AEMA10

Conference events hosted by the Australian Early Medieval Association

The AEMA committee and conference convenors would like to thank the following for their generous support:

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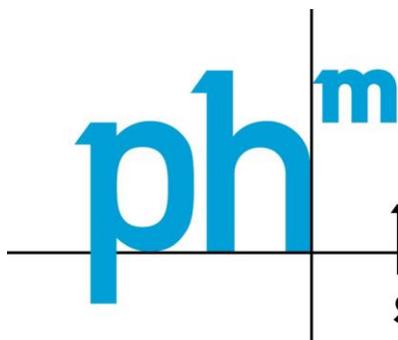
Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

Co-op Bookshop, Macquarie University Campus

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FRIDAY CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Museum of Ancient Cultures, Building X5B Level 3

8:15 – 9:00   **REGISTRATION**

9:00 – 9:15   **OPENING AND WELCOME**
Ian Plant, Head of Ancient History Department, Macquarie
University and Janet Wade, Conference Convenor

9:15 – 10:45   **SESSION 1** – Hagiography, Holy Men, and Emotion
Seminar Room, Chair: Rod McDonald

John Simons (Macquarie University)
Animals in the Celtic and Greek Hagiographic Traditions

Jonathan M. Wooding (University of Sydney)
The Emotional World of the Early British and Irish *peregrini*

Lynette Olson (University of Sydney)
Emotions at a World Turned Upside Down

10:45 – 11:15   **MORNING TEA**

11:15 – 12:45   **SESSION 2** – Late Antique Gaul
Seminar Room, Chair: Lynette Olson

Geoffrey Dunn (Australian Catholic University)
Flavius Constantius and Affairs in Gaul between 411 and 417

Daniel Knox (University of Auckland)
Bibliophiles and Bishops

Susan Loftus (Macquarie University)
Suitable Men to enter the Episcopate in Late Antique Gaul: Ideal and
Reality

12:45 – 1:45   **LUNCH**
AGM in Seminar Room for AEMA members

Friday Conference Program
Museum of Ancient Cultures, Building X5B Level 3

1:45 – 2:45   **PLENARY SESSION 1**
Seminar Room, Chair: Nicole Moffatt

Juanita Feros Ruys (University of Sydney)
Love and Trauma: The Emotional Classroom of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

2:45 – 3:15   **AFTERNOON TEA**
(incl. assembly for trip to the Powerhouse Museum)

3:15 – 4:00   **TRAVEL TO THE POWERHOUSE MUSEUM**

4:00 – 6:00   **PRACTICAL SESSION**

Medieval and Byzantine Artifacts at the Powerhouse Museum
Private viewing of a selection of Medieval and Byzantine artifacts at the Powerhouse Museum on Harris St, Sydney

6:15   **CONFERENCE DINNER**
Short walk to Vesta Caffe and Ristorante, Harbour St, Darling Quarter (Darling Harbour)

Transport to the Macquarie Campus for those with accommodation nearby will be arranged after dinner if required

SATURDAY CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Museum of Ancient Cultures, Building X5B Level 3

9:00 – 10:30 **SESSION 3A** – Looking Back
Seminar Room, Chair: Janet Wade

Raymond Harding (Macquarie University)
A Re-examination of the Relationship of Theatre and the Church over the First Four Centuries of the Christian Era

Nicole Moffatt (Macquarie University)
You've got mail! Networking a New Identity in Late Antiquity

Chris Bishop (Australian National University)
King Arthur in America: Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant*

9:00 – 10:30 **SESSION 3B** – Old English Poetry
Museum Room, Chair: Rod McDonald

Erica Steiner (University of Sydney)
The Barrow-Dweller in *Beowulf*: An Anglo-Scandinavian Context

Anna Wallace (University of Sydney)
Questions of Temporal Authenticity in Cynewulf's *Elene*

April Bertels-Garnsey (University of Sydney)
'In that Bright City Where My Brother Is': Family, Geography and Conflict in the Old English *Andreas* and *Elene*

10:30 – 11:00 **MORNING TEA**

Saturday Conference Program

Museum of Ancient Cultures, Building X5B Level 3

11:00 – 12:30   **SESSION 4A**– Punishment, Shame and the Business of War
Seminar Room, Chair: Pamela O'Neill

Tahlia Birnbaum (University of Sydney)
Humiliation, Vikings, and the Construction of Shame in Late Anglo-Saxon England

Samuel Cardwell (Monash University)
Providence and Punishment: Narratives of Northumbrian Defeat in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*

Rod McDonald (Swansea University)
Viking Business at the Battle of Clontarf

11:00 – 12:30   **SESSION 4B** – Perceptions and Realities
Museum Room, Chair: John D'Alton

Janet Wade (Macquarie University)
'Lock up your Valuables': Perceptions of Sailors and Sea-merchants in Port Cities of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium

Hollie Thomas (University of Queensland)
Dustsceawung and Perceptions of Roman Remains in Anglo-Saxon England

