

Workshop Abstracts

Session 1: Monuments and their Intended Audience (Part One)

Dr Victoria Thompson Whitworth

Lecturer, Centre for Nordic Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands

Email: victoria.whitworth@uhi.ac.uk

Sermons in Stone? Author and Audience at Barwick-in-Elmet, West Yorkshire

This paper looks at the two surviving stone shafts from the parish church of Barwick in Elmet, W Yorks. One of these has vegetal and interlace imagery, while the other also has a figural scene, and a plant-scroll including a small animal. This paper first analyses the stone with the figural scene and argues that it is compounded from several episodes taken from the Biblical myth of the Fall of Adam and Eve and later salvific events in Christian narrative. The paper then considers the unique and complex vegetal/plant-scroll imagery on the smaller of the two cross-shafts, asking what it can tell us about cultural expectations and aspirations, before setting Barwick in Elmet in its wider social and landscape context.

Professor Roger Stalley

Professor Emeritus of the History of Art, Trinity College Dublin

Email: rstalley@tcd.ie.

The Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise: context and meaning

The so-called cross of the scriptures at Clonmacnoise is one of the rare cases when we know something about the historical context in which an Irish high cross was made. It now seems certain that carving was carried out c909, at the same time as the construction of the stone church to which it is (or was) aligned. Both monuments were created under the aegis of Flann Sinna, the high king, whose role as a benefactor renewed a relationship with kingship that went back to the founding of the monastery over 300 years before. These circumstances have

particular relevance to the iconography of the cross, providing an explanation for at least two of the more puzzling scenes. The confirmation of the 909 date also has wider implications. The carving was executed by the Muiredach master of Monasterboice and the iconography of the Last Judgment at Clonmacnoise is in fact a ‘reduced’ version of that encountered at Monasterboice. Among many features shared by the crosses is the use of compositional motifs drawn from late Antique art.

Marjolein Stern

PhD Student, Centre for the Study of the Viking Age, School of English Studies, University of Nottingham

Email: aexms5@nottingham.ac.uk

Runestones and Audience

When we discuss the audience of runestones, there is a tension between the monuments’ public nature – its location and permanence made it accessible to a generally large and varied audience – and its use of a semiotic resource that was most likely not mastered by all – runic text. Sections of this runic inscription can even be in ‘coded’ runes, which is seen as a sign that at least that part was meant for a select part of the audience. Location, material and text are not the only semiotic resources, however. Decoration also conveys part of the message. The decoration is sometimes interpreted as a means of giving information to those who could not read the inscription. Because image and text do not tend to convey the same information or refer to the same ideology or concept, they complement each other rather than that one serves as a substitute or even an explanation for the other. There are also indications that some parts of the decorations and inscriptions may have had a special resonance with specific groups within the general audience. For instance, runestones share certain expressions, subjects, imagery, and poetic devices with skaldic poetry. By exploring the parallels between these two commemorative practices – runestones and skaldic poetry – a certain subgroup of the memorial stones’ audience may be identified.

Session 2: Monuments and their Intended Audience (Part Two)

Dr Lilla Kopár

Assistant Professor of English and Director of the Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

Email: kopar@cua.edu

The 'Secular' Nature of Viking Age Sculpture in England

It has often been noted that one of the major changes in sculptural production in Viking Age northern England was the shift from monastic and high-status ecclesiastical patronage towards a dominant pattern of lay patronage (see e.g. Bailey 1996: 79). The new patrons of monumental art, members of the local Anglo-Scandinavian elite, introduced a distinct artistic taste that was representative of their hybrid colonial culture. This manifested itself in obvious stylistic changes as well as in an increase of non-ecclesiastical imagery of warriors, horsemen, and other secular 'portraits', in representations of select myths and heroic legends promoting secular social values, the introduction of a new monument type (the hogback), and ultimately in the changing function of sculpture as public monuments of local power. All these developments seem to suggest a gradual 'secularization' of stone sculpture in spite of its continued ecclesiastical context. To what extent was this 'secularization' a new phenomenon in England? What, if anything, was 'secular' about Viking Age sculpture? And how did the changing circumstances of production (re)define the audience of stone monuments as public art?

In the present paper I will offer an overview of possible 'secular' features of stone monuments, from iconography and inscriptions to typology and location, and discuss the impact of lay patronage on the function and intended audience of the monuments. To contextualize the Anglo-Saxon material, and to further the discussion, a comparison will be made with stone monuments of the Isle of Man and Scandinavia.

