

Medieval Archaeology

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Reconstructing childhood diets at medieval Portmahomack, Scotland supported by an SMA grant

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Well known to the Society, Portmahomack in northeast Scotland is an important archaeological site that includes the discovery of the first Pictish monastery excavated in Scotland and a wealth of finds and subsequent analyses that represent important insights into Pictish lay, monastic and medieval parish church communities, spanning over one thousand years (Carver *et al* 2016). A comprehensive bioarchaeological study on the adult individuals has yielded important insights into adult diet, health and trauma at Portmahomack from the 6th to 17th centuries AD. It is now timely to conduct isotope analysis of the sub-adult remains to enable a full investigation into aspects of childhood diet, and to contribute to the existing osteological data on health and well-being. Bone collagen extraction from thirty-two sub-adult skeletons was undertaken by

the author at the University of Liverpool's Department of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, and mass spectrometry analysis has now been completed by Iso-Analytical Ltd (Cheshire). The next phase of the project is to analyse and interpret the carbon and nitrogen isotope data and to write up the results for publication.

This project has been made possible with funding from the Society for Medieval Archaeology and by kind permission from Professor Martin Carver and the Tarbat Historic Trust. It will enable a greater understanding of childhood diet and health, and investigate economic, cultural and religious influences relating to childhood health and nutrition during the medieval period. For example, investigating skeletal and isotopic evidence of nutritional stress may offer insights into child mortality and morbidity; economic strategies, and religious

The Newsletter leads once again with research being sponsored by Society grants, and it is heartening to see the variety and quality of these endeavours. Grant-aided research pops up on two other occasions, with notice of two other bodies that are able to bestow funding opportunities; in this instance the LAHS and the CST; good news for medieval scholarship.

As we approach the Summertime and the possibility of fieldwork, we remind members that other members of the Society conduct projects that welcome visitors to site (see page 12), so don't be shy to drop by and see the work as it happens.

Niall Brady
Newsletter Editor
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Left:
The 'Calf Stone' is just one of the many Pictish stone sculpture fragments found at Portmahomack, and cattle were an important source of food here during the medieval period. Photo taken at the Tarbat Discovery Centre by the author.

and/or cultural influences on food consumption. Studies on childhood diet and nutrition tend to be under-represented in bioarchaeological scholarship, and isotope studies of childhood diet in medieval Scotland have received very little attention in the past ten years, with only a minimal number of studies published. Results from this project therefore have the potential to be significant, not only because it is the first to offer isotopic data on all sub-adults from Portmahomack, thereby offering a rare insight into childhood diet, health and nutrition in the medieval Scottish Highlands, but it will also provide much-needed additional data to the dearth of isotope evidence on childhood diets in medieval Scotland overall. Moreover, the study will enable comparisons between child and adult diet and nutrition, thereby gaining a greater

understanding of past lifeways of whole communities from medieval Scotland. Finally, it is hoped that this project may challenge traditional assumptions that children are peripheral to our understanding of past lifeways.

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References

Carver M.O.H., Garner-Lahire, J. and Spall, C.A. (eds) 2016, *Portmahomack on Tarbat Ness: changing ideologies in North-east Scotland, sixth to sixteenth century AD*. Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Aerial survey of early medieval settlement sites, NE Spain, a Mick Aston Research Grant

The excavation of an early medieval settlement site in 2017 in Aragon, NE Spain, close to the present-day village of Bureta was directed by Prof. Chris Gerrard and Dr Alejandra Gutierrez and focused on ‘ground-truthing’ features identified through a magnetometer survey conducted earlier in the year. The work produced evidence of two structures with occupation layers dated by ceramic evidence to the Visigothic period. Throughout the excavation, as well as traditional fieldwork, I operated a drone to photograph and record the progress of the excavation, and this work was made possible by the Society’s Mick Aston Research Grant, which supported my work.

While not only providing useful record photographs of the excavation, the images from the drone were also processed using photogrammetric software to produce 3D-models and

rectified orthophotos of the excavation area. The resulting outputs will be used in the post-excavation phase for further analysis and to assist the writing-up process.

In addition to the site at Bureta, a number of other nearby sites were visited and photographed with the drone to produce both standard aerial photographs as well as 3D models for comparison with the site at Bureta and for illustrative purposes. The drone proved to be an effective addition to the standard suite of archaeological equipment, providing the ability to obtain high-resolution aerial imagery as well as detailed 3D models and orthophotos quickly and reliably.

Peter Brown

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New spatial and geophysical data analysis by the Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project, an update



High-resolution image from the 3D model of Rothwell Charnel House.

The Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project (see *Newsletter 56*, 2016) has recently completed two new research projects. The first has created a digital version of the site using 3D modelling techniques and was funded by the University of Sheffield's Digital Humanities Exploration Fund. The second undertook geophysical survey in the environs of the charnel house, supported by an SMA Research Grant. Both projects were collaborative, drawing on the expertise of University of Sheffield researchers Steve Maddock and Peter Heywood (Computer Science), Rab Scott (AMRC), Dawn Hadley and Jennifer Crangle (Archaeology) in addition to geophysicist Alice James of Northern Archaeological Associates.