Penelope Nash (University of Sydney)
Contemporary Perceptions of the Actions of Tenth-Century European Elites

12:30 – 1:30   **LUNCH**
AEMA Committee meeting in Museum Room (1.00 – 1.30)

Saturday Conference Program
Museum of Ancient Cultures, Building X5B Level 3

1:30 – 3:00   **SESSION 5A** – Images and Memory
Seminar Room, Chair: Ian Michie

Jay Johnston (University of Sydney/University of NSW)
Interpreting the Role and Agency of Images in Insular Manuscript
and Amulet Traditions

Valentina De Pasca (University of Milan)
Byzantine Influence in Lombard Jewellery Production: Materials
from Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra (Italy)

John D'Alton (Monash University)
Maximus to Eriugena: Memories of PsDionysius from
Constantinople to France

1:30 – 3:00   **SESSION 5B** – Law, Intellect and Humanity
Museum Room, Chair: Penelope Nash

Pamela O'Neill (University of Sydney)
.i.fri Saxanu: Saxon Incursions and Early Irish Law

Merrin Marks (University of Sydney)
Imagining Grendel's Mother: Human Woman or Female Monster?

3:00 – 3:30   **AFTERNOON TEA**

3:30 – 4:30   **PLENARY SESSION 2**
Seminar Room, Chair: Darius von Güttner

Ken Parry (Macquarie University)
Pierre Gilles' Constantinople: A Sixteenth Century Frenchman in the
City of Suleyman the Magnificent

4:30 – 4:45   **CLOSING REMARKS & ANNOUNCEMENT OF
BEST PG / ECR PAPER PRIZE**
Seminar Room, Darius von Güttner, AEMA Vice President

ABSTRACTS

PLENARY SPEAKERS

PAPERS

ABSTRACTS

PLENARY

JUANITA FEROS RUYS

ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, University of Sydney

Love and Trauma: The Emotional Classroom of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

This address explores the emotional contexts engendered in and by the classrooms of the premodern world. What makes the premodern classroom such a rewarding laboratory is the fact that it followed a pedagogic tradition in terms of curricula and approaches to instruction that remained remarkably unchanged from the world of late antiquity through the medieval and into the early modern era. Within these classrooms, emotions played a prominent, if under-theorized, role. Their effect was doubled: studies into accounts of childhood learning from the premodern world reveal not just that children learnt emotions and learnt about emotions in the classroom, but also that they learnt in the classroom through emotions. In fact, these classrooms can give the appearance of having been riven by emotional undercurrents, including both constructive emotions like desire for knowledge, the joy of learning, and curiosity, counterpoised against disruptive emotions such as fear (whether of punishment or of failure), rivalry and collegial jealousy, and confusion and self-doubt. Love of the master was also a major factor at play in the premodern classroom but proved something of a double-edged sword—it could inspire students to greater learning, but equally it could subject them to humiliation and manufacture their compliance in practices detrimental to their own well-being. Contributing to the fraught emotional context of the classroom was the fact that the curricula were often designed to facilitate a desire to learn by arousing the emotions—this might include teaching through the use of sexually suggestive material. As Augustine observed, the way the classroom taught students to understand and apply emotions rendered it a juvenile microcosm of the adult world: the emotional regulation learnt there carried over into professional life. This paper particularly considers the premodern classroom from Augustine and Quintilian through to the emerging genre of the life-narrative in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. These autobiographical writings offer clear evidence that the classroom provided an emotional matrix from which a person's life-long sense and expression of self might be forged.

PLENARY

KEN PARRY

Macquarie University

Pierre Gilles' Constantinople: A Sixteenth Century Frenchman in the City of Suleyman the Magnificent

It would seem ironic that anyone interested in the early history of Constantinople should turn to a book written by a Frenchman who resided in Istanbul between 1544 and 1547 during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66). The reason for consulting this work lies in the fact that Pierre Gilles took an antiquarian's interest in the city at a time when most of the ancient Byzantine monuments and landmarks were disappearing to make way for the Ottoman Sultan's new building program. As a result of his three-year stay in Istanbul Gilles took upon himself to write *A Topography of Constantinople and its Antiquities* in which he describes the city with reference to many early sources, such as the sixth-century historians Procopius and Agathias. In fact Gilles' main interest (not unlike that of many modern scholars) was in the periods of Constantine and Justinian, and he did what any good student of early Byzantine history should do, he turned to the contemporary historical sources, or at least those he was able to access. His work is a mine of information and is peppered with references to the ancient historians who wrote about the Queen of Cities in Late Antiquity. Not only that, but his book provides an insight into the kind of education available to a Frenchman in the first half of the sixteenth century. The work was first translated into English by John Ball in 1729, but we had to wait until 2008 for a modern translation to appear.

