The Selected Letters of John Cage
By John Cage, Edited by Laura Kuhn and Laura Kuhn

This selection of over five hundred letters gives us the life of John Cage with all the intelligence, wit, and inventiveness that made him such an important and groundbreaking composer and performer. The missives range from lengthy reports of his early trips to Europe in the 1930s through his years with the dancer Merce Cunningham, and shed new light on his growing eminence as an iconic performance artist of the American avant-garde. Cage's joie de vivre resounds in these letters—fully annotated throughout—in every phase of his career, and includes correspondence with Peter Yates, David Tudor, and Pierre Boulez, among others. Above all, they reveal his passionate interest in people, ideas, and the arts. The voice is one we recognize from his writings: singular, profound, irreverent, and funny. Not only will readers take pleasure in Cage's correspondence with and commentary about the people and events of a momentous and transformative time in the arts, they will also share in his meditations on the very nature of art. A deep pleasure to read, this volume presents an extraordinary portrait of a complex, brilliant man who challenged and changed the artistic currents of the twentieth century.

BINDING: Hardback
PRICE: £29.99
PUBLISHER: Wesleyan University Press
PAGES: 656
PUBLICATION DATE: January 5, 2016
READER INTERESTS:
Early Modern & Modern Humanities & Cultures/Language & Literature/English
NOT FOR SALE: CA, MX, US
Tempest-Tossed

By Susan Campbell

Tempest-Tossed is the first full biography of the passionate, fascinating youngest daughter of the "Fabulous Beecher" family - one of America's most high-powered families of the nineteenth century. Older sister Harriet Beecher Stowe was the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Brother Henry Ward Beecher was one of America's most influential ministers, and sister Catherine Beecher wrote pivotal works on women's rights and educational reform. And then there was Isabella Beecher Hooker - "a curiously modern nineteenth-century figure." She was a leader in the suffrage movement, and a mover and shaker in Hartford's storied Nook Farm neighborhood and salon. But there is more to the story - to Isabella's character - than that.

Isabella was an ardent Spiritualist. In daily life, she could be off-putting, perplexing, tenacious, charming. Many found her daunting to get to know and stay on comfortable terms with. Her "wild streak" was especially unfavorable in the eyes of Hartford society at the time, which valued restraint and duty. In her latest book, Susan Campbell brings her own unique blend of empathy and unbridled humor to the story of Harriet's younger half-sister. Tempest Tossed reveals Isabella's evolution from orthodox Calvinist daughter, wife, and mother, to one of the most influential players in the movement for women's suffrage, where this unforgettable woman finally gets her proper due.
Justinian's Balkan Wars
Campaigning, Diplomacy and Development in Illyricum, Thace and the Northern World A.D. 527-65
By Alexander Sarantis

Justinian's Balkan Wars is the first history of military and diplomatic affairs in the Roman provinces south of the River Danube during the reign of the Emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-65). The Emperor's policies in this region have received little attention from modern historians, who have focussed on his struggles with the Sassanian Persian empire in the East, and, in the West, his glorious reconquests of Italy from the Goths and Africa from the Vandals. This comparative neglect reflects the influence of the contemporary historian Procopius, who (following his own bias) viewed the Balkans under Justinian as a backwater denuded of manpower and left vulnerable to the depredations of barbarian raiders. In contrast Justinian's Balkan Wars argues that the Emperor was fully aware of the region's vital strategic importance, and frequently committed more effort and resources there than in other theatres of operation.

Justinian's Balkan Wars offers a detailed reconstruction of military and diplomatic relations between the Germanic, Hunnic and Slavic peoples north of the Danube frontier and Justinian's eastern Roman Empire. It uses a variety of contemporary histories and chronicles to chart barbarian raids, imperial campaigns and the receptions of barbarian leaders in the glittering halls of the imperial capital, Constantinople. In doing so it sketches the contours of Justinian's Balkan strategy and its relationship to other theatres of operation such as the Italian Peninsula and the Transcaucasus. The book draws on administrative reforms, epigraphic and numismatic evidence, and the archaeology of settlement patterns to place these historical events in a wider socio-economic and physical context. It shows the importance of infrastructure, logistical preparation, political control and the support of local hearts and minds for successful campaigning in Late Antiquity. Justinian's energetic military, diplomatic, and development policies in the Balkans ensured that the eastern Roman Empire in general prevailed against its barbarian opponents. Hence the eventual loss of Roman control over the majority of the Balkan provinces and their colonisation by Slavic tribes in the 7th c. was by no means inevitable when Justinian died in 565.

About the Author:
Alexander Sarantis is currently Lecturer in Early Medieval European History at Aberystwyth University and Honorary Research Fellow of the Centre for Late Antique Archaeology at the University of Kent. His research interests include war and warfare across the period of Late Antiquity (3rd-7th c. A.D.), Roman-barbarian relations, and barbarian migrations and settlements in the Roman provinces, with particular concentration on the East Roman empire in the reign of Justinian. Since finishing his D.Phil at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford in 2006 on The Balkans in the Reign of Justinian he has authored articles on barbarian groups such as the Gepids, Heruls, Sarmatians, Quadi and Lombards. He recently co-edited and contributed seven papers to War and Warfare in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives (two volumes, Leiden 2013).
American Studies as Transnational Practice
Edited by Yuan Shu and Donald E. Pease

This wide-ranging collection brings together an eclectic group of scholars to reflect upon the transnational configurations of the field of American studies and how these have affected its localizations, epistemological perspectives, ecological imaginaries, and politics of translation. The volume seeks both to elaborate on the causes of the transnational paradigm shift in American studies and to describe the material changes that this new paradigm has effected during the past two decades. The contributors hail from a variety of postcolonial, transoceanic, hemispheric, and post-national positions and sensibilities, enabling them to theorize a "crossroads of cultures" explanation of transnational American studies that moves beyond the multicultural studies model.

Offering a rich and rewarding mix of essays and case studies, this collection will satisfy a broad range of students and scholars.

