

The volume presents an authoritative, encyclopaedic overview of the territory of *Barbaricum*, which extended from the mountains of central Norway to the Rhine and Danube, from the Russian forests to the Dutch swamps, and was composed of macro-regions with very diversified cultures.

A long-term account is given, from an unprecedented perspective: *Barbaricum* is not seen from the viewpoint of the Roman Empire (or indeed the following the Carolingian Empire), but as a group of autonomous societies, which also looked to the empire. Their settlement structures and economies, social structure and rituals are investigated, and in particular their forms of power.

Almost a millennium of the history of a large part of Europe is constructed here from the basic evidence: a history that is little known in Italy and for which until now a general survey was lacking.

**Marco Valenti** is professor of Medieval Archaeology at the University of Siena; he is particularly interested in the social and settlement transformations that followed the fall of the Roman Empire. For many years he has directed extensive excavation campaigns at various Early Medieval sites in Tuscany. He is the author of over 200 publications, including monographs, and has participated in the preparation of national and international exhibitions. He founded and directs the Poggibonsi Archaeodrome (SI), Italy's only open-air archaeological museum dedicated to the Early Middle Ages.