APRIL BERTELS-GARNSEY

University of Sydney

'In that Bright City Where My Brother Is': Family, Geography and Conflict in the Old English Andreas *and* Elene

The Old English hagiographical poems *Andreas* and *Elene* both adapt Latin conversion narratives that take place in cities 'across the water' in the unfamiliar East. *Elene* moves between distant locations familiar to the Anglo-Saxon imagination, with a particular focus on the city of Jerusalem. The island city of Mermedonia in *Andreas* is a more exotic place, inhabited by a cannibal people.

These imagined urban spaces beyond the sea provide settings in which Anglo-Saxon poets explore the nature and significance of family relationships. Both texts depict the relationship between brothers (whether or not they are genetically related) as a spiritual and emotional connection that brings joy. Other familial relationships, however, are presented more problematically.

Andreas emphasises God's role as father and the spiritual brotherhood shared by apostles, shifting focus away from blood relationships as the foundations of loyalty and identity. The poem also, however, downplays the image of St Andrew as spiritual father that is found in its Greek and Latin analogues.

The author of *Elene*, on the other hand, presents literal brotherhood as a spiritually edifying connection that plays a part in a Jew's conversion to Christianity. So significant is this literal genetic bond, indeed, that it overrides chronological considerations. Yet it is neither the saintly Elene nor her son, Constantine the Great, who first articulates the importance of God's spiritual paternity, but rather the newly repentant Judas.
Both poems, then, use the Eastern Mediterranean world as a space in which to explore Christian history and the complexities of relationships during social and religious change.

This paper will examine the ways in which insularity and urbanity interact with family relationships among cannibals, Jews and saints in these poems, and the significance of these associations for the Anglo-Saxon audience of these two texts.

TAHLIA BIRNBAUM

University of Sydney

Humiliation, Vikings, and the Construction of Shame in Late Anglo-Saxon England

The Viking attacks on Anglo-Saxon England in the tenth and eleventh centuries generated a range of emotional responses. This paper looks at the writings of key contemporary authors, especially the homilists Aelfric and Wulfstan, who interpreted these attacks as punishment from God, delivered to kings, warriors and Christian subjects for their poor conduct. The focus will be on shame, and how the emotion is used as a rhetorical device to make audiences feel ashamed, modify their behaviour, and return to God in order to ensure their own salvation and that of the nation. These authors direct their audiences towards re-internalising God's authority and re-learning a sense of shame. Underpinning these writings is the interpretation of shame as a crucial aspect of repentance. These texts provide evidence that shame was seen a useful emotion in modifying behaviour and ensuring salvation at Judgment Day. The rhetoric of shame in these late texts shows that shame was an integral factor in the Anglo-Saxon understanding of repentance, redemption and salvation.

At the same time, more traditional heroic modes of shame were also operating, associated with poor conduct on the battlefield and loyalty to one's lord. These themes dominate the poem *The Battle of Maldon*, named after the battle which took place in 991 against invading Viking forces. The evidence from late Anglo-Saxon England shows two different types of shame: shame associated with sin and repentance, and the shame associated with poor conduct on the battlefield. The Viking invasions of this period show how these two different kinds of shame co-existed, demonstrating the complex responses behind this single emotion, and the different types of shame that developed throughout Anglo-Saxon history.

CHRIS BISHOP

Australian National University

King Arthur in America: Hal Foster's Prince Valiant

Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant: In the days of King Arthur* has appeared in continuous syndication since 1937, but when a long-anticipated reprint of the first three years of the comic strip was finally released in 1982, the publication was called *Prince Valiant: An American Epic*. The title page of this edition bears an original Foster drawing of prince Valiant in his red, white and blue livery standing before an American flag — and yet this apparent paradox, a Yankee knight, seems strangely appropriate when interpreted through the wider lens of American Arthuriana.

As a body of work, Foster's *Prince Valiant* celebrates the paradoxical. Essentially modernist in its oeuvre, the strip is set in the Age of Arthur. Ostensibly American in its outlook, the setting is mostly European. Undeniably democratic in its politics, the principal character is, after all, a prince. That the strip should prove so successful for so long attests to the power of its wistful and melancholic nostalgia. It is this nostalgia that has fuelled an American obsession with medievalism and a continuing engagement with the promise of Camelot, a promise that interpreted the poetry of Tennyson through the art of Howard Pyle, refashioned that interpretation into comics and movies and musicals, and finally divested itself into the brief tenure of an assassinated president.

This paper will seek to illuminate at least some of the themes at play in *Prince Valiant*, and to contextualize them within a greater medievalism.

SAMUEL CARDWELL

Monash University

Providence and Punishment: Narratives of Northumbrian Defeat in Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica

Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* represents the English, and the Northumbrians in particular, as a 'chosen people' among the nations of Britain, 'foreknown' not only to salvation but also to pre-eminence. If this is the case, what was Bede to make of the three narratives of Northumbrian defeat that seem to intrude on this providential scheme? The first Christian king of Northumbria, Edwin, was defeated and killed by pagan Mercians and heretical Britons at the Battle of Hatfield Chase; only eight years later, his successor St. Oswald was destroyed by the same pagan king (Penda of Mercia) at Maserfield. Then, after a period of peace and prosperity, King Ecgfrith's army was annihilated by the Picts at Nechtansmere (Dun Nechtain).

