

2015 June - No. 16

# Medieval Histories

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Firenze and Siena 1250-1320

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# Medieval Histories

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### Medieval Histories

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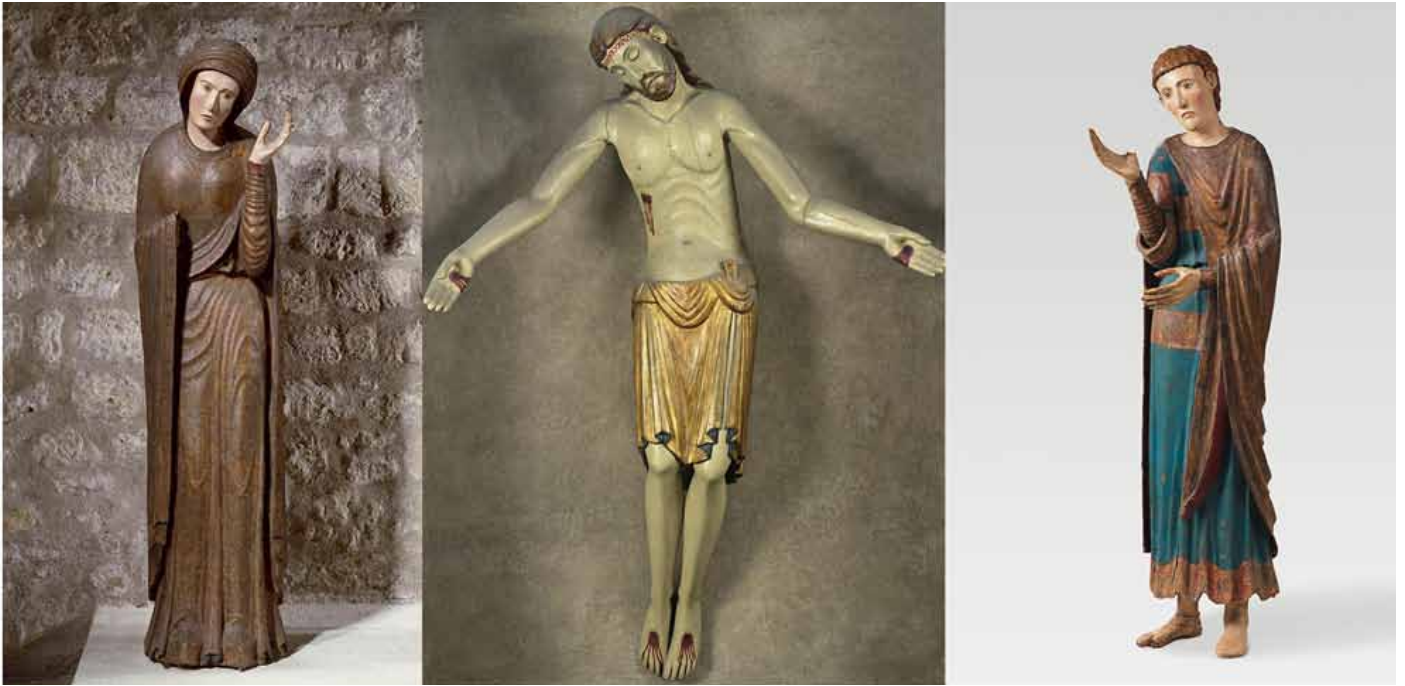
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### Photo (frontpage):

The Descent from the Cross ca. 1260 - 1280 © Musée du Louvre

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*Christ from the Cathedral of Prato and a Virgin and a Saint John now in the Cluny Museum © Musée du Louvre et Musée du Cluny*

## Gold and Ivory from Paris, Pisa, Firenze and Siena 1250-1320

The summer exhibition at Louvre-Lens – Gold and Ivory – highlights the wealth of artistic exchanges between Paris and Tuscany 1250-1320

Between 1250 and 1320 artistic exchanges between Paris and the leading city-states in Toscana flourished. Thanks to exceptional loans from around twenty prestigious European museums, a new exhibition lifts the veil on the relationships between the major centres of artistic creation of the period: Paris, Firenze, Siena and Pisa.

This exhibition brings together more than 125 exquisite works: monumental statuary, gold background paintings, illuminated manuscripts, fine enamels and ivories. In particular, these works reveal the influence of French exponents of High Gothic

style on the Tuscan sculptors and painters in the late 13th century, within a region, which would later become the cradle of the early Renaissance.