3D model provides unprecedented access to a medieval funerary site

The Digital Ossuary project integrated computer science and archaeological approaches in an investigation of the subterranean medieval charnel house of Holy Trinity church in Rothwell, Northamptonshire. The charnel house, which was constructed during the 13th century, houses disinterred human skeletal remains radiocarbon dated to the 13th-15th and 18th-19th centuries. While medieval charnelling was a Europe-wide phenomenon, evidence has largely been lost in England since the 16th-century Reformation, and Rothwell is the most complete surviving example with *in situ* medieval remains. It is a site of major international significance, but analysis is hampered by issues of access and preservation. The project had four principal aims:

i) to develop analysis of the largely unstudied medieval charnel house by collecting digital records of the charnel

deposit and their environment;

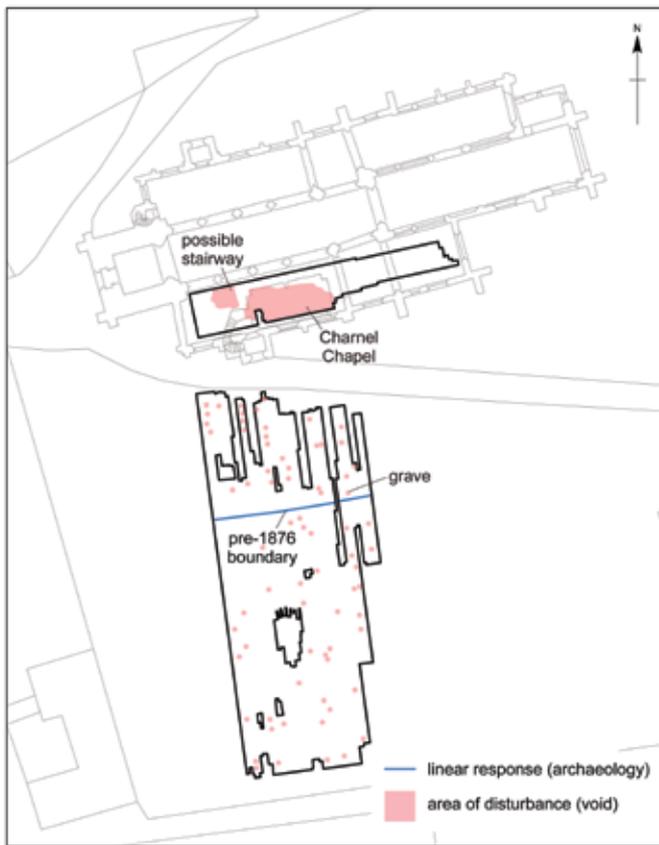
ii) to enhance interpretation of the manner in which the ossuary was used in the medieval period, through digital capture of the spatial arrangements within the house, and the range of medieval vantage points into the house;

iii) to present this fragile, and largely inaccessible heritage resource to the public in a sustainable manner; and

iv) to facilitate preservation of the ossuary, which is in a fragile state, in the form of digital preservation *in situ*.

The principal methodological questions focused on comparison of different techniques for digital recording to develop an approach that would be the least labour intensive, as well as provide the best virtual representation. The charnel house presented a difficult subject for digital recording, necessitating the application and testing of some novel computing techniques. The findings of this part of the project were published in proceedings of the Computer Graphics and Visual Computing Conference 2016 and VR Culture and Heritage Conference 2016.

We have also created a 3D virtual reality model of the space with the aim of developing digital access to the site for the wider public and research community. Versions of this model can be seen on our website, but these have had to be significantly simplified for web viewing. The full model can be downloaded in various formats from the Sheffield digital file repository ORDA. Project details and links to the 3D models can be found on the Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project's website <http://www.rothwellcharnelchapel.group.shef.ac.uk/>



Schematic interpretation of results of GPR survey in the southern cemetery and south aisle of Holy Trinity Church, Rothwell. Scale 1:500. Image: Alice James, Northern Archaeological Associates, using topographic and architectural survey data provided by Allan T Adams and Ian Atkins.

Geophysical assessment of the environs of the Rothwell Charnel House

GPR survey data were collected using an Utsi 400Mhz cart system by Alice James of Northern Archaeological Associates in August 2017. Survey data from the cemetery illuminate changes to its footprint over time, and thus help test extant hypotheses about the origins of the charnel. The remains of a substantial linear feature aligned with a *c.*1.5m drop in elevation *c.*17m to the south of the current church confirm an earlier cemetery boundary (pre- AD 1876) in this location. If this marked the extent of the medieval cemetery, it was very small, and burial congestion must have been a significant motivation for charnelling activity.

