Department of Archaeology and Ancient History

Higher Seminars in Archaeology, Spring 2021

The Higher Seminars take place on Wednesdays at 10.15-12.00

The seminars will continue to be held online via Zoom for the remainder of the Spring semester. 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.

13 Jan  Fika meeting 10.15-11.00
20 Jan  No Seminar (Departmental meeting)
27 Jan  Michael Given (Univ. of Glasgow): *On the Rocks and In the Trees: Conviviality and the Landscape of Cyprus*
        Joint Seminar with the Antiken Higher Seminar Series
3 Feb   Neil Price: *Distant Vikings: Comparative Archaeologies from the Pacific and the Northern World*
10 Feb   Terje Östigård: *An ecology and cosmology of the winter: Farming, fertility and funerals*
17 Feb  Kristian Strutt and Dominic Barker (Univ. of Southampton): *The Old Sarum Landscapes Project. Establishing the Extent and Chronology of Settlement at Old Sarum and Stratford sub-Castle, Wiltshire, UK*
24 Feb  Anneli Ekblom, Vincenza Ferrara and Pascoal João Gota: *Biocultural heritage, the role of archaeology and historical ecology in the management of biodiverse landscapes*
3 March Helene Martinsson-Wallin: *Archaeology and Sustainable Development – Three case studies*
10 March Dept. Research Day
17 March  Frands Herschend  
*What is Háv hanging on in Hávamál?*

24 March  Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson: *Approaches to Archaeological Material - a reflection*  
John Ljungkvist: *Old finds and new studies - reflections on basis of a reinterpretation*  
Ben Raffield: *Shattered lives and broken worlds: captivity, slavery, and violence in the Viking diaspora*

31 March  Ben Pennington (Univ. of Southampton): *The emergence of the Egyptian State - links with the landscape evolution of the Nile Delta*  
Joint seminar with the Higher Seminar in Egyptology series

7 April  Nik Petek-Sargeant (British Museum):  
*Weathering climate change: conceptual challenges in archaeology*

14 April  Kailin Hatlestad and Emily Vella (Uppsala; TerraNova ITN): *Energy Regimes, Archaeology, and Modelling*

21 April  Anastasia Nikulina (Leiden University; TerraNova ITN): *Tracking hunter-gatherer impact on interglacial vegetation in Last Interglacial and Holocene Europe: challenges, proxies and future directions*

28 April  Anneli Ekblom and Michel Notelid: *A corner in the middle: narrative and representation of a landscape, lower Limpopo, Mozambique. Text seminar.*

5 May  Annika Nordström: final doctoral seminar  
*Okända rum - aspekter på social praktik och social identitet i Nyköping c. 1100 – 1500*  
Supervisors: Christoph Kilger, Ing-Marie Back Danielsson  
Opponent: Göran Tagesson (Department of History, UU)

8 May  Andreas Hennius: Doctoral defence. Opponent: James Barrett (Cambridge)

12 May  15.00-17.00. Joint seminar with the Antiken Higher Seminar series.  
Thomas Tartaron (University of Pennsylvania): *title tbc*; and  
Alex Knodell (Carleton College): *From Small Islands to a Big Picture: Regional Survey with the Small Cycladic Islands Project*

19 May  Richard Meurman: *A dubious historical dating on unstable ground - Sala silvermines presumed beginning around 1509-10*

26 May  Don Kulick (Engaging Vulnerability/Dept of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology, UU)

2 June  Julia Wihlborg: *Vulnerable Vikings*

Angus Graham  
Coordinator and Chair of the Higher Seminars in Archaeology  
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Michael Given (University of Glasgow)

*On the Rocks and In the Trees: Conviviality and the Landscape of Cyprus*

In a time of runaway climate change, species extinction, pandemic, and widespread social and environmental injustice, how can we understand and remedy our relationship with the ecological and social landscapes we live in? One approach is through the long-term perspective brought by landscape archaeology, especially when allied with history, ethnography and the ecological sciences. To this can be added a theoretical framework based on the social critic and polymath Ivan Illich’s idea of ‘conviviality’, which celebrates the interdependence of all players in our social and ecological world.

In this talk, I will explore these ideas and possibilities, using examples from a range of Cypriot landscapes from the Archaic period to the 20th century. Rocks, for example, are the foundations of socioecological communities and the complex interrelationships that generate growth, life and the specific roles and characters of particular places. This can be seen in the Roman-period tombs and quarries cut into the limestone of the Acropolis of Kourion, and in the role of particular rocks in grinding human food. Trees such as the Cyprus pine, the Golden oak, and the domesticated olive orchestrate intense interactions between (for example) soil, water, copper, goats, pigeons, and furniture makers. Rocks, rock formations and trees can all play significant roles in cultic practice, and in creating local biographies of place.

