Department of Archaeology and Ancient History

Higher Seminars in Archaeology

The Higher Seminars normally take place on Wednesdays at 10.15-12.00 (see exceptions in schedule below)

Initially meetings will occur via Zoom only. The invitation is recurring and should work for all meetings. This arrangement will be reviewed periodically.

When joining a seminar, please write your name in the ‘chat’. This then forms a record of all attendees. All attendees should mute their microphone during the presentation. If you have a question or comment, please just write ‘comment / question’ in the chat function. The chair of the seminar will keep a list of people and give the word to you. This is when you can turn on your microphone. Please have your camera on during the seminar - it is a lot nicer for the speaker to see their audience rather than talking to a group of black boxes.

2 Sept Natalija Kashuba: From Lake Baikal to the Arctic Ocean. Ancient demography of North Asia

9 Sept No seminar

16 Sept Emily Vella: Blender and Perspectives on Modelling

23 Sept Departmental Research Day

30 Sept Joakim Kjellberg: final doctoral seminar (Time: 15.15 – 17.00)
Den medeltida stadens dynamik – urbanitet, sociala praktiker och materiell kultur i Uppsala 1100-1550.
Opponent: Axel Christophersen (NTNU Trondheim)
NB the seminar will be in Swedish and Norwegian
Joakim will send you sections of his thesis from this Thursday (24th) onwards if you email him directly: joakim.kjellberg@arkeologi.uu.se

7 Oct Anders Kaliff and Terje Østigård: The Great Indo-European Horse Sacrifice
14 Oct  No seminar

21 Oct  Carolin Johansson and Angus Graham: *Re-imag(in)ing the Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia*  
Joint seminar with the Higher Seminar in Egyptology series

28 Oct  Alexander Roesen Sjöstrand: final doctoral seminar  
*Changes, activities and bones - The evolution and activities of the PWC site Ajvide on the island of Gotland.*  
Supervisors: Sabine Sten, Paul Wallin and Gustaf Svedjemo.  
Opponent: Jan Apel (Stockholm University)

4 Nov  Rita Peyroteo Stjerna and Luciana G. Simões (Department of Organismal Biology, Human Evolution, UU): *Genetic analysis of a human burial in a Mesolithic shell midden in Portugal reveals an unexpected individual history*

11 Nov  Christoph Kilger: *What Viking merchants had in mind*

18 Nov  Julia Wihlborg: *The Power to Write History: Men and Women in Archaeological Academia*

25 Nov  Therese Ekholm: final doctoral seminar  
*Animals & Humans - the human-animal interaction during late glacial and post glacial time in northern Sweden*  
Supervisors: Sabine Sten, Kjel Knutsson  
Opponent: Dr. Ingela Bergman (Silvermuseet, Arjeplog)  
Seminar Chair: Karl-Johan Lindholm  
NB the seminar will be held in Swedish

2 Dec  Daniel Löwenborg and Åsa Larsson (RAÄ): *Urdar - a research infrastructure for Swedish contract archaeology*

9 Dec  Henriette Rödland: final doctoral seminar  
*Swahili Social Landscapes: Material expressions of identity, slavery, and labour in pre-colonial Zanzibar, 1000-1400 CE.*  
Supervisors: Neil Price, Stephanie Wynne-Jones (York) and Paul Lane (Cambridge).  
Opponent: Per Ditlef Fredriksen (Oslo University)

16 Dec  Fika Seminar: discussion of future directions and speakers

For spring 2021, there are currently plenty of slots available:

3 Feb  Neil Price: *Distant Vikings*

17 Feb  Anastasia Nikulina (Leiden, TerraNova Project): title tbc.

17 March  Julia Wihlborg: *Vulnerable Vikings*

Angus Graham  
Coordinator and Chair of the Higher Seminars in Archaeology
Emily Vella: Blender and Perspectives on Modelling

Blender is a free and open-source 3D modelling software that has been used in animated films, 3D printing, video games, and in our case, 3D reconstruction of archaeological material, features, and landscapes. The first half of the workshop will be a mixture of lecture and discussion focusing on addressing main questions such as “why model?” and the differences between 2D modelling, 2.5D modelling, and 3D modelling. Various case studies will be used to demonstrate the different ways that modelling can be used in archaeology and the advantages/disadvantages of different methodologies. The second half will be a brief tutorial on how to use Blender to create a simple 3D model of pottery from a typical pottery drawing.

All materials and tutorial instructions will available on this google drive by Tuesday Sept 15th; please download the tutorial folder prior to the workshop. The entire workshop will take place over Zoom.

