

ANN: Monumental Medievalism: Public Monuments & the Mis|use of the Medieval Past

Discussion published by Duncan Hardy on Friday, September 30, 2022

[Monumental Medievalism: Public Monuments & the Mis|use of the Medieval Past](#)

Wed, 5 Oct 2022, 12:30 - Thu, 6 Oct 2022, 19:00 BST

Online

In the summer of 2020, one of several dozen protests organised throughout the world in response to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis (USA) culminated in the statue of the slave trader Edward Colston being dumped into the water of Bristol Harbour (England). The ripples were felt across the globe. In the ensuing days, weeks and months, scores of other monuments depicting historical figures were variously defaced, toppled, removed from view, or placed under new scrutiny. Many of these had played prominent roles in the slave trade and/or in European colonialism. Some of these monuments were of medieval figures, while others were evocative—to varying degrees of credibility—of the (faux-)chivalric codes and rose-tinted regalia of the medieval past. Of course, to medievalists, the convergence of civic and civil statuary with protest and activism was nothing new. In fact—from the damnatio memoriae of later Roman Emperors to Saints Florus and Laurus smashing statues in Kosovo; Byzantine Eikonomachía; Aniconism in medieval Islam; the Huichang Persecution of Buddhist images; the Ghaznavid plundering of Mathura and Somnath; the Khmer intolerance of Jayavarman monuments in Angkor; the Strigólnik stripping of Pskov and Novgorod; and the First and Second Suppression Acts of the 1530s—many of its roots actually lie in the medieval world. What use then, or advantage, might the study of the Middle Ages hold in evaluating these modern political struggles? This workshop will address precisely this question.

The workshop has three aims. Firstly, it will explore examples of statues, monuments and related forms of public sculpture which speak to the ongoing making and unmaking of medieval figures, images and histories: what we term 'Monumental Medievalism'. Secondly, in addition to considering the 'when', 'how' and 'why' of monuments' original production, it will interrogate the varied and often contested meanings that monuments later acquired over time. Of special interest, moreover, will be papers that address not only the use but the misuse of the Middle Ages, in connection to questions of local identity, gender, sexuality, race, religion and/or marginalisation. Thirdly, it will take the measure of nostalgia for the Middle Ages in the twenty-first century, asking questions of appropriation, anachronism, authenticity, nationalism and reflecting upon the possibilities and pitfalls of conscripting medieval images to serve as contemporary cultural conduits.

****PROGRAMME****

ALL TIMES ARE IN BRITISH SUMMER TIME (UTC +1hr)

Wednesday 5 October

12:45-13:00 - Welcome

Euan McCartney Robson and Simon John

13:00-14:45 - Session 1: Monumental Medievalism in Modern Japan

Chair: Simon John (Swansea University, UK)

Sven Saaler (Sophia University, Japan): 'The medieval roots of imperial loyalty: the cult of Kusunoki Masashige in modern Japan'

Judith Vitale (University of Zurich, Switzerland): 'The "Movement for the Establishment of a Monument for the Mongol invasions"'

Ran Zwigenberg (Pennsylvania State University, USA): 'Date Masamune: In (and off) the Saddle of History on Japan's Periphery'

Oleg Benesch (University of York, UK), 'A Japanese Monument to Global Medievalism: The Origins of the Yasukuni Shrine Yushukan Military Museum'

14:45-15:15 - BREAK

15:15-16:45 - Session 2: Encountering the Middle Ages through Monuments: approaches and debates

Chair: Euan McCartney Robson (Paul Mellon Centre, UK)

Laura S. Harrison (Independent Scholar, UK) & Andrew B.R. Elliott (University of Lincoln, UK): "'Set in Stone": The Participatory Function of Medieval Statues'

Sarah Gordon (Utah State University, USA): "'Tear it Down": Controversial Statues of Medieval

Figures in the US (Joan of Arc and St. Louis)'

Simon John (Swansea University, UK): 'The uses of medieval traditions, invented and otherwise: Brussels' 1848 statue of Godfrey of Bouillon and perceptions of the (mostly) medieval past'

16:45-17:15 - BREAK

17:15-18:15 - Session 3: Monuments and the Medieval Past in Ukraine and Russia

Chair: Markian Prokopovych (Durham University, UK)

Emma Louise Leahy (Independent Scholar, Germany): 'The Kyivan Rus' as Origin Story in Soviet and National Historiographies: The Changing Meanings of Medieval Images in the Monumental Mosaic Art of Ukraine (1960s to 2010s)'

Anastasija Ropa (Latvian Academy of Sport Education, Latvia), Edgar Rops (Independent Scholar, Latvia), and Maria Inês Bolinhas (Catholic University of Portugal): 'The Contested Statue of Knyaz Vladimir/Volodymyr'

Thursday 6 October

12:00-13:30 - Session 4: Monuments, Medieval History and Nation-Building

Chair: Christoph Laucht (Conflict, Reconstruction and Memory research group, Swansea University)

Anna Lidor-Osprian and Romedio Schmitz-Esser (both Heidelberg University, Germany): 'Between Medievalism and Baroque Maternalism: The Multifaceted Historical Monumentalism of nineteenth-century Austria'

Len Scales (Durham University, UK): 'Unsettled Memories: Henry I (r. 919-936) in Quedlinburg'

Tommaso Zerbi (Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max Planck Institute for Art History, Italy): 'A Tale of Two

Monuments: Making, Remaking, and Unmaking the Myth of Amadeus VI of Savoy from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century'

13:30-14:00 - BREAK

14:00-15:00 - Session 5: National Histories and the (ab)uses of the Middle Ages

Chair: Matthew Gabriele (Virginia Tech, USA)

Omer Merzić (Institute of Historical Research, UK): 'The use and misuse of medieval monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina'

Gethin Matthews (Swansea University, UK): 'The use and abuse of the medieval past in Wales in the age of the Great War'

15:00-15:30 - BREAK

15:30-17:00 - Session 6: Monumental Women

Chair: Euan McCartney Robson

Julia Faiers (University of St Andrews, UK): 'The invention and reinvention of Clémence Isaure in modern Toulouse'

Christopher Crocker (University of Manitoba, Canada): 'Ásmundur Sveinsson's "The First White Mother in America": Guðríður Þorbjarnardóttir as a (white-) feminist icon'

Caroline Bourne (University of Reading, UK): 'The Gwenllian Monument at Kidwelly: Issues of Gender and a Contested Landscape in Commemorating Medieval Welsh History'

17:00-17:30 - BREAK

17:30-19:00 - Session 7: The Monumental Heritage of the Middle Ages

Chair: Anna Lisor-Osprian

Teresa Soley (Columbia University, USA): 'Sculpting Portugal's Golden Age: Tombs and the Image of the "Age of Discovery"'

Jessica Barker (The Courtauld Institute, UK): 'Anachronic Empire: The Afterlives of the Padrões of Diogo Cão'

Ethel Sara Wolper (University of New Hampshire, USA): 'Lessons from Mosul: ISIS, UNESCO, and the Spectacle of Definition'

19:00 - Concluding remarks