

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES



**Dr Audrey Lilian Meaney FSA FAHA  
1931-2021**

It is with deep regret that the Academy informs you of the recent passing of Dr Audrey Meaney FSA FAHA, a leading archaeologist and historian specialising in the study of Anglo-Saxon England. She was elected to the Academy in 1984 and became a Corresponding Fellow in 2015.

Dr Meaney was born in England on 19 March 1931 and took a BA in English at Oxford University. In 1955, she was appointed as Carlisle Research Student at Girton College, Cambridge, to undertake her PhD in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic Studies (completed in 1959). Upon completion of her PhD, Meaney moved to Australia and to the English Department at the University of New England before moving to the recently formed Macquarie University in 1968 where she taught until her retirement in 1989. She also held visiting appointments at the University of Sydney and the ANU.

Dr Meaney's work was renowned for linking aspects of Anglo-Saxon language, literature, history and folklore, as well as archaeology, which established her as a truly interdisciplinary scholar of early medieval history. She published *A Gazetteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* in 1964 and (jointly with Sonia Hawkes) *Two Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Winnall, Winchester, Hampshire* in 1970, a product of her frequent trips back to the UK to undertake fieldwork. The 1980s saw Dr Meaney shifting her focus from archaeology to written texts, developing her work on amulets in an influential series of articles on Anglo-Saxon medicine which have made her one of the most important

commentators on the history of early medieval Western medicine.

According to colleagues, Dr Meaney was very influential in the early development of Macquarie University's teaching programs and a passionate advocate for the role of women and women's studies in the university sector. Her interest in the role of women also became a dominant theme in her research and she published several major articles on women in Anglo-Saxon culture. She took a leading role in founding the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and the Sydney Medieval and Renaissance Group, the latter of which established the Audrey Meaney Prize, an annual prize for a second- or third-year undergraduate student attending a university in the Sydney area.

Upon retirement, Meaney moved back to the UK and settled in Cambridge. In 1992 a special issue of the journal *Parergon* was released in her honour. In 2010, an anthology entitled *Signals of Belief in Early England: Anglo-Saxon Paganism Revisited* was also published in honour of Meaney, "in appreciation of her studies of Anglo-Saxon paganism."

In addition to being a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Meaney was elected as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1977.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Dr Meaney's family, friends and colleagues.

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