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BINDING: Paperback

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READER INTERESTS: Early Modern & Modern Humanities & Cultures/Language & Literature

NOT FOR SALE: CA, MX, US

OTHER FORMATS AVAILABLE: Hardback, 9781611688467, £64
The Racial Imaginary of the Cold War Kitchen
By Kate A. Baldwin

This book demonstrates the ways in which the kitchen - the centerpiece of domesticity and consumerism - was deployed as a recurring motif in the ideological and propaganda battles of the Cold War. Beginning with the famous Nixon - Khrushechev kitchen debate, Baldwin shows how Nixon turned the kitchen into a space of exception, while contemporary writers, artists, and activists depicted it as a site of cultural resistance. Focusing on a wide variety of literature and media from the United States and the Soviet Union, Baldwin reveals how the binary logic at work in Nixon's discourse - setting U.S. freedom against Soviet totalitarianism - erased the histories of slavery, gender subordination, colonialism, and racial genocide. The Racial Imaginary of the Cold War Kitchen treats the kitchen as symptomatic of these erasures, connecting issues of race, gender, and social difference across national boundaries.

This rich and rewarding study - embracing the literature, film, and photography of the era - will appeal to a broad spectrum of scholars.

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BINDING: Hardback
PRICE: £64.00
PUBLISHER: Dartmouth College Press
PAGES: 204
PUBLICATION DATE: January 5, 2016
READER INTERESTS: Early Modern & Modern Humanities & Cultures/Language & Literature
NOT FOR SALE: CA, MX, US
OTHER FORMATS AVAILABLE: Hardback, 9781611688627, £64
Paperback, 9781611688634, £34
Roman Crete: New Perspectives
Edited by Jane E. Francis and Anna Kouremenos

Key Features:
- Inter-disciplinary studies into the artefacts, history, inscriptions and archaeological evidence for Crete as a Roman province
- Develops a number of themes to demonstrate the economic, cultural and iconographic integration of the island into the Roman Empire
- Papers contribute to current academic issues including Romanisation/acculturation, climate and landscape studies, regional production and distribution and domestic housing, economy and trade

The last several decades have seen a dramatic increase in interest in the Roman period on the island of Crete. Ongoing and some long-standing excavations and investigations of Roman sites and buildings, intensive archaeological survey of Roman areas, and intensive research on artefacts, history, and inscriptions of the island now provide abundant data for assessing Crete alongside other Roman provinces. New research has also meant a re-evaluation of old data in light of new discoveries, and the history and archaeology of Crete is now being rewritten.

The breadth of topics addressed by the papers in this volume is an indication of Crete's vast archaeological potential for contributing to current academic issues such as Romanisation/acculturation, climate and landscape studies, regional production and distribution, iconographic trends, domestic housing, economy and trade, and the transition to the late-Antique era. These papers confirm Crete's place as a fully realised participant in the Roman world over the course of many centuries but also position it as a newly discovered source of academic inquiry.
Spinning Fates and Songs of the Loom
The Use of Textiles, Clothing and Cloth Production as Metaphor, Symbol and Narrative Device in Greek and Latin Literature
Edited by Giovanni Fanfani, Mary Harlow and Marie Louise Nosch

Textile imagery is pervasive in classical literature. An awareness of the craft and technology of weaving and spinning, of the production and consumption of clothing items, and of the social and religious significance of garments is key to the appreciation of how textile and cloth metaphors work as literary devices, their suitability to conceptualise human activities and represent cosmic realities, and their potential to evoke symbolic associations and generic expectations. Spanning mainly Greek and Latin poetic genres, yet encompassing comparative evidence from other Indo-European languages and literatures, these 18 chapters draw a various yet consistent picture of the literary exploitation of the imagery, concepts and symbolism of ancient textiles and clothing. Topics include refreshing readings of tragic instances of deadly peploi and fatal fabrics situate them within a Near Eastern tradition of curse as garment, explore female agency in the narrative of their production, and argue for broader symbolic implications of textile-making within the sphere of natural wealth. The concepts and technological principles of ancient weaving emerge as cognitive patterns that, by means of analogy rather than metaphor, are reflected in early Greek mathematic and logical thinking, and in archaic poetics. The significance of weaving technology in early philosophical conceptions of cosmic order is revived by Lucretius' account of atomic compound structure, where he makes extensive use of textile imagery, whilst clothing imagery is at the centre of the sustained intertextual strategy built by Statius in his epic poem, where recurrent cloaks activate a multi-layered poetic memory.

About the Author:
Mary Harlow is Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Leicester.
Down By The River
Archaeological, Palaeoenvironmental and Geoarchaeological Investigations of The Suffolk River Valleys
By Benjamin Gearey, Henry Chapman and Andy Howard

Key Features:
· Major series of palaeoenvironmental and geoarchaeological studies of the Suffolk river valley floodplains backed by radiocarbon dating and assessment of preservation and conservation.
· First synthesis of the timing, pattern and process of fluvial development, human activity and landscape change during the Holocene of the region including construction and use of Iron Age post alignment structures.
· Discusses and evaluates sampling and analysis techniques employed in the study and their applicability to other similar environmental research

Whilst East Anglia has long been known as a key area for the preservation of important Palaeolithic archaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits, relatively little study of the Holocene record has previously been carried out. This series of detailed studies presents the results of palaeoenvironmental, archaeological and geoarchaeological investigations focused on the Post-Glacial record preserved in the valleys of the Suffolk rivers. Five floodplain sites (Becceles, Hoxne, Hengrave, Ixworth and Brandon) were cored for palaeoenvironmental assessment, further sampling and radiocarbon dating and the results are described. In addition, a summary is presented of the results of palaeoenvironmental and geoarchaeological investigations carried out as part of archaeological mitigation associated with commercial developments. Together, the results demonstrate the largely untapped research potential of the Suffolk river valleys and provide hypotheses concerning the timing, pattern and process of fluvial development, human activity and landscape change during the Holocene. Bank realignment work at Becceles in the lower Waveney Valley resulted in the discovery of three late prehistoric wetland archaeological sites at Becceles, Barsham and Geldeston. These each consisted of triple alignments of timber posts constructed across the floodplain during the later Iron Age, with evidence for continuing activity in the Romano-British period. The final chapter presents a summary of the current state of knowledge of Holocene environmental change and the archaeological record in Suffolk. The possible form and function of the Waveney timber alignment structures is discussed and compared to other similar sites from around the United Kingdom. It is suggested that these structures may have acted to delineate routeways to, from and across the river and also as territorial markers associated with river travel, both local and perhaps into the southern North Sea. A discussion of specific techniques employed during the work at Becceles, including the trialing of a novel geophysical approach at the site and 3-D digital recording of the timbers is presented and the volume concludes with a brief summary of research questions for future palaeoenvironmental and archaeological study.
Burial and social change in first millennium BC Italy
Approaching Social Agents
Edited by Elisa Perego and Rafael Scopacasa

