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Chris Baghos

University of Sydney

Spiritual Legitimation in East Anglia: Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* and Its Hagiographical Antecedents

In his critical edition and translation of Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* (c. 730-740), Bertram Colgrave raised the question of why King Ælfwald of East Anglia commissioned the text given that its subject belonged to the rival kingdom of Mercia. The scholar posited that the saint was of interest to the ruler since he had established his hermitage in the borderland known as Crowland. In addition, Colgrave affirmed that the favourable portrayal of King Æthelbald of Mercia in the *Life* suggests that relations between the two realms were positive at the time (Colgrave, ed. & trans., 'Introduction' to Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* (Cambridge University Press, 1956) 16). The scholar thus provided a satisfactory explanation as to why Ælfwald had no objection to Guthlac. However, he did not account for the monarch's active interest in the ascetic, which I contend stemmed from a common understanding of holiness amongst the Byzantine, Continental, and Insular Christians of the first millennium. This does not preclude the fact that Felix attempted to further legitimise the veneration of Guthlac within the wider East Anglian society, as evidenced by his depiction of the hermit as a restorer of paradise. In this paper, I will outline how Felix reiterated the popular patristic understanding of the cosmological consequences of the Fall and the function of sainthood in their reversal, namely for the purpose of placing his subject in a widely accepted tradition of holy solitaries – one which extended from Egypt to the Insular world. More precisely, I will outline how Felix has presented Guthlac as effecting harmony between humans, animals, and the elements through his obedience to, and imitation of, Christ. To this end, I will highlight where Felix has drawn from authoritative hagiographical works such as Evagrius of Antioch's translation of the *Life of St Antony*, St Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, and the Venerable Bede's prose *Life of St Cuthbert*.

Lisa Kaaren Bailey

University of Auckland

Legitimate violence and the bodies of the *servi dei*

In late antiquity, committed religious figures were presented, and presented themselves, as *servi dei*: slaves of God. This metaphor of slavery as religious piety was shaped by the social realities of slavery in the late antique world: the power of the inversion came precisely from the humiliating lives which slaves led. One of the key features of slave life, however, was that they were subject to legitimate violence. Their masters could inflict violence, including sexual violence, upon their bodies in ways which were both socially sanctioned and legally protected. This aspect of the social reality of slavery proved problematic for the religious metaphor, as the ideal of Christian asceticism involved the preservation of bodily intactness and self-control. This paper explores this tension between the religious metaphor of slavery and its social realities, asking how physical violence against slaves of God was legitimated or de-legitimated, and how it related to self-inflicted forms of bodily violence. In particular, the paper will explore the gendered nature of such violence and its implications for constructions of elite masculinity and femininity. It will ask whether the modern concept of violence applies to the acts described in late antique texts, and how religious violence shaped both metaphorical and actual experiences of servitude.

Chris Bishop

Australian National University

Decolonising the Dark Ages

In the closing years of the sixth century, Pope Gregory I received a letter from Reccared, a man who had exercised power among the Visigoths in Spain since at least 580. Although Gregory's response hailed the warlord as king (*reccaredo regi visigothorum*), Reccared's own claims seem far more modest — he used only his name in his correspondence (*recharedus*). For a Catholic convert such as Reccared, this may well have been a matter of piety (why boast of secular titles before the holy Father?), but a wider reading reveals that Reccared's refusal to use such royal titles was commonplace among the early Germanic nations. Indeed, not only did these early “kings” routinely avoid such titles, we witness no name repetition in their regnal lists, thus Reccared succeeded from Leovigild, who succeeded from Liuva, who succeeded from Athanagild, who succeeded from Agila, and so forth. And the names of these “kings” must have seemed singularly descriptive to the Germanic ear — “Counsel to the Realm” (Reccared), “Gold-lover” (Leovigild), “the Golden Lord” (Athanagild) — a fact that becomes all the more disquieting when we turn our attention to the names of the Germanic tribes themselves — “Axes” (Franks), “Knives” (Saxons), “Spear-people” (Germani), “Border People” (Marcomanni), “Children of the House of War” (Burgundians), “Rovers” (Vandals), “Us” (Suevi)...

This paper presents a very preliminary discursus into the lexicon of legitimacy that has scaffolded modern studies of both the *völkerwanderung* and the polities that developed from it. As academics we have (rightly) banished pejorative terms such as the “Dark Ages” from our vocabulary, but in our efforts to rehabilitate our subject, have we created kingdoms where there were none, imagined a unity that never existed, and elevated to the royalty individuals who would have denounced us for doing so?

