Symposium Report

‘The Great Household, 1000-1500’ (2016)

I was invited to present at the 2016 Harlaxton Medieval Symposium by Christopher Woolgar and the Dobson Scholarship allowed me not only to present at the symposium, but also to enjoy the full symposium. Without the scholarship it was unlikely that I would have been able to attend for the entirety of the symposium. The theme of the symposium aligned very closely to my research interests and in particular my recent doctoral thesis from the University of Oxford. Currently, I work outside of academic in professional services at the University of Oxford and I am incredibly grateful to the committee for providing scholarships to both PhD students and recent graduates in non-academic roles. Personally, I believe that it is hugely important to support recent PhD graduates working outside of academia to continue to engage with the academic community. The Barry Dobson Scholarship is a perfect example of such support.

I presented a paper on *Administering the Noble Household, 1180-1280: The Evidence from Courtesy Literature*. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the Harlaxton Medieval Symposium were the opportunities to talk to scholars during the breaks. In particular, a number of scholars whose work was integral to my thesis were present at the Symposium and the opportunity to discuss my work and my paper in advance of my presentation was incredibly valuable and significantly shaped the paper I presented. Subsequent opportunities have emerged after my presentation: through conversations there is now a potential to publish a translation of *Urbanus magnus*, the medieval text which I focus on; I have been inspired through conversations and follow-up correspondence to write two journal articles; and I have been given the opportunity to contribute to the Proceedings volume for this Symposium. As an early career researcher who works outside of academia, the opportunities which Harlaxton has provided are the impetus for continued research and engagement with academia.

Beyond my own presentation, the Symposium programme was broad and varied, such that it exposed me to a range of subjects and disciplines which I was not that familiar with. As someone with a focus on the twelfth century, much of the Symposium focused later than my period. However, this led to interesting conversations and comparisons. In particular, papers on architecture, music, and material culture provided a context and detail for my own period. In particular, papers on Chapels, oratories and portable alters by Kent Rawlinson, on the archaeology of rabbit consumption by Eleanor Standley, and on Catering for Great Households by Martha Carlin have sparked new insights and interpretations of my own research. In addition, the conference dinner has led to further conversation with Caroline Yeldham in relation to the texts on food and diet that we work on respectively, which is still ongoing since the conclusion of the Symposium.

I would like to express my gratitude again to the Committee for awarding the Dobson Scholarship to allow me to attend the Symposium. It has fostered further engagement with attendees leading to the sharing of knowledge and future collaborations.

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