Key Features:
· Presents innovative approaches through the study of funerary practices to the consideration of the chief agencies of social change in 1st millennium BC Italy

In the first millennium BC, communities in Italy underwent crucial transformations which scholars have often subsumed under the heading of 'state formation', namely increased social stratification, the centralisation of political power and, in some cases, urbanisation. Most research has tended to approach the phenomenon of state formation and social change in relation to specific territorial dynamics of growth and expansion, changing modes of exploitation of food and other resources over time, and the adoption of selected socio-ritual practices by the ruling élites in order to construct and negotiate authority. In contrast, comparatively little attention has been paid to the question of how these key developments resonated across the broader social transect, and how social groups other than ruling élites both promoted these changes and experienced their effects. The chief aim of this collection of 14 papers is to harness innovative approaches to the exceptionally rich mortuary evidence of first millennium BC Italy, in order to investigate the roles and identities of social actors who either struggled for power and social recognition, or were manipulated and exploited by superior authorities in a phase of tumultuous socio-political change throughout the entire Mediterranean basin. Contributors provide a diverse range of approaches in order to examine how power operated in society, how it was exercised and resisted, and how this can be studied through mortuary evidence. Section 1 addresses the construction of identity by focusing mainly on the manipulation of age, ethnic and gender categories in society in regions and sites that reached notable power and splendour in first millennium BC Italy. These include Etruria, Latium, Campania and the rich settlement of Verucchio, in Emilia Romagna. Each paper in Section 2 offers a counterpoint to a contribution in Section 1 with an overall emphasis on scholarly multivocality, and the multiplicity of the theoretical approaches that can be used to read the archaeological evidence.
Crosse and Blackwell 1830-1921
A British food manufacturer in London's West End
By Nigel Jeffries, Lyn Blackmore and David Sorapure

This book presents the results of the archaeological excavations in advance of the redevelopment by Crossrail Limited of the Eastern Ticket Hall at Tottenham Court Road Underground Station, charting the history of one of the great enterprises of Victorian and Edwardian Britain – Crosse and Blackwell.

After its move from King Street (close to present-day Shaftesbury Avenue) in 1838 to Soho Square in London's West End, food manufacturer Crosse and Blackwell built and converted property on a number of streets between Soho Square and Hog Lane (later Charing Cross Road) into warehousing and factory space, enabling production of its food sauces, pickles, vinegar, jams and marmalades on a vast, industrial, scale. With a royal appointment, granted in 1837, the unprecedented use of celebrity chefs to either develop or endorse its products and the branding and labelling of its lines that referenced Britain's imperial pretensions, Crosse and Blackwell was soon able to dominate not only the domestic market but compete globally. In 1922 it moved from the West End to Branston, Staffordshire, where Crosse and Blackwell developed arguably its most famous product, Branston Pickle.
Agnès Varda Unlimited
Edited by Marie-Claire Barnet

In her ever-evolving career, the legendary filmmaker Agnès Varda has gone from being a photographer at the Avignon festival in the late 1940s, through being a director celebrated at the Cannes festival (Cléo de 5 à 7, 1962), to her more ironic self-proclaimed status as a 'jeune artiste plasticienne'. She has recently staged mixed-media projects and exhibitions all over the world from Paris (2006) to Los Angeles (2013-14). Agnès Varda Unlimited: Image, Music, Media reconsiders the legacy and potential of Varda's radical tour de force cinématique, as seen in the 22-DVD 'definitive' Tout(e) Varda, and her enduring artistic presence. These essays discuss not just when, but also how and why, Varda's renewed artistic forms have ignited with such creative force, and have been so inspiring an influence. The volume concludes with two remarkable interviews: one with Varda herself, and another a rare contribution from the leading actress of Cléo de 5 à 7, Corinne Marchand.

About the Author:
Marie-Claire Barnet is Senior Lecturer in French at Durham University.
Rewriting Les Mystères de Paris
The Mystères Urbains and the Palimpsest

By Amy Wigelsworth

Key works of popular fiction are often rewritten to capitalise on their success. But what are the implications of this rewriting process? Such is the question addressed by this detailed study of several rewritings of Eugène Sue's Mystères de Paris (1842–43), produced in the latter half of the nineteenth century, in response to the phenomenal success of Sue's archetypal urban mystery. Pursuing a compelling analogy between city and text, and exploring the resonance of the palimpsest trope to both, Amy Wigelsworth argues that the mystères urbains are exemplary rewritings, which shed new light on contemporary reading and writing practices, and emerge as early avatars of a genre still widely consumed and enjoyed in the 21st century.

Amy Wigelsworth completed her PhD at Durham University. She currently holds a part-time lectureship in French at the Sheffield Business School (Sheffield Hallam University), and also teaches French at the University of York.

About the Author:
Amy Wigelsworth completed her PhD at Durham University. She currently holds a part-time lectureship in French at the Sheffield Business School (Sheffield Hallam University), and also teaches French at the University of York.
Local Places, Global Processes
Edited by Peter Coates, David Moon and Paul Warde

Key Features:
· Presents a multi-disciplinary approach to the relationship between perceptions of environmental change at a local scale and the wider forces of transformation, addressing influential ways of understanding and debating questions of ‘the state of nature’

· Uses case studies on conservation, landscape change and management to examine how perceptions of environmental change have emerged or been discarded over time

· Investigates three particular landscapes and human engagement with their changing environments through a series of essays, artworks and public information media

We live in an age of unprecedented environmental change: global, interconnected and universal. Yet though our lives are inextricably connected to global processes, and increasingly mobile, we still live in particular places. Our perceptions of change, and what kind of change might be for good or ill, are shaped by the interaction of localised experience and the wider forces of transformation. Local Places, Global Processes examines how these relationships have been shaped in Britain over time in three ways. First, through essays addressing influential ways of understanding and debating questions of ‘the state of nature’. These are complemented by case studies on conservation, landscape change and management, and how perceptions of environmental change have emerged or been discarded over time. Chapters also draw on a series of site-based workshops that brought together historians, landscape managers and artists to discuss and reflect on particular sites: Wicken Fen in Cambridgeshire, owned by the National Trust and the first British nature reserve; the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Somerset, England's first AONB and a landscape enriched by Romantic association; and the landscape of Kielder Water and Forest, a land of superlatives in Northumberland in north-eastern England – the largest planted forest and artificial lake in northern Europe.