Adrian Boas

University of Haifa

The Founding and Early Evolution of the Teutonic Order

The German military order known as the Brothers of the Hospital of St Mary of the Germans in Jerusalem, or more popularly as the Teutonic Order, was founded shortly after the Third Crusade. The establishment of the German contingent to that crusade, first as a non-military hospitaller order immediately after the city fell to the Crusaders in 1191, and finally in 1198 as a fully-fledged military order, came up against strong opposition. The story of its struggle to survive and flourish against the hostile reception mainly of the two older military orders in Acre, the Order of the Hospital of St John and the Order of the Temple, is the story of a struggle for legitimacy. The very choice of the order's name (*Ordo fratrum hospitalis sancte Marie Theutonicorum in Jherusalem*) which connected it to an older establishment to which in fact it had no legal connection, was aimed at validating its existence, but would, in fact, weaken its position. The increasing opposition the order faced in Acre eventually led to it moving part of its administrative establishment into the foothills of the western Galilee where it built its main fortress in the Latin East – Montfort Castle. In 1999 and 2000 a joint team from the University of Haifa and the *Deutscher Orden* (as the Teutonic Order is today known) identified and excavated the remains of the headquarters of the order in Acre (modern Akko) and since 2011 the University of Haifa has been involved in excavations and research at the castle of Montfort. This paper will examine the principal discoveries from these two sites and consider their role in the formation and early evolution of the Teutonic Order.

Julian Calcagno

La Trobe University

Authority and legitimacy in Germanic honour systems after the fall of the Roman Empire

The inheritance of Rome provided the newly formed Germanic Kingdoms with much more than just a fragmented Western Empire believed to be engulfed in 500 years of “cultural darkness”. The Latinisation of these kingdoms enshrined a new era of cultural and religious fervour which would inevitably inculcate new practices of honour amongst the now recognised “Germanic” elite. The story of Germanic ethnogenesis before the decline of the Roman Empire was depicted exclusively by Roman accounts. Through incorporation of “Barbarians” into the Roman Empire, the Germanic elites began to identify themselves as the successors of Rome, and to some degree, even Romans themselves. This process of Latinisation would inevitably lead the Germanic peoples to become not the “Barbarian” sackers of Rome which people know them as today, but rather the successors of what will become the newly formed Western Kingdoms. This paper seeks to provide insight to the historical and sociological changes underpinned during the process of Latinisation by utilising a comparative analysis of early Germanic honour.

In the context of legitimacy, the central questions which one may posit are: who gives legitimacy to honour? What are the underlying sociological and historical facts which enabled a shift in the newly Latinised Germanic honour systems? What are the dominant views on authority during this period? What gave these new authoritative purveyors of honour, eg: the Church and the elite, cultural legitimacy?

Anna Czarnowus

University of Silesia, Katowice (Poland)

Laughter and Its Lack in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* and in Layamon's *Brut*

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (written between 1129 and 1151) introduces the Arthurian part of narrative with the tragic prophesies of Merlin. Nevertheless, the chronicler infuses the narrative with joy once he starts commenting on Arthur's reign, his victories in battle, and his efficient rule. Geoffrey writes about Arthur with enthusiasm, even if he does not describe the king as laughing. What he is writing about his exploits, however, goes very much with the Anglo-Saxon spirit of laughing at the enemy. Even if the chronicle does not record this laughter, its existence can be deduced on the basis of what attitude Arthur assumes towards his enemies.

Layamon's *Brut*, written before 1225, is set in the times of "merry old England", as Rosamund Allen summarizes its social context (1992: xxv). Yet laughter in the *Brut* offers a strong contrast to the romance laughter of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. In the fourteenth-century narrative we laugh with king Arthur and also at how imperfect Camelot can be. In the *Brut* there is the atmosphere of austerity that is sometimes interrupted by mockery of the enemies or Arthur's laughter that demonstrates his superiority over his subjects and knights. The mockery happens there very much in the spirit of the Anglo-Saxon ridiculing of the enemy in military confrontations. This is the laughter that was preserved also in Old French *chansons de geste* and in their Middle English continuations that took the form of oriental romances. In the *Brut* laughter is not a reaction that strengthens the community. I argue that due to the romance quality of his text Layamon has more opportunities than Geoffrey to present Arthur as a laughing character, but prefers to develop the Anglo-Saxon discourse.

John D’Alton

Monash University

Eusebius, heroic women martyrs, and the legitimization of a politically disturbing asceticism

When stories of heroic women martyrs challenging corrupt political leaders entered the Syrian context in the fifth century, it was part of a deliberate strategy to legitimise a particular understanding of asceticism as an active confrontational life. Eusebius’ *History of the Martyrs of Palestine* has been barely studied, and mostly analysed for its historical accuracy, yet the rhetorical element predominates in this work and its translation in Syriac and subsequent popularity tells us much about the Syrian milieu. Augustine writes of troublesome ascetics wandering around the empire and siphoning money from the gullible. This was also an issue in Syria where people preferred ascetics to pray in the hills and be out of sight. Eusebius however valorises the confrontational martyr who voluntarily chooses to provoke the political elite and gain God’s honour through choosing death. His work challenges laxity, and invokes various Greco-Roman rhetorical strategies to affirm the supremacy of bold martyrdom over wealth, status, and education. This paper contextualises Eusebius’ *martyria* and discusses its metaphors and usage within the fifth century Syrian context. I note particular repetitive conflict themes and their role in the legitimization of a politically disturbing asceticism.