While Nechtansmere is overtly represented as a case of divine punishment for Ecgfrith's hubris and war-mongering, Hatfield Chase and Maserfield are more problematic. Bede provides no overt explanation or theodicy for either event (in contrast to the later *Historia Brittonum* which attributes Oswald's defeat to 'diabolical agency'). Oswald is represented as a saint and martyr, dying for the faith in battle against the pagans, but Edwin receives no such posthumous acclamation. This paper will attempt to reconcile these narratives of defeat with the overall historical, literary and theological framework of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

JOHN D'ALTON

Monash University

Maximus to Eriugena: Memories of PsDionysius from Constantinople to France

Well-before the high scholastic period, intellectual and spiritual memories of Ps-Dionysius, Aristotle and Plato were being transported from East to West, and their creative re-use crossed languages and cultures. Seventh century Maximus the Confessor of Constantinople wrote numerous theological treatises including "Life of the Virgin", but is best known for his work on the two wills in Christ, and for his non-Augustinian philosophy of a truly free human will. A century later, Johannes Scotus Eriugena translated some of Maximos and built on his Pseudo-Dionysian, NeoPlatonic and Aristotelian ideas to develop an innovative framework to deal with questions of free will. Eriugena is noted for defending free will against the extreme predestinarianism of the monk Gottschalk. His reception and development of the thought of Maximus and Ps-Dionysius was a significant part of the West European revival of philosophical thought, and his writings later influenced mystics such as Meister Eckhardt. Both Maximus and Eriugena were theologian-philosophers who considered Aristotle and Plato as foundational and virtually axiomatic in their work. This paper explores aspects of the memory and appropriation of earlier intellectual ideas by Maximus and Eriugena of Ps-Dionysius, Plato and Aristotle, and also by Eriugena of Maximos and Ps-Dionysius. The journey of ideas from East to West during this early medieval period dispels simplistic notions of a sudden thirteenth century rediscovery of Aristotle in France. It also shows that there was a remarkable connection between the extremities of the former Roman empire, and that in a sense an empire of Greco-Latin ideas never ceased and was indeed active from Constantinople to Ireland.

VALENTINA DE PASCA

University of Milan

Byzantine Influence in Lombard Jewellery Production: Materials from Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra (Italy)

Studying the materials brought to light from the graves in the Early Medieval cemeteries in Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra (both necropolis located in central Italy) leads to a reflection concerning the jewellery handcraft found during the archaeological campaigns which took place at the end of the XIXth Century. Although to date jewellery has been studied only superficially, it could be the starting point for a multidisciplinary analysis which would go beyond a simple study of the production in the early Lombard age. It could in fact throw light on the trading of luxury objects and on the circulation of typological and stylistic models strongly influenced by the Byzantine culture.

Manufacturing and use of jewellery for personal adornment was typical of the German people who attributed a primary role to precious objects to highlight their social status. This habit emerges in a relevant way studying Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra grave materials where the ranks of the tombs are clearly evidenced, as well as the difference in the quality of the jewels produced of German and Byzantine tastes which evolved in parallel without damaging each other.

Even though the refined manufacture and the precious materials evident in the Byzantine objects would appeal to the Lombard people, it is also true that imitating the "fashion of Constantinople" was accompanied by a clear allusion of the wealth and power of the Byzantine court. It is of little importance that the sophistication of the artifacts in the Byzantine style found in the cemeteries of Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra were not up to the level of the production of the workshops in Constantinople, what constituted a relevant factor was the call to a clear model belonging to a well-formal stylistic language easily decoded and equipped with its own symbology.

The aim of this study is to show how the Byzantine influence clearly characterized some of the Lombard jewels brought to light in the two central Italy necropolis, to compare them with contemporary Constantinopolitan productions and to highlight how Byzantine cultural guidelines reached not only the empire's territories more sensitive to that kind of cultural influence (e.g. Syria and Egypt) but also all those territories and societies with different customs and traditions which were unable to resist the charms aesthetic and symbolic of Byzantium.

GEOFFREY DUNN

Australian Catholic University

Flavius Constantius and Affairs in Gaul between 411 and 417

Jordanes (32) presents the marriage in 417 between Flavius Constantius, the leading general in the western Roman empire after the execution of Stilicho in 408, and Galla Placidia, the half-sister to Honorius, emperor in the West from 395 to 423, as part of the settlement of imperial efforts against the Goths in Spain and Gaul who, are depicted unfairly as liable to turn on the empire, which they were helping in dealing with other barbarian groups. This paper is interested in the half dozen years prior to the marriage and asks the question of the extent of Constantius' interest in affairs in Gaul after 411, when he defeated the usurper Constantine III. David Frye has argued that Constantius maintained a strong interest in political and ecclesiastical appointments during these years. The argument advanced here is that although Constantius was in Gaul at least from 414 he was too engaged with dealing with the Goths in Narbonne, as he had been in previous years with them in Italy and with events in Africa during these years to take much interest in the creation of an episcopate in Gaul more sympathetic to him and the imperial regime than there had been under Constantine III.