The multi-disciplinary approach draws together the exchanges, artworks and writing assembled at these workshops and afterwards. This opens up how being in a place, and engaging with ideas attached to it, shape perceptions of the environment. It provides resources with which landscape managers can think about their tasks and engage various publics in discussion about future environments in light of these histories of place. Rather than a history of these three places, this is history written from them.

About the Author:
Peter Coates is Professor of American and Environmental History at the University of Bristol. He is an environmental historian of the 19th and 20th century, particularly of the USA and UK. His principal research interests are in the study of human relations with the rest of the natural world over time.

David Moon is Anniversary Professor of History at the University of York. The main focus of his research has been the rural world of the Russian Empire from the 17th to the 20th centuries.
The Rhetoric of Exile
Duress and the Imagining of Force
By Vladimir Vladimir Zoric

The Rhetoric of Exile explores the rhetorical construction of force in indirect exile and in literary responses to it. Between banishment, a compulsory exile, and expatriation, a voluntary one, many legal systems have allowed for a third model. Such an exile is pragmatic and ambiguous in nature: the degree of compulsion is never explicitly defined, but all agents involved understand that it is real. As far back as the Roman Republic, there have been exiles who felt considerable duress but could not pin it down to any specific legal document or judicial decision, and these victims of silent persecution are all the more likely to brood on the elusive force over them, and to recreate it by imaginative means. What is displaced and hidden in law – force as metonymy - returns as a potent and condensed image in literature - force as metaphor.
A Kind of Endlessness
By Donald Britton and Edited by Reginald Shepherd, Philip Clark and Other Douglas Crase

Described as "dazzling" by Edmund White and as a poet "who has The Gift and delivers The Goods" by Kenward Elmslie, Donald Britton published just one book of poetry, Italy, before his death from AIDS in 1994. A Kind of Endlessness: The Selected Poems of Donald Britton reprints Italy alongside previously unpublished and uncollected poems to display the full range of Britton's fresh, vivid language and subtle humor. It is poetry by turns glamorous, wistful, intellectual, and elegant, the sharp-eyed observations of a penetrating mind lost to the world too soon.
Inappropriability of the Earth
By Yves Charles Zarka

The Earth is not simply the terrestrial globe (earth), it is also – and fundamentally – the habitable world (Earth). Now this Earth is in a critical state. Overexploited, despoiled, her finitude is denied by the productivist appropriation which dominates our times and which increases inequalities within societies and between different parts of the world. By continuously destroying the Earth, mankind is destroying itself. It has become urgent for us to change, if humanity wishes to remain (at least partly) free to make its own destiny and pass on a habitable world to future generations. Many things have been said and written on other possible developments, but what has been missing is a principle which could give an account of the philosophical shift we need to make. Such is the purpose of this book, which aims to rethink our being in its relation to others, to humanity and the living world through the concept of inappropriability.
Yemen, A Modern History

By Farian Sabahi

Yemen, like Iran, is a country that arrived late on the scene of the 19th century, compared to the others in the region. It became a nation state with great difficulty and a sovereign state, according to international law, only in 1918, after the withdrawal of the Ottomans and following their defeat at the end of World War I. In 2011, Yemen has been the theatre of political and social tensions. Enriched by in-depth analyses, this is an essential volume for understanding Yemeni history and current events.
E Porno, tem porno?
Panorama of Brazilian Porn
Edited by Mariana Baltar

Key Features:
· A unique contribution to Porn Studies due to its specific intake focusing on Brazilian Porn

· The articles in the book represent an historical, analitical and political account on a particular field and market that are not well known to European and North American audiences

· The articles presented in this book are more than a survey of the history of Brazilian Porn, they are also a statement of a theoretical, political and historical field of studies that has been developing within the last decade.

E Pornô, tem pornô? represents a panorama of both Brazilian Porn Industry and studies. From the early Pornochanchadas' productions – that were more erotic than explicitly pornographical, playing with a highly sexualized culture and flair for the sarcistical and comical – to the contemporary ambience of the netporn; with its amateur performances and selfpornifications. The articles presented in this book are more than a survey of the history of Brazilian Porn, they are also a statement of a theoretical, political and historical field of studies that has been developing within the last decade. The feminine issues in Brazilian Porn are stressed by most of the articles of the book, focusing on a case study of the Women in Prision films - a subgenre that was very popular during late 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. This panorama represents an important and groundbreaking mapping of a peculiar and popular domain of productions as well as theoretical and political field of studies.
Aesthetic Resistance and Dis-Interest
Things Which Will Not Allow Themselves to be Said
By John Steppling

As the institutionalization of the avant-garde took place, postmodern theory both reacted to and helped create the forces that eroded reason and even taste, labelled them quaint in the name of a postmodern theory, at the same time that mass commodity form was inscribing exchange value on all work of the imagination. In fact, the reality is that the system, the society of domination has enclosed discourse in such a way that, coupled to new social media and electronic platforms, all radical, all working class or under class voices are pre vetted or erased, and only the most craven corporate financialized kitsch is validated. The collusion of galleries, collectors and curators, following the model of studio film and network TV, has equated popularity with quality. The problem then is to recuperate something of the lost radical conscience of art and culture. There is now an amnesia about the prehistory of society, of our own psyches, and of the imagination. The colonizing of consciousness has rendered the imagination of the west atrophied and almost inert. All art is a recreation of our own psychic formation (mimesis) as well as being shaped by its 'otherness', by a purposelessness. All stories are crime stories, all stories are about exile, and all stories are about homesickness. And all art contains a narrative. For only by having no purpose can the artwork posit the direction to which society must look to create an 'other' or elsewhere. To retain something of that utopian promise that is foundational in culture. The world is being dis-encharnted. The Utopian promise is not kept.
Women Villains and Double Agents in Spy Fiction in English Literature
Edited by Carmen Concilio

Key Features:
· This collection of essays offers a varied and new range of readings of some of the British classics of the spy fiction genre.

· Attention to psychology, gender issues and a wider perspective including tv series and film studies provide originality to this work. The book is aimed at an audience of academic scholars, students, and also the wider public, intrigued by such plots.