Data from the south aisle of the church have also provided supporting evidence for an alternate access route into the charnel house that predates the current stairway. Infilling

of stonework at the base of the stairs led Antiquarians to speculate a tunnel led to the nunnery, located some 400m away in the northwest of the town. However, this route, whose existence the GPR data appears to confirm, would more likely have provided access to the house from within the church. Nearby churches at Brackley and Irthlingborough also have subterranean medieval houses accessed via internal stairs, suggesting the charnel house at Rothwell originally followed a consistent regional architectural plan and implies potential similarities in the function of all three.

Next, we plan to integrate 3D data from the GPR survey with our 3D model of the interior of the charnel house, to generate a holistic spatial reconstruction and further our plans for documenting this rare and endangered site.

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Website

www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk

The website continues to improve.

Send us your comments:

medievalarchaeology@googlemail.com

Apply for a Grant

The Society is in the happy position of being able to offer grants for research and for travel. For information on how to apply for a Society grant/award, see our website,

www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk

Current Officers

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Be sure to check out our website and facebook pages for updates on members' events that fall between Newsletter dates

SMA Members are entitled to discounts on ALL Routledge books

Society members are entitled to a 20% discount on all Routledge books. To apply the discount, please go online to the Routledge website, <https://www.routledge.com/>, and use the following promotional code: MA20.

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Society News

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

The 2018 AGM of the Society will be held on
Monday 03 December in York, at 6pm.

The agenda for the AGM including details of new members of Council to be elected will appear in the Autumn Newsletter and will also appear on the website from September.

As announced at the last AGM,

the Honorary Secretary, Prof. Dawn Hadley, will be standing down at the next AGM and the Society's Officers are seeking to identify a replacement as Honorary Secretary to be elected at the 2018 AGM.

The new Student Representative

is Beatrice Widell, Doctoral Research Student
 at the Department of Archaeology, University of Reading
b.widell@pgr.reading.ac.uk

The Mick Aston Photographic Competition 2018

Mick Aston was a skilled photographer, a talented draughtsman and a great member of the Society. His camera was never far away and over a career spanning more than 40 years he built up a unique collection of images that charted the development of medieval archaeology throughout Britain. In his honour, the Society for Medieval Archaeology sponsors an annual photographic competition exclusively for Society members, with a winning prize of £200.

The theme for 2018 is **'the past meets the future'**.

As it is the European Year of Cultural Heritage, we welcome photographs captured anywhere in Europe. [#EuropeforCulture](https://twitter.com/EuropeforCulture)
 for further details, see <http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/the-mick-aston-photographic-competition-2018/>

In 2017 winner was Brian Buchanan, who submitted his photograph of the use of a drone in archaeological recording at Yeavinger.
 Congratulations Brian!

SMA Annual Conference

13–15 July 2018, Durham University

Grave Concerns: Death, Landscape, and Locality in Medieval Society

Since 1990, aspects of death and burial in medieval societies in Europe and beyond have been examined closely. State-of-the-art research on early medieval and medieval funerary rites has emerged, along with new advances in scientific research. Spatial consideration is a connecting research strand. From understanding the distribution patterns of grave types and the use of antecedent landscape features for burial, to charting the rise of commemorative markers in stone and identifying patterns of diseases and health in medieval populations and their mobility, the location of the grave has become a rich stepping off point, stimulating and facilitating new research directions. The SMA Annual Conference in 2018 will bring much of the new work together in a special occasion.

FRIDAY 13 JULY

- 17.00 – 19.00 Registration, Durham Cathedral Cloister
 18.00 – 19.00 Private view Open Treasure exhibition, Durham Cathedral
 19.00 – 20.00 **Keynote Lecture 1, Bonnie Effros** (U Liverpool)
 'New eyes on ancient cemeteries? Merovingian mortuary archaeology in the age of Inrap'
 20.00 – 21.00 Wine Reception

SATURDAY 14 JULY

- Rosemary Cramp Lecture Theatre, Calman Learning Centre, Durham U
 8.40 – 9.00 Late Registration
 9.00 – 9.15 Welcome and Introduction, Sarah Semple (Durham U)
 9.15 – 10.15 **Session 1: Re-thinking Cremation**
 Gareth Perry (U Sheffield) 'Ceramic hinterlands: establishing the 'catchment areas' of Early Anglo-Saxon cremation cemeteries'
 Femke Lippok (Leiden U) 'The pyre and the grave: reconsidering early medieval cremation burials on the continent'
 10.15 – 10.45 Coffee
 10.45 – 12.15 **Session 2: Early Medieval Cemeteries: Place, Space and Context**
 Jean Soulat (LandArc – Craham UMR 6273)
 'A Merovingian cemetery at Vicq, Yvelines, France: more than 40 years of research (1976–2016)'
 Adrián Maldonado (U Glasgow) 'Re-animating unfurnished burials: stone cists and log coffins in early medieval northern Britain'
 Dries Tys (Free U of Brussels) 'Resilient burial landscapes versus the triumph of Christianisation: continuity and change in the burial landscape of northern Francia in the 7th–11th centuries'
 12.15 – 13.15 Lunch
 13.15 – 15.15 **Session 3: Monumentality and Memory**
 Jure Šucur (U Zadar) 'Reusing tumuli as burial sites in Dalmatia: when and how'
 Juliette Mitchell (U Aberdeen) 'Landscapes of the dead: the setting of Pictish barrow cemeteries'
 Anouk Busset (U Glasgow) 'Carving early Christianity: stone

monuments as creation of liturgical movement in the landscape?'

