

The Student Award of the European Association of Archaeologists (2016)

The European Association of Archaeologists instituted the EAA Student Award in 2002. The prize is awarded annually for the best paper presented by a student or archaeologist, working on a dissertation, at the EAA conference. The papers are evaluated for their academic merit and innovative ideas by the Award Selection Committee.

The European Association of Archaeologists awards the 2016 Student Award of the European Association of Archaeologists to

Sian Mui

for her paper *Positioning Ritual: Death and Representation in Early Medieval England*

and to

Shumon Hussain

for his paper *Gazing at Owls? The Role of Human-Strigiform Interfaces in the Gravettian of East-Central Europe.*



Sian Mui discusses the significance of corpse positioning in early Anglo-Saxon inhumations. Data are brought together from thirty-two cemeteries across England. Recurrent patterns of corpse postures suggest that positioning rituals were practiced, in which body representation was closely linked with individual and group identities.

This research uses an original approach to early medieval funerary rites, with an emphasis on the dead body and on mortuary theatre, as opposed to the established focus on exceptionally wealthy burials. The paper confidently combines a strong theoretical basis with an impressive body of data, and is well-situated within ongoing academic debate. It is also well-written, presented and illustrated.

Shumon Hussain considers the ecological and cultural background to human-owl relations during the Gravettian period in southern Moravia. It argues that the recurrence of owls in the visual culture of the Gravettian is the result of unique conditions of encounter and interaction that emerged from a combination of Gravettian socio-cultural behaviour, the specific climates and environments of late Marine Isotope Stage 3 East-Central Europe, and the distinctive behaviour of owls within these.

This research successfully combines theory drawn from environmental humanities with a wide-ranging approach to the data. The paper is well-written and organised, and culminates in some thought-provoking interpretations.

We would like to thank the sponsors of the EAA 2016 Student Award who kindly donated book vouchers worth GBP 1,000:

Archaeolingua
Cambridge University Press
Oxbow Books
Oxford University Press
Springer
Taylor and Francis
Thames and Hudson
Wiley and Blackwell

