

The RHIND LECTURES, a series of six lectures delivered annually on a subject pertaining to history or archaeology, by eminent authorities on the subject, have been given since 1876. They commemorate Alexander Henry Rhind of Sibster who bequeathed money to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland to endow the lectures which perpetuate his name.

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Society of Antiquaries  
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# THE RHIND LECTURES 2017

Sacred Heritage: Archaeology, Identity and Medieval Beliefs  
PROFESSOR ROBERTA GILCHRIST

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**19-21 May | FREE and open to all | booking advised**

Auditorium, National Museum of Scotland  
Edinburgh, EH1 1JF, enter via Lothian Street





# THE RHIND LECTURES 2017

Sacred Heritage: Archaeology, Identity and Medieval Beliefs

PROFESSOR ROBERTA GILCHRIST

Medieval churches and monasteries are key features of the British landscape, contributing to local identities and sense of place. Yet the relationship between heritage and medieval religion has received relatively little critical reflection. These lectures will place research on medieval beliefs within a wider framework of sacred heritage, reflecting on issues of value, authenticity and interpretation. Archaeological evidence for medieval beliefs will be explored in relation to regional identity, practices of magic and healing, memory and myth. The lectures develop chronologically from the 12th century to the use of archaeology today, with case studies focusing on Scottish monasticism and Glastonbury Abbey.

Roberta Gilchrist is Professor of Archaeology and Research Dean at the University of Reading. She has published extensively on the archaeology of medieval religion and belief and their intersection with gender, magic and the life course. She has published pioneering works on medieval nunneries (1994), hospitals (1995), burial practices (2005) and popular devotion (2012), and major studies on Glastonbury Abbey (2015) and Norwich Cathedral Close (2005). She is an elected Fellow of the British Academy, a trustee of *Antiquity* and former president of the Society for Medieval Archaeology. She was voted *Current Archaeology's* 'Archaeologist of the Year 2016'.



For further information and to book your place please visit the Society's website [www.socantscot.org/events](http://www.socantscot.org/events) or call 0131 247 4133.

## Friday 19th May

### 6.00pm Sacred Values: Medieval Archaeology and Religious Heritage

Religious sites and material culture account for a large part of the subject matter of medieval archaeology. But the discipline seldom reflects on what these things meant to medieval people or why they continue to matter today. Why do we value, conserve and interpret medieval sacred heritage? What is the potential significance of medieval archaeology to contemporary social issues surrounding religious identity, and how does this impact on archaeology?

Followed by a Reception

## Saturday 20th May

### 11.00am Monastic Archaeology and National Identity: the Scottish Monastic Inheritance

How is archaeological practice shaped by the social value placed on medieval heritage? This question is explored in relation to the study of Scottish monasticism, focusing on the transition to the reformed orders in the 12th century. Later medieval monastic archaeology is placed in a comparative perspective to identify what may be distinctive and significant in the Scottish experience.

### 2.00pm Medicine for the Soul: the Archaeology of Monastic Healing

This lecture reviews archaeological evidence for therapeutic treatments in monastic and hospital infirmaries in medieval Britain. How did monastic ideas about the body and soul influence treatment of the medieval sick? Can we detect regional differences and chronological traditions in monastic healing?

### 3.30pm The Materiality of Magic: the Ritual Lives of People and Things

Why did medieval people place amulets with the dead and deliberately bury objects in sacred space? How were beliefs about magic reconciled with medieval religion? This lecture considers archaeological evidence for ritual practices that were shared by monastic and lay communities in medieval Scotland, rites possibly intended to heal, protect and transform the living and the dead.

## Sunday 21st May

### 2.00pm Monastic Legacies: Memory and the Biography of Place

Monasteries were active in creating ritual landscapes as imagined spaces, interweaving myth and hagiography with material practices to embody memory and the medieval sense of place. These meanings, in turn, were reworked as post-Reformation narratives which operated at local and national scales. This lecture introduces the theme of memory in the monastic landscape, before considering a case study of Glastonbury Abbey in detail.

### 3.30pm Sacred Myths: Archaeology and Authenticity

How is sacred heritage involved in the production and negotiation of myths connected to saints, kings and nationhood? This lecture examines the role of archaeology and archaeologists in authenticating myths connected with sacred sites such as Glastonbury, Walsingham, Iona and Melrose. It considers the changing and multiple meanings of medieval religious sites as they took on new spiritual and political identities in the 20th century.

