

東文研セミナー Sara Kuehn博士ご講演

" A Supernatural Creature in a Transcultural and Transreligious Framework: The Case of the so-called 'Sēnmurw' "

場所：東京大学東洋文化研究所第1会議室

日時：平成30年1月26日（金）15時30分～17時



The lecture revisits the evolution of the iconographic theme and the transcultural and transreligious framework of the composite mythical animal commonly identified as 'sēnmurw'. Of one of the vehicles of transmission of elements of the Western Asian world, in particular of the Sasanian and Sogdian spheres, into medieval Christian and Islamic art, the Pahlavī sēn(ē)murw (Avestan saēna-mərəgha-, New Persian sīmurgh, Old Syriac sīmur(gh), Arab 'anqa') also so has traits in common with the Chinese phoenix and the Sanskrit garuḍa. Depicted in a variety of media, including architectural decoration, metalwork, textiles, glass, numismatics and glyptics, it is generally rendered in profile, characterised by a snarling canine snout with projecting (sometimes bifurcating or foliate) tongue, two paws (one raised above the other), wings and a (pea)cock-like tail. The iconography of this supernatural creature remains remarkably consistent and resilient across cultures and eras. Yet, at the same time, its signification may be multi-layered, multivalent and adaptive. In its royal, apotropaic and exalting aspect, it passes easily between cultures, often retaining similar power, prestige and meaning even if situated in very different theologies and Weltanschauungen. The discussion will show that, over more than seven centuries, and spanning civilisations from the greater Iranian world to twelfth-century Europe, this animal of fantasy has answered iconographic needs associated with themes ranging from the important, such as abundance, fertility, royalty, glory, good fortune, splendour and protection, to the most rarefied, such as ascent, salvation and delivery.