The exhibition at the Louvre-Lens is the first to examine this artistic interchange, which is of paramount importance to the history of art.

### Paris 1250

In 1250 Paris was one of the largest European cities with nearly 300.000 citizens. It was also the capital of the Kingdom of France, home of Saint-Louis and a vibrant intellectual and artistic centre with a decidedly international reputation. With its great architectural sites (the Sainte-Chapelle, the Lady Chapel at Saint Germain des Prés, the transept of Notre Dame) and the completion of the courtyard of the

Palais de la Cité, Paris became the “capital of luxury”. Indeed, an abundant production of precious objects were produced there (illuminated manuscripts, ivories, goldsmithery), supported by an explosion of artistic commissions by the elite. Paris was the heart of what we now refer to as High Gothic. Paris was simply the ‘hot’ place to be.

Part of this repute was due to the architectural and artistic milieu, which developed in the wake of the building projects of the king. It has been claimed that Paris at that time underwent a development akin to what happened in Paris in the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the direction of Haussmann.

## Descent from the Cross

One of the best ways of getting a feeling for this special atmosphere is by study-

ing one of the artistic masterpieces of that time: the Descent from the Cross from 1270 -1280. Full of expressive movement, the figures are clad in modern garb; they signal that a decidedly new artistic expression has come to town.

In the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Italian artists like Nicola Pisano and Cimabue were inspired by this. The result was the so-called “French Art”, which they developed in opposition to the old Byzantine tradition. Mingling inspiration from Paris with that of Rome in the Antiquity, these artists created some of the most amazing medieval sculptures and paintings, we may ever see.

It stands to reason that the famous pulpit in Pisa will not grace the exhibition in Louvre-Lens this summer. But less can do! What we see are such minor ivories and other pieces of art like manuscripts and

*The Descent from the Cross ca. 1270 - 1280 © Musée du Louvre*





*Three acolytes from Bargello: Arnolfo di Cambio, Colum with three acolytes, Pisa, around 1267, marble, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello*

golden treasures, which were imported from Paris to the cities of Pisa, Prato, Firenze and Siena; and which obviously inspired the artists there.

But we can also explore some of the great results of the artistic inspiration. One such highlight is the bringing together of Christ from a crucifix from the Cathedral of Prato and a Virgin and a Saint John now in the Cluny Museum. Exhibited side by side specialists are invited to explore whether the three sculptures originally belonged to the same group. There will also be a unique comparison of pieces from around 1300 with stylistic links – among them a Christ by Giovanni Pisano, fragments from the St. Gertrude cask from Nivelles and Maître Honoré's *La Somme Le Roy*. A group of monumental painted sculptures from early 14th-century Tuscany will also help

reassess the place they held in the creative culture of that time.

The exhibition is divided into four sections

## The 1250s

The first section of the exhibition presents a brief overview of the birth of High Gothic, through four major Parisian architectural sites: the Lady Chapel of Saint Germain des Prés, the Sainte Chapelle at the Palais de la Cité, and the transept and rood screen of Notre Dame. Architectural elements and monumental statuary are accompanied by royal manuscripts and stained glass from the same sites. Tuscan painting and sculpture from the mid- to late 13<sup>th</sup> century, still influenced by Byzantine art, are presented alongside each other

Some of the works in this section include:

- Jean de Chelles, Head of a Wise Man, Paris, Notre-Dame cathedral 1250-1258 in limestone with traces of polychromy, Paris, musée de Cluny – musée national du Moyen Âge
- Childebert receives St. Germain, Paris, the Lady Chapel of Saint Germain des Prés, stained glass, 1240-1245, London, Victoria and Albert Museum
- Virgin and Child, Paris, the Lady Chapel of Saint Germain des Prés, 1245-1255, limestone, Paris, church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés
- Virgin and St. John weeping, Deposition of Christ, Prato, around 1250, wood, late polychromy, Paris, musée de Cluny – musée national du Moyen Âge (Virgin and St. John), Prato, Duomo (Christ)

## Cimabue and Nicola Pisano

This section of the exhibition shows how the style of Tuscan art took shape in the latter half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, between a revival of the Byzantine tradition and borrowings from Gothic art, particularly that of Paris. Focus is on the work of Nicola Pisano and Cimabue. This section also presents the technical innovations that appeared in Tuscany, in particular translucent enamels. In parallel, this section considers the prominent figures of Parisian art between the end of the reign of Louis IX (St Louis, who died in 1270) and the beginning of the reign of Philip IV (from 1285).