Robert DiNapoli

Scholar at Large

Telling Tales: an Archaeology of Old English Poetry

The extant corpus of Old English poetry took final shape in manuscripts transcribed during the years of the Benedictine Reform. In response to King Alfred's initial call that 'those books most needful for men to know' be translated from Latin into English, vernacular literacy became established in Anglo-Saxon *scriptoria* on a scale not seen elsewhere. Not surprisingly, the bulk of the poems preserved in those years reflect the values and priorities of their Christian milieu. Why wouldn't they, if the costly and labour-intensive resources of the early medieval scriptorium were to be devoted to their preservation?

But at least some vernacular texts thus preserved comprise surprisingly composite elements. Scholarship has tended to emphasise the Latin and ecclesiastical DNA of the Reform project. With good reason, since most of the texts translated at Alfred's behest were either biblical or patristic. But the vernacular poetry, which uses a vocabulary and an idiom descended from a highly developed oral tradition that owed nothing to Latin or patristics, sometimes strikes notes that do not sit squarely in the Anglo-Saxons' conventional theological frame of reference.

In effect, the site of Anglo-Saxon poetry resembles an archaeological dig. Its upper layers offer profuse evidence of most recent habitation, but these lie above scantier and more obscure remains whose cultural orientations may differ substantially. In my talk I will discuss brief representative extracts from poems such as *Maxims I and II*, *The Fortunes of Men* and *The Order of the World* to explore how their epistemologies and cosmologies frequently veer off the beaten track of Augustinian orthodoxy. In the process I will ask (if not always answer!) challenging questions about how such material found its way in among the more conventional productions of early medieval scriptoria.

Kristen Erskine

Independent Scholar

What is a legitimate source? The case for folklore and local beliefs as sources for the *nemeton* sites of Pictland

This paper discusses the sacred assembly sites of the Pictish areas of Scotland (*nemeta*), of which I am refining a gazetteer. These sites, I argue, originated probably in the Iron Age, and were used throughout the early medieval period for assemblies of various kinds. Most are found in conjunction with early medieval material remains, primarily ecclesiastical. Scholars have identified, from place-name evidence, approximately twenty such sites. In collating the gazetteer, I have combined evidence from place-names, landscape, archaeology, historical texts, and local and folk traditions. In doing so, decisions need to be made concerning what sources of information may be considered legitimate for such an undertaking. In the paper, I give particular attention to sources in folklore and local legend, a category of evidence which supplies plentiful material for these sites. I weigh up the quantity and quality of contribution that such sources can make to a project that claims some scholarly and historical legitimacy. In identifying and describing the various *nemeta* that can now be identified as belonging to early medieval Pictland, what are the legitimate uses of folklore and local beliefs?

Matthew Firth

Flinders University

Legitimacy through Forgery: The Æthelstanian Grants to the Monks of Malmesbury

The links between the Anglo-Saxon king Æthelstan (924/7-939) and Malmesbury Abbey (Wiltshire) are well attested. Reputedly a particular devotee of St Aldhelm, the abbey's founder, Æthelstan donated lands, numerous holy objects (including a *portione ligni Domini*), and wealth to the monks of Malmesbury. After the Battle of Brunanburh in 937, two of his royal cousins who had fallen in the fighting were passed into the care of the abbey and honoured by being laid to rest at the feet of St Aldhelm's tomb. Moreover, only two years later Æthelstan was interred at Malmesbury, breaking with tradition which had previously seen Wessex royals buried at Glastonbury or Winchester. The material history of Æthelstan's kingship was thus prevalent at the abbey – tombs and relics providing a direct link to a time when Malmesbury was favoured by royalty. Less tangible, however, were the abbey's traditional claims to lands held by right of Æthelstan's donation. Such appeals to tradition were particularly fragile in post-Conquest England and could not bestow the legitimacy that accompanied a royal diploma confirming land grants.

This paper will examine the four extant charters that purport to record Æthelstan's gifts of lands to Malmesbury Abbey. It does not propose to examine the authenticity of the documents, all of which are established forgeries. Rather, I intend to examine whether these documents represent a genuine tradition of pre-Conquest land ownership; whether they have an authentic tenth-century progenitor; and to what degree the forged Æthelstanian diplomas granted a perceived legitimacy to Malmesbury's land ownership.

