Dr Archie Dunn BA (Reading), MA, PhD (Birmingham)

Teaching Fellow in Byzantine Archaeology

Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies (/research/activity/bomgs/index.aspx)

Contact details

Telephone +44 (0)121 41 45510 (tel:+44 121 41 45510)

Email a.w.dunn@bham.ac.uk (mailto:a.w.dunn@bham.ac.uk)

Arts Building

About

Archie Dunn is a Member of the Council of the British School at Athens, the Committee of the Cotton Foundation and the editorial board of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. He directs the Survey of Ancient Thisve/Byzantine Kastorion (Central Greece)in collaboration with the Greek Archaeological Service.

Biography

Archie Dunn is a member of the publications team for three major excavations (Corinth, Paphos, and Kourion), also for the intensive interdisciplinary survey of Boeotia, and has reports and contributions published and in press. He has published numerous reports and studies about his own surveys (The Strymon Delta, and Thisve/Kastorion, both in Greece); and numerous articles and commissioned conference papers about Byzantine settlement patterns, land-use, towns, the economy and sigillography. He has completed the edition with commentaries of some 200 Middle Byzantine seals from the excavations of Corinth. He organised a Table Ronde at the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies on "Landscape, archaeology and society", and is the organiser of the British Symposium of Byzantine Studies in 2013 with the theme " Byzantine Greece: microcosm of empire?".

Teaching

Lectures and seminars on Late Roman and Byzantine archaeology (40 hours); classes on Byzantine sigillography, epigraphy, historical geography, Greek survey, and perceptions of the Byzantine archaeological heritage.

Postgraduate supervision

- Late Roman and Byzantine archaeology; archaeology of the later medieval Aegean world
- Regional histories and economic history of the Byzantine world

Research

The aspects of the Late Roman and Byzantine East that have most interested me – the evolution (economic, social, and more broadly institutional) of communities, and the histories of land-use , production, redistribution, and exchange – explain my practical commitment to, and involvements in many forms of archaeological enquiry: intensive survey, extensive survey, excavation, and collections-based study. But whatever the form of the project (e.g., two of those forms of enquiry in combination), it is always closely engaged with historical enquiries and the problems that written sources pose. Both the intensive surveys which I have directed or co-directed (in the estuary of the Strymon in Eastern Macedonia, and Thisve Basin in Western Boeotia) confront the archaeologies of settlement, landscape, and material culture with the full range of Byzantine sources, but also Ancient, Ottoman, and medieval and post-medieval western sources, with the aim of exploring the local and regional configurations of many of the themes evoked above.

The Macedonian survey attempted a high-resolution and *longue durée* focus upon themes in my unpublished doctoral thesis *The interaction of secular public institutions and provincial communities in the political and economic spheres in Late Antique Aegean Macedonia*, and is being published in a series of articles, the most recent being a linked group of three by myself and two colleagues in environmental history in: J.Bintliff and H.Stöger (ed.), *Medieval and Post-Medieval Greece. The Corfu Papers* (B.A.R. International Series 2023), 2009. My current survey (2004-8; 2011) is recording the complex and rich monumental remains of a pre-Classical-to-Late Roman urban settlement (Thisve) and its Byzantine and Crusader successor (Kastorion, whose lost identity I have traced in 10th-15th-c sources, Byzantine, Western and Ottoman). I am doing this in the context of **(1)** an overlooked distribution of rural Byzantine fortifications; **(2)** the intensive artefactual survey by American colleagues Professors Timothy Gregory and Bill Caraher of Thisve/Kastorion's naturally defined hinterland; **(3)** this hinterland (the Thisve Basin)'s hydrography and geomorphology and the archaeology of water- and soil-management (being studied with Dr Tim Van der Schriek (University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne); **(4)** the wider regional context (Post-Roman), which I have already researched, first as a British Academy Research Associate, then with other funding, for the Boeotian Archaeological and Geological Expedition (directed by Professors Anthony Snodgrass and John Bintliff). Relevant aspects of the regional context I published in 1996 and 2006. Preliminary reports on the current survey appear in the *Bulletin of British Byzantine Studies* 33 (2007, pp.35-39), 34 (2008, pp.33-40), and 35 (2009, pp.37-46), and in the annual *Khronika* of *Arkhaiologikon Deltion* for 2005-2008 (all in press).

Both surveys, or combinations of surveys, link the analysis of monumental topography and architecture (ancient, medieval, and post-medieval), artefacts from the surface, sedimentology, palynology, and botany, to interpret the trajectories and functions of important provincial Late Roman and/or Byzantine settlements within a local multi-period framework, within the framework of the study of the Late Roman and Byzantine occupation of the landscape, necessarily too within the context of the evolution of the dynamic Mediterranean environments of the Holocene (of which both projects offer instructive case studies), and of course in relation to historical conditions in their provincial configurations. The post-Roman aspects of these require basic research in themselves, with two of which I engage.

Firstly, Post-Roman land-use, as a neglected and ill-understood parameter of the second and third of those aspects of context, requires new studies of its own at the trans-regional level, which I undertake. I am publishing a series of studies of the vast *incultum* of the post-Roman East: a framing paper in 2007 ("Rural producers and markets: aspects of the archaeological and historical problem"); "The control and exploitation and control of the arboreal resources of the Late Byzantine and Frankish Aegean region", *L'uomo e la foresta, secc.xiii – xviii* (Prato, 1996), pp.479-497, "The exploitation and control of woodland and scrubland in the Byzantine world", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 16 (1992), pp.235-299, and (in progress) "The definition and occupation of landscapes by Byzantine institutions, communities, and elites (European provinces)" for the Table Ronde *Archaeology of Byzantine landscapes* at the XXII. International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Sofia, 2011), and "The control and exploitation of rivers, lakes and wetlands in the Middle and Late Byzantine worlds" for the conference *Man and his environment in the Byzantine Empire* (Mainz, 2011).