The aim of this collection of essays is to explore "negative characters" in espionage narratives of some of the most esteemed English writers, such as Conrad, Maugham, Ambler, Greene, Fleming, MacEwan, among others. The role of women will be analysed, in particular with the figure of Mata Hari, so as to provide a gender perspective on women as villains and/or double agents. The relationship between literature and film studies will also be considered in a comparative approach.
Chiasmi International n. 17
Psychology, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics
Edited by Leonard Lawlor

Key Features:
· The world's most important review about Merleau-Ponty
· Trilingual Studies concerning Merleau-Ponty's Thought
· New Series

The world's most important review about Merleau-Ponty. Trilingual Studies concerning Merleau-Ponty's thought.
Concepts Of Morphology
By Olaf Breidbach and Federico Vercellone

Morphology is the general theory of form and formation, which can be seen as the innovative and fruitful point of intersection of the scientific and the humanistic cultures. The three papers presented in the book by Olaf Breidbach, Pietro Corvaja and Angelo Vianello respectively illustrate different features of morphology from the epistemic viewpoints of history of science, mathematics and biology. The texts were produced in the context of the second meeting of the "Centro Interdipartimentale di Morfologia F. Moiso", which took place in Udine on 14 December 2007.
William Parker

By Marcello Lorrai

This book collects a series of conversations between William Parker and Marcello Lorrai, an Italian journalist based in Milan. Parker's life, musical vision and experiences are the focus of these conversations, spanning the whole African American jazz scene. The book also features more than 30 original black-and-white portraits by Italian jazz photographer Luciano Rossetti.

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Early Modern & Modern Humanities & Cultures/Cultural Studies/Music
Music

NOT FOR SALE:
CA, MX, US
Outside music, Inside voices
By Garrison Fewell

"Outside Music, Inside Voices", supported by a Faculty Fellowship grant from the Berklee College of Music, was edited by the jazz writer Ed Hazell and by Evelyn Rosenthal, former director of Harvard University Museum Publications. The 330-page book includes a foreword written by Ed Hazell; extensive notations in the footnotes of the author's introduction; individual biographies of each artist and the author; 30 brilliant black-and-white photographs of each artist, taken by Luciano Rossetti. As Herbie Hancock noted in his endorsement, "Garrison Fewell has written a brilliant reflection on creativity and spirituality, delving into the deep relationship between these two subjects that spark the explorations of many pioneers in avant-garde jazz music. The level of detail here is so compelling that it encourages much more than just a single reading of this book."


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Music

NOT FOR SALE:
CA, MX, US
Strategies of Noise
By Martina Raponi

To live means to enter into circles of mediation between subject and object. These mediations imply filters and prejudices, they cause disturbances and interferences, they determine accumulations, they require attention and discernment. This research analyses the concept of noise, but also explores the reasons why we find fascination and attraction to such phenomenon.

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Art
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Demetrio Stratos
By Claudio Chianura

Demetrio Stratos (1945-1979) was one of the most original and popular singers in the 1970s. His voice has interpreted Artaud's theatre, beat music, the jazz rock of Area and the mesostics of John Cage, who was one of the major architects of his international consecration. Although he died prematurely at the age of 34, Stratos still lives in terms of enormous popularity in countries like Italy, Spain, Brasil and Japan. This book is the story of a unique figure, from the inception to its dramatic epilogue.

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Tango

By Marco Brunamonti

The charm of tango knows no bounds, nor linguistic borders. Anyone who is willing to embrace its magic, all of a sudden is left smitten. This book intends to explore all the musical compositions of such cultural phenomenon, able to capture multitudes of dancers in every corner of the world. Dancing styles, major composers and interpreters, historical orchestras and one of the most updated studies on the phenomenon of New Tango: as it discusses all of these, this book is a must for any aficionados of tango.


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Cultures/Cultural Studies/Music
Early Modern & Modern Humanities &
Cultures/Cultural Studies/Theatre &
Performing Arts
Proceedings of the 27th International Congress of Papyrology Keynote Papers
Edited by Tomasz Derda, Jakub Urbanik and Adam Lajtar

The 27th International Congress of Papyrology, under the High Patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland, gathered more than 300 scholars from the papyrology field in Warsaw. In keynote papers the experts in singular fields of papyrology were called upon to present the rest of our community with the novelties and curiosities rather than with a comprehensive and tedious list of the most recent literature. And so each morning of our five-day Congress was dedicated to one of the more general branches of papyrology; a common topic that would bring together a number of papers in which the speakers aimed to bring back the integrity to the shattered picture of papyrological science. We have decided to publish these snapshots of the discipline ad 2013 before the general Proceedings, creating thus a special issue of the Journal. We hope that in such a way these images would become more accessible to the scientific world of Classics.
Glastonbury Abbey archaeological investigations 1904–79
By Cheryl Green and Roberta Gilchrist

Key Features:
· A comprehensive account of the archaeology of Glastonbury Abbey
· Presents new evidence and challenges existing interpretations, especially for the Saxon glassworking furnaces (c AD 700)
· Describes and illustrates the rich assemblage of material culture from the abbey

Glastonbury Abbey was renowned in the Middle Ages as the reputed burial place of the legendary King Arthur and the site of the earliest Christian church in Britain, believed to have been founded by Joseph of Arimathea in the first century AD. New insights into the abbey's origins and historical development have been revealed by thirty-six seasons of archaeological excavation that took place at the site during the twentieth century, directed by such iconic figures as Sir William St John Hope, Sir Charles Peers, Sir Alfred Clapham and Dr Courtenay Arthur Ralegh Radford. The results of these antiquarian excavations, only published in the past in the form of brief interim statements, can now be examined critically for the first time, thanks to a joint project by the University of Reading and Glastonbury Abbey, funded principally by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This volume reports on the comprehensive study of the archaeological archives and artefact collections and a new geophysical survey. Previous interpretations are challenged and new evidence is presented for the Saxon and later medieval phases of the abbey, including an important complex of early glassworking furnaces, dated c 700. For the first time, archaeological evidence is revealed for the Norman and later medieval monastic ranges and the luxurious abbot's hall and court. The rich assemblage of material culture includes devotional objects, fine imported vessels, locally produced ceramic floor tiles and stained glass and sculpture of the highest quality. Many retrospective elements are evident in the architecture of Glastonbury Abbey, perhaps suggesting a deliberate strategy to cultivate memory and to promote the antiquity of its Christian heritage.
The Banknotes of the Imperial Bank of Persia
An Analysis of a Complex System with Catalogue

By Michael Bonine and Edited by Jere Bacharach

The Imperial Bank of Persia, established in 1889, was the first bank to issue banknotes and attempt to establish a modern banking system in Iran. Its banknotes are, in fact, some of the most beautiful and largest notes ever issued for any nation; yet, the story of the Imperial Bank and its notes is complex and complicated because there are very few remaining specimens, especially of the earliest notes and those of higher denominations. This lavishly illustrated and stochastically printed volume showcases the best and rarest of these banknotes while untangling the complex web of branch banks in Iran.
Irritamenta
Numismatic Treasures of a Renaissance Collector
By John Cunnally