RAY HARDING

Macquarie University

A Re-examination of the Relationship of Theatre and the Church in the First Four Centuries of the Christian Era

Theatre, which began as the centrepiece of the Dionysian Festival in Athens would endure for twelve hundred years before entering a lengthy hiatus after being banned by the Church Council in Trullo of 692-693. Tertullian, Augustine, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus and Jacob of Serugh feature prominently among the church leaders who railed against the evil of theatre during the period in question. Immortality and the promotion of paganism were cited as the chief objections of these early Christian fathers. 'And, quite obviously, the arts of the stage are under the patronage of Liber and Venus. Those features which are particular to, and characteristic of, the stage, that wantonness in gesture and posture, they dedicate to Venus and Liber, deities both dissolute: the former by sex perversion, the latter by effeminate dress." (Tertullian, *On the Spectacles* 10.8)

But was it truly as simple as concern for the immortal souls of their congregations that motivated the polemicising? This paper will examine the evidence that falling church attendances in the face of the competition presented by mime and pantomime and the rhetorical displays of the Second Sophistic were every bit as much a concern as the perdition of souls.

JAY JOHNSTON

University of Sydney/University of NSW

Interpreting the Role and Agency of Images in Insular Manuscript and Amulet Traditions

In the Late Antique Mediterranean, a variety of corpora were employed by diverse faith communities to enact supernatural protection for the individual, including amulets and ritual handbooks. For example, "The Magical Book of Mary and the Angels" P. Heid. Inv. Kopt. 685 (edition Meyer 1996). This is a twenty-page parchment book that contains the text of spells, ingredients for ritual use and instructions for the creation of a phylactery. Accompanying the text are numerous images of spirit beings and designs that incorporate text forms including ring-script. Recent scholarship has increasingly turned to examine the function and role of images and design elements in so-called magical handbooks of the Late Antique Mediterranean world.

In approaching the interpretation of this material from the perspective of contemporary theories regarding the agency of images, the active nature of these texts and their design elements are emphasised. That is, that the texts can be read holistically with both images and text elements being accorded equivalent critical attention. In particular, from such a perspective the *role* of the image and design elements is not automatically perceived as of secondary importance to the textual content, but rather, had a central place in the 'activity' of the amulet/spell or ritual.

This paper seeks to extend recent work in this area (currently undertaken by Johnston, Gardner, Kindt, Hunter and Whitehouse in an Australian Research Council project) by applying the new holistic methodology to selected examples from the Insular context, in particular the *Book of Deer*. It aims to explore possible iconographic influence from the Mediterranean world on the development of Insular manuscripts and amulet traditions of the Early Christian period in the British Isles.

DANIEL KNOX
University of Auckland

Bibliophiles and Bishops

The intellectual life of post-Roman Gaul is captured in the letters of the Gallo-Roman aristocracy. In particular the letters of Sidonius Apollinaris (c. A.D. 430-89) and Ruricius of Limoges (c. A.D. 440-510) illustrate the importance of the inheritance of classical literary culture as a defining motif of the Gallo-Roman elite. Letters in the collections of these two bishops provide us with numerous examples of requests for the publication of poems and the exchange of books and literature, presenting us with an image of a class obsessed with the written word.

This paper will explore classical Roman literary traditions as a vehicle for social relationships and social mobility in post-Roman Gaul. Ralph Mathisen (2003) argues that: "In general, an interest in classical culture served to unify Roman aristocrats who otherwise were separated by rank, occupation, wealth, and geographical distance." Allen Jones (2009) presents a more fluid image of elite society in post-Roman Gaul than has been traditionally advocated arguing that Gallo-Roman aristocrats could be tied to multiple centres of patronage and that literary culture could serve as a means of climbing the social scale. I will look at the participation of non-Gallo-Roman elites in Gallo-Roman literary culture and argue that these social and literary networks were not as exclusive as they outwardly appear.

SUSAN LOFTUS

Macquarie University

Suitable Men to Enter the Episcopate in Late Antique Gaul: Ideal and Reality

Beside the complicated composition of military and political authority in the successor kingdoms in Gaul in the sixth century there was another power that regulated many of the lives of the community, that of ecclesiastical power. Much of the authority and the achievements of a Gallo-Roman bishop were dependent on his suitability for office. The defining characteristics that a candidate was expected to have, had been written in the contemporary church canon law in a number of ways. Canons referring to the requirements for episcopal office were frequent, and often reiterated at consecutive councils, indicating both the importance and perhaps the disregard for specific qualifications. In this paper I will discuss both the perceived requirements for priestly and episcopal office and the men who were considered suitable and were eventually chosen to be bishops. The evidence of the suitability of these men is demonstrated most clearly, through a comparative study of the canon law and contemporary narrative sources, hagiography, letters and poetry. Due consideration to the agenda of specific genres such as hagiography is essential for an examination to add insight into the reality of the situation.