Andrew Johnson (Manx National Heritage) 'Fingerposts to faith: movement in a landscape of carved stone crosses'

15.15 – 15.45 Coffee

15.45 – 17.15 **Session 4: Medieval Life and Death**

Roos van Oosten and Rachel Schats (Leiden U) 'Urban graveyards in the Low Countries: burial research in comparative perspective'

Mary Lewis (U Reading) 'Health, work and the adolescent in medieval England (AD 900-1550): the osteological evidence'

Catriona McKenzie (U Exeter) 'Death and burial in Gaelic medieval Ireland'

18.00 – 19.00 **Keynote Lecture 2, Roberta Gilchrist** (U Reading)

'Unleashing heterodoxy: an anthropological agenda for later medieval burial archaeology'

19.00 – 20.30 Wine Reception and Poster Session

SUNDAY 15 JULY

- 9.30 – 10.30 **Session 5: Re-dating Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries**
 John Hines (Cardiff U) 'The burial grounds at RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell, Suffolk: the chronological evidence'
 John Naylor (Ashmolean) and Chris Scull (UCL/Cardiff U) 'The use of gold coinage in Early Anglo-Saxon burials'
 10.30 – 11.00 Coffee
 11.00 – 12.00 **Session 6: Burial in the Viking World**
 Ann Sølvia Jacobsen (Durham U), Simun V. Arge (National Museum of the Faroe Islands) and Karen Milek (Durham U) 'Landscape agency, mental maps, and the siting of Viking Age burials in the North Atlantic region'
 Caroline Paterson and Stephen Harrison (U Glasgow) 'The pagan Norse graves of Scotland: burial, landscape and diversity'
 12.00 – 13.00 **Keynote Lecture 3, Duncan Sayer** (U Central Lancs),
 'The Semantics of early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery Space'

Full attendance £95; Basic attendance £80

Society for Medieval Archaeology Members' Rate £30

Full details, <http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/sma-conference-2018/>

Other News

Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society announces its enhanced grants scheme

Until recently the LAHS fund gave grants of between £500 and £1,000, but additional resources mean that considerably larger sums are now possible. Grants are available to anyone wishing to research the history or archaeology of Leicestershire or Rutland (for guidelines and criteria see: <https://www.le.ac.uk/lahs/research/index.html>), with medieval-era research very much welcomed.

Archaeology of the Severn Estuary – free online access

The Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee has been co-ordinating archaeological research in the Severn Estuary area in the UK for over 20 years, bringing together academics, field and curatorial archaeologists and interested amateurs. The publication **Archaeology of the Severn Estuary** has highlighted the fascinating results of this work from all periods.

In partnership with the Archaeological Data Service, all the volumes of the publication are now available online for free at <https://doi.org/10.5284/1044660>. All future issues will also be available for free online, immediately after they are approved by the editorial team.

In addition, membership of SELRC will also be entirely free from now on. To join, simply send your name and a contact email address to Richard.brunning@swheritage.org.uk. All communication will be solely by email and will include notification of meetings, publications and special offers for members.

Saturday 13 October 2018 Castle Studies: Current Research and the Future

A one-day Castle Studies Group conference (10am–5pm) at the Society of Antiquaries of London will celebrate a leading figure in castle studies since the 1950s, Dr Derek Renn, author of **Norman Castles in Britain** (1969; 1973) and numerous papers and guidebooks. Dr Neil Guy, CSG Editor, has been editing several essays for a Festschrift to honour Derek, and the CSG is pleased to launch this collection as **Castles: History, Archaeology, Landscape and Architecture** at the conference. Speakers, including some contributors to the Festschrift, will present short papers on current research, and it is hoped that at least one speaker will present thoughts on the directions that castle studies should be taking. Speakers include Oliver Creighton, Karen Dempsey, Bob Higham, Brian Kerr, Neil Ludlow, Pamela Marshall and David Mercer. The cost will be £70, which will include refreshments and a light sandwich lunch. Cheques should be made out to Castle Studies Group and sent with the application form to Dr John R. Kenyon, 140 Fairwater Grove East, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 2JW, from whom the form is available. Closing date 31 July 2018.

If paying by bank transfer: RBS, 15 Foregate Street, Chester CH1 1HD; Account Castle Studies Group; Sort code 16 16 14; Account number 11351304. Please cite your name as an identifier when making the payment.