Heidi Stoner

MA Student, Department of History of Art, University of York

Email: hls520@york.ac.uk

Power in Stone: Monumental depictions of Majesty and Might

While Anglo-Saxon stone crosses have an obvious monastic or ecclesiastical context, how the iconographies were perceived by others who may have seen them is much more problematic. The figural scenes that have been identified are often studied in relation to their exegetical meanings or in relation to the contemporary liturgy. The audience for these monuments may have been public or exclusive, but inarguably the images displayed would not have been seen by solely ecclesiastic spectators. The arts of the Anglo-Saxons were based on an understanding that the visual was a means of expressing plurality of meaning – meaning that could incorporate both the actual and the metaphorical: this paper, while not discounting the exegetical and liturgical readings present, will suggest an iconographic reading that goes beyond the ecclesiastic setting of these monuments in order to suggest the depiction of secular power, namely kingship. Much of the iconographies displayed on these monuments use a borrowed visual language from the Late Antique or Imperial Roman world, which arguably have an obvious and recognisable secular meaning, albeit in a Christian context. In examining the secular, the religious, and the ecclesiastical in terms of monument form, as well as iconographic identity and symbolic significances this paper aims to provide a greater understanding of the representation of power and majesty in Anglo-Saxon England.

Bethan Morris

PhD Student, Edinburgh University

Email: bethan.morris@hotmail.co.uk

Sticks and Stones: literacy, symbols and monuments in Pictland and beyond

The symbol stones of Scotland have inspired many readings in the past. Numerous studies have focused on their chronological and artistic development and classification. A number of the stones have Latin and/or ogham inscriptions upon them, but it has been argued from different quarters that the symbols themselves are a form of writing and communicate information cognate with inscribed monuments from further south in Britain and Ireland. The most enigmatic of the material remains of the Picts, they are also hold some of the earliest definite evidence for writing and reading from Pictland itself, dating from at least the fifth century AD. The landscape setting of these monuments can reveal much to us of their function, intended message and audiences. The Class II monuments are also found with Christian iconography and many stones have been found on church sites, leading to obvious connections with the Church, Christianity and conversion. Furthermore, the evidence provided by these individual literacy events can also be utilised to inform us of the wider literacy practices of the Picts and the communicative practices they employed. We can begin to see the impact the introduction of literacy and the Christian clerics, who were the primary wielders of a new literature and literacy practices, had on society, the conditions which would make conversion to Christianity seem rational among the population and the new forms of power relations and surveillance developing in the seventh century among the kingdoms of early medieval Britain and Ireland, which literacy helped to facilitate.

Martin Goldberg

Early Historic & Viking curator, Department of Archaeology, National Museums Scotland, Scotland

Email: m.goldberg@nmas.ac.uk

Carving Pictish symbols – conventions and competence

The art-historical dating of Pictish symbols has been a source of much debate. In his contribution to the seminal *The Problem of the Picts* (1955) RBK Stevenson advocated a theory of ‘the declining symbol’ to provide an art-historical sequence, or relative chronology, for the most common symbol of the crescent and v-rod. To me, Stevenson’s underlying principle of degeneration from a classical ideal form is at odds with an understanding of the general trend of increasing competence in stone-carving skills across the Early Medieval period. This is perhaps most obvious in Pictland in the distinction between incised symbolstones and relief-carved Christian cross-slabs. This paper will highlight how conventions that can be recognised on Class I Pictish symbolstones provide the framework for an alternative typology for the carving of Pictish symbols. The adaptation of those conventions through time allows us to think about different audiences, and what these changing forms meant to carver and viewer; considering competence in carving and competence in symbol use as two distinct but inter-dependent trajectories.

Session 3: Space and Audience

Dr Kelly Kilpatrick

Research Fellow, Institute for Name-Studies, School of English, University of Nottingham

Email: kelly.kilpatrick@nottingham.ac.uk

Latin, Runes and Pseudo-Ogham: The Enigma of the Hackness Stone

The Anglo-Saxon cross at Hackness, North Yorkshire is an exceptional monument. Despite its present fragmentary condition, the Hackness stone provides a unique opportunity to

examine a monument's patrons, audience and cultural heritage through inscriptions. Writing and the spectacle of language played a key role in the monument's programme, and inscription panels survive on each face. To add to the enigmatic nature of this cross, the inscriptions are carved in four different scripts: Latin, Anglo-Saxon runes, *hahal* runes and a 'cryptic' script resembling ogham. By examining the legible Latin text it is possible to study the patrons and who the monument was erected for (a certain abbess Oedilburga). Hackness was a daughter-house of Whitby and was founded c. 680 by St Hilda. Whitby was an early centre of learning and a politicised monastery with international connections. The style of ornament, orthography of the Latin letters and the sheer variety of scripts represented on the Hackness Stone make an important statement about the tradition and ambitions of this monastic community and *familia*. In this paper the inscriptions will also be analysed collectively to explore the concept of 'writing as image'. The non-Latin inscriptions suggest that this cross was intended to impress both a local and foreign, specifically Irish, audience. Finally, this paper will consider how the dimensions of the cross conditioned audience experience, and how to fully appreciate the inscription panels the audience would have had to physically interact with the monument.

Dr Sally Foster

Lecturer, University of Aberdeen

Email: sally.foster@abdn.ac.uk

Connecting People, Places and Things: insights from the duplicated world

Drawing on the work of Siân Jones, and Lowe and Latour, in particular, this paper will consider what it is that makes 'authenticity' and 'aura' work, with a special focus on materiality. What is it that makes things 'connect' with people, and therefore have significance? What difference might this make for our interpretations of early medieval sculpture at each stage of its multiple lives? There are also very practical implications for how we might present such sculpture to the public in the future. The nature and qualities of space are key but not the sole ingredients in this mix. The study of replicas of early medieval sculpture and their reception informs this topic; the main case study will be St John's Cross, Iona.

