

Society for Medieval Archaeology Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

The year begins as a busy and positive time for the Society and this Newsletter suggests a flavour of the directions in which we are moving. We hear from our President; observe the numbers of conferences over the coming months; catch up with a range of useful research projects; and reflect on aspects of our membership. Mark Hall closes with a masterful weaving from exhibition to film, celebrating the ever-popular representation of the Middle Ages to the wider public.

We will continue to synchronize the website with the Newsletter during 2009. Thanks go to all contributors of the present issue. Please continue to send me your pieces for both outlets by e-mail, and best wishes for a productive year.



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

December's Annual General Meeting saw the completion of my first year as President of the Society; and as the mid-point of the three-year presidential term begins to loom, it seems timely to say a few words about the Society's current activities and plans, and to invite your feedback.

The Society's remit is wide, and it is increasingly active in many different ways. Our mission statement, and our publications, events and activities appear on our website (<http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk>) and are regularly covered in the Newsletter. Nevertheless, and perhaps because the

Society has never had an annual programme of lectures, providing a regular informal meeting-place for members, the suspicion remains that we might do better at communicating what we do to the membership. What follows is a brief summary of recent and future activities which I hope will go some way to address this, and will encourage feedback and suggestions for future activities from the membership.

Following our 50th Anniversary Year in 2007, this has been a busy and successful year for the Society, with a wide range of events. In March, we organised a field trip to Estonia, in conjunction with colleagues from the Finnish Antiquarian Society; Mark Hall gave an enthusiastic report on it in the September Newsletter. In May we held a day workshop at the Institute of Archaeology at UCL on 'Looking to the Future of Medieval Archaeology' focusing on the opportunities and challenges facing medieval archaeology over the coming decade, and the various ways in which in the future it might build on the achievements of the last 50 years. The workshop was well attended, and the debates very lively; a paper by Steve Rippon, our new Treasurer, and Mark Gardiner on the issues identified will appear in the Society's Anniversary Monograph, to be published later this year.

As part of its aim to support and highlight medieval archaeology around the country, the Society sponsored a number of successful sessions at both the International Medieval Conference at Leeds in July, and the TAG conference at Southampton in December. Further SMA sponsored sessions at both conferences are planned for this year, as well as at the 44th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University at Kalamazoo in May, where we are keen to advertise our work through an annual presence. We are also co-sponsoring a workshop on new research in medieval childhood with the Society for the Study of Childhood in the Past, which

www.medievalarchaeology.org

will be held at the University of Sheffield on 12 March. For 2010, a major conference co-hosted with the Vernacular Architecture Group is planned; this will take place in Oxford in September, and will focus around the theme of regional difference within domestic space, which would allow a wide discussion of objects, spaces, people and their activities. A larger themed conference is also under discussion for 2011: watch this space. For further information on these and other forthcoming events, please contact the Hon Secretary, Dr Dawn Hadley.

During the year, the Society made grants from the three research funds it administers to a number of individuals for archaeological research and travel, including younger scholars; and at the AGM in December, the John Hurst and Martin Jope awards were respectively presented to Robert Lee of Southampton University, and Professor Roberta Gilchrist. Our guest lecturer at the AGM was Professor Neil Price of Aberdeen University, who took as his theme 'Passing into poetry: mortuary theatre in early medieval Scandinavia', a dramatic topic which gripped the audience. This year's AGM will be held on 7 December, and the guest lecturer will be announced shortly on the website, and in the next Newsletter

Finally, perhaps the most visible and enduring face of the Society is seen in our internationally regarded publications - the Journal and our Monograph series. So successful is the Journal in attracting a wide range of high quality papers covering the whole field of Medieval Europe, that Council is currently considering producing two issues per year; a new cover design is planned to coincide with this. The Monographs have also been increasingly successful, with two substantial publications - the Shapwick and Dryslwyn reports - appearing in the course of 2008.

All of this goes to show that, at 51 years old, the Society is in excellent health, building on our strengths, and continuing to extend our membership, especially among students and younger professionals, in step with our expanding activities. I hope this

short summary will stimulate members' interest and participation in what we do, and our ongoing programme, and welcome your feedback and ideas for future activities.

Leslie Webster

CONFERENCES & EVENTS, forthcoming

APRIL: The Spring Meeting of the Medieval Settlement Research Group will be held at the University of Leicester on **4-5 April**. The theme will be **Monks in the Midlands: medieval monasteries in town and landscape in the Midlands**. See: www.britarch.ac.uk/msrg/msrgconferences.htm

The Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies at the University of Manchester is presenting a conference, **Wilfrid, Saint and Bishop: 709-2009**, on **15-17 April**, Hulme Hall, Oxford Place, Manchester, M14 5RL. Contact Nick.J.Higham@man.ac.uk

The Early Medieval Wales Archaeology Research Group will host its 25th Anniversary Colloquium on **25-26 April**, entitled, **The Archaeology of Early Medieval Wales IN CONTEXT**. Contact Linda Jones, College of Arts and Humanities, Bangor University, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DG or see: <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/history/wales-in-context.php.en>

Grantham Museum and the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire present **Medieval Grantham, a conference**, on **25 April** at The Ballroom, Guildhall Arts Centre, St Peter's Hill, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6PZ.

MAY: Carlisle Cathedral is hosting a festival to celebrate **St Cuthbert and Carlisle** on **30 April-4 May**. Contact: Canon Librarian, (Canon Dr David Jenkins) on 01228 538086 (email: director.education@carlisle-diocese.org.uk); www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/xchange/st-cuthbert-and-carlisle-2009.html

The Society for Landscape Studies is holding its Spring Weekend Conference , **Landscapes of South Yorkshire and the North Midlands**, in Sheffield on **2-3 May**. See: www.landscapestudies.com/

The **Society for Medieval Archaeology** is hosting its first session at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, Michigan, **7-10 May**. Speakers at **Archaeology and the Artifact** will be Elaine Treharne, Joanna Story and Susan Harrington. The International Congress hosts a wide range of archaeological panels, including The Discovery Programme sponsored session, **Rural Settlement Studies: Quickening the Pace**, and interdisciplinary panels sponsored by the American Society of Irish Medieval Studies, on **Cross Cultural Contacts**. See: <http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress>

The **Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement** (GIHS) is hosting its 39th annual conference in association with The East Galway Archaeological and Historical Society in Portumna, Co. Galway on **8-10 May**. Contact Linda Doran for details, linda@billdoran.net

Castles, Landscape and Lordship is the theme of a joint conference hosted by the Royal Archaeological Institute and the Medieval Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society. The conference will be hosted in various venues in York from **16-17 May**. Contact the Administrator at Royal Archaeological Institute, c/o Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BE, or see: www.royalarchaeolinst.org

The University of Sheffield's Department of Archaeology will be hosting the 2009 **Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium (EMASS)**. Sessions will take place on **21-22 May**. Proposals for papers are required by 13th March. See: www.shf.ac.uk/archaeology/conferences/emass/

The University of Nottingham's Institute for Medieval Research invites you to submit abstracts for papers and posters for a two-day conference on **North & South, East & West: Movements in the Medieval**

World, 30-31 May. Contact Marjolein Stern, aexms5@nottingham.ac.uk

JUNE: A congress entitled **Dorestad in an international Framework** will take place in Leiden from **24-27 June**, as part of the exhibition *Dorestad - A medieval Metropolis* (16 April - 1 November 2009). Contact Dr. Annemarieke Willemsen or see <http://www.rmo.nl/congress>