Caroline Foster

University of Oxford

Who may be *rex francorum*? Examining royal legitimacy in Merovingian Francia

Explorations of medieval political thought have typically characterised the early middle ages as an era of limited innovation. The Merovingians are largely described as having drawn upon the political ideologies of the Roman Empire and are not generally considered to have been philosophical, or even particularly strategic, in their approach to monarchy. And yet, the Merovingians were, by many measures, the most powerful and enduring of the first successor kingdoms and Merovingian kings reigned with relative prosperity and stability when compared to their neighbours. For this reason, the core tenets of the Merovingian political structure warrant further consideration. My Masters study examined the practice of partitive succession as a means of providing insight into what can be an opaque political system. In this paper, I intend to discuss a key aspect of my dissertation, namely what I was able to establish regarding Merovingian attitudes towards royal legitimacy. By closely examining the key sources, particularly Gregory of Tours' *Decem Libri Historiarum*, it becomes evident that the Merovingian kings operated within well-defined ideas of royal legitimacy, establishing succession norms which though they may appear peculiar to our eyes, were accepted and championed by the political actors of the fifth and sixth century. I will also discuss the way in which, in the seventh century, ideas of royal legitimacy shifted, particularly as the Merovingian regime became increasingly unstable prior to the Carolingian assumption. The exploration of shifting attitudes towards legitimacy in Merovingian Francia can also be considered as an opportunity to explore broader ideas of political legitimacy and what established someone as a 'rightful' king.

Leonela Fundic

Australian Catholic University

Art in Service of Imperial Propaganda: Claims of Legitimacy in Byzantine Art

References to biblical figures and events, especially from the Old Testament, were commonly used for theological endorsement of one's right to wield power in the Byzantine Empire and the newly established neighbouring states under its influence. Along with panegyrics and other literary genres where the authors employed the language of biblical typology, visual representations were also mobilised with a similar purpose. As a result, Byzantine works of art, ranging from monumental paintings and mosaics to illuminating manuscripts and objects of minor art resonate with certain political and ideological concerns. This paper follows the development of specific narratives from the Old Testament, which were used for theological support of the legitimacy of hereditary power. Themes from the life of Patriarchs Jacob and Joseph, representations of Moses and David as well as events from the history of Israel were frequently depicted in connection to dynastic propaganda of Byzantine emperors and the rulers of satellite states linked to Byzantium.

Julianna Grigg

University of Melbourne

'transitum de hoc mundo': Ceolfrid's Paschal theology and the spiritual passing over of Origen and Anatolius

The early Christian church was dogged by disputes over the dating of Easter. Failure to achieve a consensus on a regular Easter cycle divided Christians in the second century and again in the fourth. In the seventh and early-eighth century the matter was still under dispute, this time among the churches in Britain and Ireland. In this period Abbot Ceolfrid of Wearmouth-Jarrow sent a letter to the King of the Picts that cogently outlined the reasons for following a 19-year Paschal cycle as the only legitimate method; derived from Paschal tables developed by Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century. Bede reproduces Ceolfrid's letter in his *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* thereby preserving for posterity a study on the logistical and theological complexities surrounding the debate on how to derive the correct date to celebrate Easter. The letter has received some critical analysis, primarily on its computational method. Yet concentration on Ceolfrid's computistical argument can miss his interpretation of Paschal theology that emphasises the transcendence of the Resurrection over the Passion. This is evident in the abbot's Christological emphasis on the biblical Exodus story and his mystical interpretation of the festival as a spiritual journey where light triumphs over darkness. It is a theology that closely corresponds to the second and third century assertions of Origen and Anatolius. This paper discusses Ceolfrid's Paschal theology and considers the survival of early Christian theology in an eighth-century Anglo-Saxon monastery and the impact this had on liturgical ritual.

Jennifer Hekmeijer

Flinders University

The *Enigmata Eusebii*: Heavenly Bodies, Beasts and the Bissextile Day

My PhD project is to produce an annotated edition and commentary of two 8th century Anglo-Latin riddle collections, the *Enigmata Eusebii* and the *Enigmata Tatwini*. These riddle collections are part of a medieval riddling tradition begun earlier by the Latin scholar of the late antique period, Symphosius, and popularised in England by scholar and cleric, Aldhelm (c 639-709). However, the riddle collections of Eusebius and Tatwine are unusual because, unlike other contemporary collections, these two are usually regarded as a kind of composite text. This assumption originates from the so-called ‘medieval paradigm of the century of riddles’ said to have been established by Symphosius’s one-hundred riddle collection, and which was copied by Aldhelm. Modern scholars have assumed that the Eusebius’s sixty and Tatwine’s forty was also intended to fulfil this ‘paradigm’. It is my contention, however, that these two collections were never intended to be regarded as one text, and in fact this coupling has resulted in the two collections being misconstrued both in terms of their ideas and how we view their authors. The general assumption has been that both the collections and their authors are similar, but my research shows that this is far from the case and that they may even have had opposing schools of thought. In fact, considering these two collections as separate entities will very likely reveal new ideas regarding Anglo-Saxon daily life, the history of ideas and the history of science. This paper will begin with a brief outline to provide the context for my research in relation to these riddle collections and then focus on the riddles of Eusebius in order to demonstrate his particular concern with the philosophical and scientific debates of his society and, in turn, endeavour to provide some insights into his world view.

Elise Jakeman

The Australian National University

Anarchy in Anglo-Saxon England: An anarchist examination of the efficacy of hierarchical social models in explaining Anglo-Saxon mortuary practices.

