

## PEF EVENT

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025, 6pm**

### **HOLD THE LINE: BYZANTINE ARCHEOLOGY IN COLONIAL PALESTINE, c.1800 - 1948**

- Daniel Reynolds, University of Birmingham
- PEF, 5-6 Dreadnought Walk, Greenwich, London SE10 9FP
- Free, please email [rsvppef@gmail.com](mailto:rsvppef@gmail.com) to reserve your ticket/s

### **TALKS AT THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND**

6pm, 4th September 2025  
5 - 6 Dreadnought Walk, Greenwich, London SE10 9FP

### **HOLD THE LINE: BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGY IN COLONIAL PALESTINE 1800 - 1948**

Daniel Reynolds, University of Birmingham



To book your free ticket please email: [Rsvppef@gmail.com](mailto:Rsvppef@gmail.com)  
or watch later on our YouTube channel

Image: General view over the ruins of Byzantine Esbata in the Negev, with a local boy holding a scale.  
PEF 4-S-COLT-107: Coll Expedition 1933-37

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### **Summary**

This lecture investigates how Byzantine archaeology emerged in tandem with British colonial ambitions during the British Mandate in Palestine. Focusing on the Negev Desert (present-day southern Israel) as a case study, it considers how archaeological and historical research into the Byzantine period—particularly from the early 19th century onward—offered the British government a political and economic framework for safeguarding its strategic control of the Suez Canal. The portrayal of the Negev as a timeless “frontier zone,” thriving under centralized imperial rule and benefiting from increased migration from a “Hellenised” western Europe, drew legitimacy from an imagined reconstruction of its Byzantine past.

### **About the speaker**

Daniel Reynolds is Associate Professor in Byzantine History and Director of the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies at the University of Birmingham.

His research interests include the history and archaeology of Byzantine and early Islamic Palestine and the Transjordan, c.300-c.1099, and the ways in which this history and archaeology has been studied and harnessed by subsequent generations.

His new book, *The Development of Byzantine Archaeology and Historiographical Tradition in Colonial Palestine 1800 – 1948* will shortly be published by Palgrave Macmillan.

## HOW TO FIND US

THE PEF is situated on the south bank of the River Thames, a short walk away from Greenwich train and DLR station, Greenwich Pier (Riverbus) and Island Gardens DLR and Greenwich Foot Tunnel. Cutty Sark CLR station is currently closed until Spring 2026.

