AEMA12

RECEPTION

Conference Programme
and
Abstracts

21–22 April 2017

Australian National University
Canberra

12ᵗʰ Conference of
The Australian Early Medieval Association

Conference Committee

Convenors:

Christopher Bishop
Geoffrey D. Dunn

Members:

John D'Alton
Darius von Güttner Sporzyński
Stephen Joyce
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Committee of
The Australian Early Medieval Association
2016

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FRIDAY, 21 April

09.00 – 09.30   **Registration** (AD Hope Conference Room)

09.30 – 10.00   **Welcome and Announcements** (AD Hope Conference Room)

10.00 – 11.30   **Session 1 – Classical Reception** (AD Hope Conference Room)

Chair: Darius von Güttner-Sporzyński

10.00 – 10.30 – Chris BISHOP (Australian National University) – "From Virgil's 'Lofty Towers' to the 'Broken Walls' of Fortunatus: Creation and Construction in the Latin Poetry of Late Antiquity"

10.30 – 11.00 – Geoffrey D. DUNN (University of Pretoria) – "Reception of the First Council of Nicaea in Early Medieval Papal Letters"

11.00 – 11.30 – Susan-Mary WITHYCOMBE (Charles Sturt University) – "What has Jupiter to do with Thursday?"

11.30 – 12.00   **Break (**AD Hope Conference Room**)**

12.00 – 13.30   **Session 2 – Byzantines and the East I** (AD Hope Conference Room)

Chair: John D'Alton

12.00 – 12.30 – Matthew O'FARRELL (Macquarie University) – "Persian Analogs in a Medieval 'History' of Constantine"

12.30 – 13.00 – Janet WADE (Macquarie University) – "The Goddess Athena: Patroness of the Marketplace in the Christian Capital of the East"

13.00 – 13.30 – Bronwen NEIL (Macquarie University) – "Maximus the Confessor on Dreams and Treason"

13.30 – 14.30   **Lunch & AEMA Annual General Meeting (**AD Hope Conference Room**)**

14.30 – 16.00   **Session 3 – British Isles I** (AD Hope Conference Room)

Chair: Bob DiNapoli

14.30 – 15.00 – Erica STEINER (University of Sydney) – "*Stigmata Brittonum*: Appearance and Identity in the British Isles"

15.00 – 15.30 – Pamela O'NEIL (University of New South Wales/University of Sydney) – "Earlier Material in Críth Gablach"

15.30 – 16.00 – Matt FIRTH (University of New England) – "Reinventing Æthelstan: Anglo-Saxon Kingship in the Íslendingasögur"

16.00 – 16.30   **Break (**AD Hope Conference Room**)**

16.30 – 17.30   **Plenary Session 1** (AD Hope Conference Room)

Chair: Chris Bishop

Louise D'ARCENS (Macquarie University) – "Frankly Melancholic: Early Medieval France in neo-reactionary thought today"

17.30 – 18.30   **Reception** (ANU Classics Museum)

From 19.00   **Conference Dinner** (The Roti House Malaysian Restaurant)

SATURDAY, 22 April

09.00 – 10.00   **Plenary Session 2** (AD Hope Conference Room)

Chair: Chris Bishop

Bob DINAPOLI (The Melbourne Literature Seminars) – "Patchy Reception: The Riddle of *Beowulf*"

10.00 – 10.30   **Break** (AD Hope Conference Room)

10.30 – 11.30   **Session 4 – British Isles II** (AD Hope Conference Room)

Chair: Bronwen Neil

10.30 – 11.00 – Susan FORD (Australian National University) – "Front to back: the image and imagination of the manuscript"

11.00 – 11.30 – Stephen JOYCE (Monash University) – "*Poenitentiale Ambrosianum*, the Book of David and the British Church in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries"

11.30 – 12.00   **Break** (AD Hope Conference Room)

12.00 – 13.30   **Session 5 – Continental Europe** (AD Hope Conference Room)

Chair: Geoffrey D. Dunn

12.00 – 12.30 – Amy WOOD (Macquarie University) – "Not Playing by the Rules: Rome and the Sclavenes"

12.30 – 13.00 – Darren SMITH (Sydney University) – "The Early Medieval Ages between the World Wars: Pirenne's *Mahomet et Charlemagne* and the Vision for a New Europe"

13.00 – 13.30 Darius VON GÜTTNER-SPORZYŃSKI (University of Melbourne) – "Baptism of Poland: the narrative accounts of the conversion of Mieszko I"

13.30 – 14.30   **Lunch & AEMA Committee Meeting** (AD Hope Conference Room)

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14.30 – 16.00   **Session 6 – Byzantines and the East II** (AD Hope Conference Room)

