

PREFACE

The idea for this book began with the Rhind Lectures delivered in Edinburgh in May 2017. It brings together two aspects of my work that until now have remained entirely separate: medieval archaeology and heritage studies. My academic research has focused principally on medieval social archaeology, with particular emphasis on gender and belief. Throughout my academic career, I have also worked in heritage management as a consultant, a member of national heritage conservation committees, as a trustee to a major heritage site, and as the Archaeologist to Norwich Cathedral (1993–2005). But for decades my work in these two spheres was disconnected, reflecting the general lack of engagement between academic archaeology and heritage practice. The gap between the two fields seems particularly pronounced in relation to medieval archaeology, despite the rich legacy of medieval material culture, archaeological sites, monuments and historic buildings that attracts both academic study and public appreciation. There is very little critical literature connecting the practice of medieval archaeology with heritage studies, although there are noteworthy exceptions (e.g. Bruce and Creighton 2006; Emerick 2014; James et al. 2008). My interests in medieval archaeology and heritage were finally brought together through sustained engagement with Glastonbury Abbey, first through my academic research on the abbey's archaeology, and secondly through involvement in the site's conservation and public interpretation. Glastonbury is an object lesson in 'living heritage', a medieval sacred site that has been continuously reimagined since at least the seventh century, and which is today valued for different reasons by diverse contemporary audiences (see Chapters 5 and 6). It is often said that Glastonbury exudes an irresistible 'sense of place', a distinctive quality linked to the local landscape, legends and heritage. Its enduring appeal to spiritual seekers has certainly caused me to think differently about the relationship between sacred heritage and medieval archaeology.

The timely coincidence of two invitations prompted me to reflect more deeply on the connections between medieval archaeology and heritage. First, I was asked by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland to give the Rhind Lectures in 2017. I was reflecting on how to structure a series of public lectures on the archaeology of medieval beliefs, when an invitation arrived to give

a Stanford Distinguished Lecture in Heritage. Lynn Meskell invited me to frame my work on Glastonbury Abbey within the context of global heritage studies. In preparing for the Stanford lecture, I realised just how little had been written on sacred heritage internationally, and how great was the gulf separating the practice of medieval archaeology, heritage management and heritage theory. This seemed a suitable challenge for the Rhinds – comprising six lectures delivered over a single weekend – the archaeological equivalent of Wagner’s Ring Cycle!

But an additional gauntlet was thrown down by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland: 2017 had been announced as Scotland’s Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology, and they asked if at least one of my Rhind Lectures could be devoted to the topic of medieval Scotland. I had not worked previously on medieval Scottish archaeology, but, as a Scottish Canadian, how could I possibly refuse?! Foregrounding Scottish evidence prompted me to reflect more closely on issues of national identity, both in the construction of archaeological knowledge today, and in the regional expression of material religion in the past. The medieval Scottish experience permeates much of this book, and is given centre stage especially in Chapters 2 and 4. It was perhaps inevitable that I would find my way to Scottish monasticism eventually, where I discovered that ‘Gilchrists’ feature prominently: they turn up in historical sources as monks, hermits and the founders of monasteries. But this is not a simple case of nominative determinism: *Gilla Crist* means servant of Christ and was a popular Gaelic personal name in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Hammond 2013: 33).

The aim of this book is to connect medieval archaeology and heritage by focusing on the material study of religion, in other words, how bodies and things engage to construct the *sensory experience* of religion (Meyer et al, 2010; Morgan 2010). In developing this framework, I hope to advance three parallel but distinct objectives: first, to contribute a critical overview of the field of sacred heritage; second, to develop a practice-based approach to monastic archaeology that emphasises agency and embodiment; and finally, to stimulate social research questions for the archaeological study of later medieval Scotland. I would like to thank the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and the audience for the Rhind Lectures, including friends who provided support throughout (especially Sally Foster, Mark Hall, Nancy Edwards and Rosemary Cramp). I would also like to acknowledge the audience and organisers of the Stanford Distinguished Lecture in Heritage (Archaeology Center, Stanford University, May 2016) and the Sune Lindqvist Annual Lecture (University of Uppsala, September 2016), for their thought-provoking questions and comments on material that was subsequently developed for Chapters 1 and 6.

Numerous colleagues have been kind enough to comment on draft chapters as my ideas have developed: Karin Altenberg, Janet Bell, Karen Dempsey, Dee

Dyas, Stephen Driscoll, Sally Foster, Mark Hall, Mary Lewis and Carole Rawcliffe, as well as very incisive comments from anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press. Gemma Watson provided invaluable research assistance with data collection for the Chapters 2–4 and prepared the tables, as well as assembling the illustrations and dealing with copyright. Karin Altenberg shared recent experience at the Swedish Heritage Board, including translation of public policy documents. For help with compiling illustrations, I would particularly like to thank Derek Hall, Mark Hall, Mick Sharp, Avril Maddrell, John Crook, Geoff Corris, Graham Howard, Liz Gardner, Sarah Lambert-Gates, Stephen Driscoll, Glastonbury Abbey, the Swedish History Museum and the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture at the University of York. I am grateful to the University of Reading for generously funding a subvention to enable Open Access publication and to the School of Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Science for a subvention towards the cost of illustrations. Chapters 5 and 6 draw on collaborative research projects on Glastonbury Abbey, funded principally by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. I would like to thank Beatrice Rehl of Cambridge University Press for her interest in commissioning this publication.

Finally, it is a great pleasure to dedicate this book to the inspirational Lynn Meskell, in warm appreciation of twenty years of friendship, feminist solidarity and shopping.

Illustrations:

The print on demand book is in black and white. For colour illustrations, please see the OA publication. For additional images and digital reconstructions of Glastonbury Abbey, please see: www.glastonburyabbey.org.

Data access statement:

Data supporting the results reported in this publication are openly available from the University of Reading Research Data Archive at <http://dx.doi.org/10.17864/1947.152>