JULY: The National Endowment for the Humanities, USA, is presenting a Summer Seminar at the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College, London, and the Wellcome Library on **Disease in the Middle Ages**, between **5 July to 8 August**. Contact the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS), at: <http://medievalseminar2009.asu.edu>

The **Society for Medieval Archaeology** is hosting a session at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds, **13-16 July**. Speakers at **Theatres of Power: The Appropriation of Ancient Landscapes by the Church** will be Sarah Semple, Dawn Hadley and David Stocker. See: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/index.html>

AUGUST: England in the Age of the Black Death. A conference to be held at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, **8-10 August**, to mark the retirement of John Hatcher in 2009. Contact Steve Rigby, at: S.H.Rigby@manchester.ac.uk

SEPTEMBER: Cardiff University is the venue for a conference on **The Military Orders: Politics and Power**, to be held from **3-6 September**. Organised by the Cardiff Centre for the Crusades, see: www.cf.ac.uk/hisar/newsandevents/events/

Ruralia, the *Jean-Marie Pesez conference series on medieval rural archaeology* will present its eighth international conference in Lorca, Murcia, Spain on the theme of **Food in the medieval rural environment - Processing, Storage, Distribution**, between **7-12 September**, with a post-conference additional fieldtrip until the 14th. Contact Dr. Jorge Eiroa Rodríguez, at: jorgeir@um.es

The Society for Church Archaeology will host **Romans and the Romanesque in Lincoln and Lincolnshire, 25–27 September**, Edward King House, Lincoln. Contact: churcharchaeology@googlemail.com

The **Durham Medieval Archaeologists**, present **Sensory Perceptions in Medieval Society AD 450-1600**, on **26 September**; see above under March.

To advertise conferences/events in the Newsletter, contact: *Dr Oliver Creighton*, Dept. of Archaeology, Laver Building, North Park Road, Exeter, Devon, UK EX4 4QE, or email o.h.creighton@exeter.ac.uk

CONFERENCE REPORTS

The **2008 Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG)** conference was hosted by the University of Southampton, from the 15-17 December. As usual sessions and papers were extremely varied, with a chronological span from the Palaeolithic to the twentieth-century and covering a range of themes from landscape to religion, mortuary archaeology and material culture. The conference continued to build upon its international reputation with speakers coming from as far afield as North America, Scandinavia, India and Iran.

The society supported three sessions at the conference, following on from the session which they supported at TAG in York (2007). The first of these, “Theory and Computer Visualization: The Potential of Virtual Heritage Environments” was organised by Paul Graves (Durham), Kate Giles and Anthony Masinton (York). The papers explored the ways in which computer visualization can be used in archaeological interpretation. Caradoc Peters and Adam Spring (Plymouth) argued that 3D technologies have the potential to subvert existing perspectives in the way we interpret the past and in the way we utilize such technologies. Eleftheria Paliou (Southampton) used a case study from Bronze Age Crete to demonstrate the potential of 3D modelling in the study of visualisation and movement in the reconstruction of natural and built

environments. Geoff Arnott (Heritage Technology) and Kate Giles presented a reconstruction of wall paintings at the Guild Chapel, Stratford-Upon-Avon, exploring how the creation of these reconstructions led to new questions being asked of the paintings and of existing interpretations of them. Graves discussed the role of computer visualizations in the reconstruction of how religious practices created meaning out of spaces within Durham Cathedral, and their role as a research tool in comparing the way religious activities were carried out in different institutions. The final paper was given by Masinton who presented a study of movement within Yorkshire parish churches and how this impacted upon the understanding of these spaces.

The second session, “Brightness, Lustre and Shine: Colour in the Medieval Household” was arranged by Eleanor Standley (Durham) and Rebecca Bridgman (Southampton). The session sought to explore the potential of colour studies in medieval archaeology, both in terms to inferences we can make from them and also the study of their meaning in the medieval period. Liz James (Sussex) discussed the role of colour in Byzantine material culture, arguing that lustre rather than hue was more important to Byzantine people and that there are complex interplays between colour, brightness and light. Chris Woolgar (Southampton) discussed the relationship between colour and food in the medieval period, reviewing the evidence from medieval recipe books, menus from feasts and other historical records, with the aim of studying the colour of food in a similar way to how we study items of material culture. Finally, Ben Jervis (Southampton) presented some thoughts on the role of the colour of medieval pottery in archaeological inference, suggesting that the study of colour must be related to studies of light (and in turn to architecture) and be considered in context, proposing a more integrated approach to the study of colour in the medieval home. Discussion acknowledged the need for a contextual approach to the study of colour in the medieval home.

The final session, “Putting Humpty Together Again: Overcoming the Fragmentation of the Middle Ages” was organised by Ben Jervis and Tehmina Goskar (Southampton) and was designed to promote a positive approach to the integration of disciplines both within and outside of archaeology, in the study of the medieval period. Papers were presented from across the medieval period, in reverse chronological order, starting with Anthony Buxton (Oxford) who presented an account of his research into using documentary and archaeological evidence in the early modern household, primarily in regard to finding a suitable theoretical framework in which to carry out his research. Jude Jones (Southampton) used the work of Alfred Gell to study the way that Tudor-Jacobean tomb effigies can be studied as representations of society’s relationship with death. Rose Drew (York) argued that osteological studies of medieval remains must be better integrated with other studies of sites and material culture to better contextualise their findings, as well as the need for osteologists to be clearer in how they present their research. Hal Dalwood (Worcestershire County Council) used the case study of Worcester to explore how interpretations of medieval sites are influenced both by current theoretical thinking but also by pressures of development, questioning who sets the agenda for the interpretation and understanding of such sites. Jervis presented a study of pottery distribution in medieval Southampton, arguing that the different quarters of the town are not as clearly defined as historical accounts have us believe; the identities of those living in different areas of Southampton were multiple and ever changing. Jemma Bezant (Lampeter) used a landscape study to argue that Wales was not a Norman invention, but instead that Welsh kings used new fashions to subtly embrace existing Welsh practices and identities. The last paper was presented by Lizzy Craig (Sheffield) who demonstrated the value of a bio-cultural approach to Late Saxon funerary assemblages, bringing together osteological, topographical and artefactual data to explore social identities formed both in life and death. Matthew Johnson acted as

discussant, using the papers to argue that medieval archaeology can no longer be perceived as atheoretical, and that we must both be explicit in our use of theoretical concepts and question those of others more forcefully.

The three sessions show the vibrancy of medieval archaeology as the fiftieth anniversary year of the society comes to an end, demonstrating that the next fifty should be informative, revolutionary and exciting for the discipline.