Chair: Ann Moffatt

14.30 – 15.00 – Ryan STRICKLER (Macquarie University) – "Alterity and Identity: Dehumanizing the Other in Seventh-Century Byzantine Literature"

15.00 – 15.30 – Natalie MYLONAS (Macquarie University) – "Embracing and Resisting Alterity: Gendered Characterisation in the Different Versions of the *Life of Anastasia* as a Response to the 'Otherness' of the Cross-Dressing Saint"

15.30 – 16.00 – John D'ALTON (Monash University) – "Fighting Temptation with Jacob of Serugh: The Transmission of the *Agon* Metaphor from Greece to Today via the Medieval East"

16.00 – 16.30   **Break** (AD Hope Conference Room)

16.30 – 18.00   **Session 7 – Modern Reception** (AD Hope Conference Room)

Chair: Chris Bishop

16.30 – 17.00 – John KENNEDY (Charles Sturt University) – "The Celts, the Vikings, and Modern Coinage"

17.00 – 17.30 – Jewell JOHNSON (University of Sydney) – "Modern Art's Other: 'Radicals' of Medieval Orthodoxy in Twentieth-Century Art"

17.30 – 18.00 – Mark BYRON (University of Sydney) – "'Called Throne, Belascio or Topaze': Early Medieval Encyclopaedism in Ezra Pound's *Cantos*"

18.00   **Prizes announced and close** (AD Hope Conference Room)

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Louise D'Arcens, Macquarie University

Frankly Melancholic: Early Medieval France in neo-reactionary thought today

In this talk I will examine the valency of the early Middle Ages in the recent French political imaginary and in recent vocabularies of nationhood. Although nineteenth-century writers such as Karl Joris Huysmanns (credited with the birth of French heritage Cathedral tourism) viewed the later Middle Ages as the truest expression of French greatness, as epitomised in the vibrancy of its high Gothic aesthetic, for a number of political commentators in the last two decades it is the early Middle Ages that represent 'la France profonde'. Some celebrate it as the era of Clovis, 'the First Frenchman'; for others this period sowed the seeds for a cultural and political decline that continues today. The most prominent, and controversial, recent instance of the latter view has emerged among the French 'nouveaux réactionnaires': Éric Zemmour's book *Mélancolie française* (2010) sparked a heated debate among commentators and historians alike, as a result of its ideological use of the early Middle Ages to account for what Zemmour regards as the rise of French cultural malaise and loss of identity in the era of multiculturalism. I will track and analyse the public debates that emerged in France in response to Zemmour's assertion that contemporary French nihilism has its roots in a kind of abiding national 'post-Roman' melancholy. It will also explore the notorious creative (and not uncritical) uptake of Zemmour's thesis in Michel Houellebecq's 2015 novel *Soumission* – a novel which had a prominent place in the explosive events of that year in France. Through examining these texts and debates I aim to show that the early Middle Ages continue to be significant to how France negotiates its role in a rapidly changing Europe.

Robert DiNapoli, Independent Scholar

Patchy Reception: The Riddle of *Beowulf*

Over the years I've worked with *Beowulf*, I've grown ever more aware of its sheer *unlikeliness*. What was the poet thinking? How could he, most likely an Anglo-Saxon monastic, have conceived this long poem about sixth-century pagans? Vellum was a costly resource: what scriptorium would allow any of its stores to be used for the copying of a text whose concerns look mostly away from the monastic devotion to scripture and to the writings of the church fathers? Our familiarity with *Beowulf*, both as the most celebrated poem in the canon of Old English literature and as the object of two centuries of modern critical scrutiny, can distract us from how powerfully it differs from any other poem of its era. We characterise it as 'secular'. At the same time, we can sense the Christian and re-imagined pre-Christian sensibilities that shimmer in its depths. Its pagan Danes and Geats name 'God' like heroes of the Old Testament, and its demonic cannibal-ogre monsters it characterises as *hel-runan* or 'intimates of hell'. Highly literate, it makes canny use of oral conventions preserved in the poet's native tradition. It employs the tools of literacy brought to England by Christian missionaries to tell a tale which, according to Alcuin of York, no Christian should waste his time even listening to. By chance or by design (depending on when he composed his work) the poet benefitted as well from the Benedictine Reform's fostering of vernacular literacy—nowhere else in Europe could a poem such as *Beowulf* have found its way onto vellum during the Anglo-Saxon era. I will explore some of the many mysteries attendant on this singular text, in the hope of finding the basis for a more intuitive and sympathetic sense of its author's imagination and purposes. To help me I will draw on Exeter Riddle 39's exquisite play with the natures of the spoken and the written word.