Please download the latest version of Blender before the workshop if you would like to actively participate in the tutorial. The software is free, but if you would like to download it onto your work laptop, you will need administrative permissions. https://www.blender.org/


The great Indo-European horse sacrifice is one of the most enduring and widespread traditions in world history. This study presents a historic overview of Indo-European studies and shows the cosmological continuity of the horse-sacrificial tradition based on specific cultural innovations and ecological adaptations over time. It also sheds new light on cultural history through in-depth analysis of horse sacrifice in culture and cosmology. From Sintashta in Russia and the steppes to the legendary ashwamedha ritual in India and horse sacrifices in Roman, Greek and Irish traditions, the analysis finds that horse sacrifice appears to have been most successful in Scandinavia, with classic sites and funerals such as Sagaholm, Kivik and Håga in the Bronze Age and Old Uppsala, Rakne and Oseberg in the Iron Age. The horse-sacrifice tradition shows that these cosmological rituals were closely related to the region’s ecology, the weather and the availability of water that was required for a successful harvest. In the cold north, the sun was important for cultivation, but it was the relation between winter and water that defined the seasons and called for horse rituals, as recent skeid traditions show. Understanding horse sacrifice as an institution therefore provides new insights into prehistoric religion from the Bronze Age to recent folklore in rural Scandinavia.


Rita Peyroteo Stjerna (Researcher, bioarchaeologist) and Luciana G. Simões (PhD Candidate, population geneticist), Department of Organismal Biology, Human Evolution, Uppsala University

Genetic analysis of a human burial in a Mesolithic shell midden in Portugal reveals an unexpected individual history

Abstract:
We identified a young adult male of African descent buried sometime during the 17th -18th centuries in a well-known 8000 years old shell midden in Portugal. This identification was possible
because of the integration of genetic analysis with archaeological research. We employed a multidisciplinary approach to explore agency and behaviour behind this unexpected find. Ancient DNA, archaeology, historical records, radiocarbon dating and stable isotope analyses of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen on human bone were combined to determine this individual’s place of origin and to reconstruct the burial context. Genome-wide data and uniparental markers indicate unadmixed African ancestry and affinity to West African populations such as the Mandenka and Gambian. Dietary data support the genetic results. Stable isotopes of carbon and nitrogen show that his diet relied on C4 plant protein (e.g., millet, sorghum) which was dominant in West Africa’s semi-arid region and not commonly available in Europe nor in Equatorial Africa, where C3 crops were dominant. Oxygen isotope results indicate a littoral African origin, further circumscribing Senegambia as his birthplace. Archaeological data suggests a simple but carefully prepared grave, dug out on the top layers of the shell midden. Interestingly, historical and ethnographic data show that shell middens are up to present-day used as cemeteries in Senegambia. Most likely, this individual arrived in Portugal via the Atlantic Slave Trade. What is unclear are the reasons behind this unusual burial. We explore scenarios that could explain the choice of this Mesolithic site for his burial and show the power of integrating archaeology, history, isotopes and genetics to investigate individual histories.

Keywords
ancient DNA, archaeosciences, interdisciplinarity, burial, shell midden, Atlantic Slave Trade

Christoph Kilger: *What Viking merchants had in mind*

In the Early Middle Ages, with the rise of the Muslim Caliphate trade and exchange expanded on a global scale. Both archaeological and numismatic sources testify to the development of a supra-regional bullion silver economy in Eurasia, which copied monetary standards and practices current in the commerce of the Islamic world. However, we still know little about the monetary habitus in long distance networks of the Early Viking Age (c. 800-950 AD). In this seminar I am going to talk about various aspects of measurement and numeracy probably current in long distance trade communities. I will present some examples, which might provide evidence that Viking Age merchants had a profound knowledge of Islamic coinages and their monetary value. This probably has also implications for our understanding of how weight standards such as the Islamic miṯqāl became accepted.

Julia Wihlborg: *The Power to Write History: Men and Women in Archaeological Academia*

Since the birth of archaeology in the 17th-century, it has always been a male business. Even though female archaeologists existed, the first ones to collect trinkets in curiosity cabinets, record ancient monuments and conduct excavations were mostly men. However, times are changing and more and more great female archaeologists have emerged and made their mark upon the archaeological discipline. Nowadays the power of creating history is equally shared between men and women. Or is it? This paper aims to explore who holds the final mandate over the creation of history in contemporary Sweden. In other words, who are hired at universities to be at the frontline of archaeological research and to pass their knowledge on to the next generation of archaeologists. The analysis is based upon comparative studies of the number of men and women hired in archaeological institutions, what academic titles they hold, their ages as well as their academic interests. This information is processed with the help of traditional statistical methods as well as a correspondence analysis conducted with the program PAST. The purpose is to answer questions like: “Are there a similar amount of men and women hired in Swedish archaeological institutions?”, “Are there more female PhD-students than professors, indicating a change in the gender distribution?” “Are men and women interested in the same kind of research questions?” and “Do traditionally male research questions get more funding than those that are traditionally female?”. 