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Alice Rio, King's College London), United Kingdom

The European slave trade and regional profiles of slavery in the Early Middle Ages

Abstract:

The eighth to tenth centuries AD saw the rise of a booming slave trade which connected, at the furthest extremes of its web, Ireland with Bukhara, and followed a variety of routes and staging posts across the Mediterranean, the Baltic, and overland across Europe. The emphasis on global history has led to increasing interest in this large-scale interregional slave trade, and new work has tended to revise upwards earlier estimations of its quantitative importance. The profiles of slavery and slave labour within the regions crossed by this trade also seem to have undergone important changes during this same period, but these two phenomena are not very often linked together. This lecture will offer a (necessarily broad) sketch of connections between this trade and the different profiles and cultures of slavery in various regions of Europe.

Bio:

Alice Rio is Professor of Medieval History at King's College London. Her second book was a comparative study of slavery in early medieval Europe (*Slavery After Rome, 500-1100*, Oxford, 2017), and she has also written a number of articles on the subject. She is now working on a history of early medieval Europe, told through the lives of women who moved from one European region to another (and a few who experienced other forms of transfer between different communities). She is currently co-editor, with Matthew Hilton, of the journal *Past & Present*.