Chris Bishop, Australian National University

From Virgil's "lofty towers" to the "broken walls" of Fortunatus — creation and construction in the Latin poetry of Late Antiquity

It seems that few poems of Late Antiquity have received the level of attention that has been heaped upon the Mosella of Decimus Magnus Ausonius. Characterized (some might say stigmatized) as an hodoeporikon from at least the 1930s, the poem is commonly believed to describe Ausonius' return to Trier with the emperor Valentinian I, following a campaign against encroaching Germanic warbands. The earliest commentators on Ausonius' Mosella tended to concentrate on the structure of the poem itself, but, from the 1960s, there was a shift in academic focus towards an analysis of the specific language used in the poem and, in particular, its intertextuality. In 1984 Michael Roberts identified one of the dominant themes of the poem as the "violation of boundaries" and elucidated Ausonius' "negative evaluation of the products of culture as opposed to nature". It is in this vein that this paper will precede, but arguing also that we see in Ausonius the beginning of a Christian and late antique rejection of the man made.

Mark Byron, University of Sydney

'Called Thrones, Belascio or Topaze': Early Medieval Encyclopaedism in Ezra Pound's *Cantos*

Ezra Pound's modern epic poem *The Cantos* aspires to the inexhaustibility of his predecessors Dante and Homer. The poem's themes span the history of civilizations (east and west), philosophy, theology, politics, economy, as well as contemporary matters of war and social change. Pound draws deeply on his cultural heritage, deploying a wide range of source materials from the Greek and Roman classical spheres, as well as the lights of high medieval culture in the troubadour poets, the Paris philosophers, and the Tuscan poets Dante and Guido Cavalcanti. As Pound attempts to establish the foundations for the *paradiso* section of his epic, he turns, conspicuously, to early medieval sources such as Martianus Capella and the Eastern Church Fathers (Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor), sensitive to their reception in the translations and commentaries of the great ninth-century theologian and translator John Scottus Eriugena. Pound intended to use Eriugena's masterwork, the *Periphyseon*, as an eschatological framework for the concluding sections of *The Cantos* until war and incarceration changed its direction and tenor. Why did Pound, almost entirely alone among the major Modernist poets, draw so heavily upon early medieval sources? This paper sketches out a preliminary answer to this question, evaluating the encyclopaedic intensities of Pound's poem and the way he discerned early medieval sources themselves to function as models of preservation and reception of classical (especially late-classical) knowledge. Pound's early medievalism is a key mode of his thinking, both in terms of cultural preservation and poetic experimentation: a much fuller exploration of this theme is now possible and timely in the context of recent significant advances in early medieval scholarship.

John D'Alton, Monash University

Fighting temptation with Jacob of Serugh: The transmission of the *agon* metaphor from Greece to today via the medieval East

The concept of the *agon*, the military/athletic struggle against the "other"- the inner or outer enemy, was well-developed in Hellenistic times, and spread over a large area along with Greek culture. Before becoming embedded in modern Western thought this theme was extended in

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medieval times both in the West and the East especially in relation to Christian spirituality. Christ's fight with temptation and Satan was seen as a model for the civilised Christian person's similar struggle with the evil without and within their own soul. One author who extensively depicts this agonistic struggle is the Syrian poet Jacob of Serugh, second in fame only to Ephrem. Writing in the early sixth century Jacob portrays Jesus' wilderness temptations in two extended poems amounting to over 1000 lines. In these he writes of contests, battles, and wounds, of swords, shields and victories. His metaphors also teach an anthropology that becomes definitive in Christian thought- Jesus fights as a true human, and his victory "raises Adam again", and allows for the possibility of personal Christian victory and salvation. This paper explores Jacob's reception of the *agon* metaphor and his ideas of Christ's corporeality and cosmic battle. It shows how the medieval Eastern theme of spiritual battle develops into a rich theology and metaphor which then influences the later West through Ignatius of Loyola and others. The fight with temptation becomes central to ideas of personality from authors such as Bernard of Clairvaux to Jane Eyre. Jacob of Serugh stands as an important early medieval developer and transmitter of the *agon* metaphor.

Geoffrey D. Dunn, University of Pretoria

Reception of the First Council of Nicaea in Early Medieval Papal Letters

The council of Nicaea met in 325 to find solutions to the Arian controversy about the nature of the Son within the Trinity, the date to celebrate Easter each year, the Meletian controversy in Egypt, and to rule on certain disciplinary matters. Within a decade and a half it came to be called ecumenical (a statement more about its universal reception rather than universal participation) and in later generations its pronouncements were held in the highest authority. This paper investigates the authority the council held in the minds of bishops of Rome in the fifth century, starting with the confusion of the canons of the 342 synod of Serdica as Nicene. The argument is advanced that the council, particularly its canons, were appealed to by Roman bishops and declared inviolable, especially when later bishops or synods sought to undermine Rome's prestige as the Roman bishops believed it had been recognised at Nicaea.

