

## CENNI BIOGRAFICI



### ALEKS PLUSKOWSKI

Aleks Pluskowski completed his BA (hons) in Archaeology and Anthropology at Christ's College, the University of Cambridge in 1999. In 2002 he was awarded his Ph.D. in medieval archaeology at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge and from 2003-2007 he was a Junior Research Fellow in medieval archaeology at Clare College, Cambridge, held jointly with the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research from 2006-2007. In 2007 he was appointed lecturer in medieval archaeology at the University of Reading, where he remains in post until the present. From October 2010 until October 2014 he has been directing a major international project funded by the European Research Council: "The Ecology of Crusading: The Environmental Impact of Conquest, Colonisation and Religious Conversion in the Medieval Baltic" ([www.ecologyofcrusading.com](http://www.ecologyofcrusading.com)).

Pluskowski's Ph.D. focused on human responses to the wolf in medieval Britain and Scandinavia on either side of the conversion to Christianity. This was published in 2006 by Boydell as *Wolves and the Wilderness in the Middle Ages*, and is currently being revised and expanded into a much broader European survey. Subsequently his research activity focused on medieval zooarchaeology, animal studies and the medieval animal database network based at the Central European University in Budapest. This resulted in a series of papers on animals as material culture, exotics, otherness and the biological profiling of medieval archaeological sites. Throughout he has maintained a consistent interest in the complex relationship between ecology and culture, and particularly the ecological dimensions of religious transformation and heterogeneity within, and beyond, Europe. He has edited a number of volumes on medieval animal studies, including *Breaking and Shaping Beastly Bodies: Animals as Material Culture in the Middle Ages* (Oxbow 2007) and *The Ritual Killing and Burial of Animals: European Perspectives* (Oxbow 2012). He has been involved in a number of projects investigating the relationship between environmental change and colonisation, in particular the Heritage of Serenissima project directed by Sauro Gelichi at Ca'Foscari in Venice. He is also a member of the Mauritian Archaeology and Cultural Heritage project, directed by Krish Seetah at Stanford, focusing on the environmental dimensions of slavery, indenture and colonialism within an island and maritime context.

His research in the last six years has focused on the environmental transformations associated with the creation of crusader states in the frontiers of medieval Europe, particularly the eastern Baltic. His most recent volume synthesised existing knowledge on the archaeology of the crusades in Prussia, published by Routledge in 2012 as *The Archaeology of the Prussian Crusade: Holy War and Colonisation*. The long-term aim of the project is to apply its integrated methodology to further our understanding of other frontier societies which were shaped by crusading and colonisation, particularly the Holy Land and Iberia.