When asked to conjure an image of Anglo-Saxon England, there are several dominant narratives that tend to come to mind: kingly burials, containing rich arrays of precious artefacts; burgeoning kingdoms, establishing their place through strategic alliances within powerful families; and elite foreign warriors, come to stake their claim. Many of these narratives have resulted from how Anglo-Saxon England – particularly mortuary practices – have been approached in academia. In archaeology, the use of hierarchy-based interpretive models have formed the basis of many investigations into the social structure of Anglo-Saxon England. An observable majority of archaeological literature utilising such hierarchical models argue that an individual's social status during life is directly reflected in the manner in which they are commemorated in death.

This dominant focus on status as a driving determinant of social engagement is limiting the depth of interpretation we can undertake. Hierarchical models are largely interested in identifying the elite, consequently marginalising and illegitimising those individuals who may be considered 'low status' or not fitting the prescribed hierarchical structure. Additionally, the variation exhibited in Anglo-Saxon mortuary practices is too broad to be encompassed by a single, inflexible model, resulting in the oversight of potentially integral aspects of social performance and engagement. To counter this, this paper proposes the use of anarchist theory as an interpretive lens. This theoretical ideal emphasises natural elements of humanity, such as self-expression and complex interpersonal relationships. By approaching Anglo-Saxon mortuary practices in such a manner, we can strive to tell compelling and meaningful stories about the past, which go beyond constructing hierarchical divisions between groups of people. To demonstrate this, this paper examines the graves excavated from seven Anglo-Saxon cemeteries across England, highlighting the different practices each community was engaging in and the integral roles played by identity and emotion.

Diana Jeske

Monash University

“You who consecrated me in legitimate matrimony”: The role of legitimacy in the political partnership of Matilda of Scotland and Anselm of Canterbury

During the English Investiture Controversy (approx. 1102-1107), Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (c.1033-1109), regularly corresponded with Matilda of Scotland, Queen of England (1080-1118). As the wife of Henry I, and closely connected to the archbishop, Matilda was in a unique position to help mediate negotiations between the two men, and actively contribute to bringing about an end to the crisis. Over the course of their correspondence Matilda and Anselm not only created an effective political partnership, but also helped to conceptualise a vision of effective rule in England that involved a triumvirate between king, queen and archbishop. The basis of this political partnership, and attendant political philosophy, rested on a shared understanding of Matilda’s legitimacy as queen of England, an understanding necessarily established at the beginning of their correspondence over this period. This paper will discuss the role legitimacy plays in evaluating and interpreting Anselm and Matilda’s correspondence and the implications it has for our understanding of the investiture controversy itself, Matilda’s active role in negotiating a solution, and the triumvirate political philosophy developed therein.

Steve Joyce

Monash University

Understanding the 12 in The Twelve Abuses of the World

This paper seeks to present research on the wide reception and influence of the anonymous seventh-century Irish text, *The Twelve Abuses of the World* in the medieval West. In examining the utilisation of the sacred number 12, but in a ‘negative’ sense, the origins of this Christian text in classical philosophy and rhetoric will be unpacked. It will argue that the text has its origin in the rhetorical traditions of seventh-century Ireland utilising a reimagining of the 12 grammatical vices taught by the fourth-century grammarian, Donatus, as they relate to the divine Logos in the Gospel of John.

John Kennedy

Charles Sturt University

Scandinavian military intervention in Ireland: Legitimate adventuring or unchristian aggression?

The predominantly Icelandic *Konungasögur* ('Sagas of the Kings') record numerous occasions on which kings and other magnates from the Scandinavian countries intervened using force in Ireland during the Viking age and into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These interventions often involved raiding parties but sometimes extended to attempts at conquest. Ireland, as those responsible for the sagas seem generally to have been aware, was then a land that had towns founded and dominated by Scandinavians but where the predominant culture and language were not Norse. A question might arise as to the extent to which the saga authors could regard these interventions as legitimate. The sagas as we now have them are the product of a Christian society: some of the authors apparently were directly in the service of the church; and all would have been educated in a Christian environment. Even if not schooled in the finer points of just war theology they cannot have been unaware of Christian teaching on unprovoked aggression. The proposed paper will examine how Scandinavian aggression and other military interventions in Ireland are presented in the *Konungasögur*. Often there is no clear indication either of approval or disapproval, but despite the famous 'saga objectivity' it is sometimes possible to detect authorial misgivings, particularly in more explicitly pious sources or in relation to kings admired for their Christianity. One can, however, also sometimes detect a partisan belief that in their mode of fighting back against the Scandinavian incursions the Irish laid themselves open to legitimate criticism.