Other Grants

The Castle Studies Trust – awards six grants to advance the understanding of castles



Over **£22,000** has been granted to sponsor six projects:

- **Bolingbroke, England** – revealing what researching Bolingbroke Castle’s Route Yard and Dewy Hill tell us about Bolingbroke Castle?
- **Pembroke, Wales** – test trenches at one of Wales’ greatest castles to confirm the site of the late medieval structure revealed in the geophysical survey funded by the CST in 2016 plus a topographical survey of the site.
- **Dig It! 2017 Castles of South Scotland** – enhancing public understanding and knowledge of some castles in southern Scotland, their purpose, history and relevance, particularly the lesser-known and least visited sites.
- **Keith Marischal, Scotland** – geophysical survey in search of a lost medieval castle and renaissance palace with a great hall reputed to be second in size to that of Stirling’s.
- **Laughton-en-le-Mortain, England** – archaeological investigation of the motte and bailey castle and its surrounding landscape.
- **Ruthin Denbighshire, Wales** – co-funded reconstruction drawing of a great Welsh Edwardian fortress. Ruthin town was where Owain Glyndwr’s rebellion against English rule started.

Donate to attend exclusive site visits

By making a substantial one-off donation or setting up a standing order, you help to fund more exciting projects and:

- Visit sites not accessible to the general public. Four out of the five projects this year are on private land.
- Get exclusive previews and insight to the projects from

the project teams before everyone else.

You can donate:

- By credit or debit card by going to <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/castlestudiestrust>
- By cheque (payable to the Castle Studies Trust) or standing order – completing and returning a form at: <http://castlestudiestrust.org/Donate.html>

2016 projects finished

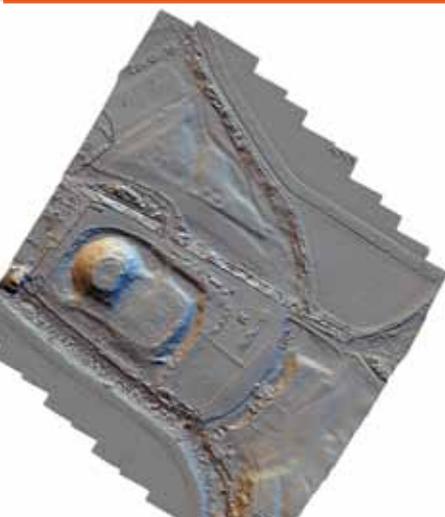
- **Dinas Bran, Denbighshire, Wales** – work is complete, see the results at www.castlestudiestrust.org and a short blog and video at <http://castlestudiestrust.org/blog/2017/07/09/visiting-dinas-bran/>
- **Lathom, Lancashire, England** – analysis of castle masonry from the completely destroyed late 15th-century castle built by Thomas Stanley, Early of Derby. Our expert assessor has signed-off on the project and the report should be available on our website shortly.
- **Clifford, Herefordshire, England** – site work is complete and the report is being finalised.
- **Castle Pulverbatch Shropshire, England** – CST-sponsored geophysical and photogrammetric surveys are complete, and now GPR survey will take place.
- **Fotheringhay, Northants, England** – aerial survey is complete, and GPR work in rough terrain will finish soon.

Find out more about the projects we have funded and the Pembroke and Caus reports, visit www.castlestudiestrust.org or contact the chair of trustees, **Jeremy Cunnington**, at admin@castlestudiestrust.org

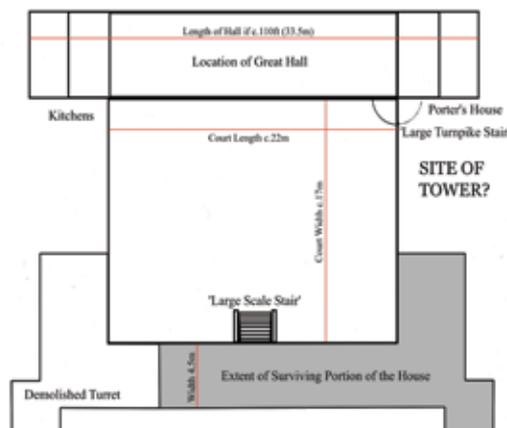
Fotheringhay Castle DTM multi-hillshade.

Plan of Keith Marischal.

Pembroke Castle aerial photo, copyright RCAHMW.



KEITH MARISCHAL AS DESCRIBED IN THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



Media & Exhibition

REFORGING RAGNARÖK

In what feels like a time of ever deepening political meltdown, it seems apposite to take a look at the biographical trajectory of belief as seen through the lens of some recent reimaginings of the Norse myth of Ragnarök.