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SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

Peat and Peatlands Network

There is wide acceptance that complex transitions in fuel resource-use arise in episodes of significant change. Perhaps the most fundamental of these episodes was the post-1500 northern European transition to ‘Modernity’ through a process which involved disengagement from a dependence on traditional fuel forms, which were seen as difficult or expensive and labour-intensive to obtain in bulk, and the use of new, cheaper and more abundant energy sources. In a British context, the most overlooked aspect of this transition is the decline in peat-use caused by the shift towards an increasing dependence on coal and then other fossil fuels. This led to radical changes in the manner and method of the exploitation of peatland as an economic resource. In this process, peat and peatland in areas as diverse as the Somerset Levels, East Anglian fenland, Yorkshire Moors, Central Lowlands and North-west Highlands and Islands of Scotland and Ards peninsula in Ulster lost social and economic value, and was subject to alternative exploitative strategies before residual areas of peatland acquired iconic ‘natural heritage’ status in the late 20th century. The local and regional impact of these transitions is often well understood but we lack a coherent overview of the causes and consequences of the virtual abandonment of peat for fuel in former peat-rich or -dependent areas.



Discussion of the environmental history and geo-archaeology dimensions of the issue took place at the Irish Economic and Social History Society conference in Dublin in 2007. An awareness was raised of the need to explore 'the peat question' within a wider disciplinary framework and across a broader geographical and chronological range. The work is led by the Centre for Environmental History at the University of Stirling, with the Departments of History at the universities of East Anglia and Queen's, Belfast, and Department of Archaeology at Exeter. Planning is at an advanced stage for the creation of a research network to bring together different groups from Britain, Ireland, Iceland, France and the Netherlands to examine the changing uses of peat and peatland over time in the North Atlantic Rim territories, and the shifting perceptions of value and significance attached to them. The aim is to draw on the conceptual and methodological contributions of different disciplines and of different cultures in the study region to illuminate the fundamental tension which exists between contemporary society's energy needs and conservation driven by its growing environmental conscience. In studying such topics, historians, archaeologists, social anthropologists and conservation scientists have generally worked in discrete research climates, usually with discipline-specific methods and commonly with sharply contrasting premises. The Peatlands Network will instead explore peat use or conservation, for fuel and other purposes, principally in the post-medieval period but with a firm grounding through establishing the patterns of medieval exploitation in Britain and the wider North Atlantic zone from

interdisciplinary perspectives and set into a wide international context.

One aim of the new group will be to examine the emergence of the perceptual dichotomy between the economic and cultural devaluation of peatland in purely material terms and the assignation to it of high cultural and natural heritage value in environmental terms. This approach will allow participants to address two related central issues which have powerful contemporary and historical resonance: the causes and consequences implicit in the adoption, exploitation or abandonment of energy resources; and the question of choices and assigned values that affect human-environmental interactions.

This network aims to bring together historians, archaeologists, social anthropologists and conservation scientists with their counterparts in cultural landscape and environmental studies, in order better to integrate their research. It is hoped that such interdisciplinary collaboration will enhance knowledge and understanding across a broad spectrum of often conflicting issues at the heart of contemporary Western attitudes towards human-environmental interactions. The project will allow the questions of archaeologists (*e.g.* issues of resource control, supply and use) to be addressed by historians, social anthropologists and conservation scientists in empirical contexts (stakeholders, communities, institutions and hierarchies); the questions of historians (*e.g.* concerning legal frameworks for management/exploitation or shifting pressures in supply, demand and use) to be addressed by archaeologists (in terms of environmental determinants), conservation scientists (in terms of management strategies) and social anthropologists (in terms of cultural determination and value perception).

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INSTAR Funding in Ireland - the Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research programme 2008

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



December 2008 saw the completion of the first year of ministerial funding for archaeological research in Ireland that is specifically aimed at collaborative approaches between universities, state institutions, and private sector consultancies. Of the fourteen projects funded last year, five were focused on medieval matters, and we can expect reports on each of the projects in the course of this year's Newsletters. **Mapping Death: People, Boundaries & Territories in Ireland 1st to 8th Centuries AD**, where the lead investigator is the UCD Mícheal Ó Cléirigh Institute will be reported on in the September issue, along with **EMAP, the Early Medieval Archaeology Project**, led by the School of Archaeology, UCD; see: www.emap.ie. We also look forward to **Medieval Dublin City Archaeological Research Agenda**, led by Dublin City Council. The INSTAR projects receive their funding through the Heritage Council; see: www.heritagecouncil.ie. Proposals for 2009 funding are currently being reviewed.

INSTAR 1: Revealing the *Faire City*: The Kilkenny Archaeological Project

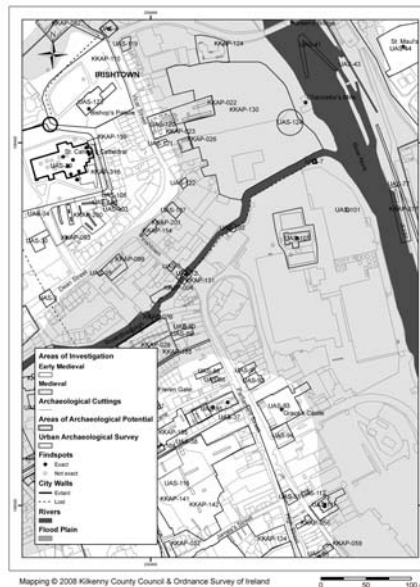


Panorama of Kilkenny (photo: C. Ó Drisceoil)

Kilkenny is a compact, walled riverside city in the south-east of Ireland whose surviving castle and cathedral, abbeys and churches, town walls, townhouses and streets all shape the only example of an Irish medieval city to remain wholly intact. This legacy is complimented by a long and important tradition of research and scholarship that has for over 150 years delved into the rich vein of documentary and archaeological material which the city has fashioned. Like most other Irish towns, investigations

arising from redevelopment within Kilkenny's historic centre have produced an abundance of new archaeological data, all of which has a very important role to play in allowing the origin, development and ultimately the historic character of the city to be appreciated. However, the results of most of these discoveries have never been made public; without their benefit it is impossible to understand the total history of life in Kilkenny during the past millennium.

In 2008 the Kilkenny Archaeological Project (KKAP) was instituted as a partnership between Kilkenny Archaeology (archaeological consultants) and the National University of Ireland Maynooth and it received INSTAR funding and the support of Kilkenny Borough Council to collate and assess the archaeological record for the city with a view to producing a strategy for its public dissemination. KKAP has collated records for all known recording 'events' in the city between 1845-2006 onto a specifically designed database integrated with GIS, the 'Kilkenny Urban Archaeology Database'.



An example of the GIS mapping produced for the Kilkenny Urban Archaeological Database

The database covers the present Kilkenny Borough Council area and its immediate environs and was modelled on similar schemes that had been completed for a number of historic towns in England, such as Lincoln and Canterbury. At present the

database contains 429 individual entries, of which 212 relate to archaeological investigations that occurred between 1968 and 2006. The location for each recording 'event' has been plotted and there now exists comprehensive mapping for a wide range of material, including each archaeological cutting that has been opened within the city, historically recorded findspots and listed buildings. The database is capable of being constantly updated and will be an invaluable tool for providing rapid and concise archaeological data as well as access to primary material such as site reports, journal publications and a host of relevant records, all of which have been scanned into the database as pdfs. It is also now possible to produce with relative ease thematic maps which can be related to a range of queries.

The second major undertaking for the project was the production of a substantial report on the archaeology of the city. Thirty-eight years of excavation in Kilkenny has amassed the largest collection of archaeological material from any Irish inland town: 212 sites were investigated in the city in 277 individual recording 'operations'. Given its relatively small size, only Dublin and Cork have greater numbers of excavation licences issued. Kilkenny's archaeological record ranges in date from the late Mesolithic to the 20th century AD, with the medieval (c. 1169-1550) and post-medieval (c. 1550-1900) periods being particularly well represented. The archaeology of trade, exploitation of natural resources, specialisation, technology, manufacturing, social differentiation, religious aspirations and death and burial are all included in the city's archaeological dataset.

