

Introduction

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The Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium was created in 2007 to provide a platform for research students and early career archaeologists focusing on the early medieval period (c. AD 300 – 1200) to discuss and present their work at the professional level. It serves to connect these students and early career researchers to each other and to a wider network of early medieval archaeologists. In recent years, the symposium has become a major event at which new and interdisciplinary research is presented.

Given the degree of new research presented in the field and the importance of students and early career researchers to our academic inquiry of the past, the EMASS 2018 Organising Committee felt it important that the conference proceedings be published. Many speakers presented their research from Masters and Doctorate degrees, many of which are still in progress. Consequently, not all speakers could publish their work openly and many could not publish their results in full. Nevertheless, the research presented in this volume demonstrates strong and significant contributions to the field on the part of students and early career researchers.

EMASS 2018 was held in Glasgow from 19 – 21 April and was jointly hosted by the University of Glasgow and the Glasgow School of Art. Twenty-one papers and four posters by a total of forty individuals were presented over two days, of which nine are included in this volume. The presentations ranged in topic from re-evaluating concepts of warlordism in post-Roman Britain to discussions of ideological reuse of *metope* in Italy. McNeil identifies significant changes in the deposition of buckles and buckle forms in Anglo-Saxon mortuary practices as indicators of significant societal changes during the 7th century, particularly the rise of a burgeoning elite and the adoption of Christianity. Górkiewicz Downer continues in the vein of 7th century Anglo-Saxon mortuary practices by cautioning against broadly classifying certain objects as ‘amulets’ and demonstrates that many of these objects, such as cowrie shells, were treated and deposited differently in these burial contexts. Van Tongeren echoes words of caution in his assessment of mortuary chronologies through artefact typologies in the Netherlands. He finds that German and French chronological frameworks do not always match the occurrence of mortuary objects in the Netherlands and that some objects can be classed as transitional types between other recognised continental object categories.

Moving away from mortuary practices and into discussions of new analytical approaches to archaeology, Christie demonstrates the use of photographic filters in understanding surface and subsurface features of glass beads. Differences in bubble concentrations demonstrate significant differences in manufacture and trade between regions of early medieval Scotland and provide meaningful insight into an object category about which relatively little is known. Kasten then uses reflective transformation imaging and photogrammetric 3D modelling to understand the effect of wear on carved stone monuments in early medieval Scotland. Based on this understanding, she has been able to identify the patterns that originally decorated stones now worn beyond recognition.

Cowart-Smith examines the distribution and iconography of early medieval high crosses and other stone sculpture in south-east Scotland between AD 400 – 1100. She demonstrates differences in recumbent slabs used to mark elite graves versus the more publicly visible high crosses. Russo also discusses iconography of stone sculpture through the reuse of *metope* in Longobardian Italy. He argues the incorporation of these sculptures in Longobardian structures and the association of the included symbols with power and strength helped to affirm Longobardian rule over the lands they invaded.

Continuing with the military prowess, Carr re-evaluates the traditional contrasting of late Roman provincial civilian elites to the violent ‘superthugs’ of the early medieval period. Carr argues instead that late Roman elites played a significant role in this perceived transition to violence and warlordism and were active agents in the transition to early medieval Europe. Finally, Rodríguez-Monterrubio and colleagues provide the first detailed report and analysis of ‘El Castellón,’ a site of continuous occupation from the Late Iron Age to the medieval period in Santa Eulalia de Tabara, Zamora, Spain. This report has helped to extend the traditional limited picture we had about Visigoths and Suevi in this region.

We would like to extend our warmest thanks to all presenters at EMASS 2018 and all contributors to this volume for making it successful.