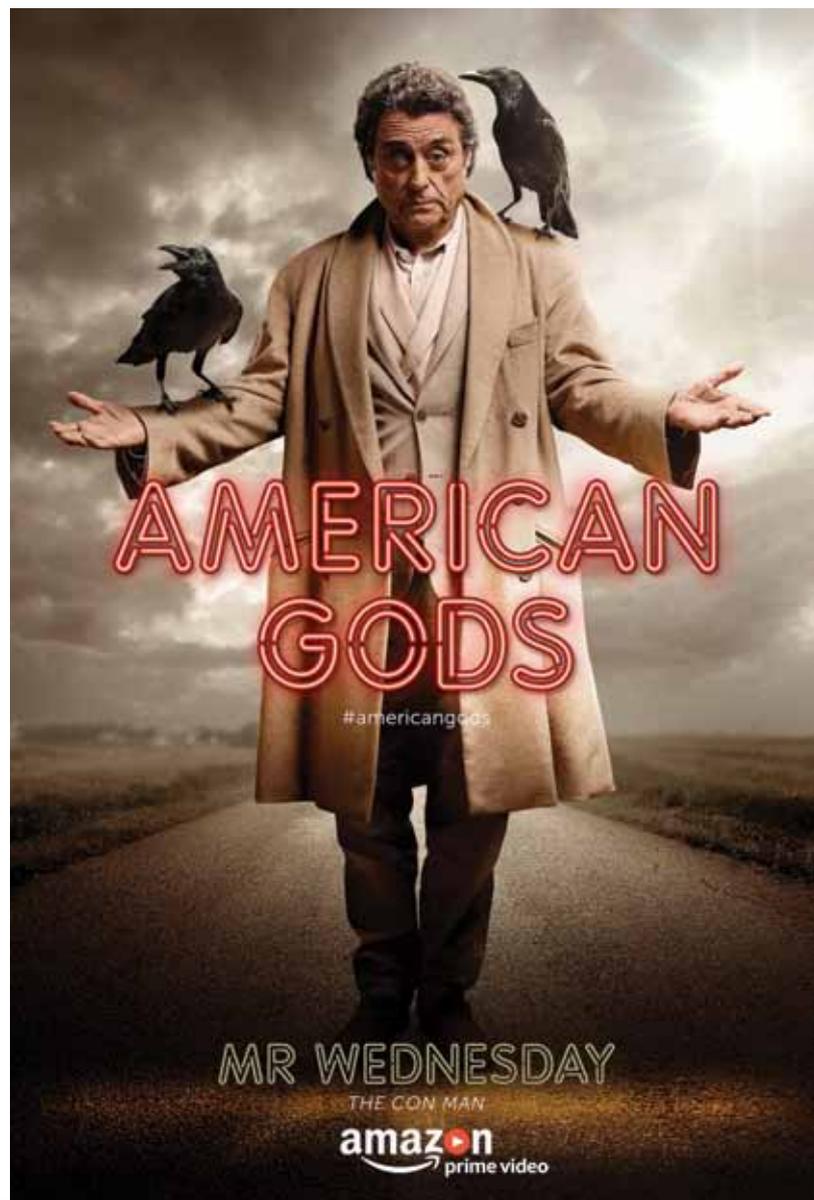
Of course it is hard to know what the original take on Ragnarök was, but certainly in its history it reveals itself to have a changing conceptualisation. It does seem likely that it always carried an intent around the renewal of an existing order consequent on a cycle of birth and decay. Perhaps the first clear instance of its transitional status is its Christianisation by Icelandic scholar and poet, Snorri Sturlusson, when he reformulates the *Völuspá* account with his prose version, *Gylfaginning*. In the former, Ragnarök is the culmination of a natural cycle of ageing, out of which all is reborn. For the classicising and Christianising Snorri it becomes the culmination of corruption unleashed upon a golden age. The two versions, of course, still turn on a renewal out of destruction, albeit one is more seasonally cyclical and the other about corruption.

Both versions of the story have as a key motif the theft of golden playing pieces and their rediscovery once the world is recreated anew. In *Völuspá* this is the seed of decay whilst in *Gylfaginning* it is symbolic of the last golden age of happiness. The recovery of that golden age is hinted at in Joanne Harris's novel *The Gospel of Loki* (2014), in which its concluding 'Prophecy of the Oracle' [the oracle being the head of Ymir] includes the lines:

On what was once the battlefield
A New Age dawns. Its children
Find the golden gaming-boards
Of bright Asgard, the fallen

The *Gospel of Loki* is Harris' re-telling of Ragnarök from the perspective of a redeemable Loki. It is a prequel to her two Runemarks novels, *Runemarks* (2008) and *Runelight* (2011), which are set in a post-Ragnarök parallel world where the Norse gods are wandering outlaw figures persecuted by a new religious authority, the Order. In both her vision of Asgard and of a post-Ragnarök parallel world, the underlying and inevitable destiny is Ragnarök.

A rather different tack is taken by the two 2017 moving-image reimaginings I want to now focus on: *American*



The English actor Ian McShane, who plays Mr Wednesday in *American Gods*.
Source: online image.