What is clear is that Kilkenny's archaeology is distinctive to the city, yet because it has consistently absorbed international influences it may also be seen within the context of wider European patterns of urbanisation. In particular, Kilkenny's progress over the past millennium has been punctuated by periods of major expansion (in the 9th-10th century, 13th century, and 16th-17th century respectively) which mirror developments in

Britain and on the continent, and it is this dynamic blend that defined the ancient city and whose legacy continues to this day in its built form.



Archaeological excavations at Highhayes, MacDonagh railway station 2006. A previously undocumented artisan's quarter of the medieval city was revealed, including a pottery production centre and a baker's yard (photo: C. Ó Drisceoil)

Of 115 investigations that can be considered worthy of publication because of their relative importance, only 10 have been published. This produces a huge information deficit at a local level and for urban archaeology in general. What KKAP has revealed above all else is that we still know very little about the fundamentals of past life and society in the city. The city's fabric through the ages is poorly understood and there are major problems in tracing the development of its topography and material culture. Yet KKAP reveals the enormous wealth and range of the city's archaeological record and a unique opportunity exists now to explore it in detail and address these challenges. Application is being made to the Heritage Council to conduct a second stage of KKAP, which advocates for the production of a synthesis and analysis of the material that is grounded in a research agenda. If successful, the KKAP will represent the first time such a methodology has been used in Irish urban archaeology. See: www.kkap.ie for more information, and download a pdf of the report detailing the findings to date.

Cóilín Ó Drisceoil, John Bradley, Richard Jennings, Leah McCullough, John Healy
www.kkap.ie

INSTAR 2: Making Christian Landscapes. Settlement, Society and Regionality in Early Medieval Ireland

Recent excavations carried out in advance of road building and other developments are going to transform our understanding of early medieval Ireland. A large number of secular settlements, ecclesiastical sites and non-ecclesiastical burials have been excavated. In addition, an entirely new category of site has been identified, the cemetery settlement (or settlement/cemetery): enclosed sites used for both occupation and burial but with no evidence for a church. Two research strategies are essential if the full implications of these sites are to be realised. The first is the collation and synthesis of all excavated sites, the principal aim of UCD/QUB's EMAP. The second is to look in detail at the landscape context of the excavated sites and to consider their relationship to other sites known from archaeological and/or documentary evidence. The *Making Christian Landscapes* project was initiated in 2008 to pursue this second research strategy. It is based in the Archaeology Department, University College Cork (UCC) and the team is interdisciplinary and international comprising archaeologists working in the commercial sector, archaeologists in universities in Ireland and Britain and historians.



Cross-slab marking the boundary of the ecclesiastical estate of Inis Úasal, Co. Kerry

The name of the project reflects the fact that the physical and conceptual transformation of the landscape during this period was intimately bound up with the arrival and development of a new religion – Christianity – and its attendant power structures. Landscape studies which look in detail at where and how people chose, or were obliged, to live, worship and be buried and how this changed over time are the best

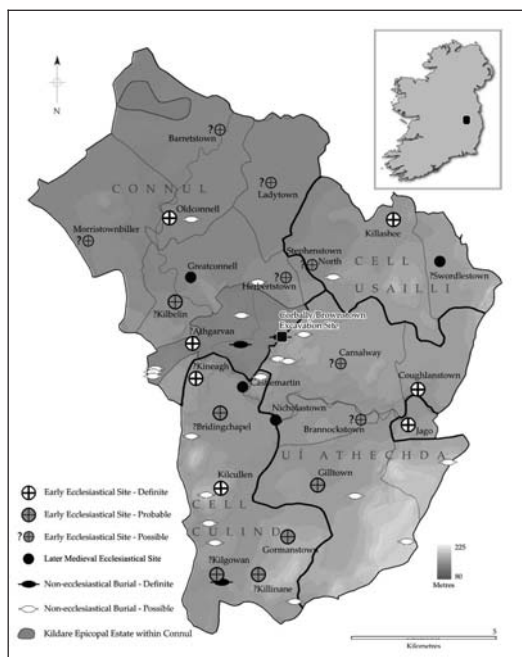
way to develop better understandings of this complex process. The importance of the process cannot be overstated; the basic pattern of ecclesiastical settlement and land-divisions was established by 1100 and persists in modified form to the present day.

Three regional studies, each comprising a number of case studies, form the core of the project: Leinster (selected areas), Galway (selected areas) and the early medieval kingdom of *Corcu Duibne*, Co. Kerry. All relevant strands of evidence – topography, land use, secular settlements, cemeteries, ecclesiastical sites, boundaries, landholdings and estates, routeways and pre-Christian monuments – are integrated into a coherent whole using GIS. The sheer bulk of the evidence means that this is only feasible for small areas comprising three or four contiguous parishes (60-100km²). In order to fully understand the patterns which emerge, the surrounding area, usually comprising a cantred (successor to the early medieval *triche cét*), is then subject to less intensive study. Within the core areas land use patterns are studied using Historic Landscape Characterisation. Very little HLC has been carried out in Ireland before now and this is the first time the method has been used for research rather than management purposes. It is proving to be very useful, especially in western areas where traces of medieval field systems are more likely to survive.

A key aim of the project is to investigate whether the process of *Making Christian Landscapes* varied from region to region. To what extent does the apparent diversity within and between regions – especially between the east and west of the country – reflect early medieval regionality or simply differential visibility? The uniform methodology employed is allowing us to compare regions systematically for the first time. Initial results suggest that once differences in land quality and in the nature of the archaeological and documentary record are taken into account, there is a remarkably consistent density of early ecclesiastical settlements across all areas, one which is much higher than in pre-Viking England. We believe that this is due to a relatively diffuse social structure which

meant that a higher proportion of the population was entitled to found churches.

In order to determine exactly what sections of society were founding churches, and who was living at cemetery settlements and burying their dead at other types of non-ecclesiastical cemeteries, it is essential to determine who owned the land on which these sites occur. Using a methodology developed by Paul MacCotter, we are reconstructing early medieval ecclesiastical and secular estates for the first time. We have been able to confirm that many churches were founded by minor secular proprietors. Initial results also suggest that the density of ecclesiastical sites is particularly high on ecclesiastical estates and that some of these estates are characterised by unusually large ringforts. It therefore appears that these different kinds of estate leave distinct signatures in the archaeological record.



Early medieval estates, ecclesiastical sites and non-ecclesiastical burials in the vicinity of Corbally, Co. Kildare, an early medieval cemetery excavated by Aegis Archaeology Ltd

We are finding little evidence to support the theory that a high proportion of Irish ecclesiastical sites are sited on boundaries. However this does seem to be true of the vast majority of non-ecclesiastical burials including ogham stones and barrows, though not cemetery settlements. In some

of the case study areas, cemetery settlements and other non-ecclesiastical burials, including some of Viking Age date, are turning out to be on ecclesiastical estates. This undermines the common assumption that 'non-ecclesiastical' burials occur only in areas outside of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and has prompted us to reconsider the relationship between burial and belief in this period.