In the late fifth century and in the sixth century, the selection of a new type of man to episcopal office was the consequence of dwindling Roman power in the west and the subsequent establishment of the autonomous successor kingdoms. Career options became more limited. Aristocratic men who would normally have entered public office in the local or provincial Roman administration now chose instead to enter the ecclesiastical hierarchy, seeing it as an alternative career path holding comparable authority. This highly educated body of aristocratic men made up a large section of the sixth-century Gallo-Roman episcopate. But were they canonically suitable?

ROD McDONALD

Swansea University

Viking Business at the Battle of Clontarf

Reportedly, Vikings from Dublin joined forces with Vikings from other locations in the British Isles and took part in the Battle. At the same time, however, Vikings in Dublin were already some two or more generations into being merchants, artisans and traders; both producers and importers of a wide range of goods, and playing a large part in the establishment of the first truly urban settlement in Ireland. How does the rhetoric of vikings warrior stack up against the apparent economic reality of urban trader and merchant, seemingly both types being Dublin vikings?

MERRIN MARKS

University of Sydney

Imagining Grendel's Mother: Human Woman or Female Monster?

The poem *Beowulf* was composed in Old English and, ever since studies of the poem commenced in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, most readers have been dependent upon translations and commentaries in order to understand it. Translators and critics therefore carry the responsibility of conveying a perception of characters and events of the text and, if the text is at all ambiguous, they must make decisions as to how they believe characters or events should be depicted; to try and decide what may have been the original intention of the author. In the case of the character of Grendel's mother, the majority of translators and critics of *Beowulf* have depicted Grendel's mother as a vile female monster; innately evil and as monstrous in character as her son. This paper poses the premise that the *Beowulf* poet may have intended the character of Grendel's mother to be human rather than monstrous in nature and examines the poem with a bias towards her humanity rather than non-human monstrosity. With few exceptions, the descriptive words within the poem which are used in reference to Grendel's mother have generally been translated with a bias towards presenting her as being akin to a she-troll or other non-human being; however, these same words are also attributed to other characters in the poem and are translated in human terms or with a positive connotation rather than negative. The actions and perceived actions of Grendel's mother, which are usually interpreted as being evil and non-human, can also be interpreted as being moral and conforming to human emotions and codes of behaviour. A re-imagining of the nature of Grendel's mother in human terms has ramifications for the interpretation of the nature of other characters in the poem, particularly Beowulf himself, and opens up the debate as to when particular behaviours should be construed as heroic and justified or as monstrous and evil.

NICOLE MOFFATT

Macquarie University

You've got mail!: Networking a New Identity in Late Antiquity

Some four thousand of the nine thousand letters bequeathed by Antiquity to the modern era can be dated to between the mid fourth to mid fifth centuries AD. This coincides with a period of significant transformation of the Roman Empire and the changing perception of what it was to be Roman. From this corpus emerges the outline of a social network of elite Christian intellectuals who facilitated their social discourse via an evolving 'global' communications system. During a period in which the church, state and invading 'barbarians' increasingly sought to control 'knowledge' of the social world, the structure of the network evolved so their conversations and information could traverse the Empire. This paper maps the network, its accumulation of social capital via the development and compliance with an epistolary code. From this discourse an intellectual elite emerged that had negotiated their own identity and place in the new social order, through the social network within which they sat.

PENELOPE NASH

University of Sydney

Contemporary Perceptions of the Actions of Tenth-Century European Elites

Many of the actions of elites, especially kings and their followers, are known through the writings and images of their contemporaries. However, the motives attributed to these privileged members of society by their peers, although often plausible, present only a partial picture. In the tenth century in the West, an age when authority resided predominantly with the ruler and when primogeniture was not firmly established, the motives of struggling or jealous elites often encompassed a naked search for power. Such motives meant that would-be rulers started arguments and battles to obtain such power, but perhaps disguised their motives under more worthy aims. The chroniclers of these deeds were at times themselves deceived or had their own agendas.

Queens and other aristocratic women sought power no less often than their male counterparts. Bound more rigidly by an expected code of action their methods were more circumscribed. Nevertheless the ruling women in tenth-century Italian and German lands had in general more scope than women in other western kingdoms. They created favourable images of self which came to be accepted and promoted to a surprising degree by the chroniclers of their actions: Widukind of Corvey, Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim, the anonymous author of the Quedlinburg Annals, Odilo of Cluny and Thietmar of Merseburg cooperated in these creations. Their works were copied and read throughout the High and Later Middle Ages and favourably promulgated the good names of these women during these periods and beyond. With the greater access by modern readers to new edited volumes of these works and their availability via electronic means, it is possible to undertake new analysis and come to understandings not previously conceivable.