Handsomely bound in red leather, MS Typ 411 is one of thousands of rare editions, manuscripts, and documents in that library's Printing and Graphic Arts section, formerly called the Typography Department. Resembling an old fashioned family Bible at 10 × 8 inches and some 300 pages, when opened this book reveals no text but a series of fine pen-and-ink drawings, 1,220 illustrations of ancient coins. These are the records of a coin collection owned by Andrea Loredan, a Venetian patrician well known in the 1550s and ’60s as a passionate connoisseur of antiquities. Silver tetradrachmas of Athens and Alexander the Great, aurei of Philip and Augustus, denarii of Caesar and his assassins, large Imperial sestertii of Nero and Hadrian, the numismatic images were intended to delight the eye, stir the curiosity, and enflame the acquisitive instincts of prospective buyers, at a time when the cash-strapped patrician was seeking to liquidate the ancient treasures of his private museum. The volume was, in essence, a sales catalogue, a species of book not often sought out and admired for artistic or literary merit. Yet Loredan and his unknown draftsman, unaware of how they were benefitting future scholars, produced a graphic masterpiece of elegance and charm, a document of the highest importance for the study of Renaissance antiquarianism, humanism, and archaeology.
Monuments in Miniature
Architecture on Roman Coinage
By Nathan Elkins

The regular representation of the built environment on coins was a purely Roman phenomenon among the ancients. In the Greek world, architectural representation on coinage was very uncommon; when it did appear it referred directly to the local identity of the issuing state. Coins of the Persian satrapies only rarely depicted fortifications in conjunction with traditional Persian emblems of royalty, power, and shrines of the chief deities in the minting city. The Roman use of the iconography of building was fundamentally different. From the first occurrence in 135 BC through the late Roman Empire, the architectural images on coins from Rome commemorated or politicized the monument in question. By the mid-first century BC and into the Imperial period, architecture had become commonplace in the repertoire of Roman coin iconography. Representation of monuments is one of the most beloved (and belabored) topics in studies of Roman coin iconography. It is also a theme in dire need of re-exploration. This comprehensive and chronological approach to architectural coin types conveys the complexity of the subject and underscores how the designs were symptomatic of, and sensitive to, the underlying social, cultural and historical trends that affected both Roman art and Roman society at large.
Na Inoa Hoku
Hawaiian and Pacific Star Names
By Rubellite Kawena Johnson, John Kaipo Mahelona and Clive Ruggles

In 1975, Hawaiian scholars Rubellite Kawena Johnson and John Kaipo Mahelona published Na Inoa Hoku, a Catalogue of Hawaiian and Pacific Star Names. Though long out of print, Na Inoa Hoku is still widely regarded as a definitive source of reference for anyone interested in the use of astronomy in Polynesian voyaging or the nature and development of ritual and calendrical practices throughout the Pacific.

Working together with British archaeoastronomer Clive Ruggles, the authors have extensively revised and extended the catalogues and transformed the discussion of their wider context and significance, resulting in a much stronger focus upon the rich historical legacy of the Hawaiian Islands themselves.

This new edition of Na Inoa Hoku is completely overhauled, vastly expanded, and includes new translation of many key primary Hawaiian sources from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.
Excavations at Newport Street, Worcester, 2005
Roman Roadside Activity and Medieval to Post-Medieval Urban Development on the Severn Floodplain
By Peter Davenport

Excavation of approximately a third of a hectare in the north-western part of the historic core of Worcester revealed evidence for activity dating from the Roman to the post-medieval and early modern period. The deepest deposits were recorded in geotechnical and archaeological boreholes, and in two sondages: the rest of the site was excavated to the depth of formation level for development.

The earliest feature was a Roman road running on the approximate alignment of the present-day Newport Street. Deposits relating to road construction and ground consolidation comprised metal-working waste, with finds of later 2nd to 3rd-century date. No in situ evidence of Roman occupation was excavated. These levels were sealed by alluvial deposits. In the early 13th century the area was divided by boundaries, which were consolidated during the subsequent medieval and post-medieval periods into building plots with frontages onto both Newport Street and Dolday. The Newport Street frontage was developed with substantial stone and timber buildings, some over stone-built cellars. A series of ovens, hearths, structures and surfaces suggest a mixture of craft and domestic activities took place in the back plots of these properties. The style, construction and layout of some of the medieval buildings, coupled with artefactual and environmental evidence, suggest the occupants were relatively prosperous.

The major plot boundaries changed little throughout the post-medieval and early modern period, although documentary research indicates a complex history of ownership and holdings featuring sub-division, amalgamation and multiple occupancy. The street frontages of both Newport Street and Dolday continued to be occupied throughout the post-medieval and early modern periods. Open spaces and structural remains, including wells, hearths, ovens and cess pits, in the back plots reflect a variety of activities associated with trade and domestic activity. Finds and environmental evidence has helped to link some of these structures to trades associated with the owners and occupants known from historical records. The remains of bread-ovens, a bake-house, a malthouse and a warehouse for hemp have been identified, and there is more tentative archaeological evidence for cordwaining, cloth-making, brewing and distilling, the latter trades replacing cloth-making as that trade declined in the 17th and 18th centuries. The sub-division of properties and the crowding of small cottages into the back plots during the 18th and 19th centuries reflect the increase in residential occupancy that resulted in over-crowding and a decline in status for this area of the city.

The excavations represent the first large-scale archaeological investigation of this part of Worcester. The results complement those of previous major investigations of the Roman and medieval town and provide valuable insights into the economic and social status of the medieval town's expansion onto the former floodplain. An integrated approach, analysing all aspects of the archaeological evidence in combination with detailed study of the available documentary and historical sources, has been particularly valuable in achieving an understanding of the site in later periods, providing the first major archaeological study of the post-medieval development of the city.
The Coin Evidence as a Source for the History of Classe (Ravenna)
Excavations of the Harbour Area (2001-2005) and the Basilica of San Severo (2006-2010)

Elena Baldi

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La Duat como espacio de una dialectica de la regeneracion
In-habitacion y resignificacion del espacio funerario en los Textos del Amduat
By Mariano Bonanno
The Mosaics of Khirbet el-Mafjar
Hisham's Palace