Ash Lenton

Australian National University

Castles in the swamps: legitimising authority in the Duchy of Saxony

The breakup of Charlemagne's empire was a catalyst for further competition and strife. Across Western Europe, petty nobles and would-be kings were building castles and fortifications to establish, legitimise and maintain their powerbases. In particular, the spread of motte and bailey castles across what is now France, Britain, the Netherlands and Germany was prolific in regions newly captured, colonised and exploited for their emergent agriculture, forced labour and conscripted warriors. As the Early Medieval period neared its finale, the marginal and marshy Duchy of Saxony became the theatrical landscape in which rival noble houses enacted their power plays in ever increasing numbers of motte and bailey castles. Their tenuous claims to political authority and their dubious connections to family lineages became grounded and normalised in the architectural landscapes of colonisation, domination and militarisation. One particular adventurer, Lothair of Supplinburg, suffered the slings and arrows of feudal fortune as he orchestrated his rise from wretched obscurity to dynastic legitimacy and ultimately to authority over the empire of the Romans. This paper examines the archaeological landscape of Lothair's meteoric rise to imperial power with newly uncovered information from motte excavations in Lower Saxony, Germany. From the earliest strongholds of piratical communities in Scandinavia, we can trace the progress and fortunes of these artificially constructed hilltop fortifications, their captive labour forces and the scoundrels and brigands who built them.

Andrew Lynch

University of Western Australia

“...the higher perfection of these others”: exile, emotion and legitimation in the Old English Life of St Mary of Egypt

The legend of St Mary of Egypt, first appearing in sixth-century Byzantine culture, became widely popular in medieval Latin and vernacular versions. It was a radical extension in Christian emotional sympathy that allowed a ‘harlot’ like Mary any social or spiritual consideration. Her story resembles a saintly life in exile like those of earlier desert fathers, but as applied to a notorious female placed completely outside the bounds of religious and secular community by her former way of life. The earliest vernacular version is an Old English translation of Paul the Deacon’s Latin text found in a manuscript of Ælfric’s *Lives of the Saints*, although not by Ælfric. In some versions the story begins with Mary’s early life. In the Old English text, following its original, Mary’s spectacular account of sin and repentance is framed within the journeys of Zosimus, a monk, who finds her as a penitent in the desert beyond the Jordan, hears her life story, and later gives her communion before she dies. He buries her body in the desert then carries the tale of her sanctity back to his fellow monks. I shall argue that rather than diminishing Mary’s prestige in the tale, or the importance of her agency, this narrative frame strategy is subtly constructed to accord her a special privilege.

Cheryl Major

University of Western Australia

Legitimate idealisms of female agency in Chrétien de Troyes' Arthurian Romances

A common trope that begun to surface in the treatment of women in medieval literature is the idea of revising orthodox gender dynamics. For example: the shift from the autocratic male and the submissive female to the assertive female and the yielding male. From Morgan Le Faye and Laudine, to Guinevere and Iseult, and to autobiographical works of Hildegard of Bingen and Margery Kempe, these women played pivotal roles in medieval narratives that begun to support and shape their society's beliefs and perceptions of the women around them.

The Arthurian Romances are a collection of medieval narratives written by Chrétien de Troyes that instrumentally carved the progressive idealisms of female importance in early twelfth century France. Set against the backdrop of King Arthur and his court, these narratives played an influential role not only in placing women in a favourable position amongst the aristocracy, it also transcended their strictly limited gendered roles which would herald a journey of change for the female gender.

My paper will examine three texts, *Erec and Enide*, *The Knight of the Cart* (Lancelot) and *The Knight with the Lion* (Yvain), and discuss the ways in which these romances legitimized women's agency in society. The texts feature feminal characters ranging from maidservants to Queens, highlighting distinctive idealisms that legitimized the established views of female function in cultural society. To conclude, my paper will spotlight the influences these neoteric romances had on early twelfth century France and how its society navigated through the monumental cultural changes beyond the narratives.

Constant Mews

Monash University

Reading about the abuses of the age: from seventh-century Ireland to twelfth-century France

There never was any single mode of reading within the monastic cloister. This paper looks at the transformation of reading practice between the seventh and twelfth centuries by comparing two influential, but largely unstudied texts that address perceived abuses in contemporary behaviour. One is the *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, a text written in Ireland in the seventh century and widely circulated in the medieval period under the name of Cyprian (in the earliest manuscripts) or Augustine. It classifies moral failings into twelve categories, from a *sapiens* without good works to bad kings and bishops, and a people without law. The other is a text about abuses within the cloister, composed by an Augustinian canon, Hugh of Fouilloy (d. ca. 1172), and included within his *De claustro animae*. It has not been realised that this text also circulated widely as a distinct composition, beginning *Duodecim autem sunt abusiones claustrum* (PL 176: 1058C-1086D). These two texts, one inspired by the other, are used to illustrate the inadequacy of conventional generalisations about medieval *lectio sacra* as uniquely focused on spiritual ends. Each text in its own way illustrates how monastic reading, inspired by the Bible, could engage in identifying moral failings either within society in general, or within the cloister in particular. Both texts illustrate how Brian Stock's notion of a textual community can help show how monastic reading could become a vehicle for criticising the contemporary social order.

