the safety plane (for example, the six central posts of the longhouse were cemented at the base of their lodgings, since the structure was planned to endure a continuous visitors flow), we followed a strict experimental approach for what concerns tools and building techniques.

The whole work has been recorded day by day and in real time with multiple daily posts, photos, videos, etc., on the Facebook page "Archeodromo live", in order to stimulate participation, debate and discussion, as well as ensure complete transparency.

The Archaeodrome is indeed very active when it comes to online communication<sup>4</sup>. The aim was, and still is, to give immediate public accessibility to all our activities, showing the work in progress, the solutions we found, our successes as well as our failures. To put some order in the as-

<sup>4</sup> It has a state-of-the-art website ([www.archeodromopoggibonsi.it](http://www.archeodromopoggibonsi.it)), a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/archeopb/>) and a Twitter profile ([https://twitter.com/archeo\\_pb](https://twitter.com/archeo_pb)), constantly updated on events, news, next reconstructions, press review, etc. We also have a dedicated YouTube channel (Archaeological Park of Poggibonsi – <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn1JvzFRFlyo6aitzvOZXSA>). The choice of absolute transparency and real-time communication about our activities (which we also pursue on our digs with the "live excavation" system; see VALENTI 2012) started on June 23 2014, when the construction of the longhouse and of the artisanal structures began.

sorted mix of published information, the communication strategy has been outlined in thematic sections grouped into specific subjects and highlighted in individual posts with significant titles, like "verso l'Archeodromo" (towards the Archaeodrome), "i giorni di lavoro" (working days), post di "metodo" (methodology) and so on. This typological distinction of the posts is effective precisely in covering an information disclosure based on different learning levels, allowing an in-detail handling of the proposed themes.

During the construction phase, or in occasion of buildings renovations, the most frequent posts refer to the thematic section "i giorni di lavoro" (working days), reporting live about the ongoing activities. Informations on the construction techniques of the huts have also constantly been published, raising the followers curiosity (expressed through online questions) about the methods and solutions adopted for specific structural problems, clearly illustrated also through a large number of posted pictures. For example, several questions were related to the choice of the earthen floors or to the composition of the clay walls, or even to the type of fiber used for binding the wooden structural elements. In other words, the progress of the construction site, albeit virtual, triggered a process of curiosity, directly satisfied by archaeologists working at the site. These have been able to give "live" explanations about the ongoing work and the constructive choices.

In fact, the Poggibonsi Archaeodrome has witnessed an immediate success in terms of visitors and followers, as well as the attention of national and local mass media. Prime time, large audience TV shows on the national public channels (Rai TV), such as Superquark, Bell'Italia, TG2 and TG3; but also frequent reports within the programs of "Rai Storia" (the public TV history channel), which has made the Archaeodrome a privileged location to talk about the Middle Ages. Shows like "DiMartedì", broadcast on the La7 national TV channel, came to Poggibonsi to talk about the virtues of our project, as well as many electronic newspapers and blogs. Even the German public-service radio broadcaster "Bayerischer Rundfunk" visited us and interviewed the Archaeodrome inhabitants, as well as the Rai Radio2 show "Caterpillar" and the radio "Made in Italy", which reaches 5 million listeners in 38 different countries. Finally, many national newspapers and magazines have written about our experience, from "L'Espresso" to "L'Unità" and "Left"<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> A few examples can be found at the links below.

Rai1, "Superquark": <http://www.rai.tv/dl/RaiTV/programmi/media/ContentItem-d50edc98-a154-4d56-af640442827d23f.html#p=0>.

La7, "diMartedì": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUeap4lbybw>.

Rai3 Bell'Italia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Yrxld6voy0>.

Rai Storia, "Viva la Storia" on personal hygiene in the Middle Ages: <http://www.raistoria.rai.it/artico>

## 2. The activities

It should be clear, from the previous paragraph, that communication is one of the channels on which the Archaeodrome project is successfully focusing, in order to let people know that there is a “place” where scientific quality is combined with knowledge for all.

Our open-air museum presents an impacting exhibition solution, where the archaeologists wear historic dresses and turn into 9<sup>th</sup> century villagers, working and going through ordinary moments of daily life, that is performing activities of living history. This allows visitors to physically enter real animated spaces of the reconstructed period, touching with their own hands and seeing with their own eyes the shapes, the size and the features of the village, as well as feeling its atmosphere, the sounds and rumors, the smells, the social and hierarchical relationships. The house of the ruling family, for example, clearly communicates the concept of wealth in the rural early Middle Ages, with a larger size of the inhabited spaces, a greater articulation of the internal rooms, the presence of grain storing facilities inside and outside the building, the availability of more food resources.