By Donald Whitcomb and Hamdan Taha

This is a presentation of beautiful colored mosaics. They originate from buildings in the oasis of Jericho and all date from the first half of the eighth century, during the time of Umayyad caliphate of the early Islamic period. Many visitors have had the privilege of seeing the mosaics revealed, but no one has experienced the impact of all these pavements since they were first excavated in the 1930s and 1940s. A few have been published, but the presentation in Hamilton and Grabar (Khirbat al Mafjar: An Arabian Mansion in the Jordan Valley, 1959) is only very fine aquarelle paintings from the originals. In 2010 the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage uncovered, cleaned, and assessed the state of conservation of these mosaics. A series of high-quality digital photographs was prepared by a team from the Department, composed of M. Diab, N. Khatib, Said Ghazal, Rafaat Sharaia, and I. Hamdan, under the direction of Taha, from which the present selection is offered for study and appreciation of this triumph in early Islamic art. These images speak for themselves.
The Use and reuse of stone circles
Fieldwork at five Scottish monuments and its implications
Edited by Richard Bradley and Courtney Nimura

Key Features:
- Presents all new data resulting from the excavation and cross-comparison of 5 Scottish stone circles of varying type, size and sequence reassesses the construction sequences and use histories of stone circles in Britain

The study of stone circles has long played a major role in British and Irish archaeology, and for Scotland most attention has been focused on the large monuments of Orkney and the Western Isles. Several decades of fieldwork have shown how these major structures are likely to be of early date and recognised that that smaller settings of monoliths had a more extended history. Many of the structures in Northern Britain were reused during the later Bronze Age, the Iron Age and the early medieval period. A series of problems demand further investigation including: when were the last stone circles built? How did they differ from earlier constructions? How were they related to henge monuments, especially those of Bronze Age date? How frequently were these places reused, and did this secondary activity change the character of those sites? This major new assessment first presents the results of fieldwork undertaken at the Scottish recumbent stone circle of Hillhead; the stone circles of Waulkmill and Croftmoraig, the stone circle and henge at Hill of Tuach at Kintore; and the small ring cairn at Laikenbuie in Inverness-shire. Part 2 brings together the results of these five projects and puts forward a chronology for the construction and primary use of stone circles, particularly the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age examples. It considers the reuse of stone circles, long after they were built, and discusses four neighbouring stone circles in Aberdeenshire which display both similarities and contrasts in their architecture, use of raw materials, associated artefacts and structural sequences. Finally, a reassessment and reinterpretation of Croftmoraig and its sequence is presented: the new interpretation drawing attention to ways of thinking about these monuments which have still to fulfil their potential.

About the Author:
Courtney Nimura is Post Doctoral Research Assistant on the Leverhulme-funded project 'European Celtic Art in Context' at the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford and Assistant Editor of Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society. Her principal research interests are in the interpretation of Scandinavian rock art, Neolithic and Bronze Age society, maritime and inter-tidal archaeology and community archaeology.
Stepney Green
Moated manor house to city farm
By David Sankey

Remains of a late medieval and Tudor moated mansion, known from the 17th century as Worcester House, were located on Crossrail's Stepney Green shafts worksite in London's East End. Its rich merchant and aristocratic owners had a fine country residence with easy access to the city and to the River Thames and so to overseas trade. In the early 17th century it was among properties owned by the 1st Marquis of Worcester, a supporter of Charles II, which were confiscated by Cromwell's Parliament. By the late 17th century the estate had passed into the hands of radical Nonconformists associated with the Stepney Meeting and a meeting house was built there. Worcester House was converted to a Baptist college in the early 19th century and a Congregationalist church constructed in 1841 replaced the earlier meeting house. Other parts of the estate were developed as small factories and new housing for 19th-century dock workers in an area which later suffered severe bomb damage in World War II. Vivid accounts by local people of life before, during and after the war, up to the founding of what is now Stepney City Farm, bring this vibrant piece of East End history up to date.
The Thames Iron Works 1837–1912
A major shipbuilder on the Thames
By Daniel Harrison

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The British Archaeological Association's 2013 conference was devoted to the study of Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster. It also embraced Westminster School, which was founded at the Reformation in the Abbey precinct. Collectively, these institutions occupy a remarkable assemblage of medieval and later buildings, most of which are well documented. Although the Association had held a conference at Westminster in 1902, this was the first time that the internationally important complex of historic buildings was examined holistically, and the papers published here cover a wide range of subject matter.

Westminster came into existence in the later Anglo-Saxon period, and by the mid-11th century, when Edward the Confessor's great new abbey was built, it was a major royal centre two miles south-west of the City of London. Within a century or so, it had become the principal seat of government in England, and this series of twenty-eight papers covers new research on the topography, buildings, art-history, architecture and archaeology of Westminster's two great establishments - Abbey and Palace.

Part I begins with studies of the topography of the area, an account of its Roman-period finds and an historiographical overview of the archaeology of the Abbey. Edward the Confessor's enigmatic church plan is discussed and the evidence for later Romanesque structures is assembled for the first time. Five papers examine aspects of Henry III's vast new Abbey church and its decoration. A further four cover aspects of the later medieval period, coronation, and Sir George Gilbert Scott's impact as the Abbey's greatest Surveyor of the Fabric. A pair of papers examines the development of the northern precinct of the Abbey, around St Margaret's Church, and the remarkable buildings of Westminster school, created within the remains of the monastery in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Part II part deals with the Palace of Westminster and its wider topography between the late 11th century and the devastating fire of 1834 that largely destroyed the medieval palace. William Rufus's enormous hall, and its famous roofs are completely reassessed, and comparisons discussed between this structure and the great hall at Caen. Other essays reconsider Henry III's palace, St Stephen's chapel, the king's great chamber (the 'Painted Chamber') and the enigmatic Jewel Tower. The final papers examine the meeting places of Parliament and the living accommodation of the MPs who attended it, the topography of the Palace between the Reformation and the fire of 1834, and the building of the New Palace which is better known today as the Houses of Parliament.