Clare Monagle

Macquarie University

Notre Dame is Burning – The Legitimate Middle Ages and the Fantasy of Civilisation

In the aftermath of the fire at Notre Dame people took to social media to share their memories of visits to the cathedral, often accompanied by their holiday snaps. These posts registered disbelief at the possibility of the Church's destruction, as people sought to find out how this event could have transpired. The subject of this talk will be to explore this incredulity. Why were we so shocked at the fire? Why did we think that Notre Dame was perpetual? What does our shock tell us about attachment to the Middle Ages, and to the ideals of 'civilisation' that particular Church is held to embody. In Australia, indigenous activists pointed out that while we mourned a Church in Paris, a great many Aboriginal sacred sites were currently at risk due to development. No one, they argued, was weeping for these sacred places. So what do we value from the past? What do we mourn? And who is the we? The response to the fire at Notre Dame revealed its status as legitimate in the story of the Western Civilisation, and as foundational also to an idea of France. This paper will consider how Notre Dame has been produced as legitimate within, and necessary to, the story the west tells itself about itself. In so doing, I will think about the myriad sacred places which are not accorded legitimacy, and which cannot be affixed to larger historical narratives.

Pamela O'Neill

University of Sydney

Tracing the church's appropriation of legitimacy in early Irish law

In 697, the law *Cáin Adomnáin* was promulgated throughout most of Scotland and Ireland. Its principal purpose appears to have been the intrusion of a non-victim as a recipient of the proceeds of justice: a fine was payable to the church of Iona in addition to the traditional restitution and compensation to the victims of particular offences. This was an entirely unprecedented notion in early Irish law, and yet soon afterwards the status text *Críth Gablach* cited *Cáin Adomnáin* as an example of the right of kings to enforce temporary laws of their own making; a right which may well not have existed before this peculiar moment in history. This inclusion in *Críth Gablach*, though, endows the idea with considerable legitimacy, and it seems to have been generally accepted thereafter. Indeed, in the decades that followed, more and more laws were promulgated which diverted proceeds of justice away from victims and diverted control of the processes of justice towards churches. In this paper, I chart the process through which the early medieval churches of Scotland and Ireland appropriated legitimacy for their increasing assertion of control over various aspects of law-making and enforcement.

Cassandra Schilling

Flinders University

Lessons in leadership: *Beowulf's* digressions as imparting lessons for prospective rulers in Anglo-Saxon Society

This presentation considers the digressions in *Beowulf* and the way in which they are used by the poet to provide lessons on the qualities of good social leadership. It looks closely at the diverse qualities of the rulers that are depicted within the poem's numerous digressions and examines the juxtapositional way in which they represent their subjects. For example, the positive and negative contrasts that are observable in both the Sigemund-Heremod digression and between Modthryth and Hygd within the Offa digression. The presentation argues that this is a deliberate method employed within *Beowulf* in order to establish a sense of what characteristics are valued and/or considered reprobable in rulers. By investigating the way these rulers – male and female – are presented both on a narrative, and a narrational level, this presentation suggests that the ruling figures depicted within the digressions of *Beowulf* produce an evaluative commentary on the universal, social aspects of Anglo-Saxon rule. Furthermore, this commentary, not only provides lessons in leadership to Beowulf in a narrative capacity, but additionally, imparts these same lessons to the audience, reinforcing them within Anglo-Saxon society as applicable to contemporary rulers of the time.

Michaela Selway

University of Auckland

Mythologising Medieval Origins: The Manipulation of the Christian Narrative in Orosius of Braga and Gregory of Tours

In the transition from Antiquity to the Medieval Period, medieval writers began to incorporate the Christian Bible into their repertoire of texts alongside ‘the classics’ when writing Histories. The Bible’s influence greatly affected the narrative that was portrayed in their texts, revealing both their interpretation of their history and their views and expectations on their current world and people group. This research paper explores the effect the Christian Bible had on the origin myths described in two prominent chronicles of the early medieval period: Paulus Orosius’ *Historiarum Adversum Paganos* and Gregory of Tours’ *Historia Francorum*. This paper argues that these authors manipulated the Biblical origin myth to portray their ideas of the past, present and future. Through the creation of either a biological or constitutional connection to the biblical narrative, these authors aimed to grant legitimacy both to their position of influence and to their people. This was achieved by beginning their narrative with a prominent biblical story such as the Garden of Eden, Noah’s Ark or the crucifixion. Where this biological connection could not be claimed, which legitimised their position through a ‘possession of time’, the mimicking of the Abrahamic Cycle of the Exodus narrative allowed them to legitimise the space they were occupying through a constitutional connection. This associated the author and their people with a long-established, well-known narrative of migration that was divinely ordained.