Matt Firth, University of New England

Reinventing Æthelstan: Anglo-Saxon Kingship in the Íslendingasögur

In part faithful record of transmitted oral narratives, in part authorial invention, the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century *Íslendingasögur* relate the histories and legends of Iceland in the ninth- and tenth-centuries. The narratives are complex documents. Authored to preserve national narratives, the *Íslendingasögur* were also designed to meet the expectations of an audience contemporaneous with the authorship, and at times were written under the auspices of the vested interests of a patron or specific politic milieu. As such, the historicity of any transmitted narrative element with the *Íslendingasögur* requires detailed examination to unravel. This paper will look at the topos of Anglo-Saxon kingship that at times intrudes into these primarily Icelandic narratives, using the depiction of Æthelstan (r. 924 – 939) in *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* as a vehicle to facilitate the examination. Though Æthelstan's reign suffers from a paucity of contemporary documentation, it is nonetheless known that he was a king of trans-European repute. The marriage alliances Æthelstan sought with continental polities through his sisters, his hegemony over Anglo-Scandinavian England and Scotland, and his victory at the battle of Brunanburh, create the image of a king whose power was unrivalled to that point in Anglo-Saxon history. In his twelfth-century *Gesta regum Anglorum*, William of Malmesbury depicts Æthelstan as a paradigm of kingship. However, in the only other significant account that purports to evidence the personal character of the king, *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* depicts a weak king, a mere foil for the heroism of the Icelandic protagonist. Thus

this paper seeks to establish whether the characterisation of Anglo-Saxon kingship in the *Íslendingasögur* was a narrative device designed to augment Icelandic heroism, or whether there is some historicity behind the transmission of Anglo-Saxon kingship in Icelandic saga.

Susan Ford, Australian National University

Front to back: the image and imagination of the manuscript

Jumping off from Ludmilla Jordanova's strictures addressed to historians in *History in Practice*, about the 'cult of the archive' which 'nurtures … fantasies about … privileged access to the past', I ask whether classicists, who have no manuscripts, are a danger to medievalists, who have many. The case study will be the shrivelled copy of Gildas' *De Excidio Britanniae*, Cotton Vitellius A vi, very recently digitally imaged by the British Library and now knowable back to front and upside down in all its holeyness.

Jewell Johnson, University of Sydney

Modern Art's Other: 'Radicals' of Medieval Orthodoxy in 20th Century Art

Post-Enlightenment escalation throughout the 20th century shifted Modern Art's relationship with religion to "the spiritual underground" (Motherwell 1945). Habermas' post-secular considerations and 'The Spiritual in Art' exhibition at LACMA in Los Angeles (1987), are critical turning points for the secular gaze and modern expressions of religion in art. Beyond Medieval Studies these encounters remain limited and tentative, mostly excluded from modern and contemporary art's territory of interest. This reticence or aversion in this reception is unsurprising: Western Christianity expected a totalitarian focus on itself, safely isolated from 'New Age' heresies. In contrast, the Eastern Church organically prescribes all of life informs and enhances one's perception of the faith, and her Russian Church in Europe and America produced two artists of the Modern-Middle Ages' lifestyle last century. Kandinsky elucidated his "Christian Art" and the first theories of abstraction in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911), a seminal reference for this genre (theoretical and artistic) for more than a century. The narrative familiarity for viewing religious art in the Medieval Era remains necessary for Kandinsky's abstract work titled 'Day of Judgement,' and the second archetype, Andy Warhol's return to Representation, which adapts explicitly medieval symbolism as a result of his devout lifestyle presence informing his art's work's face/surface value's covert operations in POP. The Eastern Church's freedom of material suitable for inspiration and use clears much confusion around Kandinsky's personal dismissal of Theosophy while Western perception persists he adopted its beliefs. and Warhol's secretive daily mass and devotions paradoxical in view of the Pope of Pop's public personae. Russian Orthodoxy was revealed by the 'impressions' of Kandinsky's Abstraction, and Warhol's POPular culture of objects and personalities transformed with Byzantine esotericism. They remain contemporaneous models for both a secular and religious gaze.