Those who visit the Archaeodrome can meet the archaeologists/re-enactors/experimenters while they are tilling the land with replicas of plows and agricultural tools, reconstructed on the basis of archaeological finds and iconographies of the period of reference; or they can see a blacksmith, covered with soot, while he operates on hand bellows to blow air into the forge and hammers an iron bar to produce a knife blade very similar to those found in the archaeological contexts of the nearby excavations; they can also follow the training sessions of warriors using swords, spears and shields made by the same re-enactors; or, again, they might sit down with women around the heart, watching them as they prepare flat bread using specific coarse pottery, or cook soups in jars as they did, in the same places, over a thousand years ago. These are just a few of the many jobs which are being carried out within the settlement. The visitor can “disturb” the villagers, asking them informations about what they are doing, or directly try to use their tools and repeat their gestures.

Our goal is exactly that; not simply to rebuild, but to create an Archaeodrome experience, making it a place where people get in contact with the materiality of history, living it, experimenting, having fun and learning. In other words, it's a Public Archaeology operation, clearly open to everybody, where we capture the attention of the audience through “doing”. It becomes therefore possible to communicate scientific data produced by

li/viva-la-storia-lavarsi/31985/default.aspx (from minute 6:38 onwards).

A large press review can be found on our website (<http://www.archeodromopoggibonsi.it/#r6>)



Fig. 2. The Archaeodrome: January 2016. View from south-east.

archaeological investigations, often combined with historical facts in order to provide a complete picture of the world we are representing.

It's a quite complex challenge, which has to be articulated by calibrating different types of activities. That's why the archaeologists also interpret narrative roles, following storytelling techniques. In fact, we propose ourselves as a new Italian reconstruction idea, based both on experimental archeology and storytelling-living history; it is the first ever in our country focusing on the early Middle Ages. At the Archaeodrome, reenactors are committed to take an excavation context and bring it back to life. It wants to be a form of immersion in materiality by the general public, providing means to educate people to archaeology and to what this discipline can reconstruct and tell.

Storytelling is therefore the essential element to be connected with the reconstruction; a way to portray real or fictitious events in words, images, sounds, gestures; a form of effective communication, engaging content, emotions, intentions and contexts. Telling stories is the best way to transfer knowledge and experience.

Exarc, for example, which is the reference point for an in-depth analysis of open-air museums, puts much emphasis on the themes of storytelling and more modern re-enactment scenarios, where representation/narration and experimental archeology perfectly blend together<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> A section of the organization's website is dedicated to storytelling as a tool for heritage promotion (<http://exarc.net/manuals/1-story-telling-introduction>).



Figs. 3-4. On the left, the bread oven: view from north-east. On the right, the interior of the peasant hut.

Our storytelling events allow us to talk about early medieval local and more general history; they represent realistic plots that probably never happened. In fact, events in themselves are imaginary, but the archaeological set on which they take place is real; the result is that visitors live an immersive experience of knowledge communication through a uniform storytelling framework. Different facets can thus be encompassed within the same story: the reality of the context in which we operate (data from the excavation), the social and economic life of the village with its hierarchical relationships (processed information), general historical facts (*histoire événementielle*) and local events.

In the communication context so far described the methods of experimental archeology are also applied. Several crafts are represented at the village, so adding a further series of educational informations. We are reproducing the production processes of: the entire metallurgic iron cycle (starting with the mineral and ending up with the forging of real artifacts), a carpentry, fabrics (spinning, weaving and dyeing), leatherworks, several cooking techniques, candles, glass beads, the knowledge and use of medicinal herbs. We are also trying to grow an experimental vegetable garden. All these activities are carried during the narrative acts and become part of the stories we present, producing artifacts we use and clothes we wear.

A practical example of one of the many events we organized in 2015, reproducing a funeral, can be helpful to have a better understanding of

what we do and how we do it. Aspects related to funerary customs, the "interference" between Christian and pagan/traditional rituals and the whole performance, were based on the one hand on existing literature and on the other hand on the information uncovered by the archaeological excavations of our site and on the paleopathological analysis of the investigated skeletons, which yielded data about diseases, nutrition and signs of activities carried out by the Carolingian age villagers<sup>7</sup>.