The Principal Investigators of the project are Dr Tomás Ó Carragáin and John Sheehan of UCC. The Associate Investigators are Dr Sam Turner, University of Newcastle, historians Dr Paul MacCotter and Prof. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, UCC digital data manager Nick Hogan, UCC IRCHSS scholars Gill Boazman and Bernadette McCarthy, and two commercial companies, Aegis Archaeology and Munster Archaeology.

Each of the three regional studies will be published as a monograph. In addition, we plan to place the Irish evidence in its European context through a synthesis by Ó Carragáin and Turner and an international conference which will be held at UCC.

Tomás Ó Carragáin, Department of Archaeology, University College Cork.

See:

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/DepartmentsCentresandUnits/Archaeology/Research/ResearchGroupList/EarlyMedievalandVikingResearchGroup/EarlyMedievalandVikingResearchProjects/MakingChristianLandscapes/>

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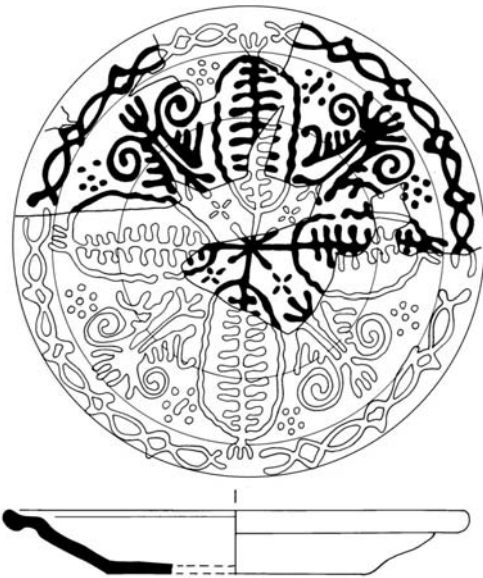
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T. Ó Carragáin 2009 'From family cemeteries to community cemeteries in Viking Age Ireland?' in C. Corlett and M. Potterton (eds.) *Life and death in early medieval Ireland in light of recent excavations* (Wordwell, Bray).

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NEWS & VIEWS

The **Medieval Pottery Research Group** (MPRG) is pleased to announce the publication of its third occasional paper: *The Harlow Pottery Industries* by Wally Davey and Helen Walker with contributions by Richard Bartlett, Mike Hughes and Alan Vince. Pottery was produced in Harlow, Essex, from the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries but it is the wares of the seventeenth century that are best known, in particular Metropolitan slipware. These highly decorated wares as well as plain redwares and black glazed wares are found on excavations as far flung as London, Newcastle upon Tyne, Dublin and the colonies of North America.



The publication is the result of many years work collecting, recording and researching the kilns and pottery of Harlow by a team of local enthusiasts led by Wally Davey. In collaboration with Helen Walker of Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, with grant funding from English Heritage and the support and encouragement of Harlow Museum Mr Davey has brought into the public domain years of accumulated knowledge of this important pottery industry.

Using four groups of Metropolitan slipware production waste, the report aims to

characterise the kiln products so that slipwares found at consumer sites can be more closely identified and dated than previously. The origins and affinities of the slipware industry are discussed and the report also summarises the evidence for a medieval industry and presents typologies of the 15th to 16th century wares and the black-glazed wares. The technological aspects of the pottery production are also examined and the results of scientific analysis of the glaze and clay fabric presented. In addition documentary research on the Harlow potters illuminates various aspects of this study from sourcing the raw materials to marketing the finished product. See: www.medievalpottery.org.uk

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SOCIETY NEWS

Dr. Sally Foster, Hon. Editor, provides the follows reflections:

Journal trends

The Editorial Committee has started to keep abreast of trends in the journal. Our starting point was seeking to understand the workings of the journal and to use this to inform our future strategies and operations. More recently, the European Science Foundation requested some statistics for inform its European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH) www.esf.org/research-areas/humanities/research-infrastructures-including-erih.html.

International activity

The ERIH initial list was published in 2007, rating *Medieval Archaeology* as a category A journal for archaeology ('high ranking international publications with a very strong reputation among researchers of the field in different countries, regularly cited all over the world', and category B for art history ('standard international publications with a good reputation among researchers of the field in different countries'). The stated aim of these lists is that they will help to identify excellence in humanities scholarship and prove useful for the aggregate benchmarking of national

research systems, for example, in determining the international standing of the research activity carried out in a given field in a particular country.

The ERIH approach is certainly not universally respected – for example, the 2007 British Academy *Peer Review: the challenges for the humanities and social sciences* states ‘the ERIH does not at present represent a reliable way in which summary measures of peer reviewed publications can be constructed’ (see: www.britac.ac.uk/reports/peer-review/contents.cfm, p 35 for explanation). Certainly, ambiguities attach to how we are to compile the statistics it now requests, let alone their value for assessment purposes. None the less, they do provide a basic index of international activity in the journal, so the Editorial Committee will continue to maintain and review them each year.

For *Medieval Archaeology* we can see that since 2004 the average percentage of non-UK authors/non-UK contributions is nearly 17%, with considerable variation between volumes (0-31%). A paper may have more than one author, the authors may come from different countries and, while a lead author may belong to the journal’s country of publication, the other authors and subject matter need not. We interpret a non-UK contribution as where the subject is non-UK and at least one of the authors is non-UK.

The number of countries of origin of accepted contributions per volume varies from one to three, but this becomes three to five if we break up the countries of the UK. The figure that the ERIH asks for therefore masks the efforts and achievements of the journal in securing pan-UK coverage. Beyond the UK, the following have all featured recently or will feature in Vol 53 (2009): Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Norway, Russia, Sweden, USA.

Publication rates

Over the last few years, our average publication rate is about 60% of submissions, with articles faring slightly more successfully than notes. A common issue is not meeting our significance threshold – we aim to publish material that

is of international significance or national significance and international interest. Sometimes authors withdraw contributions that we accept subject to modification because they do not feel able (for a variety of reasons) to make the level of changes we require. While this is disappointing, it is an inevitable consequence of seeking to maintain a certain standard.

Student contributions

Prompted by observations from the student representative on Council, Eleanor Standley, we have examined what published material stems from postgraduate research. For vols 50-53 (forthcoming), this appears to average a very respectable 20% or so of contributions, and that is after taking out the ‘distortion’ created by publishing (Vol 53 onwards) of abstracts of the winners of the John Hurst Award for the best undergraduate dissertations.

Journal length

The determining factors are the volume of notes and articles of sufficient quality that are ready for publication, and how much the Society can afford to publish above its ‘normal’ journal length. While Medieval Britain and Ireland is now slightly shorter in recent years, the Reviews section has increased in length, probably because of the RAE and certainly because of the efforts of our energetic Review Editor, Neil Christie.

