



CIFA2021 ONLINE: ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ONLINE 2021

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SESSION TITLE

Celebrating academic and early career research

SESSION ABSTRACT

What's new? This session will provide a platform for student-led and early careers research through presentations that explore the new and exciting academic research currently being undertaken in archaeology. Each of our ten presenters will shine a spotlight on the latest research, approaches, methods and its potential applications and implications for the wider historic environment sector.

SESSION PROGRAMME

13:15 – 13:20	Welcome! <i>Chair, Jen Parker Wooding, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists</i>
13:20 – 13:35	Beginnings of Neolithic pottery production in the Eastern Balkans <i>Tanya Dzhanfezova, University of Oxford</i>
13:35 – 13:50	The Case of Tadmor-Palmyra: Reception Studies as a Future for Archaeological Research <i>Rory McInnes-Gibbons, Durham University</i>
13:50 – 14:05	Why recycle glass? The answer is clear?: Experimental glass recycling using a wood-fired glassworking furnace <i>Victoria Lucas, Newcastle University</i>
14:05 – 14:20	A multidisciplinary approach to reconstructing the lived-experience of medieval English sufferers of Hansen's Disease and 'leprosy' <i>Alette Blom, University of Cambridge</i>
14:20 – 14:35	'Are you sitting comfortably?': a dis/ability story from the Romano-British cemetery at Alington Avenue, Dorset <i>Stephanie Evelyn-Wright, University of Southampton</i>
14:35 – 14:45	Q&A
14:45 – 15:00	Break
15:00 – 15:05	Welcome back
15:05 – 15:20	Tut on Tour: 60-years of Demand Creation through Exhibition <i>Summer Austin, University College London</i>
15:20 – 15:35	The economic and social value of archaeology to Caithness <i>Kenneth McElroy, University of Glasgow</i>

15:35 – 15:50	Assessing the effect distribution and densities of archaeological sites have on the detection rates of archaeological evaluation techniques <i>Richard Higham, University of Brighton</i>
15:50 – 16:05	Future-proofing cultural heritage sites: an analysis of the response to climate change and the implications of sea-level rise <i>Courtney Piper, Durham University</i>
16:05 – 16:20	Remote sensing for the reconstruction and mapping of archaeological resources in alluvial environments <i>Nicolas Crabb, University of Brighton</i>
16:20 – 16:30	Q&A

SPEAKER ABSTRACTS

Beginnings of Neolithic pottery production in the Eastern Balkans

Tanya Dzhanfezova, University of Oxford

Neolithization of the Balkans is a complex prehistoric process associated with movements of people, objects, and ideas transferred from the early centres in Asia into the new European territories.

This project recovers and interprets the hidden technological variability in the first prehistoric pottery in the Eastern Balkans – a crossroads area bridging the two continents. By applying multi-analytical and cross-disciplinary approaches, it examines the innovative adaptations to local conditions that the adoption of pottery production, as a new technology, must have involved.

Regionally, specific decorative styles were associated with groups of population that shared common territories and, amongst the rest, similar aesthetic views expressed in material culture. Special focus is thus placed on one of the hallmarks of this period – the painted ceramic wares. Each technological component is interpreted in the context of the local raw materials (availability) and the site-specific technical approaches (decision making), thus helping us understand inceptive pottery production in its complexity.

The Case of Tadmor-Palmyra: Reception Studies as a Future for Archaeological Research

Rory McInnes-Gibbons, Durham University

Between 2015 and 2017, many of the Roman Syrian city of Palmyra's ancient monuments including the temples of Bel and Baalshamin were destroyed by Islamic State militants. As a result, over a century of continuous archaeological research into the city's unique civilisation has been suspended with no obvious return date for European-led excavations.

What could prove fallow years in the field of Palmyrene Studies - which has previously depended upon archaeology for its primary material - can in fact be a productive period for the study of the place. While established art history projects like the Palmyra Portrait Project have transformed the archival resources around the city, I believe, classical reception has been and will continue to be an important contributor to the field.

My research focuses on historiography and the legacy of European interaction with the ancient city in sources such as travel literature and the vast archive of visual material. By investigating each episode of reception from the city's rediscovery for the West in 1678 through to the tragic modern-day destruction, I aim to produce an archaeology of the Western experience of Palmyra.

In this presentation, I hope to give an overview of my project and introduce Palmyra and the important role of archaeological reception in the modern academy to a wider audience.

Rory McInnes-Gibbons is a third year PhD candidate in the Department of Classics & Ancient History at Durham University. He works under a triumvirate of supervisors led by Professor Ted Kaizer, accompanied by Dr Edmund Thomas and Dr Nora Goldschmidt. He is currently putting the finishing touches to a thesis entitled, "The Reception of the Ruins of Palmyra in the Long Eighteenth Century: 1678-1820

Why Recycle Glass? The Answer is Clear? Experimental glass recycling using a wood-fired glassworking furnace

Victoria Lucas, Newcastle University

The life histories of glass artefacts are complex, the inherent transmutable nature of glass lending itself to recycling and to distinct objects returning to a common 'pool' of glass numerous times to be reformed. The chemical composition of glass reflects this; containing not just the life history of the object itself but allowing access to a tapestry of past glassworkers technological and decision-making practices that form part of a deeper biography. It is important to include recycling in any big picture view of glass compositional analysis, and the study of the emergence of new glass groups, recipes, and technologies. Therefore, a greater understanding of the effects of repeated recycling on glass composition and working properties is vital.