What we are proposing envisages also a new dimension of the re-enactor/re-creator/narrator, very close to some European experiences. A figure that, if supported, can easily be integrated within cultural heritage promotion policies. For a couple of decades now, important historical institutions and museums, especially in northern Europe, have shown the way forward. They employ stable groups of re-enactors, who work closely with researchers (increasingly the two figures coincide in the same person) in order to exponentially enhance their educational and dissemination potential, organizing big and successful events.

In this way, it becomes possible to plan cultural events which attract a large number of people without falling, for example, in the imprecise and indefinite representation of the Middle Ages which is so popular in a high number of local festivals throughout Italy.

In fact, the main problem with open-air museums and, more generally, with re-enactment, is due to the clearly low accuracy and authenticity level which is often noticed. This is a feature that sadly connotes an important part of the living history phenomenon, today applied to virtually all historical periods, from prehistory to the Second World War. As a consequence, we witness the creation of a gap, implying a false or insufficient knowledge transmission; because historical reconstruction, which should always be the natural consequence of experimental and reconstructive archeology, could be a powerful instrument to reach not only the enthusiasts, but also all those people who would not normally come near to a museum.

As I recently wrote in an article for "L'Unità" (a national newspaper which hosted an interesting debate on the revival of the Middle Ages that is actually, for better or for worse, taking place in Italy), the re-enactors are central in giving the image of a living Middle Age; but their maturation becomes essential, if we want that reconstructions and revival actually become a means of enhancing knowledge and love for heritage by the general public. We still need to transform museums and ar-

<sup>7</sup> This is a good example of a storytelling event, reproducing facts which did not really happen but are based on reliable scientific data. The complete script of the event can be found here: <http://us4.campaign-archive2.com/?u=fbf3f8744ad1ad49087e673b0&id=660f89770e>. Other scripts are available at the same Internet address.

chaeological sites/parks in places where one can learn while having fun, touching (hi)storytelling with hands.

Lately, some realities are starting to change also in our country, and we have examples of “new-generation” re-enactors who look for synergistic relationship with the institutions. A few of them, for now, have started working in education, increasing the possible knowledge instruments for the public. They satisfy the desire to understand, counteracting the widespread reluctance of people to stand in front of museum explanatory panels, often written by specialists for specialists. These major changes are taking place in particular within the new frontier of the medieval re-enactment, namely that of the early Middle Ages; but the sword of Damocles of mediocrity is always suspended.

Ultimately, experiences like the one of the Poggibonsi Archaeodrome are enlivened exactly by these innovative figures of archaeologists/experimenters/re-enactors, who try to be in first place serious re-constructors in a cooperative relationship with institutions. Having a specialized University education or being themselves members of the academic staff, they are fully qualified communicators, fitting new cultural and participatory didactics scenarios made tangible by the attempt to provide and share the materiality of history.

Our choice has so far been very positive; beyond the great success of public and in the media, a newly arrived official recognition rewards the efforts and the road we have taken. In fact, in September 2015, the Archeodromo received the Riccardo Francovich prize, awarded by the Society of Italian Medieval Archaeologists (SAMI) to the Italian museum or archaeological park that best represents the synthesis between rigorous scientific contents and communication effectiveness of the same to a non-specialists audience.

The adventure is therefore in full swing; we'll see where it takes us, and with what results.

### 3. Presence

A stainless belief stands at the basis of the Archaeodrome experience: cultural heritage has to be public, accessible, understandable and for the benefit of all; it should also become an important economic resource. Cultural heritage, as Giuliano Volpe writes, has to abandon the logics of “drawing-room gossips and controversies between opposing sides” that created the “divorce between citizens and heritage”, as if the archaeologist was the holder of some kind of truth which is incomprehensible to others. On the opposite, we have, in fact, a marked social function (Volpe 2015).



The elitist vision of heritage which becomes the prerogative of a small number of scholars is one of the biggest limits and problems that we have to overcome, if we want to make culture a resource for - and a habit of - the people. The ongoing reform started by Minister Franceschini, not without predictable and inevitable contumelies, is a radical revolution in this sense; it tries to encourage citizens to rediscover the value of our cultural heritage and adopt an active role in its protection, promotion and appreciation. To get to this point, we have to accomplish some specific steps and one thing I consider essential is precisely the reconciliation of people, starting from the basics of communication (the layout of a museum, the captions and texts of its explanatory panels, etc.), rejecting the idea of museums as aseptic places where a "caste" speaks and acts so as to keep away visitors.