LYNETTE OLSON

University of Sydney

Emotions at a World Turned Upside Down

This paper is the product of teaching over thirty years about the transition from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages, drawing on a number of fifth-century sources which were always the heart and soul of the course. The quality of these writings in conveying the intensely interesting events and cultural interfaces of the period is due not least to the emotions that they express and arouse in the reader. Issues of communication and reception across such an immense historical distance will of course be considered, but are not taken to invalidate our encounter with this evidence. Consideration of the sources in the context of the fifth-century thought-world and circumstances is essential. They come from a highly rhetorical tradition, but it is no hollow rhetoric when Sidonius Apollinaris rises above aristocratic trivialities in defence of his city in a letter to which particular attention will be given. Writers of the crumbling fifth-century Roman West universally expressed passionate regret at what was happening. Just what they were regretting deserves close examination, as do the techniques by which their emotions were expressed; religion should be kept in its place. A case in point is Salvian's *On the Governance of God*, in which the emotions are remarkably secular. They are deeply religious in Patrick's literary confession, which as has been observed is unique in telling what it was like to be taken into captivity by barbarians and to become holy, and are especially effectively expressed because he knows how he should be writing but cannot owing to his lack of higher rhetorical education and with an effort does indeed communicate his 'heart's desire' to his readers ancient and modern.

PAMELA O'NEILL

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.i.fri Saxanu: *Saxon Incursions and Early Irish Law*

The early Irish legal text *Críth Gablach* lists amongst the attributes of kings the power to proclaim a *rechtge*, 'emergency law', under particular circumstances. These circumstances include the driving out of a foreign kindred, which is illustrated by *.i. fri Saxanu*, 'ie against the Saxons'.

Críth Gablach was written around 700 CE, at an unknown location in the Gaelic-speaking region encompassing the island of Ireland and much of what is now Scotland. It is dated primarily by the illustration it gives for another circumstance in which an emergency law may be proclaimed *amail rongab recht Adamnáin*, 'as in the case of Adomnán's Law'. Adomnán's Law, the very first law in the Gaelic-speaking region to mandate fines payable to a party unrelated to the victim, was promulgated in 697. The novelty of Adomnán's Law at the time of its incorporation into *Críth Gablach* suggests that the latter text may bear witness to a transitional moment in Gaelic law-making.

The reference to an emergency law to drive out the Saxons is therefore of considerable importance. This paper considers whether this, like Adomnán's Law, may have been the first of its kind and what, precisely, the law mandated. The invasion by Saxons referred to was almost certainly led by Ecgfrið, king of Northumbria from 670 to 685. Ecgfrið was an aggressive neighbour, recorded as having invaded Mercia around 679 and Brega in 684 before another such incursion into Fortriu resulted in his death at Dún Nechtain (probably Dunachton) in 685. The paper explores whether one of the latter two incursions in particular is meant, or whether the reference is to Ecgfrið's bellicosity in general. The results of these enquiries will inform some comments on the eighth-century Insular legal and political landscape.

JOHN SIMONS

Macquarie University

Animals in the Celtic and Greek Hagiographic Traditions

This paper will begin with a reading of the Old Irish poem usually known as The Scholar's Cat. It will explore the way in which the monastic author recognizes the cat as having a distinctive existence and a distinctive animal consciousness. This will then be taken as a guide for the reading of a range of Celtic saints' lives involving the interaction of saints and animals. These will be compared with saints' lives involving animals coming out of the Greek tradition. Icons showing saints and animals will also be used to illustrate the argument. The paper will show that within the pan-Orthodox community there were different models of sainthood at work and that these can be read by examining the role of animals in the different hagiographic traditions.

ERICA STEINER

University of Sydney

The Barrow-Dweller in Beowulf: *An Anglo-Scandinavian Context*

The concept of the undead barrow-dweller was one of great longevity in the Germanic and Scandinavian early medieval eschatological world, and this paper will show the existence of these beings in *Beowulf* primarily in the figures of Grendel and his mother as *draugar*, as well as through other demonic beings. Though *draugr* is a specific Old Norse word for the undead barrow-dwellers in literature and folklore, they are analogous to other pre-Christian supernatural beings found throughout the Germanic world. These beings clearly originate in the pre-Christian mythology of the Germanic world, yet the treatment of Grendel and other non-Christian and demonic elements within *Beowulf* cannot be seen outside of the literary Christian culture of late Anglo-Saxon England. That the poem has non-Christian elements embedded within it does not negate the Christianity of its author (and audience) any less than the incidence of pre-Christian ideas, imagery and beings in other poetry and prose of the era does; it simply shows the nature of syncretic belief in Anglo-Saxon England. By locating the origin of the poem in not only an Anglo-Saxon, but an Anglo- Scandinavian milieu, questions of date inevitably arise, and within the limited scope of this paper some supporting evidence will be discussed that points to the composition of *Beowulf* in the early tenth century Danelaw.