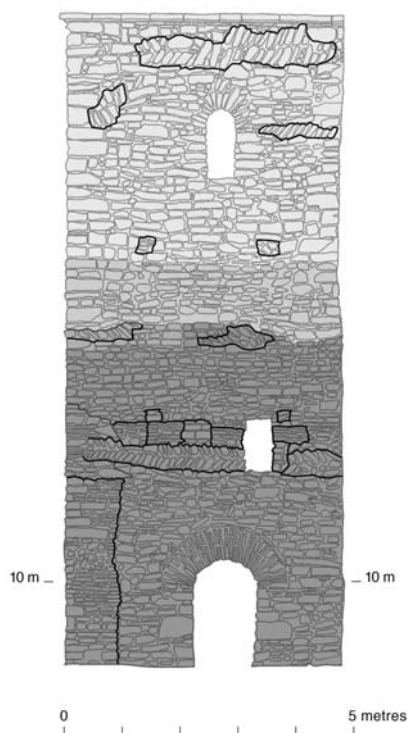
Hon Editor

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GRANTS AND AWARDS

Brixworth Archaeological Research Committee. The Society’s generous grant has contributed substantially to the funds available for a complex programme of technical drawing in preparation for the publication of 30 years’ research, it is hoped as a SMA monograph. As part of this programme a series of interpretive elevation drawings has been drafted. These are not only an essential aid to the understanding of the analytical text of the volume but have informed and facilitated the interpretation of the building and its sequences of construction.

Based on these archaeological 'stratigraphy' diagrams and the reconstructed ground plan of the first phase of All Saints' church, it has been possible to suggest the original form of the forebuilding (sometimes called 'narthex') at the west end of the building; this differs markedly from previous reconstruction proposals, and envisages a gallery-like chamber at first-floor level, at least across the full width of the nave, and possibly over all five compartments of the forebuilding. The accompanying illustrations present a draft of the interpretation drawing of the south elevation of the present tower and a draft possible reconstruction. Our illustrator continues to be engaged on the preparation of publication drawings; in the present grant period these have included eleven elevations showing the archaeological stratigraphy, one of which accompanies this report, a composite plan of excavations around the church undertaken since 1958 and the superimposition of remote-sensing data on the internal west elevation of the nave.



The pre-Conquest element of the tower south elevation at Brixworth, showing the archaeological 'stratigraphy'; the shading represents the different geological assemblages (draft)

Meanwhile there has been considerable progress in drafting text, which currently stands at some 95000 words. A substantial part of the main interpretation chapter is in draft and has been discussed by the committee before being finalised. Also, during 2008, a ground-penetrating radar survey (funded by the Society of Antiquaries) was undertaken in the church and churchyard, the preliminary results of which are being studied with interest.



Suggested reconstruction of the western forebuilding; the cut-away view shows the postulated upper chamber and the approach stairs in the turriform end chamber (draft)

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The **Durham Medieval Archaeologists** were awarded an SMA grant in 2008 to assist in running two successful workshops in an on-going series entitled *'The Sensory Perceptions in Medieval Society, AD450-1600'*. The workshops provide an informal arenas for the presentation and discussion of innovative, multi-disciplinary research centred on the classical senses in the medieval world. Speakers at the workshop exploring 'Medieval Taste and Scent' included Dr. Pam Graves (Archaeology, Durham University), Peter Brears (Food Historian) and Leona Skelton (History, Durham University). Papers explored the

medieval odours of urban spaces and places, incense, sensors and the odours of sanctity in medieval ecclesiastical contexts and medieval dining and eating. There was also a 'tasting session' with medieval dishes prepared by students and staff.

The workshop on 'Medieval Vision' brought together papers from Gwen Dales (Archaeology, Durham University), Dr. Claire Nesbitt (Archaeology, Durham University) and Mike Huxtable (English Studies, Durham University). It explored colour and metaphor in medieval England, light and symbolism in Byzantine churches and sculpture in Anglo-Saxon Mercia. Audiences ranged from c. 15-30. Different academic levels were represented, including undergraduates, established academics and independent researchers. The students gained experience of organising and chairing sessions and acting as discussants, and the series of excellent papers promoted cross-disciplinary debate, demonstrating the profit of an informal setting. A successful bid to the new AHRC grant scheme for postgraduate workshops and conferences has helped the development of the on-going series. We would like to thank the Society of Medieval Archaeology for their financial award and support for this venture.

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The **Eric Fletcher Fund** provided support to Michelle Munde who received £500 to aid in the cost of processing faunal samples for isotopic analysis in order to investigate the faunal evidence for human diet in medieval Spain. It complements an ongoing doctoral thesis which is exploring socio-religious change through the application of isotopic techniques to reveal religious and social status dietary differences, supervised by Drs Christopher Gerrard, Andrew Millard, and Alejandra Gutiérrez, Durham University.

Dietary isotopes offer the only method that can provide direct evidence for the diet of archaeological individuals. Michelle's doctoral research uses carbon ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$) and nitrogen ($\delta^{15}\text{N}$) isotopes to explore the

dietary differences between three cultures, Christians, Muslims and Jews in the multi-faith society of medieval Spain, a religious mix unique to western Europe at that time. Multi-faith societies existed in Iberia under changing religious rule, as Muslim *Al-Andalus* from the 8th century AD and as Christian kingdoms after the C13th *reconquista*. The intention is to assess differences in diet *between* individuals and *between* faith communities and to evaluate them under differing political control over an extended time period.



Human and faunal samples have been collected from recent, well-recorded and dated archaeological excavations in the regionally autonomous communities of Aragon and Valencia in NE Spain. Early results from human data demonstrate the potential to investigate numerous issues, including trends within and differences between Christian and Muslim diet; food intake, gender and social status; urban vs. rural diet and coastal vs. inland diet. However, data from contemporaneous faunal material is essential to understand the isotopic variation within the food sources available at the time and therefore understand exactly which food stuffs carried the chemical signatures that have produced the observed differences between my human bone collagen samples.

The monies from the Eric Fletcher Fund, were invested in the processing of samples at Durham University. The results are expected to aid in the interpretation of the human isotopic dietary data and reveal animal husbandry practices in Medieval Spain. They may, for example, confirm the

presence of possible human immigrants identified in the sample from Jaca, investigate the possibility of transhumance at Albracín and elucidate foddering practices in use at Benipeixcar, Gandia.

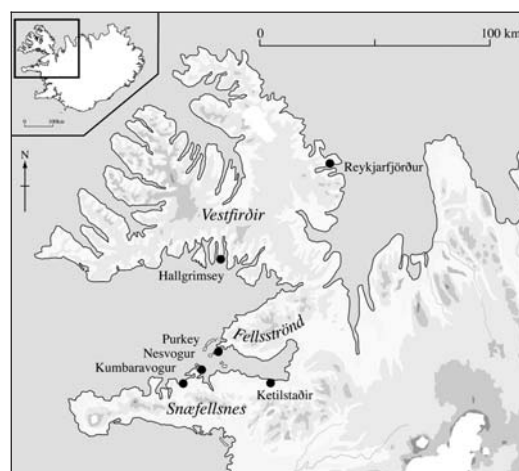
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Dr. Mark Gardiner was awarded an SMA grant to assist his collaborative project, **Late Medieval English and Hanseatic Fishing and Trading Sites in Iceland**. In the period between about 1408 and 1602 merchants and fishermen from England and Germany pushed northwards into the waters around Iceland to obtain fish for the European markets. The German vessels gathered their supplies by exchanging cloth and meal for wind-dried cod and whiting caught by Icelandic fishermen. The English, increasingly excluded from the main trading centres by the Hanseatic merchants, tended to catch their own fish, though they too supplemented their catches with dried fish obtained by barter.

