

Seminar Series 2020-2021

Seminar 1: 22nd October 2020, 4pm

Prof. Rebecca Sweetman, University of St Andrews

Title: **Mobility and the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity**

Abstract

The term Christianization refers to both the means and end-result of conversion to Christianity. To date studies of literary data and material culture such as architecture and epigraphy have enabled scholars to focus more on the impact of Christianity than on the actual spread in the Eastern Mediterranean. The consequence of this has been that while a great deal has been done to counter traditional views of the negative elements of conversion, such as destruction of temples, and even highlight the more positive aspects such as a peaceful transition, we are still left with more nebulous views of how and why Christianization was so successful. This paper will explore evidence for movement of people and goods in the Eastern Mediterranean with the aim of understanding the practicalities of the spread of Christianity.

Hosted on Zoom (for link contact archaeology.society@ucd.ie)

Seminar 2: 5th November 2020, 4pm

Dr Michael Potterton, Maynooth University

Title: **The Maynooth Lough Crannog**

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, research excavations at the remarkable multi-period crannog site at **Moynagh Lough in Co. Meath** were directed by the late John Bradley, at first through the (then) Department of Archaeology at UCD and later through the Department of History at Maynooth University. Work has now recommenced on this fascinating project, with collaboration between UCD, MU and the Royal Irish Academy, among others. In due course, the publication of the full report will make a very significant contribution to the archaeological record. Only a handful of Irish excavations have yielded such a breadth of information, covering almost every major period from Mesolithic to Medieval. This illustrated lecture will take the audience through some of the most intriguing discoveries, the history of the excavation, current research and future plans.

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Seminar 3: 19th November 2020, 4pm

Dr Benjamin Elliot, Newcastle University

Title: **Masks Unmasked: Rethinking concepts of personhood 40,000- 4,000 BC**

The making, wearing, and discarding masks plays an important role in expressions of culture for people on all continents of the globe. In 2020, attitudes towards the wearing of masks have been thrown into sharp relief by the COVID-19 pandemic, and public health advice concerning the protection offered by respiratory face coverings. Donning, wearing, doffing and disposing of masks now takes on new, often politically charged, significance.

The Masks Unmasked project, which began in October 2019, looks to critically examine the evidence for mask wearing within the hunter-gatherer communities who established themselves across Europe during the Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods. It aims to review the mooted depictions of masked individuals within the corpus of mobiliary and parietal “art”, the burial record, and wearable material culture made from modified animal skulls. In doing so, it seeks to develop an understanding of the different roles that masks and masking played in Europe’s hunter-gatherer past. This paper will present a selection of interim findings from this study.

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Seminar 4: 3rd December 2020, 10am

Dr Damien Huffer, Stockholm University

Title: Getting a Head at All Costs: The Human Remains Trade as a Unique Threat to Global Cultural Heritage

This presentation summarizes ongoing research occurring within the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded The Bone Trade Project (<https://bonetrade.github.io/>). In general, this project is beginning to identify and map the online human remains trade across various social media and e-commerce platforms. As a summary presentation, I will highlight key points of methodologies used especially where they compliment or further the use of the digital humanities 'toolbox' and established and novel machine learning techniques to understand how this collecting community functions, what we can know of their complex morals and ethics, how they negotiate a complex legal landscape, and from which populations the human remains trafficked possibly originate. The examples given will be discussed in the context of how and why counteracting the human remains trade is relevant to the preservation of global heritage and the ability of osteoarchaeologists and descent communities to understand the human condition in centuries or millennia past.

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