Stephen Joyce, Monash University

The *Poenitentiale Ambrosianum*, the Book of David and the British church in the sixth and seventh centuries

The *Poenitentiale Ambrosianum* is preserved in a manuscript from Bobbio. Editions by Ludger Körntgen and Michele Tosi have placed this penitential in a sixth or seventh-century British-Irish context, particularly as it relates to the *Ambrosianum*'s influence on the penitentials of Columbanus (d. 614) and Cummean (d. 661)This paper examines the connections between the *Ambrosianum* and the sixth-century British text, the *Excerpta quedam de libro Dauidis* or the Excerpts of the Book of

David, representing the only surviving text directly assigned to the patron saint of Wales, Bishop David. It argues that the *Poenitentiale Ambrosianum* be considered as 'the book of David', from which excerpts were made. Attempts by Cummian to draw on the authority of David in seventh-century Ireland point to the continuing strength of a British church, against the image presented by Bede.

John Kennedy, Charles Sturt University

The Celts, the Vikings, and modern coinage

This paper will explore the use, in coinage issued by mints throughout the world in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, of subjects and motifs drawn from the domains of the Continental and Insular Celts and the Vikings. It will pay particular attention to circulating coinage intended for everyday use but will also consider the limited edition coins, often made from precious metals and intended for the collector market, that are referred to by numismatists as 'non-circulating legal tender' (NCLT). The comparatively limited use of anything Celtic in coinage, even in Ireland with its strong emphasis on a Celtic heritage, and the popularity of Viking subjects on the coins of the Viking homelands, of the countries they visited in varying capacities, and of countries as diverse and unlikely as Benin, Laos, and Tuvalu will become evident, and the paper will attempt to explore the factors underlying this difference. Undoubtedly the Viking ship, with its potent aura of power, grace, and menace is significant, as is the strong case for the Norsemen, rather than St Brendan and his monks, to be regarded as the first Europeans to land in North America (the home today of many of the world's most enthusiastic and wealth coin collectors). But the documented impact of the ancient and medieval Celts on world history is arguably less dramatic than that of the Vikings, and there may also be a belief that Insular Celtic motifs in particular, which often have Christian associations, are not appropriate for something as closely associated with profane commerce as coinage.

Natalie Mylonas, Macquarie University

Embracing and Resisting Alterity: gendered characterisation in the different versions of the Life of Anastasia as a response to the "otherness" of the cross-dressing saint

Despite official declarations against cross-dressing in the fourth century and the condemnation against it in Deuteronomy 22:5, eleven *Lives* that praise the ascetic superiority of cross-dressing female saints were produced in the Late Antique and early Byzantine periods, with many others produced in the Medieval period. Engaging in a practice that was explicitly forbidden by the orthodoxy, women who cross-dressed were often labeled as "others" because they resisted social expectations and gender norms and "trespassed" into the masculine realms of independence and holiness. The hagiographers of these women walk a fine line between affirming their holiness despite their controversial lifestyles, while simultaneously stressing that their decision to cross-dress was not one made impulsively, but rather a last resort in an effort to serve God unhindered. The purpose of this paper is to explore how textual transmission and redaction – broadly conceived as kinds of text reception themselves – embrace and resist alterity in the different versions of the *Life* of one of these saints: the *Life of Anastasia*. Through an analysis of the gendered characterisation of Anastasia in two versions of her *Life* – one a part of the dossier of Abba Daniel of Scetis, and the other a freestanding narrative preserved in the Greek *Menaion* – I will show that different Christian traditions tolerated different degrees of alterity. While the earlier *Life* embraces the masculine gender identification of the saint, the later one resists gender ambiguity by avoiding masculine monikers, avoiding masculine pronouns, and even altering the narrative's chronology to affirm Anastasia's femininity. I will argue that the earlier *Life* allows the heroine a greater degree of masculinisation due to its production and circulation amongst the largely male community of the monks at Scetis; whereas the later *Life* resists such a characterisation due to its wider circulation

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and audience, which would have included women.

Bronwen Neil, Macquarie University

Maximus the Confessor on Dreams and Treason

In his trial at Constantinople in 655 Maximus the Confessor was accused of having a dream a decade earlier that the current emperor considered treasonous. Debates over the true nature of dreams had a long history in Western philosophy, with Plato arguing mostly that they had little value and Aristotle insisting that they could not be vehicles of divine revelation. The middle Platonist Philo of Alexandria took a more allegorical approach, one which was taken up in the third century by Origen, in *Against Celsus*. While certain aspects of Origenian thought resurfaced in the seventh century in Maximus the Confessor (d. 682), he seems not to have taken up the neo-Platonist evaluation of dreams as potential vehicles of divine revelation or prophecy. Maximus's distinction between the gnomic and natural wills is now recognised as one of his major contributions to Byzantine understandings of spiritual anthropology, because it solved a long-standing philosophical problem inherent in the relationship between divine providence and humanity. This paper presents a brief account of Maximus' doctrine of providence, his understanding of the will, and how both influenced his characterisation of dreams as involuntary. In contrast to Evagrius, who saw dreams as a way that the devil could lead the monk astray into sin, Maximus considered dreams to be involuntary and thus judged that the dreamer was not culpable for their content. At his trial, Maximus used this philosophical position to exonerate himself from the charge of treason arising from his reported dream.