Neil Price

*Distant Vikings: Comparative Archaeologies from the Pacific and the Northern World*

There is a long, curious and problematic history of comparisons between the voyaging cultures of the Polynesians and the Viking-Age Scandinavians – most clearly since Erik Arentz’ *Sydhavets Vikinger* (1930) and Te Rangi Hīroa’s *Vikings of the Sunrise* in 1938, but actually dating at least as far back as the 1880s when the Swedish Viking archaeologist Hjalmar Stolpe began work as one of the first Pacific ethnographers. These links were taken up again by the Hawaiian po’okela Herb Kawainui Kāne in the late 1990s, but always more as metaphor than detailed analysis. Since 2013, the University of Uppsala has been exploring more practical, material approaches to the comparative archaeology of the Vikings and the Oceanic peoples, in ongoing work on Hawai‘i and beyond that is the subject of this seminar. The project focusses on specific themes of mutual relevance, but with a critical awareness of the more uncomfortable heritage of romanticising, outsider perspectives that have afflicted both cultures. Taking respectful inspiration from Epeli Hau’ofa’s concept of the ‘sea of islands’, this presentation will set out an agenda of comparative research in Viking studies, and consider the potential feedbacks in the maritime archaeologies of Polynesia.

Terje Östigård

*An ecology and cosmology of the winter: Farming, fertility and funerals*

The Nordic winter defined the seasons and the agricultural cycle, and whether it would be a year of famine or plenty. In all comparative religions, the relation between the sun and water is essential and structures rites and religious life. The major rituals and sacrifices are closely related to the hydrological and agrarian cycles. However, in the cold north and in an extreme environment, there is seemingly no water gods or goddesses. Dominant interpretations of cosmology in agrarian societies from the Bronze Age onwards exclude ecology as if the winter and weather did not matter. Similarly, the ritual calendar, corn-spirits and fertility gods have also been marginalised in the archaeological debate. By combining archaeology, ethnography and ecology, a prehistoric cosmology of the winter...
will be addressed, but this topic also re-opens a Pandora’s box that has been buried for decades. The question of corn-spirits and continuities was one of the most debated and controversial issues a century ago.

Kristian Strutt and Dominic Barker (Univ. of Southampton)

*The Old Sarum Landscapes Project. Establishing the Extent and Chronology of Settlement at Old Sarum and Stratford sub-Castle, Wiltshire, UK*

The site of Old Sarum, Wiltshire, and its environs marks a landscape with rich remains from the Neolithic through to the post-medieval period. The monument itself is a multi-period defended site, dating at least from the Iron Age (c. 400BC), with evidence of Roman and late Saxon occupation. It formed an important defended castle site after the Norman Conquest, and the site for a cathedral constructed and enlarged in the 11th century. By the late 13th century, however, the fortunes of Old Sarum began to decline with the establishing of Salisbury cathedral in 1220, and the consequent shift of activity and settlement to ‘New Sarum’.

The Old Sarum Landscapes Project aims to investigate the landscape of Old Sarum, the monument and surrounding settlement, to map the extent of the remains and assess the chronology of the archaeology in the area. Our research commenced in 2014 with geophysical survey in the monument, and since then has taken an area of 85 hectares surrounding the castle and cathedral, using geophysical survey, excavation, and documentary evidence to analyse the evidence of occupation at the site. Of particular interest is the relationship between late Saxon settlement in the area, and the 12th and 13th century settlement of the site’s medieval heyday. What evidence is there to support the documentary evidence of a Saxon settlement at Old Sarum?

Anneli Ekblom, Vincenza Ferrara and Pascoal João Gota

*Biocultural heritage, the role of archaeology and historical ecology in the management of biodiverse landscapes*

Globally, a high proportion of biodiversity resides outside of protected areas. Incentives for biodiversity protection, therefore, must be built and fostered amongst diverse stakeholders, and in areas where biodiversity and communities co-exist. In keeping with this principle, biocultural heritage is an emerging concept drawing on local knowledge, land-use practices and heritage values to define sustainability and resilience from the perspective of local inhabitants. We begin our seminar by discussing the transdisciplinary methods whereby biocultural heritage must be explored, and here we focus specifically on the potential of archaeology to not only contribute with long term data but also with a conceptual framing of the concept of biocultural heritage itself. More broadly, biocultural heritage is considered to encompass the natural–cultural components of human–environment interactions including knowledge, practices and innovation. We then discuss the importance of building landscape histories and documenting local heritage values based on the experience and memories of local communities. In the lecture we will review examples of biocultural Heritage across the world and also zoom in on our own examples from Sicily and sub-Saharan Africa. Vincenza Ferrera will present her research project, its methodologies and challenges on the historical ecology of olive in Sicily and her aims to build on and document past and present practices of management of olive. Pascoal Gota will present his project on sacred forests, methodologies and challenges and its potential for forest conservation and self-determinacy in southern Mozambique. Finally, we will open up for a broader discussion on the potential of the concept and possible applications in various parts of the world.
Helene Martinsson-Wallin
Archaeology and Sustainable Development – Three case studies

