

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY – BRITISH MUSEUM
MEDIEVAL SEMINAR

2016-17

AUTUMN TERM

Wednesday 19th October: the eighth **Sir David Wilson Lecture in Medieval Studies** by
Professor Wendy Davies (UCL): *Spain: the Early Medieval Environment*

Beginning with recent archaeology, and its messages about the physical environment, this lecture will explore the environment of early medieval Spain in multiple senses – settlement, work, culture, communications, neighbours, neighbouring lands, rulers, and perhaps even a touch of Wilsonian 'style'.

A joint meeting with the Institute of Historical Research *Earlier Middle Ages* seminar at **6:15pm** in the **Lecture Theatre G6** at the IoA followed by a launch party for the seminar series in the **Staff Common Room**

Tuesday 1st November (Room 209)

Dr Keith Buhagiar (Malta): *Investigating Maltese rural settlement development (AD 500 - 1530)*

The Maltese archipelago lapsed into the Byzantine orbit of influence in the first half of the sixth century AD – a political development which probably brought negligible change to Malta's agrarian landscape context. At this point, Malta's agrarian framework appears to have primarily consisted of open field systems and agricultural estates of the Villa rustica type, engaged in olive oil production. The Muslim conquest of AD 871 brought large-scale disruption to Malta's settlements and commerce. It is only in the post-1127 period that centralised management coordinated by the Royal Chancery in Palermo (Sicily), that significant investment brought about the conversion of a series of river-carved valleys into viridaria or agricultural estates containing terraced land, perennial water availability, gravity-fed irrigation systems and rock-excavated dwellings.

Tuesday 8th November (Room 209)

Dr Ing-Marie Back Danielsson (Uppsala): *What do gold foil couples want? A discussion of gold foil couples and their central places in Middle Sweden and Norway during the Vendel period (AD 550-800)*

This presentation will discuss aspects of an ongoing research project which focuses on a type of material culture that is called gold foil figures, or "guldgubbar" in Swedish. "Guldgubbar" are miniscule figures made from thin hammered gold sheets. They are found only in Scandinavia, and are commonly encountered in halls of ceremonial character at so-called central places. Since gold foil couples from different regions at times are similar or identical, the "guldgubbar" can be used to understand how aristocratic contacts and networks operated and were interlinked. The presentation will address questions relating to the figures' agential dimensions, their ontological status, and the myriad rhizomatic relations that were generated through processes of making, manipulation and visual encounter.

Tuesday 13th December (Room 209)

Professor Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (Galway, NUI): *Wilderness and territorial boundaries in medieval Ireland*

Professor Fitzpatrick's lecture explores the role of wilderness places as long-standing liminia of Irish medieval kingdoms. Using landscape, myth and historical sources, it is argued that they constituted blocks of mensal land characterised by threshold geographies and enriched natural resources including hunting grounds. Among their archaeological signatures are prehistoric funerary mounds and cairns, early churches and medieval battle sites.

SPRING TERM

Tuesday 17th January (Room 209)

Jacek Gruszczynski (Oxford): *Viking Age silver hoards in the Baltic Zone: deposition and (non)retrieval*

Three of the biggest Viking-Age hoard concentrations in the Baltic Zone, at Gotland, Pomerania, and Svealand, will be introduced in their historical, geo-political and archaeological context, and their contents considered. The type of objects within them will be briefly presented, highlighting the variety and extent of contacts; the focus of the presentation will be on the possible reasons for deposition and especially on why so many of them were never retrieved. Discussion will be based on Jacek's DPhil research in which he uses not only archaeological data, but also contemporary and near contemporary written sources, Scandinavian laws and sagas, and spatial and regression statistics.

Tuesday 21st February (Room 209)

William Purkis (Birmingham): *Bearing the Cross in Twelfth Century Jerusalem*

This paper will explore aspects of the lived religious practices of Latin Christians in twelfth century Jerusalem. It will explore the challenges and opportunities of interdisciplinary approaches to these issues through examination and comparison of the surviving textual, visual and material evidence.

Tuesday 21st March (Room 209)

Indra Werthmann (Durham): *The Image of the Past: Reassembling Identities through Roman Objects in Early Anglo-Saxon Society, 5th to 7th Century AD*

This paper examines the significance of Roman objects used as personal ornaments in Anglo-Saxon graves in Kent and parts of East Anglia. Roman antiquities were collected, curated and reused in various ways and as similar patterns can be observed from Merovingian funerary contexts, mutual connections will be explored in order to shed new light on cultural affiliations and communication across the Channel.

SUMMER TERM

Wednesday 24th May (Room 612)

Dr Michael Lewis and Dr Eljas Oksanen: *Medieval Markets and Fairs seen through the Portable Antiquities Scheme Data*

The Portable Antiquities Scheme database (www.finds.org.uk) records archaeological objects discovered by the public, mostly by metal detecting, and to date contains records of over 150,000 medieval finds. Based on the results of a research project hosted at the British Museum, this paper will explore how the PAS finds data offers significant new avenues of investigation for understanding the history of medieval markets and fairs in their local and regional contexts. It will examine ways to understand the growth, development and decline of medieval commercial sites c. 1100 - c. 1350 in England through interdisciplinary approaches and GIS-led analyses of archaeological material and documentary sources.

Followed by a summer party in the **Staff Common Room**

ALL MEETINGS START AT 6pm AT THE INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

with the exception of the Wilson Lecture on Wednesday 19th October which is in G6 and starts at 6.15 pm

Convenors

Sue Brunning (BM) sbrunning@britishmuseum.org **Andrew Reynolds (IoA)** a.reynolds@ucl.ac.uk

Meetings Secretary: Rhiannon Comeau (IoA) rhiannon.comeau.10@ucl.ac.uk

Sponsored by the World Archaeology Section (IoA) and the British Museum

- All welcome -