Matthew O'Farrell, Macquarie University

Persian analogs in a Medieval Latin "History" of Constantine

The *Incerti Auctoris de Constantino Magno Eiusque Matre Helena Libellus*, an obscure Latin pamphlet first published over a hundred years ago, has attracted comparatively little scholarship and almost none in English. The text presents a "novelistic" life of Constantine and is a composite of two plots, one of which has a definite relationship to a Greek hagiographic tradition compiled in the ninth century. Its tradition can be traced back to perhaps the late thirteenth century, however the means of transmission from Greek is likely to remain forever unknown. The structure of this neglected work presents some, as yet, unexploited comparative potential. Its ahistoricity and self-contained plot suggests direct descent from a component source of the Greek hagiographies rather than the composite hagiographies themselves. Further, the insertion of an unrelated plot in the Latin work has altered the Greek story in such a way as to highlight the original narrative's alliance to an international story type. This alliance can be demonstrated by an unlikely comparison; the *Libellus* is very similar to a set of historical/biographical Persian stories describing the childhoods of the Sasanian kings Shapur I and Ormazd I whose origins may lie in the third century. Further, the alterations the *Libellus* makes to the Greek story exaggerate its resemblance to the Persian narratives. This paper will argue that the *Libellus* is a relatively pure example of a very specific and very ancient style of historicizing legend; a recognizable complex of motifs centered on new monarchy. Further that the *Libellus* shows how this complex operates according to a fixed narrative logic, even at very advanced stages of reception. Finally it shall suggest that the *Libellus* and its hypothetical ancestors may serve as useful models in a consideration of the Persian tradition.

Pamela O'Neill, University of NSW/University of Sydney

Earlier materials in Críth Gablach

In its current form, the early Irish status text Críth Gablach (circa 700 CE) contains extracts from a number of earlier legal materials on a variety of topics such as sick-maintenance and trespass. This paper explores the treatment of those materials, considering why they were included, how they were regarded, and what they show about the development of the law over time. The paper also considers the role of Críth Gablach's compiler in partially preserving texts that are otherwise unknown to today's scholars.

Darren Smith, University of Sydney

The early Middle Ages between the World Wars: Pirenne's *Mahomet et Charlemagne* and the vision for a new Europe

In 1917, interned in Germany as a prisoner of war, Belgian medievalist Henri Pirenne (1862–1935) sketched the beginnings of a thesis that would fundamentally reassess the early Middle Ages. The presentation of his thesis at the 1928 International Congress of Historical Sciences (a paper entitled 'The Expansion of Islam and the Commencement of the Middle Ages') provoked a passionate discussion, prompting Lucien Febvre and François-Louis Ganshof to comment: 'we had never experience anything of that kind before and we have never experienced it since'. Pirenne 's claim that 'without Mohammad there would be no Charlemagne' not only challenged accepted wisdom about the Middle Ages but unsettled the heart of modern European nationalism. My paper will argue that Pirenne's renown thesis was born in the ashes of the First World War, constituting an attempt to reconsider Europe's medieval origins and construct a new vision of modern Europe. I will outline the evolution of Pirenne's thesis from his early 1917 sketch to the posthumous publication of *Mahomet et Charlemagne* in 1937, and how his ideas took shape over a period of 20 years. His thesis was influenced by his personal experience of war, internationalist ideals that also produced institutions like the League of Nations, concerns about the direction of history as a discipline, and hopes about Europe's future. The paper will not assess the merits of the thesis itself, for which there is already an extensive scholarship. Rather, it will present an example of how the Middle Ages constituted a site for contesting modern concerns during the early twentieth century, especially around nationalism. The paper would mark the centenary of Pirenne's internment in Germany, an experience that propelled him to the stage as an advocate for the vital role of historians in the face of nationalism, militarism, and racial theory.