The archaeological data set centres on material culture but the relationship, entanglement and interactivity between things and the human-environment dynamics are important factors to provide a deep understanding of humanity in a past-present-future perspective. The presentation highlights three case studies that encapsulate cultural and natural dimensions alike that have global and local relevance and can contribute to the current debate and practices tied to sustainable development. I will present the process, challenges and outcome of one project that has already been carried out; In the footsteps of Tjelvar -Sustainable Cultural and Natural Experience Based Tourism in Rural Gotland (2018-2020) sponsored by Region Gotland and The Swedish Agency for Regional Growth and Development. The second project is an ongoing project on Sustainable visits to Rapa Nui – Glocal perspectives sponsored by STINT/CONCYT (2018-2022) that move beyond the sustainable tourist dimension and incorporate indigenous issues and the colonial past and the colonial present. The third project is just in its starting phase, Fisheries and coastal zone development in small island contexts – the past–present and future that is part of the Graduate School on Sustainable Development at Campus Gotland (2020-2024). In the latter project, we will explore the possibilities of moving on from interdisciplinary research strategies to explore transdisciplinary approaches.

Frands Herschend
What is Háv hanging on in Hávamál?

In Hávamál, the protagonist Háv (the High One) is hanging on a wooden meiðr, for nine nights in a painful and probably deadly rite of passages during which Háv, who was still the young unmarried and socially edgy itinerant, Loddfáfnir, was merged with the god Oðinn and thus perfected. This merger created or resulted in the »Oðinn-High-One«, that is in one of the many Odinic shapes. When the rite of passage was over Háv/Oðinn was ready to marry Frigg and become the ruling hall owner of Ásgårðr. In early Christian days in Northwest Europe, Christ too hang and died on a wooden rod or a pole (a ród, ME. rood) and not specifically on a cross). And when he died he resurrected perfected through his rite of passage.

This seminar is an archaeologist’s primarily attempt to bring together the Old Norse term meiðr with different everyday archaeological Iron Age contexts arguing that probably there is a relation between the material phenomenon described by the term meiðr and the recorded everyday archaeological contexts. Secondarily, it could be argued that the ród too fits into this category of practical wooden objects.

The purpose of this approach is to fulfil the archaeologist’s obligation to bridge literary and material contexts supporting our endeavour to unify our understanding of the Iron Age irrespective of the character of the varying source materials.

Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson
Approaches to Archaeological Material - a reflection

My presentation contains ideas and thoughts on methodological approaches to archaeological source material, and stem from ongoing studies within the Viking Phenomenon project. While there are some excellent examples of material culture studies on Viking Age material, not least by doctorands and researchers from this department, there are other instances indicating a (growing?) gap between interpretations and narratives on the one hand and the archaeological source material on the other.

Through three brief case studies, that have or will be expanded upon in published or upcoming articles, this presentation is an attempt to highlight the importance of reconnecting
Theories and ideas to the archaeological source material in order to maintain the scientific rigour in the process of interpretation and constructing new narratives. By using a known archaeological context as a template, in this case Birka, it is possible to explore and test new ideas to see if they are applicable to the actual source material. If the material does not fit within the interpretation, it is the latter that needs to be adjusted. This is very much work in progress, without the explicit aim of producing results, but rather to be able to ‘think aloud’, trying out various methods and applying different perspectives on the archaeological material to see where it may lead us.

John Ljungkvist
*Old finds and new studies - reflections on basis of a reinterpretation*

In this presentation I will reflect upon a reinterpretation of a well-known object that was made during the work on imports for the Viking Phenomenon and Viking Dynasties project. This finding relates to challenges that we consciously or not are facing regularly. Many ideas are based on studies or even loose assumptions surrounding finds or features that were made long ago. Some are ‘easy’ to change just by publishing new data. For others, like the example in this presentation, the new interpretation is just a matter coincidence (att poletten trillade ner vid ett speciellt tillfälle) and some luck finding published references from regions quite far away.

Ben Raffield
*Shattered lives and broken worlds: captivity, slavery, and violence in the Viking diaspora*

In this short presentation I will provide an update on my work within the Viking Phenomenon project, which focuses primarily on raiding, slavery, and colonisation within the broad geographical sphere of the so-called Viking diaspora. I will present three studies (one published, one in press, and one under review) that exemplify the range of theoretical and methodological approaches that I have mobilised in an attempt to shed new light on prominent but little-understood socio-cultural behaviours and institutions. Collectively, these outputs embody time spent conducting research at several different universities in Sweden and the United States.