About the Author:
Professor Warwick Rodwell, OBE, is Consultant Archaeologist to Westminster Abbey.
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Westminster

The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Palace and Abbey

Part 1 + 2

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Entre Aidos y Peitho
La iconografía del gesto del velo en la antigua Grecia
By Pablo Aparicio Resco

Is there anything more mysterious than a piece of fabric covering something? Since the author of this book started noticing classical images with its young figures holding a veil while working in Pompeii, the study of this iconography has become his passion. This volume will focus only on Ancient Greece, but it explores a fascinating topic with strong connexions in current societies. The book will delve into the iconography of the veil gesture, but will also explore other topics closely related to it from an anthropological perspective.
Sabores de Roma
Actas del I Simposio Internacional Sobre Gastronomía Antigua Romana
Edited by Pedro Carretero

Since ERA Cultura Extremadura started experimenting with Apicio's receipts, a meeting on Roman cooking and food production became crucial. This is how the first international conference "Sabores de Roma" (flavours of Rome) took place in Zafra on July 2013. This book collects some of the works presented on that conference, in a range of topics from food production and manipulation to experimental recipes and new products commercialized in the last couple of years (garum, oil, wine…). Some of the main Spanish experts in Roman cooking participate in this volume, that is a great approach to the topic.
Altamira vista por los españoles
By Xurxo Ayán Vila

In the context of the latest research on Altamira cave and museum, Xurxo Ayán had the opportunity to study the visitors' book of the cave. In an excellent essay about memory, politics and archaeology, the author delves into the image of the cave, the past and the Spanish society of the last decade. Ten years that have been a rollercoaster for Spanish society, but also for Altamira. Through the comments of famous and anonymous visitors, the book offers a unique view of a country where memories of the recent past are still fresh, merged with the remains of human experience. Humour and astonishment through the 13,000 pages of a visitors' book concentrated in a scathing but rigorous analysis. "Ordering the noise before the bison escapes scared by the threat of an earthquake".
Chiasmi International n. 1

In March 1998 the University of Milano organised and hosted a conference on The Heritage of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy in Contemporary Thought that assembled specialists from the whole world. The fruitful and rigorous confrontation that ensued is summarised in this volume, which collects the conference proceeding and other contributions on the same theme in a trilingual edition (French, English and Italian). With this volume therefore we inaugurate the international version of the journal Chiasmi, now named Chiasmi International, co-published by the Associazione culturale Mimesis (Milan), by the Librairie philosophique J. Vrin (Paris), and by the University of Memphis. It concerns not only Merleau-Ponty's works, but also the thinking that stars with and develops around Merleau-Ponty.

Flèches de pouvoir à l'aube de la métallurgie de la Bretagne au Danemark (2500-1700 av. n. è.)

By Clément Nicolas

This thesis focusses on the arrowheads found in graves of Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age date (2500-1700 BC) in the Armorican massif, the southern British Isles and Denmark. These artefacts are examined from the angle of typology, raw materials, technology, experimentation and use-wear. The aim of these different approaches is to characterize the modes of production and the functions of stone arrowheads during a period which successively sees the introduction of copper then bronze metallurgy.

Several interpretations are proposed, from warriors renewing their quivers to craftsmen manufacturing prestige goods for the elite. In Brittany, the arrows are set in their cultural and social context, marked by an individualization of funerary practices and then by the emergence of chiefs at the head of strongly hierarchical communities with geographically coherent territories. Power seems founded on reorganization of land-use and exploitation of agricultural resources, rather than on control of incipient metallurgy. Lastly, arrows are placed in the broader perspective of major trends affecting Atlantic Europe. The origin of the squared-off barbed and tanged arrowheads of the Bell Beaker culture seems anchored in the Final Neolithic of west-central France, while in the Early Bronze Age the arrowheads with oblique barbs seem to indicate an attachment to the Atlantic cultural complex.
Practices of Wealth Depositing in the 1st–9th Century AD Eastern Baltic

By Ester Oras

This PhD thesis discusses the practices of wealth depositing in the 1st–9th century AD eastern Baltic (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania). Wealth deposits are one or more valued object/s that is/are hidden deliberately as an intended separate deposition in a selected place in a specific, distinguishable manner. Wealth depositing is regarded as an important cultural practice which relates to and derives from various past social phenomena and changes respectively in spatial and temporal terms. It is emphasised that wealth deposits should be analysed as a cohesive corpus of material, regardless of specific artefact types, functional groups, production material, environment of concealment, and most importantly without any predetermined interpretation categorisations.

The dissertation presents different patterned practices of concealing valuables in the 1st–9th century AD eastern Baltic through a detailed contextual analysis of their main material characteristics: artefacts, their assemblages and appearance, environment of concealment, chronology and location in the cultural landscape. The study demonstrates how depositional practices change in time and space, and analyses relations between specific depositional practices and developments on a wider social scale. A comparative analysis of wealth deposits and important social changes in contemporary society based on overall archaeological material is presented. The key regional and cross-regional practices of wealth depositing in the 1st–9th century AD eastern Baltic are identified. Additionally, further comparisons are drawn between depositional practices in the eastern Baltic and other parts of the Baltic Sea region, especially Scandinavia.

This thesis contributes to the discussions of concepts of value and depositional practices in a long-term and cross-regional perspective. A further aim is to look beyond the problematic 'why?'-questions posed in the studies of wealth deposits, and move instead to more comprehensible questions of 'how?': how do depositional practices change in time and space, and how are these processes related to developments in a broader social context?

The book contains a catalogue of all the 1st-9th century AD Eastern Baltic deposits analysed in the dissertation with descriptions of objects, environments of concealment, find circumstances, illustrations/photos and further references.
Middle English Romances in Translation
Amis and Amiloun | Athelston | Floris and Blancheflor | Havelok the Dane | King Horn | Sir Degare
By Kenneth Eckert

The popular romances of medieval England are fantasy stories of love at first sight; brave knights seeking adventure; evil stewards; passionate, lusty women; hand-to-hand combat; angry dragons; and miracles. They are not only fun but indicate a great deal about the ideals and values of the society they were written in. Yet the genre of Middle English romance has only recently begun to attain critical respectability, dismissed as vayn carpynge in its own age and generally treated by twentieth-century critics as a junk-food form of medieval literature. Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas has been assumed to be a satire of the romances' clichéd formulas and unskilled authors. But the romances evidently enjoyed popularity among all English classes, and the genre itself continued to flourish and evolve down to present-day novels and movies. Whatever Chaucer and his contemporaries thought of romances, they would have needed some personal familiarity with the stories and texts for comic tales such as Sir Thopas to be understood.

A century ago, Beowulf faced the same problem that the Middle English romances still face: no modern translations were published because few had heard of the poem because there were no modern translations published. Where the romances have been printed, they have normally been reproduced as critical editions in their original language, or translated into heavily abridged children's versions, but few have been published as scholarly close line translations with notes. This book is an attempt to remedy this by making some of these romances available to the student or lay reader who lacks specialized knowledge of Middle English, with the hope that a clearer understanding of the poems will encourage not only enjoyment but also further study.