HOLLIE THOMAS
University of Queensland

Dustsceawung *and Perceptions of Roman Remains in Anglo-Saxon England*

The Old English word, *Dustsceawung* (the contemplation of dust), captures an idea that is perhaps most recognizable to modern audiences in a poem such as Percy Shelley's *Ozymandias*, but which was also pervasive in Anglo-Saxon poetry. In common with their Latin counterpart, the *ubi sunt* poems, Old English poetry often dwells on the fleeting nature of life and civilisation, drawing a moral lesson from this intransience. *The Ruin* in particular has captured the interest of scholars for its description of an ostensibly Roman ruin as *enta geweorc* (the work of giants). But, did the poet know that the ruins were Roman? In a 1975 article, P. John Frankis analysed the use of Latin loan words to argue that there were Roman connotations attached to the phrase *enta geweorc* and scholars have since been generally willing to accept his argument. But while the suggestions of Frankis are appealing, the evidence falls tantalizingly short of certainty. Far more convincing is Christopher Abram's more recent proposal that a correlation may be found between *The Ruin* and Venantius Fortunatus' sixth century poem, *De excidio Thuringiae*. The parallels he suggests between the description of Thuringia in the early sections of this poem and such description in *The Ruin* are unquestionably close. But, does it then follow that the Anglo-Saxon poet knew more about the creators of the building than he lets on? This paper will reassess references to Roman ruins in *The Ruin* and other Anglo-Saxon poetry, debating the extent to which the contemplation of dust can be seen as linked to *Romanitas*.

JANET WADE

Macquarie University

'Lock up your Valuables': Perceptions of Sailors and Sea-merchants in Port Cities of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium

There were always large numbers of sailors and sea-traders in the major port cities of the Late Antique and early Byzantine periods; even in the winter months these men waited in ports for favourable winds to take them back out to sea. The ongoing presence of mariners made them an important group or sub-community in maritime cities throughout the world. Unfortunately these men rarely left their own written records, and as a result, our perceptions are based almost entirely on what others had to say about them. Sailors and sea-merchants were often not permanent residents in the port cities that they frequented, thus they were seen as foreigners; alienated as a separate class from the rest of society. As such, many of our sources treat these men as either inconsequential or they are portrayed in a negative light. Yet all of the extant impressions of these men were influenced to varying degrees by the emotional, cultural, intellectual, or religious partiality of their authors.

This paper will look at a range of perceptions of the maritime sub-community that existed in Late Roman and Early Byzantine port cities. Various secular and ecclesiastical attitudes will be discussed and compared to references to these men in the civil and maritime law codes. The laws, although not completely devoid of bias, are perhaps the most realistic and reliable sources that we have on the maritime crowd during this period. I will ask whether traditional views of sailors, sea-merchants, and other mariners should be challenged. Did the maritime crowd have a more integral role in the shaping of society in port cities than the sources give them credit? Were these men really as bad as the literary sources would have us believe (or were they perhaps even worse)?

ANNA WALLACE

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Questions of Temporal Authenticity in Cynewulf's Elene

Cynewulf's Old English poem *Elene* opens with the AD date of Constantine I's Battle of Milvian Bridge and subsequent conversion to Christianity. A precise date is an unusual beginning for a saint's life, but the opening is complicated further by the historical inaccuracy of the date, which is about eighty years wide of the mark. This paper proposes that while Cynewulf inherited the date from his Latin source, he almost certainly knew it was incorrect. He departs from his source elsewhere in *Elene*, but made a deliberate choice to retain the 'wrong' date of 233 AD. This paper will explore why.

This opening of *Elene* is a conscious imitation of histories and chronicle entries; it resembles a section from Bede's *HE* or one of his world chronicles. A date is thus vital to the poem's performance of history. Using a date implies the historical authenticity of the narrative, and indirectly supports the theme of oral vs written sources which pervades *Elene*. The numbers of the date hold particular meanings in medieval number symbolism which may have justified their retention. That it is an *anno Domini* date positions the narrative relative to the fixed point of Christ's Incarnation, forming a temporal link with the *inventio crucis* narrative. Ultimately the incorrect date affirms the irrelevance of earthly time when compared to the eternity of God and saints.

JONATHAN M. WOODING

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The Emotional World of the Early British and Irish peregrini

Most readings of the evidence for early medieval *peregrinatio* identify *peregrini* behaving intellectually, by the trail of texts and glosses that they left behind. They also identify *peregrini* behaving symbolically in hagiographical narratives – but in this literary context such behaviour has an uncertain relationship to real life. Peter Brown, in his 1998 reprise of the idea of the 'holy man', drew attention to the externality of our portraits of the early medieval holy person – but noted the existence of rare sources, such as the *Confessio* of St Patrick, that gave some glimpses of their inner experience. This paper will consider how we might further reflect constructively on the emotional dimension of the very powerful and personal act of religious self-exile.