Ben Pennington (University of Southampton)
*The emergence of the Egyptian State - links with the landscape evolution of the Nile Delta*

Around 3100 BC, a socioeconomic and political transformation took place in Egypt, whereby early upstream centres of culture were transformed into a larger territorial entity encompassing all Egypt. Most models of social change focus on upstream political developments in explaining this process, yet recent work shows the deltaic landscapes downstream to have been highly dynamic. A new model presented here suggests that this landscape remodelling may have allowed or even stimulated a variety of important socioeconomic changes in the delta region which could have impacted upon the emergence of Dynastic Egypt.

Nik Petek-Sargeant (British Museum)
*Weathering climate change: conceptual challenges in archaeology*

A challenge faced by researchers working on climate change and trying to make their findings useful, applicable and relatable is that for many climate change is something that is temporally and geographically distant. To address this challenge, social sciences and humanities have been studying the social dimensions of climate and the role of people’s experiences, values and relations to the environment in their adaptations to the changing climate. Weather has been a particularly fruitful
gateway to understanding how people relate to and interpret climate change in everyday situations. However, archaeology, commonly preoccupied by hard science approaches to climate change, has been largely absent in this conversation. Nevertheless, with its insights into material outcomes of human experiences and relations, it can become integral to the discussion of ‘weathering’ climate change and historicizing weather. Using the example of Kenya’s Ilchamus community and a mix of historical and archaeological sources, I highlight their experiences of weather since the end of the Little Ice Age and explore the potential of building archaeologies of weather as an analytical approach and as a communication tool.

Emily Vella and Kailin Hatlestad (Uppsala Univ.; TerraNova ITN)
*Energy Regimes, Archaeology, and Modelling*

During this presentation, we will present on a recently submitted journal paper about Energy Regimes. We will discuss the utility of the Energy Regime concept for archaeologists (and beyond) and how we plan to implement this framework within our PhD projects. We look forward to a conversation about Energy Regimes. The title and abstract of the submitted paper follows:

*Establishing Energy Regimes as a comparative framework to describe human-environment interactions: Bridging the gap between archaeology, ecology, and related fields*
Emily Vella, Kailin Hatlestad, Alexandre Martinez, Karl-Johan Lindholm, Anastasia Nikulina, Anhelina Zapolska, Jens-Christian Svenning, Sjoerd Kluiving

Archaeologists tend to work collaboratively across many disciplines but often lack a framework to unify the fields. Energy Regimes, while not a pervasive theory in any one discipline, have been explored in environmental history, ecology, sociology, geography, and history. Due to its presence in numerous disciplines, Energy Regimes has the potential to provide a shared conceptual framework and common terminology for disciplines investigating human-environment interactions. Conventional archaeological comparative frameworks for the classification and identification of archaeological sites focus to a large extent on material culture, neglecting landscapes and creating limited perspectives on past human activities. Energy Regimes are a way to describe and classify human-environment interactions, first by considering the primary type of energy used (ex. solar, fossil fuels) and secondly by the range of human activities that are taking place, and the types of landscapes we might expect from each Energy Regime. We have identified four Energy Regimes: Guided Solar, Devised Solar, Subterranean, and Low Carbon, and provide a preliminary methodology for recognizing Energy Regimes in the archaeological record and beyond.

Anastasia Nikulina (Leiden Univ.; TerraNova ITN)
*Tracking hunter-gatherer impact on interglacial vegetation in Last Interglacial and Holocene Europe: challenges, proxies and future directions*

Proxies and their possible combinations are reviewed in relation to understanding hunter-gatherer niche construction activities in pre-agricultural Europe. The approach consists of two steps: 1) identify the range of hunter-gatherer impacts on landscapes based on ethnographic studies; 2) evaluate proxies possibly reflecting these impacts for both the Last Interglacial (Neanderthals) and the Early–Middle Holocene (Mesolithic humans) periods in Europe. Using these proxies to assess the possible character of Neanderthal and Mesolithic foragers’ impact on past landscapes, it is not possible to unequivocally differentiate between specific anthropogenic, climatic and megafaunal impacts on the local level, for both time periods. Case studies for both periods are discussed, and it is shown that published evidence for Mesolithic manipulation of landscapes is based on proxies that are also present in the Neanderthal record. If one applies the “Mesolithic” interpretation schemes to
the Neanderthal record, three common niche construction activities can be identified: vegetation burning, plant manipulation and control of animal presence. In fact, the review suggests that as strong a case can be made for a Neanderthal impact on landscapes as for anthropogenic landscape changes during the Mesolithic, even though the Neanderthal evidence comes from one high-resolution site complex only. However, inferred small Neandertal population sizes, and the low population densities that these imply, might suggest this impact is limited to a local scale. Further research in this domain should include attempts (e.g. by means of modelling studies) to establish whether hunter-gatherer impact on landscapes played out at a local level only versus a larger impact.