

The 10th Century in Western Europe

Change and Continuity

edited by

Igor Santos Salazar
and Catarina Tente

Access Archaeology





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São Gens rock-cut graves necropolis from the 10th century. Celorico da Beira, Portugal. ©Danilo Pavone
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List of Contributors

Maddalena Betti (Università Ca' Foscari, Italy)

Maria João Branco (IEM – Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal)

Stuart Brookes (University College of London, UK)

Marcos Fernández Ferreiro (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain)

Patrick Gleeson (Queen's University Belfast, UK)

Marie-Céline Isaïa (Université de Lyon, France)

Iñaki Martín Viso (Universidad de Salamanca, Spain)

Edith Peytremann (Inrap-CRAHAM, France)

Robert Portass (University of Lincoln, UK)

José Carlos Sánchez Pardo (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain)

Igor Santos Salazar (Università degli Studi di Trento, Italy)

Catarina Tente (IEM – Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal)

Orri Vésteinsson (University of Iceland, Iceland)

Introduction

The Early Middle Ages was one of the most astonishing political and social laboratories in Europe's history. Within this period, the 10th century represented a kind of "mistic" time: a century which was central in most of every interpretation of historical development, from the "crisis" of the Carolingian Empire or the formation of the English kingdom, to the "birth" of the *incastellamento* or the beginnings of Castile as Iberian political centre. In the last decades, historians and archaeologists of medieval society have become more aware, thanks to the influence of other social sciences, particularly anthropology and sociology, on the importance of much complex methodological approaches, such as theories on *scale change* and political and economic *cooperation*. Furthermore, the approach to the sources has change thanks to renewed and more critical interpretations: from the *linguistic turn* to the studies devoted to the memory. Finally, Archaeology has contributed also to the growth of our knowledge of early medieval societies and polities.

Bearing this in mind, the editors of this book organized two sessions on the 2018 Leeds International Medieval Congress devoted to "Change and continuity in 10th century western Europe". The first one was dedicated to *The resources of central authorities; the identities of local leaders*, focusing its interests mainly in written sources, while the second was archaeological record-oriented session titled *Archaeological record and historic explanation*. The aim of the Leeds sessions was to debate different societies and scales of analysis in the tenth century Western Europe, from both written sources and archeological records. In those days, some of the authors of the book presented their studies and a fruitful debate was created regarding the social, economic and political complexities on a continental scale. In the session dedicated to the archaeological record, Frode Iversen, from Kulturhistorisk museum, Universitetet i Oslo, presented a paper entitled *Viking elites in the tenth century*. Unfortunately, his text could not be included in this pages, which really impoverished the whole volume. Frode Iversen played a very relevant role in the advancement of studies on the Early Medieval Scandinavia, on which he published several titles. Frode will be missed. This book could be only dedicated to him.

Since 2018 we have invited other colleagues to contribute to the volume, and there were many who wanted to participate in this beautiful challenge. Sadly, the pandemic situation has delayed the publication of the book two years.

Including studies devoted to Iceland, Ireland, England, France, Portugal, Spain and Italy, the book brings new perspectives on the 10th century over several processes, embracing a variety of methodological approaches and geographical scales, and scrutinizing numerous and diverse types of sources, including archaeological findings along with textual evidences such as historical narratives, hagiographies, cartularies etc. The contributions to this volume have revise, challenge and enhance the existing scholarship on early medieval societies and its political and social complexities, while making readers aware of the wide-ranging and intertwined processes which defined change and continuity in tenth-century Europe.

Thus, the studies gathered in this volume address the dialogue between the different sources that support historical interpretations. A dialogue which is not always easy and faces many challenges. Moreover, those approaches show the complexities of analyzing various scales of a century in which possible to observe the actions of various actors (from the central authorities to the peasantry), whose interests were articulated along three axes: the forms of exercising power, the social articulation of the elites, and the relationship between central powers, local strengths, peasant agencies, and memory.

Finally, we would like to thank the authors for their work and for their willingness to participate in this volume. Our thanks also go to the Institute of Medieval Studies (Universidade NOVA de Lisboa) and to the *Marie Skłodowska Curie Action* CALOSEMA (agreement grant n. 748161) which supported the sessions celebrated at Leeds.

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Igor Santos Salazar and Catarina Tente

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