It is therefore not so surprising, that such an innovative challenge, which speaks directly to people using the language of everyday life and the materiality of history, has brought Poggibonsi for the first time ever to appear firmly on the tourist market. It is no coincidence that, knowing how to talk to people and pursue quality at the same time (that means not being afraid of getting our hands dirty and always commit ourselves), this experience is proposing to the local community roads that were unpredictable only a few years ago.

I will quote the recent statements by Fabio Carrozzino, Head of Tourism of the Poggibonsi Municipality: "During the first seven months of 2014, arrivals in Poggibonsi were 24,008, rising to 25,981 in the same period of 2015 with a variation +8,22%. Presences increased from 63,394 in 2014 to 70,122 in 2015 (+10.61%). The average presence also grows from 2.64 to 2.70 days". Then he continues, "The Archeodrome (...) represents an important stimulus for the implementation of cultural tourism in our territory. The national awards and its great attractiveness are clear evidences for it"<sup>8</sup>.

In my opinion these data get even more pregnant if we consider them within the national context of the so-called "cultural consume", which is clearly low and in a state of crisis due to lack of interest, rather than to shortages of time or cost of the "product". National statistics, for example, show that only 30% of Italians have visited a museum and, more generally, according to the 2013 Eurobarometer criteria, 34% of Europeans have a low cultural practice, while the Italian share of the same parameter rises (negatively) to 49%.

<sup>8</sup> Among many, see: <http://www.valdelsa.net/notizia/dati-positivi-sul-turismo-nei-primi-sette-mesi-del-2015-cresce-del-10->

The trend gets even worse if we think that, in the last two decades, the cultural sector had witnessed a steady growth in demand and fruition by residents and tourists; even in the early years of the actual international economic crisis, it resisted better than others to the effects of recession. But, with 2012, we started having clear negative signals: families in economic difficulty contracted their consuming habits, including the cultural ones. Also, very important in our specific case, the participation in entertainment-related cultural events witnessed a dramatic decrease. A completely negative trend connotes 2013: up to 39 percent of Italians, 3.7% more than in 2012, have not participated in any cultural activity, while only 21% of citizens visited archaeological sites and monuments. In these days, culture is involving fewer Italians and seems also to lose appeal even for foreign visitors<sup>9</sup>.

But this analysis also shows another aspect, more generally related to cultural assets and resources: if, as in the case of the Archaeodrome, we speak a language which people understand, we can affect them and turn them into active consumers of culture. This, mind it, does not at all mean selling out the dimension of research; it is much rather related to our ability to communicate it to others. In this sense, it is an act of social responsibility, which implies also to avoid being paralyzed by the influence of conservatism and by the motto “we have other and more serious problems”, that are unleashed every time an innovative proposal is presented.

Our relationship with the municipal administration of Poggibonsi is therefore very strong, and not only due the results we achieved. It has been so from the very beginning of this adventure, which has been married with enthusiasm by the Municipality, to the point that David Busagli, the Mayor, at the 2015 SAMI conference in Lecce asserted that: “We invest in public archeology...” an unimaginable statement for an Italian administrator, that has surprised everyone...

But it has not been an easy way to go; there have been many obstacles, of all kinds: the skepticism of some administrators, an unveiled sarcasm of the political opposition and the sometimes dismissive jokes of several people (the “little hut” and the “nativity scene” were the most common epithets). Doubts and resistances that have dissolved over time, almost immediately, as they saw the structures being built and the immediate visitors and media success.

<sup>9</sup> All data are taken from DE BIASE 2014; for the 2013 Eurobarometer, see: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_399\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_399_en.pdf). Moreover, interesting information can be found in a report of Federculture: *Cultura & Turismo Locomotiva del Paese*, published online in February 2014 (<http://www.formez.it/sites/default/files/ricerca-federculture-02.pdf>).



Fig. 5. Some inhabitants of the Archaeodrome (archaeologists) building an earthen wall.