Elizabeth Royles

Collections and Interpretation Officer, Cheshire West Museums

Email: elizabeth.royles@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Displaying Monuments in Museums: methods, issues and reactions

Almost every museum in the country will have within its collections the fragments of some sort of stone monument. Coupled with the appropriate information they are fascinating, impressive and poignant reminders of people who inhabited our regions in the past, but how can curators go about displaying them for their audiences so that their meaning and messages are not lost?

Fragments of monuments in museum collections have inevitably been removed from their context and, when they are displayed in exhibitions or galleries, they are placed in an alien setting constructed by museum staff. This paper will draw on recent experiences to examine the issues faced by museum staff who aim to display the monuments in a meaningful way, reconstructing the fragmentary remains and linking them back to their original context.

It will explore five different interpretative methods which have been used in the Grosvenor Museum and discuss their success (or lack of it!) and reactions from local communities.

Session 4 Papers: Landscape and Audience

Cecilia Ljung

PhD Student, Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies, Stockholm University

Email: Cecilia.ljung@ark.su.se

Guð hialpi sial hans – Memorials and possible audiences at early Christian cemeteries in central Sweden

Early Christian grave monuments have only in rare cases been found *in situ*, over the buried individual(s). The vast majority of the material has instead been recovered in connection with churches and other ecclesiastical institutions, either incorporated in the buildings, reused in

later medieval stone cists or found scattered around the cemeteries. This poses problems regarding how early Christian cemeteries were spatially organised, as well as how monuments were perceived by a contemporary audience. This paper will take the *in situ* recovered monuments as a starting point to explore what information can be drawn from the burial itself, the context of the monument as well as the use and reuse of memorials. Furthermore, the overall design of the monuments, the content of runic inscriptions and general changes in the late Viking Age runestone tradition - to which Early Christian grave monuments form an integrated part - may shed light not only on the commissioner and the commemorated person, but also the intended audience of the monument.

Joanne Kirton

PhD Student and Visiting Lecturer, History and Archaeology Department, University of Chester

j.kirton@chester.ac.uk

Monuments, location and orchestrated audience engagement at sculptural sites in Cheshire, England.

Taking one aspect of my PhD thesis, I will demonstrate how an exploration of a monument's form and decoration is indicative of the type of location for which the monument was envisioned. The relationship between appearance and location can also indicate how a monument was intended to be viewed by its audience. This approach considers factors such as viewsheds, proximity and directionality as important factors shaping the choice of a monument's setting and how this may affect its form and decoration. This is a particularly useful methodology for a data-set that is commonly removed from its original location, as comparison with in-situ examples can provide insight into their intended setting and function. This paper will use two examples from sites in the county of Cheshire, NW England, which have been chosen to illustrate the different applications of this methodology.

Dr Lydia Carstens

Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology

Email: lydia.carstens@schloss-gottorf.de

The mound and the word: A need for monuments in times of change

Most of the Swedish runestones were raised in close connection to the pre-Christian grave field, while they were decorated with crosses and inscribed with Christian prayers. How do the heathen grave and the Christian cross fit together?

Runestones were raised in times of radical social changes: The first stones came up during the violent Migration Period, when many social and religious changes took place (e.g. sacrifices were transferred from the bogs into the chieftain's hall) and the second wave of runestones came along Scandinavia together with the Christianisation. The Christian belief forbade it to bury the dead in large mounds and barrows, which was an old tradition in Scandinavia since the Bronze Age. They buried the dead and furnished the graves with all kinds of grave goods to mark the social status of the dead and their offsprings. Large mounds kept the memory of the ancestors alive. With the uniform Christian burial there were no more possibilities to be different. Only the name would be remembered – but nothing further. Remembrance through monuments was no longer possible until they made up a new kind of memorial: They raised the stone as a visible monument in line with all the other ancestors and “furnished” the memorial with the deeds of the commemorated people – expressed in runes. Even if the audience changed some traditions had to be kept alive and goods were transferred into runes, while the memory was kept.

Alexander Andreef

PhD Student, Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Email: alexander.andreeff@archaeology.gu.se

Gotlandic Picture Stone Sites

My studies and archaeological excavations demonstrate how picture stone sites on Gotland, Sweden, are far too complicated structures to be regarded merely as memorials or boundary markers. I have shown that different activities have taken place at the sites Fröjel Stenstugu and Buttle Änge through the centuries. The significance of picture stones throughout the centuries has undoubtedly been multifunctional and changing; as territorial marking, a memorial, preserver of oral tradition, burial site and religiously charged artefact. The picture stones have played a key role in the Gotlandic society in the late Iron Age and early Medieval Period; they were a focal point for social and ideological communication between the people of their time. I will discuss how the picture stones were used by different and shifting audiences over time.