Gods and Thor: Ragnarök. Both deal, in different ways, with the eternal presence of the gods in the contemporary context of the here and now. *American Gods* is a cable TV adaptation of Neil Gaiman's 2001 novel with the same title. The second season of the TV adaptation has yet to air but the arc it follows is broadly that of the novel. The essential conceit of the story is that gods only exist because people believe in them and that in America there are as many gods as there are immigrant populations (some of which arrived during the Ice Age and some during Viking exploration), and including many different kinds of self-sacrificing Jesus's and a leprechaun known as Mad Sweeney. There is also a group of new gods led by the Capitalist Triumvirate of Media, Mr World and Technology Boy. These are increasingly draining the belief in the older gods and the story charts a course of impending Ragnarök, a conflagration engineered by Odin ('Mr Wednesday') and Loki as a means of increasing their powers. But Gaiman neatly side-steps that ending through the agency of a new character, Shadow Moon, a Christ-like human son of Odin, who averts the sacrifice of Ragnarök. Ironically the aversion of Ragnarök proves to be a personal Ragnarök for Odin and Loki, whose American personifications are brought to an end. In a tale set in America and bringing together so many belief-systems and their deities, their believers and their non-believers it is a clever trick to dispense with Ragnarök and maintain the myth of America the Undying, ceaselessly reinventing itself.

The vision of Ragnarök offered by *Thor: Ragnarök* is even more Revisionary. The roots of this vision lie in the Marvel Comics recreation of Thor as a contemporary superhero in 1960s and later America, his home-world of Asgard part of an interstellar version of the Nine Worlds.

The Mighty Hulk takes on the demonic Surtur, in Thor: Ragnarök. Source: Online image.

The films – this is the third Thor film (which sit within the wider cycle of *Avengers* and *Guardians of the Galaxy* movies) – represent the latest upgrade in the vision of Asgard and its immortals, and in which magic is simply a very complicated form of science and there is no inherent need for the people of earth to belief in the Aesir for them to exist. In this summative episode of the franchise, Odin, Thor, Loki and Hela are conceived as a dysfunctional, family group of feuding siblings, with Hela as the first born of Odin's children and in which Odin is a tyrannical father with a very dark past. He is an equally dark and manipulative figure in *American Gods* and Joanne Harris's novels.

The key trick that Marvel's take on Ragnarök manages to pull-off is to permit the destruction of Asgard, with Hel, Fenris and Surtur at full throttle - a finality mainstream movies generally try to avoid. To make it palatable it invents a new transcendence for Thor – Hela destroys Mjölfnir, but this simply allows Thor to tap into a deep, unrecognised ability to directly channel lightning, and the loss of an eye to his vengeful sister "rebirths" him as Odin. More crucially the film reconfigures the rebirth induced by Ragnarök into identifying Asgard not as a place but as a people. The rescuing of that people (led by Thor) is the act of recreation, one that borrows from the notion of space-opera quest (notably in *Babylon 5*) though ultimately deriving from the Biblical *Exodus*. This also serves as an echo of the European birth of America, a sort of New Asgard to which various ethnic groups bring their 'Old Asgards'.

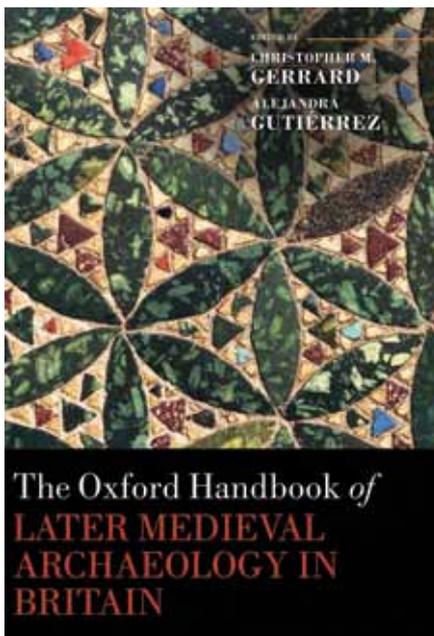
Mark Hall

marcus.antonius@virgin.net



New Titles

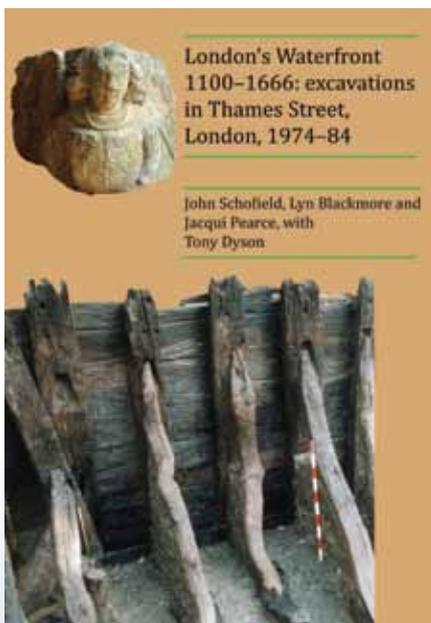
A medley of SMA contributors in this one...