Now things have decisively changed, exactly as a consequence of the increased touristic presences and the constant mass media exposure. Contacts, in some cases synergies, with the local commercial activities and tourism operators have been established, with the aim of intercepting at least a part of the touristic flow of those who choose to visit the territory between Siena and Florence; a touristic region in which Poggibonsi has always been seen as a sort of Cinderella and basically excluded.

This can be read as the sign of a successful cultural heritage policy, which is now achieving its original objectives; a policy designed around knowledge processes, founded on communication, trying to make a contribution to the development of a community, both in terms of economy and of identity. In other words, from an essential basis of scientific seriousness and publication-disclosure of the research results, it has turned into a contextualized narrative experience for all, deprived of an incomprehensible scientific language. We are now trying to become a stable attractive for local and external visitors (paying particular attention to children and young people), with the aim of trying to convince tourists to spend at least one night in Poggibonsi.

In this regard, the definitive data on tourism in 2015 can be regarded as an even better indicator of the impact achieved by a cultural heritage policy focusing on assets promotion through immersive experiences and of the constant success (that also means advertisement) on the media.

In fact, data from the Tourism Observatory of the Province of Siena show a still better trend than that of the already mentioned results relating to the first 7 months of the year. Altogether, a +10.50% of arrivals has been registered for Poggibonsi, corresponding to a +16.27% of presences. The average stay also increased from 2.69 to 2.83 days.

Hotel guests as well as non hotel guests, both from Italy and from abroad, show a steady growing trend. These results are clearly due to

a number of complex causes, but the road traced by the Archaeodrome in Poggibonsi is plainly showing its effects. The outlined growth goes hand in hand with our work and its dissemination. In detail, we see that the percentage growth of arrivals (+10.50%) is made of about 4,500 units, of which about 3,000 are Italians (+13.71%) and about 1,500 are foreigners (+6.96%). The presences switched from 42,571 to 55,515 Italians (+30.41%) and from 71,470 to 77,076 foreigners (+7.84%).

On the whole, this means that around 13,000 more Italians and almost 6,000 more foreigners have slept in Poggibonsi's accommodation facilities. But there are also other remarkable data, like the non hotel accommodation trends, which saw the Italians rise from about 7,000 units in 2014 to more than 17,000 units in 2015, while foreigners grew from almost 39,000 units to almost 46,000 units.

The school trips also fully fit into these values. In the period from 25 March to 25 May 2016, the Archaeodrome was visited and "lived" by 1,414 students and 75 teachers; 15 trips came from Tuscany and 14 from other Italian regions. The target for 2017 will be to increment trips by non Tuscan schools and, at the same time, confirming or increasing the regional ones.

To sum it all up, in Poggibonsi we are truly establishing the alliance between local government, researchers, communities, collectivity and public, aimed at giving back to cultural heritage the role it deserves. We just started, but we are in the race.

## References

- P. ARIES 1998, *Storia della morte in Occidente*, Milano.
- N. ASCHERSON 2004, *Archaeology and the British Media*, in N. MERRIMAN (ed), *Public Archaeology*, London-New York, pp. 45-58.
- C. BONACCHI 2014, *Understanding the public experience of archaeology in the UK and Italy: a call for a sociological movement in Public Archaeology*, "Post-Classical Archaeologies", 4, pp. 333-356.
- F. DE BIASE (ed) 2014, *I pubblici della cultura. Audience development, audience engagement, Pubblico, professioni e luoghi della cultura*, Milano.
- R. FRANCOVICH, M. VALENTI (eds) 2007, *Poggio Imperiale a Poggibonsi. Il territorio lo scavo il parco*, Milano.
- G. VANNINI, M. NUCCIOTTI, C. BONACCHI 2014, *Archeologia Pubblica e Archeologia Medievale*, "Archeologia Medievale", Numero Speciale, pp. 183-195.
- M. VALENTI (ed) 1996, *Poggio Imperiale a Poggibonsi: dal villaggio di capanne al castello di pietra. I. Diagnostica archeologica e campagne di scavo 1991-1994*, Firenze.
- M. VALENTI 2015 *Progetto Archeodromo di Poggibonsi (SI). Materialità della storia e storytelling*, in P. ARTHUR, M. LEO IMPERIALE (eds), *VII Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Medievale (Lecce, 9-12 settembre 2015)*, Firenze, I, pp. 103-107.
- G. VOLPE 2015, *Patrimonio al futuro. Un manifesto per i beni culturali e il paesaggio*, Verona.