

GLASGOW COLOUR STUDIES GROUP

Notes following the Tenth Meeting, 20th January 2010

The tenth meeting of the GCSG took place in Room 1, Dept of English Language, University of Glasgow. Thanks are due to David Simmons, who acted as master of ceremonies, and to Christian Kay who organized the refreshments.

It was a great pleasure to see Room 1 packed to bursting with people eager to hear from our speaker, Dr Heather Pulliam, who was kindly visiting us from the University of Edinburgh's History of Art Department.

Heather Pulliam spoke on 'Technicolour Dreamcoats: Colour and Insular Art'

"This paper considers the role of colour in the portrayal of clothing within Insular gospel-books, specifically the representation of iridescence, texture and pattern as indicators of hierarchical levels of sanctity and authority".

Dr Pulliam raised some important and interesting points, always stressing the difficulty of conveying 'true' manuscript colour in printing and digital images. Even if this were a simple matter, however, we would still not know the exact *original* colours. Referring mainly to illustrations in the Book of Kells, Dr Pulliam discussed, among other interesting observations, the highlights on clothing which suggest the representation of shot-silk, and the presumed representation of whelk-dye, often called 'Tyrian purple'. She also discussed the symbolic meanings apparent in the illustration of the Christ child on the Virgin's lap, and their likely eastern origins. The significance of the unusual depiction of the Virgin's breasts, the presence of hyssop plants, and the green clothing of the Christ child were all explored, along with the 'colour-coding' of the tri-dot motif on textiles: red on Christ's clothing, white on the Virgin's, and yellow elsewhere. These were all observations which were new to many of us.

News

- Membership has now passed 100, and currently stands at 102. **Our 100th member is Anne Paton** of the Dept of Celtic and Gaelic, University of Glasgow. She is thereby entitled to a free glass of wine at our next meeting. Anne, please claim your wine, wearing your badge, at the refreshments table.
- From now on, members are invited to **announce their colour-related publications** to the Group as soon as they have a rough publication date, or as soon as they appear, so we can all be as up-to-date as possible. Please feel free to announce your work on the discussion list – don't be modest! The address is ColourStudies@www.jiscmail.ac.uk Alternatively, you can inform Carole Biggam (c.p.biggam@btinternet.com), on the understanding that the information will be announced to the Group. Please provide full bibliographic details.

Remaining Programme

Wednesday, 24th March 2010

Dr Natalie Uomini, *Dept of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool*

Colour in Prehistory: Materials and Symbols

All meetings will be held in Room 1, Dept of English Language, University of Glasgow, at 12 University Gardens, unless announced otherwise. Members are welcome to arrive from 4.45 p.m. when refreshments will be available, at a modest charge of one pound. The meetings will begin at 5.10 p.m. and usually last for about an hour.

Talks

- If anyone would like to volunteer a talk or session for next academic year's programme, or to suggest a speaker, please contact Carole Biggam at c.p.biggam@btinternet.com
- We do not want to exclude any format for future meetings, and, indeed, it would be good to have as much variety as possible, e.g. single lectures, collections of short talks, discussions on particular subjects or themes etc.