During the last three years we have been undertaking survey work to examine these fishing and trading sites on the west side of Iceland (Gardiner and Mehler 2007). The survey has been a joint project between Queen's University Belfast, the Römisch-Germanische Kommission of the German Archaeological Institute and the University of Vienna, with assistance from the Fornleifastofnun Íslands (Institute of Archaeology, Reykjavík). The survey in 2008 was extended to cover part of Snæfellsnes and the West Fjords in the west and north-west of Iceland. Sites were located from historical records, place-names and through oral tradition. Field survey was undertaken using differential GPS, either to record the outline of the earthworks or, where appropriate, to make detailed records to produce digital terrain models.

The survey in May 2008 began on the south side of the wide bay of Breiðafjörður at one of the main German trading sites, Kumbaravogur. We had first visited the site two years earlier and had recorded the main trading base on the west of the bay. Since

then, study of historical records has allowed us to identify a second site on the east of the bay used by German merchants in the late sixteenth century. The farmer showed us the probable site on the tidal island of Landey. It occupies a point on the shore above a suitable anchorage. The site is marked by a complex set of earthworks which have been partially eroded by the sea



Detail from map of Iceland showing the study area

Merchants from Oldenburg and Bremen sometimes also used a further trading site a short distance away by sail at Nesvogur. The bay is a long inlet close to the present-day port of Stykkishólmur, but it would have been possible to sail a ship only into the outer part of the bay. German records note that a timber booth or storage building for goods was erected by the Oldenburg merchants at Nesvogur in the 1580s, but it was demolished a few years later by their rivals from Bremen who subsequently built their own. A careful study of the whole of the seaward end of Nesvogur bay failed to identify the site of the anchorage or the trading place.

We were more successful on the island of Purkey which lies in the middle of Breiðafjörður. The owners of the island took us out there by boat and we walked across the width of the island to the site of Kaupmannalágar (the merchants' hollow) which is marked by the earthworks of two long buildings lying across the base of a deep valley. These are much larger than any fifteenth- or sixteenth-century trading buildings we have seen and are more likely to belong to an earlier period.

Place-names suggested a possible trading site near the east end of Breiðafjörður at Ketilstaðir, but a visit to the area indicated that this was a very improbable landing place. The fjord at that point is very shallow and quite unsuitable for large ships. That night we stopped at Borðeyri, mainly because it is one of the few places to stay in that part of Iceland, but it was also a well-known trading site in the past. It was used during the Commonwealth period (tenth to mid-thirteenth century) and again after 1848. It is not known as a site of late medieval English and German trade, though the site does provide an excellent natural harbour on Húnaflói. A brief examination showed that the later houses and warehouses would have entirely removed any earthworks from earlier buildings.

The final site surveyed was a series of earthworks marking buildings on the north side of Reykjarfjörður. The site is notable because of its name – Kaupmannahöfn (merchants' harbour) – but it also lies directly opposite the site of Kúvikur on the far side of the fjord. That became a trading site during the Danish monopoly (1602-1787) and it is possible that Kaupmannahöfn was its predecessor.

The 2008 season completes our preliminary survey of late medieval English and German trading sites in the west and north-west of Iceland, which was the most important area for foreign trade. It has allowed us to get an overview of the type of sites chosen for trading posts, and to select the most suitable for further investigation.

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For information on how to apply for a Society grant/award, see our website www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/awards.htm

CINEMA

From Hagia Sophia to the Royal Academy, from Piazza del Campo to the Perth Playhouse: showing Bond, Byzantium and Sienna

As a medievalist, the exhibition highlight of 2008 is undoubtedly the Royal Academy of Arts blockbuster, *Byzantium 330-1453* (Oct 2008-March 2009). It is the first major, international UK-based exhibition on Byzantium for 50 years, though there have been significant national exhibitions (in 1978 at Chichester District Museum and in 1994 at the British Museum); many of the objects in the BM exhibition (Buckton 1994) reappear here, alongside a wealth of new-comers. The RA exhibition was laid out over ten rooms with a clear chronological progression (both room to room and within each room/theme) tracing the following themes: 'Introduction', 'Constantine the Great', 'Justinian the Great', 'Iconoclasm', 'At Court', 'At Home', 'At Church', 'Icons', 'Byzantium and the West', 'Beyond Byzantium' and 'Sinai'. The exhibition was styled, with engaging politeness, as an 'invitation to assess the artistic expression of a culture that survived and adapted to historical changes in the Mediterranean over more than a 1000 years from its foundation on 11 May 330 to its Islamic conquest on 29 May 1453'. It certainly fulfils its invitation and the range and artistic understanding of the 300+ artefacts it displays could not but fail to be stirring: intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Of the many highlights I confine myself to three:

- A wooden relief with besieged city, made in Egypt in the 5th century. It is intricately and exquisitely carved and shows a Byzantine army capturing a city, possibly an historical incident, possibly a Biblical episode (possibly both). My immediate reaction was how the city rose Minas Tirith-like and how readily perceivable it was as an inspiration for both Tolkien and his latter-day pictorial interpreter Alan Lee.
- A 12th century silver-gilt perfume brazier in the form of a domed building

(‘one of the most exquisite objects in the Treasury of St Marks’) possibly representing the church of the Holy Apostles, Constantinople. It is redolent with devotional purpose (encompassing several sensory perceptions, including olfactory) and with East-West contacts; later it was adapted to contain the relic of ‘blood that flowed from a crucifix shattered by a pagan in Beirut in 320.’ I was very struck by its depiction of the vices as a group of fabulous beasts and the singular ‘cherub with its head in an upturned basket.’ Though chronologically far apart their motif-similarity with elements in early medieval Pictish stone sculpture remains striking. A cross-slab in Glamis (Henderson and Henderson 2004, pl.33), for example, shows an upright cauldron with two upturned figures projecting from it which may be an exegetically related image of vice, whilst incorporating its own cultural nuance?

- A 6th-8th century child’s linen tunic, from Egypt. How wonderful to have such a poignant reminder of the longevity of hooded-culture (itself no stranger to medieval monasticism).

As much as we (I was accompanied by my teenage daughter) enjoyed the exhibition I did have one or two reservations relating to its content and display dynamics. Between 1958 (with *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art* at the Edinburgh Festival and the V&A) and 2008 there has been a huge amount of archaeological endeavour (both land-based and ship-wrecks) into the Byzantine past (not least in its extensive system of aqueducts bringing water into Constantinople’s cisterns – Crow et al 2008) but I perceived no sense of this being reflected in the RA’s exhibition. It preferred to stay within the canon of Byzantine art and rely solely on the discourse of art history. The sumptuous catalogue whilst providing valuable additional data and comment does not seriously depart from this discourse. It is not that the approach taken is in any sense wrong or unwarranted but it does mean that we do not get an entirely rounded portrayal of Byzantine society; rather we have an undiluted focus on social elites. Echoing the 2006 York

Museum exhibition on *Constantine* (Hall 2006) Egyptian-made costume is required to carry the burden of showing what was worn throughout the Empire. Yet in the exhibition we learn nothing about the dynamics of the making of and the wearing of the fantastic hooded tunic; the catalogue entry adds nothing on the tunic’s provenance of discovery. The absence of broader social structures is perhaps most noticeable in the section ‘At Home’, the introductory text of which refers to urban homes as ‘poorly constructed with small, mean rooms ...’ and of ‘domestic possessions’ as being ‘best known today through grave goods ... including clothes, shoes and figurines and through buried hoards.’ It develops this no further and the objects displayed in that section only reinforced a sense of the everyday for elites only. There were also some notable omissions of representation, including only a minimal inclusion of stone sculpture and no references at all to board games and dicing. Although the wider pleasure principle is hinted at through depictions of public games in the arena other aspects of play and leisure are ignored. Byzantium’s trade and political links with Islam made it an important conduit for example for chess. One adaptation of this game is even known as Byzantine chess and in later times chess was seen as an appropriate medium for describing contacts between Charlemagne’s court and that of Constantinople.