Secondly, studies and debates about settlement in the Late Roman and Byzantine East have been impeded by historians' limited internalisation of the gains (including methodological ones) of intensive and extensive surveys, and by archaeologists' often limited engagement with Byzantine history. I have attempted in a series of articles, most recently in 2004 and 2005, essentially on the basis of the long-term Extensive Surveys of the Greek and some Balkan states' archaeological services, to challenge some of the prevalent preconceptions, terminology, and generalising models, concerning the fate of "the city" in the 3rd-to-9th cc. I develop these themes in the final report on the survey of Thisve and Kastorion and their loci of maritime traffic.

While much of my research is therefore about the reconstruction and interpretation of the archaeologies of settlement, landscape, and land-use in their Late Roman and Byzantine configurations, I have been involved in major British- and American-led urban excavations (Paphos, Kourion, Corinth, and Knossos),so as to familiarise myself with Late Roman and Byzantine material culture, aspects of which I have already published or am in the process of publishing, namely inscribed lead seals (at all the sites) and minor objects (from Paphos and Kourion). I also publish inscribed seals as collections (in particular that of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham). I like to re-focus in these ways on the functionality of individual buildings or building complexes, and in the case of inscribed seals (technically sealings) upon specific provincial elites (the Barber Institute's collection also being mainly from the Byzantine city of Trebizond). The seals are the residues of archives and as such are a remarkable resource for the study of the 6th-to-12/13th centuries. Corinth's residues of both legible and illegible seals (several hundred altogether) can illuminate the formation of provincial and local elites, wider currents of urban social change, administrative history, and issues in economic history. I therefore use commentaries on my editions (e.g. for *Corinth Excavations,* forthcoming)to engage with such issues, and use the wider sigillographic "corpus" to engage particularly with issues in Byzantine economic history, e.g. in "The Kommerkiarios, the Apotheke, the Dromos, the Vardarios, and The West", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 17, 1993, pp.3-24; and "Changing conditions of trade and redistribution in the Eastern Mediterranean: the Greek-Aegean space", *4th International Conference on Late Roman Coarse Ware, Cooking Ware and Amphorae in the Mediterranean*(forthcoming).

Publications

- "Byzantine and Ottoman maritime traffic in the estuary of the Strymon: between environment, state, and market", in J.Bintliff – H.Stöger edd., *Medieval and Post-medieval Greece. The Corfu Papers*, B.A.R. (I. S.) 2023, 2009, pp.15-31
- 'Rural producers and markets: aspects of the archaeological and historical problem', M.Grünbart – E.Kislinger – A.Muthesius et al. edd., Material culture and well-being in Byzantium (400-1453), Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Denkschriften 356, 2007, pp.101-109
- 'Lead seals and minor objects' [chapter] and 'The seals of Damianos, Archbishop of Cyprus' [Appendix] in A.H.S.Megaw ed., Kourion: excavations in the episcopal precinct, Dumbarton Oaks Institute, 2007
- 'The rise and fall of towns, ports, and silk-production in western Boeotia: the problem of Thisvi-Kastorion', E.Jeffreys ed., Byzantine style, religion and civilization. In honour of Sir Steven Runciman, Cambridge U.P., 2006, pp.38-71
- 'A Byzantine fiscal official's seal from Knossos Excavations and the archaeology of 'Dark-Age' cities', Creta romana e protobizantina. Atti del Congresso Internazionale, Scuola Italiana Archeologica in Atene, 2005, vol.1, pp.139-146
- 'The problem of Early Byzantine rural settlement in eastern and northern Macedonia', J.Lefort – C.Morrisson – J.-P.Sodini edd., Les villages dans l'empire byzantin (IVe-XVe siècle) [Proceedings of Table Rondes dedicated to 'Le village', XX. Congrès International des Études Byzantines], Paris, 2005, pp.267-278
- 'Continuity and change in the Macedonian countryside, from Gallienus and Justinian', in: W.Bowden & L.Lavan (edd.), Late Antique Archaeology 2. Recent research on the Late Antique countryside (Leiden/Boston, 2004), pp 535-586
- [with A. Bryer & J. Nesbitt] 'Theodore Gabras, duke of Chaldia (†1098) and the Gabrades: portraits, sites and seals': memorial volume for Professor Nikos Oikonomidès, E. Chrysos (ed), The Greek National Research Foundation, Athens, 2003, pp 51-70
- 'Was there a militarisation of the southern Balkans during Late Antiquity?', XVIII International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, Philip Freeman, B.A.R (I.S) (2002) pp. 705 - 712
- 'Loci of marine traffic in the Strymon Delta iv - xviii cc: commercial, fiscal, manorial', Oi Serres kai ê periokhê tous apo tên arkhaiotêta stên metavyzantinê koinônia, Serres, 2000, vol.I, pp 339 - 360
- [with M.Atherden & J.Hall] 'Palynological evidence from the Strymon Delta, Macedonia, Greece', Proceedings of the 16th symposium of the Association for Environmental Archaeology, Oxbow Monographs, 2000, pp 6-18

© University of Birmingham 2015