Reliance on anecdotal information from modern glassworkers – working with electric and gas-fired furnaces; with highly oxidising atmospheres and stable, high temperatures – has led to the widespread assumption that glass can only be recycled a very limited number of times before it becomes unworkable due to loss of flux. However, an accurate picture of recycling in antiquity cannot be obtained without considering the impact of the use of a wood fire on the furnace environment and temperature regulation; and their effects upon the chemical composition and working properties of glass.

This paper will present the results of the first experimental work to test assumptions about how we can recognise past glass recycling, and the effects of repeated recycling on glass, using period-appropriate fuel and furnace structure. The work adopts an approach combining experimental archaeology, chemical analysis, and expert craftsperson knowledge; to produce a picture of recycling that will deepen understanding of the links between craftsperson experience, chemical composition, technological practice, and object biography.

A multidisciplinary approach to reconstructing the lived-experience of medieval English sufferers of Hansen's Disease and 'leprosy'

Alette Blom, University of Cambridge

Hansen's Disease (HD) - colloquially known as leprosy - is one of the most culturally-laden diseases of human history, largely attributable to dramatic and debilitating physical lesions. Although we now know that the chance and severity of infection depend upon immune system proficiency, 'leprosy',

and those inflicted with it, have frequently been the subject of negative generalisations resulting from the conflation of HD with 'Biblical leprosy'. This stigma was further aggravated by hyperbolic interpretations/translations of medieval texts in the 19th and 20th century and has led to negative and homogenous portrayal of 'lepers' in literature, art and even medicine.

Historic research in the last two decades has however redefined the concept of individuals suffering from HD as one uniform and ostracized group. This re-examination has highlighted the amount of variation that may have existed in the lives of sufferers based on their status, gender, age, location, severity of lesions, and more significantly, personal choice. This new image has unfortunately received scant attention in bioarchaeological research, despite its ability to contribute substantially to such questions. The analysis of human skeletal remains, our most direct source of evidence on the experiences of past peoples, represents a unique opportunity to reconstruct and narrate individual lives from varying social strata and can highlight variation in how HD impacted someone's life-course in medieval England.

This paper will discuss how a re-evaluation of HD-related human skeletal remains excavated by commercial and academic archaeology in the last decades can shed new light on the questions posed by the historic field. Combining osteological, sociohistoric, archaeological and biomolecular data my research aims to reconstruct several life-courses of medieval English individuals suffering from HD and 'leprosy' to identify the variation between people from different geographic regions, time periods, social strata and burial contexts. By narrating these reconstructed lives, we can exemplify variation and contingencies in life experiences, and move beyond current stereotypes.

'Are you sitting comfortably?': a dis/ability story from the Romano-British cemetery at Alington Avenue, Dorset

Stephanie Evelyn-Wright, University of Southampton

Feminist scholars in archaeology have been experimenting with alternative academic writing styles, a particularly compelling example of which has been the use of the fictive narratives. The fictive narrative writing approach has been heavily influential in research, exploring the themes of impairment and dis/ability through the examination of osteological data from the later Roman period cemetery site of Alington Avenue, Dorset. Initially, the fictive narrative style allowed the author to better integrate different data sets together. It was discovered, however, that this style of writing is especially helpful when exploring the experiential aspects of palaeopathology. The fictive narrative style also makes research more accessible to a wider audience, something that is particularly important in a study about disability, a discipline embroiled in a long fight for improved accessibility. In this paper I present one such fictive narrative showcasing data collected from the Romano-British cemetery site of Alington Avenue and presents the insight gleaned concerning dis/ability at the site. It is hoped that this paper will act as a mechanism to kickstart debate as to the nature of dis/ability and the mechanisms by which we present such data. I hope that conference delegates will provide feedback as to the impact that such a narrative approach had on their understanding of the site of Alington Avenue, the time period and the local experience of the individuals in my story.

Tut on Tour: 60-years of Demand Creation through Exhibition

Summer Austin, University College London

Tut on Tour is a multidisciplinary investigation into influences that create, enhance and normalise demand for acquiring antiquities. Using the 'original museum blockbuster' — Tutankhamun — as the

case study, this research investigates the antiquity market's reaction to blockbuster exhibitions by gathering and quantifying 60-years of exhibition history, collecting trends, price fluctuation, profit margins, marketing techniques and results. The objective of this study is to introduce reliable data to the crucial debate concerning the relationship between museum exhibitions, end-market demand and the antiquities market.

This research explores how Tut blockbusters exhibitions function as active agents in generating demand for Egyptian antiquities. The market for Egyptian antiquities is a demand-driven economic system predicated on collectors and museums acquiring antiquities. Using a dual-methodological approach by analysing auction catalogues, primary resources and targeted interviews, this study will measure, quantify and contextualise the inter-relationship between museums and the market. Based on initial results, this study will present evidence to support the hypothesis that blockbuster exhibitions generate measurable market demand for their subject-matter.