The exhibition’s labelling was towards the minimalist end of the spectrum (with a smattering of more detailed labels) and at times felt as if it were ashamed to be sharing case-space with objects and in the mainly dim lighting (compounded by shadow effects) labels were very difficult to see and read. Too much text is as bad as too little of course – as it was two-and-a-half hours to do the exhibition with reasonable thoroughness was more than enough for my daughter and more labelling/text would have made it unfeasibly long for a single visit. Of course this is where the catalogue (invaluable in revealing details on some objects that were barely visible in the exhibition) and the range of ancillary activities (including talks) come into their own but these do put the visitor at extra

expense and the excellent series of talks was not practical if you lived outside London. The exhibition design was over subtle for my taste, with hints at architecture in two or three rooms, perhaps most successfully in the space dealing with Justinian, which placed back-lit copies of 19th-century watercolours of the Hagia Sophia on the walls and overhead hung a huge circle of lights echoing a chandelier. Generally, however, throughout the exhibition opportunities to contextualise with images and reconstructions was lost, including a golden one with respect to the two gold body-chains. Although one of the two is displayed on a grey, anonymous female dummy-torso, there was no deployment of any contemporary Roman depictions of such chains being worn.

The film was particularly effective in charting the reception of Byzantine culture, more so in the contemporary context THEN (though it said nothing about any Islamic reception following the conquest of Constantinople); less so in more recent times (the exhibition aside of course). A particular revelation for me was Moscow positioning itself, after the capture of Constantinople, as the 'New Rome', the natural successor to both Constantinople and Rome. This appropriation included usurping the Constantinople relic ritual of the Hodgeteria as depicted in a 1498(?) textile icon from Moscow (?). More perfunctorily the exhibition notes the history of academic reception in more recent centuries, charting changes in the taste for Byzantine art as expressed by Voltaire, Ruskin and Yeats. The 'Introduction' quotes from Yeats' poem *Sailing to Byzantium*, but perhaps misses a trick in terms of modern reception by ignoring the appropriation of Byzantium by the 20th century's greatest art medium, film.

The same poem of Yeats' already referred to gives the title to the Coen brothers' 2007 film, *No Country For Old Men* (also the title of Cormac McCarthy's novel, which the film adapts). There are several other films one could discuss, including the second (as filmed) *Star Wars* trilogy (episodes 1-3) in which the royal palace of Naboo is directly based on Hagia Sophia,

all of which (like the exhibition) chime with a couple of lines (a poetic pre-affirmation of the notion of memes?) from Yeats' later poem *Byzantium*: 'These images that yet / Fresh images beget ...' Perhaps though the most notable filmic appropriation is the 007 adventure, *From Russia With Love* (a title which now gains a playful Cold War irony referencing Moscow's self-styling itself the 'New Rome'). The main setting of the 1963 film in Istanbul takes great advantage of the city's Byzantine past and its Islamic transition (including Hagia Sophia), perhaps most notably with a couple of scenes set in the Basilica Cistern. This was built under the Stoa Basilica by Constantine and rebuilt and much enlarged under Justinian in 6th century (in the film only Constantine gets a mention) providing water to royal and other buildings into modern times. In the film it is used as a secret British route to spy on the Russian Embassy – in reality the Russian Embassy is no where near the Cistern but away on the other side of the Golden Horn – a witty metaphor substituting for the court politics of the 6th century and later those of the mid 20th century Cold War.

The Bond films have in fact made regular forays into Italy's Byzantine and medieval past. Italy's surviving medieval past has been a staple of 007 film locations, including *Casino Royale* (2007), in which, with the matter-of-factness of narrative collateral damage, a 16th century Venetian town-house under-going conservation, is destroyed. Prior to that *From Russia With Love*, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, *Moonraker* and *For Your Eyes Only* all deployed Italian medieval urban settings (including Venice on a further two occasions). The unexpected pleasure of the most recent, *Quantum of Solace* (2008) is its reception of the medieval, painted through its early sequence in Sienna. Having survived a murderous car chase through northern Italy 007 arrives in Sienna and a secret MI6 base in the cellars and sewers beneath and around the Piazza del Campo (built in the 14th century). Bond arrives during the staging of the world-famous horse race, *Il Palio de Sienna* (itself the subject of a US documentary film made in 1950: *Granddad of the Races*). The race is held twice per

annum and has been a key element of the city's celebration of its devotion to the Virgin Mary (Sienna's principal saint) since at least the early 14th century (moving to the Campo in the late 16th century). The first race is held on 2nd July (to coincide with the Feast of the Visitation) and the second race on the 16th August, to follow-on from the Feast of the Assumption on the 15th. Today the race and its accompanying pageant is a huge tourist-draw and has become itself a reception of the medieval, being performed in medieval-style costume and with medieval-style ceremony. The film both captures the tourist reception of Sienna's medieval past as a narrative back-drop (an example of a wider cinema trope of deploying naturalistic crowd scenes, a sub-genre of which is tourist/heritage crowds, e.g. the Roman amphitheatre in Arles as used in *Ronin*, e.g. the Mississippi River Museum in *The Firm*) but also adds to and appropriates this. It may only be chronological coincidence but *Quantum of Solace* not only follows close on the heels of *Casino Royale* but also the National Gallery of London's exhibition *Renaissance Sienna* (Oct 2007-Jan 2008 and which included documentary footage of the *Il Palio*) and unites these two strands with Bond's arrival in Sienna, which in part we perceive through a long-shot revealing much of the medieval (Renaissance) cityscape, dominated by the civic bell-tower, the Torre del Mangia (built 1325-48) and the Campo and more than a little redolent of Beccafiumi's early 1540s brown ink and wash views of Sienna (Syson 2007, 300; Syson was also a contributor to the 1994 Byzantium catalogue). Although these two depictions are separated by politico-cultural contexts, they do share related visual-entertainment values. The film's long-shot is its window through which we enter the Renaissance city on one of the two days of the *Il Palio*. The film not only deploys the race as a colourful, narratively convenient backdrop that dramatises the medieval city but also usurps that narrative drama with 007's pursuit of an assassin across the roof-tops and balconies in the vicinity of the Campo, until reaching the Torre del Mangia. There, and in an adjacent building, a fatal (for the assassin, of course) fight scene skilfully

reinvents (using bell-ropes and conservator's scaffolding and pulleys) the climactic duel from *The Adventures of Quentin Durwood* (UK 1955, using bell-ropes and a burning, French, monastic bell-tower). The original narrative of the latter was, of course, penned by that great inventor of medieval narrative, Sir Walter Scott. The film then can be readily situated within a nexus (noting in punning-passing the *OED*'s secondary meaning of nexus as 'bond') of medieval receptions, which adds to its high achievement in entertainment value.

Mark A Hall, Perth Museum & Art Gallery

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FUTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

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