The Oxford Handbook of Later Medieval Archaeology in Britain provides an overview of the archaeology of the later Middle Ages in Britain between AD 1066 and 1550. Sixty entries, divided into 10 thematic sections, cover topics ranging from later medieval objects, human remains, archaeological science, standing buildings, and sites such as castles and monasteries, to the well-preserved relict landscapes that still survive. This volume provides comprehensive coverage of the latest research and describes the major projects and concepts that are changing our understanding of our medieval heritage.

1,104 Pages
246 x 171mm
ISBN: 9780198744719

and from Archaeopress, on matters-London...



London's Waterfront 1100-1666: excavations in Thames Street, London, 1974-84 presents and celebrates the mile-long Thames Street in the City of London and the land south of it to the River Thames as an archaeological asset. The argument is based on the reporting of four excavations by the Museum of London near the north end of London Bridge: Swan Lane, Seal House, New Fresh Wharf and Billingsgate Lorry Park. The findings of the period 1100-1666 are presented. Highlights include the first academic analysis and assessment of a 13th- or 14th century trumpet from Billingsgate (the earliest surviving straight trumpet in Europe); many pilgrim souvenirs; analysis of two drains of the 17th century from which suggestions can be made about use of rooms and spaces within documented buildings; and the proposal that one of the skeletons excavated from St Botolph's church is John Reynewell, mayor of London in 1426-7 and a notable figure in London's medieval history.

ISBN: 9781784918378
www.archaeopress.com

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Contribute to the Newsletter

We welcome submissions relating to current research projects in Ireland, the UK and on the continent, and ask that submissions do not exceed 800 words, with conference reports to be within 500 words.

Please do not embed pictures in Word/text files but do send pictures/plans as separate high quality JPEG files. The preferred format for site plans/maps is EPS, with layers clearly indicated and unlocked, and any linked files attached.

Send to Newsletter Editor by e-mail:
niallbrady100@gmail.com

The due dates for receipt of copy are:

Spring Newsletter: 15th February
Autumn Newsletter: 15th August

Credits

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Conferences & Events

— FORTHCOMING —

May:

10-13 May
53rd International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Western Michigan University.
www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress

June:

28-30 June
Irish Conference of Medievalists, University College Cork, Cork.
<http://www.irishmedievalists.com/>

July:

2-5 July
International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, Leeds.
www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/

13-15 July

Grave Concerns: Death, Landscape and Locality in Medieval Society, Durham University, Durham.
www.dur.ac.uk/archaeology/conferences/current/grave/

19-20 July

The Micropolitics of Mobility

in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, Tübingen, Germany.
www.uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/...und...in.../research-forum-2018.html

September:

14-16 September
The Commemoration of Conflict, Society for Church Archaeology Conference, Hull.
churcharchaeology.org/conferences.html

5-9 September

European Association of Archaeologists conference 2018, Barcelona.
<https://www.e-a-a.org/eea2018>
Session #150: Museum presentation in a challenged world, associated with MERC.
marcus.antonius@virgin.net

15 September

The 2018 Annual Deerhurst Lecture, at 7.30 pm in St Mary's Church, Deerhurst.
Dr Richard Mortimer (former

archivist to Westminster Abbey) on 'Deerhurst, Pershore, and Westminster Abbey'. Tickets at the door, price £5 (students £3). <https://deerhurstfriends.co.uk>

17-20 September

Archaeology Conference, Newcastle University and Durham University, Newcastle/Durham.
www.ncl.ac.uk/mccordcentre/lac2018/

22 September

From Tees to Tweed: New Perspectives in Landscape Archaeology, Society for Landscape Studies Conference, Newcastle University, Newcastle.
<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/mccordcentre/lac2018/outline/>

**October:
3 October**

Castles Studies: Current Research and the Future. Castle Studies Group at the Society of Antiquaries, London.
<http://www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk/page26.html>

— 2018 Fieldwork Projects —

If you have free time, are interested in visiting a field project and are in the area, here are two projects involving SMA committee members that are running this Summer. Be sure to contact the project beforehand (in case they are on excursions).

Ireland

2 July-2 August
The fourth field season of the Castles in Communities Anthropological and Archaeological research project.
<https://sites.google.com/view/irelandcastlesincommunities>

Location: Ballintober, Co. Roscommon
Site Type: Medieval Castle and Deserted Settlement
Dates for casual visits: Mon-Fri.
Contact: niallbrady100@gmail.com

UK

4-22 June
Durham University will be excavating at Auckland Castle in Co. Durham. Situated alongside an extensive hunting park, this site was one of the primary residences of the medieval Bishops of Durham. The project is led by Professor Chris Gerrard and Dr Pam Graves.

For more information please contact Chris or Pam, or visit www.dur.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects