



The *Wandering Jew's Chronicle* and the Phylogenetics of English Print Culture and Oral Tradition, *Giles Bergel*

Keynote 1

**Monday
18th May 2026**

The *Wandering Jew's Chronicle*, first published in England around 1634, is an appropriation of the well-known European myth of the Wandering Jew, to tell a distinctly English story - that of the succession to the throne of the kings and queens of England from William of Normandy to Charles I. Republished over two centuries, it has been more recently made available as a TEI-XML parallel-text edition, with visualisations, by the speaker. This talk will offer some reflections on how digital editing can usefully demonstrate the dynamics of cultural transmission in printed and oral traditions.

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Dr. Giles Bergel is a book historian and a digital humanist based in the Department of Engineering Science at the University of Oxford. He works mostly on historical printing, sometimes with the help of computer vision. He is interested in particular in cheap printed formats such as broadside ballads and chapbooks, but sometimes also big, expensive books such as Dante's *Commedia*. He has recently published an article on printers' woodblocks.



Using Modelling and Simulation to Understand Change in Past Societies across Scales, *Simon Carrignon*

Keynote 2

**Tuesday
19th May 2026**

Computational approaches, combined with easy access to large amounts of computational power and data, have enabled us to understand how humans interact and how culture spreads through time in ways that were unthinkable before. Nonetheless, these datasets are often biased toward relatively modern societies, and specific aspects of culture. To find general factors behind the spread of cultural transformations that can reshape how humans live around the world, one needs to understand the mechanisms that enable culturally coherent groups to emerge, persist for centuries, or disappear. This requires data that span large geographical and temporal scales, sometimes over multiple countries and millennia, that only be provided by archaeology. These data, unless modern large datasets, are scarce, not documented evenly across regions and time period and need to be carefully handled when used as evidence of change in past behaviour.

To bridge the gap between the knowledge modern datasets provide and the general mechanisms behind the emergence and evolution of past societies, we propose to use computational modelling and simulation. Modelling allows us to simulate behaviour at local levels and inform these interactions with observations from very diverse fields of study. These models, combined with the right statistical tools, can then be used to test hypotheses about the processes that gave birth to modern societies and try to answer some of the questions raised before: what makes culturally consistent groups emerge and persist, why and when some cultures blend while others replace one another and so on? Drawing on case studies from archaeology, this talk will present how agent-based modelling, combined with machine learning and Bayesian inference, can help us address these questions and the challenges such approaches raise.

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Simon Carrignon works at the crossroads between computational modelling and Cultural Evolution. He got his Ph.D. from Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Spain and has a background that combines computer science, evolutionary theory, and cognitive sciences. For more than ten years now he has been collaborating closely with archaeologists and social scientists to design and test computer models that link hypotheses and theories about the evolution of human cultures. After research positions at the Department of Anthropology in Knoxville, Tennessee and at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge, he is now a Research Associate at University College London, working on the COREX project to develop models that help explain the transformation Europe went through during the Neolithic.