This research provides necessary reflections regarding the repercussions current of blockbusters exhibitions; today's society prioritises transparent accountability, ethically focused, culturally collaborative and morally responsible exhibitions; this research helps guide the next generation of museum blockbusters.

The economic and social value of archaeology to Caithness

Kenneth McElroy, University of Glasgow

In this presentation I shall explore some of my dissertation research undertaken in February and March 2021. My dissertation explores the 'Value' - both economic and social - of archaeology to my home region, Caithness, the most northerly county on the UK mainland. The research here can be seen as a reaction to the closure of Dounreay, the local nuclear power plant, which accounts for roughly 1 in 5 jobs in the region; the effects of this closure could potentially be devastating. With this borne in mind, Caithness now needs to diversify employment, and seek new forms of opportunity and economic security. I believe archaeology may fulfill such a role, and so through my research I hope to better understand the touristic potential in the archaeology of Caithness. Additionally, though 'well-being and archaeology' is a burgeoning area of research, there have been few investigations at local authority level. Identity and belonging form an important part of well-being, and so I am interested in understanding how archaeology is perceived in Caithness - an area which has hitherto neglected to make the most of its heritage assets - and whether local communities view the archaeological landscape of Caithness as a component of their identity. In short - will the past play a part in the future of Caithness?

Assessing the effect distribution and densities of archaeological sites have on the detection rates of archaeological evaluation techniques

R. Higham¹, C.Carey², J.Corcoran³, D. Knight⁴, M. Brolly⁵, J. Cole⁶

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Evaluation strategies such as trial trenching are an integral stage of archaeological work in the developer led framework of the UK. Previous research into the effectiveness of evaluation strategies (Haneca et al., 2016; Hey and Lacey, 2001; Verhagen and Borsboom, 2009; Waller, 2008) has not provided an optimal sampling interval or strategy for the detection of archaeological features prior to mitigation in all environments. This research analyses the effect of the distribution and density of archaeological finds and features within a defined area, on the outcomes of different archaeological sampling evaluation techniques. Using ArcGIS, different layouts of archaeological trial trenches and test pits are repeatedly simulated over different archaeological distributions of; uniform, grouped, patchy, gradient, and random layouts of archaeology. These distributions of archaeology are simulated with low, medium, and high densities of archaeology allowing for each distribution and density to be analysed together. The trial trench and test pit layouts are simulated over the sites at different percentage coverage of 1 to 15 percent. The ability of the different sampling approaches to detect archaeological features of different sizes, types, periods, and rareness, provides insight into the variability of results within archaeological evaluation. For various distributions and densities of archaeological features, lower percentage coverage distorts detection patterns. This creates the risk of non-representative evaluation data informing mitigation strategies.

Future-Proofing Cultural Heritage Sites: An Analysis of the Response to Climate Change and the Implications of Sea-Level Rise

Courtney Piper, University of Durham

This discussion addresses the current state of knowledge for sea-level rise affecting coastal sites and highlights how new partnerships and unified citizen science-based approaches are proving integral for climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in the sector. This is evident through two cases of innovation, including Scotland's nationwide approach and a digital mapping project, The Digital Index of North American Archaeology (DINAA), in the Southeastern United States. The combined methods can be applicable for the budding number of coastal sites at risk, with the practical application expanding outside the consequence of SLR but to the varied climate change effects, and archaeological sites, worldwide.

Remote Sensing for the Reconstruction and Mapping of Archaeological Resources in Alluvial Environments

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The deposition of fine-grained alluvial sediments within river floodplains can bury, conceal, and preserve archaeological sites and features. For development-led projects this is problematic, as alluvial sediments are often thick, preventing the detection of archaeological resources through standard prospection techniques (e.g. gradiometer survey and aerial photography). Consequently, the analysis of alluvial sediment sequences to define zones of archaeological/paleoenvironmental potential is often a requirement during the planning or mitigation stages of developments in river valley locations. This is normally achieved through intrusive investigations, such as boreholes/coring or trial trenching allied with topographic data to enable deposit modelling; the recording of sub-surface sediments and stratigraphy, to identify geomorphological variation. However, the analysis of alluvial landform assemblages from remotely sensed data has significant potential to aid the investigation of these environments.

This research provides an assessment of the capability of contemporary remote sensing techniques (LiDAR, Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), and satellite and UAS-mounted multi/hyperspectral imagery) to model geomorphological components of river valleys and identify their archaeological potential. It reviews previous applications and provides a case study from the Lower Lugg valley, Herefordshire, where these datasets are compared with ground-based sediment sampling. The results demonstrate these techniques can provide considerable insights into the geomorphological complexity and variability of alluvial landscapes. This is especially pertinent from a planning perspective, as the application of remote sensing systems can, therefore, facilitate a more cost-effective and detailed representation of archaeological resources within these environments and offers a further significant dataset, prior to targeted intrusive works. However, the processing and interpretation of this data is complex and will require geoarchaeologists to be trained in analysing these techniques to realise its full potential within a commercial context.