Erica Steiner, University of Sydney

***Stigmata Brittonum*: Tattooed Britons or Painted People? Appearance and Identity in Ancient and Early Medieval Northern Europe**

Throughout history various cultures have practiced tattooing, and Europe in antiquity was no exception. The Persians, Greeks and Romans practiced tattooing on their slaves and condemned criminals, but around these Mediterranean cultures were a number of people with whom they had early and prolonged contact, such as the Scythians and Thracians, who did the opposite: they tattooed their elites. When the Romans first encountered and then conquered some of the tribes in the British Isles, it was remarked upon that these people also similarly decorated their bodies with designs. This perception endured into the early medieval period, with the appearance of the people known as the Picts, variously translated as 'people of the designs' or 'the painted people', but who may also be understood as 'the punctured people' – or by extension, 'the tattooed ones'. Which of these practices their name reflects has been the subject of some debate ever since the

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later medieval period when the Picts apparently vanished from the historical record. The practices of both body-painting and tattooing had also seemingly disappeared by this time from Europe – or at least were marginalised and literally stigmatised – with the abandonment of these practices coinciding with the spread and entrenchment of Christianity, a religion in which tattooing was usually forbidden. This suggests that what had once been a practice that was indicative of an individual's ethnic identity and their social status within that particular culture, had changed over the centuries into a statement of religious identity.

Ryan W. Strickler, Macquarie University

Alterity and Identity: Dehumanizing the Other in Seventh-Century Byzantine Literature

Throughout the seventh century, as Byzantine fortunes began to wane in the wake of unprecedented defeat, first at the hands of the Persians and later at the hands of the ascendant Islamic Arab forces, traditional Byzantine triumphalism, under which victory was evidence of divine favour was found wanting. God's hand in human events was not in question, instead Byzantine rhetoric became increasingly dynamic. Authors emphasized the role of the Byzantines and their adversaries in an unfolding providential drama, one which took on an apocalyptic, if not eschatological role. Byzantine subjects of various backgrounds placed themselves in their own providential narrative, complete with supernatural heroes and villains. Heroes could be found in the Emperor Heraclius and his portrayal as the new Alexander in the Syriac apocalyptic tradition or as George of Pisidia's new Heracles, or eschatological heroes such as the Jewish Messiah of the *Sefer Zerubbabel* who would avenge Roman oppression, or the Last Roman Emperor, who Pseudo Methodius predicted would restore the empire and surrender control to Christ. As compelling as these figures are, it is the villains who are the subject of this paper. Temporal, human enemies, including emperors, military adversaries, or even traitorous Byzantines were transformed into subhuman or even demonic forces through narrative dehumanization. This paper examines the rhetorical strategies used to dehumanize political enemies, rendering them enemies of God from whom the protagonists would eventually find deliverance. This paper considers this phenomenon by employing Margaret Somers's theory of "narrative emplotment", a concept employed successfully by the late Thomas Sizgorich to early Islamic identity formation. According to Somers, in establishing a unique identity within a heterogeneous society, cultural actors create a metanarrative in which they "emplot" themselves, establishing actors as characters in a larger story and granting identity through the creation of unique meaning.

Darius von Güttner Sporzyński, University of Melbourne

Baptism of Poland: the narrative accounts of the conversion of Mieszko I

The earliest narrative accounts of the 966 Mieszko's conversion to Christianity are offered by two Polish dynastic histories, the *Gesta principum Polonorum* and the *Chronica Polonorum* by Bishop Vincentius of Kraków. These narrative sources are crucial to understanding the circumstances of the baptism of the northern ruler of the pagan Slavic realm of the Poles (*Polani*). The oldest is the *Gesta* composed between 1112 and 1118 and provides a chronology of Polish history focused on the lives of the rulers of the realm, although no precise dates are preserved in the text. As the oldest narrative source to relate the sequence of events of early Polish history, the *Gesta* became the source for later authors and historians such as Bishop Vincentius of Kraków (*c.* 1150–1223) and Jan Długosz (1415–80). The second od the narrative source used in this paper is the *Chronica Polonorum* by Bishop Vincentius of Kraków, first native chronicler of Poland. The *Chronica Polonorum* is the second oldest extant narrative source and follows the chronology established by the *Gesta*. The *Chronica Polonorum* relates the history of Poland until about 1207. Both sources

outline similar yet different versions of the events of 966. This paper will attempt to highlight their differences and examine the reasons which may account for both authors' approach.

