

CHRISTOPHER PRESCOTT

## Introduction

In 2019 The Norwegian Institute in Rome (DniR) celebrated its 60th anniversary. Throughout its history the Institute has served as a base for Norwegian scholars, initially with a primary engagement in studies of Mediterranean archaeology and art history. Later, the Institute's mandate has been to support the range of discipline in the humanities, emphasising the Institute as a bridge between disciplines, various traditions and schools, i.e. with an increasingly international and multidisciplinary profile.

For a small institution like DniR these goals cannot be obtained through hiring of a multitude of specialists – recent scholars affiliated with DniR have been a prehistorian, classical archaeologists and historians, an art historian and a criminologist. Perhaps the ambitions outlined above can never be fully attained, but DniR has sought to realise its ambitions through its practices, the Institute serving as a nodal point for scholarly encounters, and the researchers at the institute serving as facilitators for these encounters. Furthermore, DniR has sought to open disciplinary borders to create a broad, if patchy, foundation beyond disciplinary specialities by advocating thematic approaches that extend beyond a single disciplinary discourse. The practical approach is mirrored in an academic philosophy that advocates an open, virtually eclectic epistemology and ontology. The overarching theme has been the descriptive and interpretative study of knowledge, its transmissions and transformations, movements of people, objects and material culture. In sum, instead of seeking coherence through a constricted disciplinary unity, we have sought elements of common interest across a heterogeneous academic continuum, exploring convergences and divergences.

The outcome of this experiment is, perhaps predictably, not expressed in a single unifying publication, but manifested in the range of visiting researchers, the many conferences and workshops and the plethora of publications that weave in and out of the evolving discourse surrounding DniR (e.g. Biffis 2018; 2019; 2020, Barker 2019, Barker, Coombe, Perna 2018, Barker, Fant 2019, Hardy 2019a; 2019b, 2020, 2021, Prescott 2017; 2018, Prescott, Rasmussen 2020, Sande 2017, Siwicky 2020a; 2020b). Some of the outcomes have been in DniR's journal *Acta* (e.g. Engh *et al.* 2019), as in the present volume. The articles in the present volume are the latest expressions of recent events in Rome, the result of two

workshops held at the Institute that are both robustly disciplinary, but simultaneously raise issues beyond the disciplinary bounds of art history (into philosophy, history of ideas and history) and archaeology (into criminology, heritage studies and contemporary sociology and politics). The first was organised by DniR-researcher Mattia Biffis in October 2019, *The Art of Truth: Providing Evidence in Early Modern Bologna*. The second section is based on a digital workshop organised by DniR-researcher Samuel Hardy in collaboration with the *Heritage Experience Initiative* project at the University of Oslo in October 2020, *Handling of Cultural Goods and Financing of Political Violence*. This event was originally scheduled for an early date, but due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, it was delayed multiple times, before finally realised in a digital format. As even simple tasks, like consulting libraries or going to an office, have at times been impossible, and academic work has generally been rendered more difficult, it should be pointed out that the publication of both workshops was also complicated by the pandemic. It is an accomplishment that the section editors Mattia Biffis and Samuel Hardy have managed to collect these articles, and *Acta's* editorial secretary Manuela Michelloni have managed to bring this volume to fruition!

*Christopher Prescott*  
*University of Oslo*

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