Jeremy Thompson

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen Nürnberg

The Archbishop's Number Book: The Use of Numbers in Exegetical, Episcopal and Synodal Legitimacy

While an important body of early medieval scholarship stresses legitimation endowed by political or ecclesiastical authority, a separate current of medieval argument vouchsafed legitimacy through the compelling appeal to eternal principles. Among the principles that evince the cogency of permanence are mathematical, and more specifically numerical, “truths.” This paper deals with efforts made in the early Middle Ages to defend theological arguments and episcopal decisions on the basis of mathematical analogies. Did God create the world in six days because the number six is perfect? Or is the number six perfect because God created the world in six days? Early medieval authors took both positions. Numbers were, furthermore, invoked to legitimate synodal proceedings. For they could guarantee the Holy Spirit’s ongoing operation in the church. After a brief overview of problems and principles, this paper will present the case of Hincmar, archbishop of Reims (845–882). A fierce defender of the rights of his see, Hincmar is the subject of a representative body of scholarship that stresses the legitimating power that one holds by virtue of possessing ecclesiastical authority. During the mid-ninth century, Hincmar fought off theological, ecclesiological and political challenges, and he vehemently defended his position through patristic and juridical proofs. What has been little stressed in his view of legitimacy is his recourse to esoteric numerical principles for verifying his claims. A short tractate from his hand on the role of numbers in ecclesiastical councils has seldom been cited—its authenticity even doubted—and his abstruse numerical symbolism in official letters has been poorly understood. The present study of these features of legitimacy will clarify early medieval strategies of legitimation and seek to restore a curious aspect of the archbishop’s approach.

Aimee Turner

Monash University

The Legitimate/Illegitimate Empress: Petrarch and Livia

From the eleventh to the early thirteenth century, the portrayal of Livia, the first empress of Rome, underwent a fundamental division. In association with the renewed interest in Ovid, Livia was portrayed as a dangerous figure, linked with adultery and the unjust exile of the poet, exercising illegitimate power. These representations reflect contemporary concerns with the role of the queen consort. In moral philosophy, in contrast, she took on the role of *mediatrix*, counselling her husband Augustus to show clemency to his enemies, contributing to legitimate rule. These disparate images, created in short passages that amount to passing references to the empress, can be tied to the reception of classical Roman literature. Francis Petrarch, known as the founder of both Humanism and modern European culture, builds on this dual tradition, depicting Livia in four separate works – *Secretum*, *Rerum memorandarum libri*, *De remediis utrisque fortune*, and *Epistulae*. In addition to the works of the preceding period, Petrarch was, himself, an avid scholar of classical literature. He is connected with the drive to rediscover works forgotten in monastic libraries around western Europe, through which he legitimated his own writings. These recoveries undoubtedly influenced his understanding of the first empress of Rome.

This paper will explore Petrarch's representation of Livia in *Secretum*, *Rerum memorandarum libri*, *De remediis utrisque fortune*, and *Epistulae*. This will provide insight not only into his study of classical and recent literature, but will also shed light on Petrarch's understanding of the consort role and the legitimate/illegitimate use of influence and power.

Darius von Güttner Sporzyński

University of Melbourne

Augustine on war – theological justification of Christian participation in holy war

Over centuries the ideas of Augustine of Hippo, one of the greatest Christian theologians, gave legitimacy to the Christian approach to waging war. In contravention of the injunction expressed in Matthew 5:39, “do not resist an evil person... offer the other cheek” Augustine emphasised that the violence itself was not intrinsically evil. What mattered was the intention of the perpetrator of violence. This paper will examine afresh Augustine’s acceptance of the inevitability of war and his three principles under which war could be legitimately conducted (legitimate authority; right intention, just cause) and chart the evolution of the Christian idea of holy war. The paper will trace the antecedents to idea of crusading and the processes which reconciled the wars of the Old Testament with the New Testament’s precept of love for one’s neighbour.

Amy Wood

Macquarie University

Narratives and Forms of Legitimation in the Early Medieval Kingdoms of the Balkans: Commonality and Contrast in Croatia, Serbia and Bulgaria.

The barbarian peoples of Late Antiquity and the Early Byzantine period who populated former Roman imperial territory almost uniformly had origin stories, *origio gentes*, which traced not only their tribal and folk histories but also placed them squarely within the Roman imperial framework as a form of legitimacy and as a claim to the legacy of the Empire.

This paper will examine the form these *origio gentes* took in the case of the Slavic and Bulgar peoples who populated south-eastern Europe in the former Danubian provinces of the Roman Empire in the seventh century onwards. There will be a focus on the stories recorded of the Croat, Serbian and Bulgarian peoples in the *de Administrando Imperio* of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, a tenth century document which has always attracted significant scholarly attention for several reasons including these much-contested origin stories. The paper will also examine the ways in which these peoples continued the same practices of acculturation and assimilation as the earlier waves of barbarian migrants who set up the Successor Kingdoms in the former Roman west. These strategies of legitimation were important as a means of creating a solid constitutional foundation for emerging kingdoms in a changing Mediterranean world where the Byzantine Empire still exerted enormous cultural, if not complete political or territorial, dominance. This paper will also briefly touch on strategies of distinction undertaken by these kingdoms as a means of asserting legitimate non-Roman identities, which also reflected the nature of the changing Mediterranean world in this period as the Early Medieval world emerged.