Janet Wade, Macquarie University

The Goddess Athena: Patroness of the Marketplace in the Christian Capital of the East

The goddess Athena had a prominent place in markets, on ships, and wherever commercial transactions were conducted throughout Antiquity. Steelyard or counterpoise weights in the Classical guise of Athena, with the Gorgon Medusa on her breastplate, became very popular in the Late Antique/Early Byzantine period. They were not recycled objects from an earlier time; they were manufactured and distributed in the fifth to seventh centuries. To date, these small, portable objects have been trivialised by scholars, who have struggled to contextualise their pagan 'otherness' in the Christian world of Late Antiquity. Instead, historians have preferred to study the contemporaneous Byzantine empress weights. A range of theories have been proposed to explain the meaning behind the Athena weights, most of which seek to assign them a Christian or purely secular meaning, or to place them in a period prior to the fourth century. Several scholars have even suggested that the weights do not depict Athena at all, despite their clear iconography. This paper will demonstrate that Athena was still a widely recognised Graeco-Roman goddess when these weights were being used, both in Constantinople and throughout the eastern Roman Mediterranean world. Some of the merchants who carried weights in Athena's likeness may have continued to worship the goddess; others would certainly have been aware that the figure represented on the weights was the same as the famous statue in the marketplace in Constantinople. I will propose that the colossal statue of Athena that presided over the activities of Constantinople's central forum was the model for these unassuming and portable objects of trade. I will also suggest that to many of the merchants and sea-traders using these weights, Athena remained the perfect goddess to watch over their commercial activities.

Susan-Mary Withycombe, Charles Sturt University

What has Jupiter to do with Thursday?

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the transition from Late Classical to Early Mediaeval was a far more complicated matter than the relatively simple Decline and Fall of Rome and the Barbarian Invasions. Closer examination of sources – literary, artistic, archaeological, numismatic, linguistic – has cast light on the Dark Ages. The distinction between Roman and Barbarian is blurred, the interaction between Classical and Germanic has been revealed as ancient and muddled. In this paper I intend to compare two conversion stories, those of Clovis King of the Franks by Gregory of Tours and Edwin King of Northumbria by the Venerable Bede. The heroes of the stories were both successful war-lords who became kings by conquest. Both had determined and persuasive wives. Both stories deal with pivotal episodes in the much longer histories of their respective countries: Gregory's *Historia Francorum* and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum.* Both were written by clergymen, both in Latin; but for one author that language was still current in his native land – albeit in a less than classical form – and for the other it was foreign and had to be learnt. The purpose of this comparison is to examine ways in which the countries that became France and England received the classical culture of the late antique world.

Amy Wood, Macquarie University

Not Playing by the Rules: Rome and the Sclavenes

In the early sixth century A.D., a completely unknown group of barbarians arrived on Lower Danubian frontier of the Eastern Roman Empire. Throughout the course of the following two

centuries, they caused considerable damage to the Empire and eventually succeeded in settling much of the Balkans and Central Eastern Europe. This paper will address evidence which suggests that those barbarians identified as Sclavenes in the written sources never became fully integrated into the Roman system of alliances or its cultural orbit in the sixth and seventh centuries. The written and archaeological evidence will be examined and compared with previous Roman-barbarian relationships to draw conclusions about the unique Sclavene relationship with the Eastern Roman Empire and the nature of Sclavene society before it transformed into the recognisable Slavic polities of the Early Middle Ages. To ask why the Sclavenes were different inevitably involves the much larger issue of Rome and her relationship with barbarians generally and over time. At its crux are processes of cultural contact, acculturation and integration, ethnicity and identity, social formation, the operation of empire and frontiers, and the overall role of the Late Roman Empire in the formation of the barbarian societies which eventually gave rise to Early Medieval Europe. It will be argued that the Sclavenes were able to resist Roman influence due to a confluence of historical circumstances, the nature of Sclavene society itself, and the availability and operation of alternative imperial orbits in Central Eastern Europe, namely the First Avar Khaganate.

Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association

edited by Geoffrey D. Dunn

The Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association invites submissions on any topic of early medieval studies. The Journal seeks engaging, original work that contributes to a collective understanding of the early medieval period. The journal welcomes papers on any theme, such as history, art history, archaeology, literature, linguistics, music and theology, and from any interpretive angle—memory, gender, historiography, medievalism, consilience and beyond. Articles must be written in English and between 6,000–12,000 words long, including footnotes and bibliography, and should follow the Chicago Manual of Style (16th edition).
All submissions will be subject to double blind reviewing. For any queries about submissions or the journal more generally:
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AEMA12

RECEPTION

In 1979 Hans-Robert Jauss published *The Alterity and Modernity of Medieval Literature*, an essay which defined reception theory and invited us to rediscover in the *alterity of the Middle Ages an aspect of its modernity*. For students of the Early Middle Ages, a field defined from its naissance by an emphasis on inter-disciplinary research, Reception theory can offer a surprisingly rich return. The 12th conference of the Australian Early Medieval Association takes Reception as its theme. We will be investigating the ways in which the literature, history, language and culture of the ancient world were received into post-Classical Europe; the ways in which the literature, history, language and culture of the Middle Ages have been received into the modern world; and the ways in which the Medieval world acted as conduit for the transmission of the Classical.

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