Some of the works in this section include:

- Workshop of Nicola Pisano, Group of three apostles, Pisa, around 1270, marble, London, Victoria and Albert Museum
- Reliquary of Saints Lucian, Maximian, and Julian, Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, around 1261, engraved, carved, silver gilt, Paris, musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge
- Gospels of St. Denis, top plate of the binding, around 800 (manuscript), 2nd half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (bound), parchment, wood, engraved gold plated copper, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France
- Descent from the Cross, Paris, around 1270-1280, ivory, polychromy, Paris, Musée du Louvre
- Arnolfo di Cambio, Column with three acolytes, Pisa, around 1267, marble, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello

## Renewed Encounter

Through the examples of Giovanni Pisano,



*Chalice guerino Tondino di Guerrino and Andrea Riguardi, Chalice, Siena, 1322-1328, silver gilt, translucent basse-taille enamel,*

*London, © Trustees of the British Museum*

and his pupil, Tino da Camaino, both trained in the workshop of Nicola Pisano, the exhibition shows the influence of the sculpture of the court of Paris on the Tuscan artistic output around 1300

Some of the works in this section include:

- Angels of Saudemont, Northern France, around 1270-1300, wood, polychromy, Arras, museum of Fine Arts
- Giovanni Pisano, Sibyl (also called Miriam), Siena, cathedral, 1287-1297, marble, Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo
- Angel blowing a trumpet, Poissy, collégiale Saint-Louis, after 1297, chalk,

traces of polychromy, Paris, musée de Cluny – musée national du Moyen Âge

- Giovanni Pisano, The Crucified Christ, Tuscany, around 1290- 1300, ivory, London, Victoria and Albert Museum
- Tino da Camaino, Virgin of the Annunciation, around 1300, wood, polychromy, Florence, Museo Stefano Bardini
- Master Honoré, La Somme le Roi, Paris, 1290-1295, illuminated parchment, London, The British Library
- Queen of France (Joan of Navarre?), Paris, around 1310, limestone, Berlin, Bode Museum

Tondino di Guerino and Andrea Riguardi, Chalice, Siena, 1322-1328, silver gilt, translucent basse-taille enamel, London, The British Museum

## Common Destiny

With the turn of the 14th century, new artists appeared, opening new avenues for Tuscan art, some of which would strongly inspire Parisian art. In the field of painting, the exhibition examines the influence of the major artists Giotto and Duccio, particularly on the illuminations of Jean Pucelle.

This final section also looks at the revival of Tuscan sculpture, with the divergence of the artistic styles of Florence and Siena.

Some of the works in this section include:

- Agostino di Giovanni, Virgin of the Annunciation, Tuscany, 1321, wood, polychromy, Pisa, Museo Nazionale di San Matteo
- Guillaume de Nourriche, Apostle, Paris,

church of Saint-Jacques-de-l'Hôpital, 1319-1324, limestone, Paris, musée de Cluny – musée national du Moyen Âge

- Missal for the use of Sainte-Chapelle, Paris, early 14th century, parchment, London, The British Library.
- The Robert Billyng Bible, Paris, 1327, parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France

At the centre of the exhibition, a mediation space allows the visitor to explore the creative techniques of the period, through

*Guillaume de Nourriche, Apostle*

© RMN-GP (musée de Cluny – musée national du Moyen Âge) /Jean-Gilles Berizzi





*Crucified Christ by Giovanni Pisano. Elephant ivory with traces of gilding. Victori and Albert Museum, London. © V&A Images*

the sculptors' materials and the painters' pigments. It also addresses the issue of copying in the Middle Ages, which allowed

## CATALOGUE:

D'or Et D'ivoire : Paris, Pise, Florence, Si-  
enne 1250-1320

Exposition au Musée Du Louvre-Lens, Du  
27 Mai Au 28 Septembre 2015

By Marie-Lys Marguerite et al.

Louvre-Lens, Snoeck Publishers 2015  
ISBN-78-94-6161-228-1

these styles to spread across Europe.

Curators are Xavier Dectot, director of the Louvre-Lens museum; Marie-Lys Marguerite, director of Saint-Omer museums. The exhibition is organised by the Louvre-Lens, with the exceptional participation of the Soprintendenza BAPSAE di Pisa e Livorno and the Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge. The exhibition is supported by Crédit Agricole Nord de France.

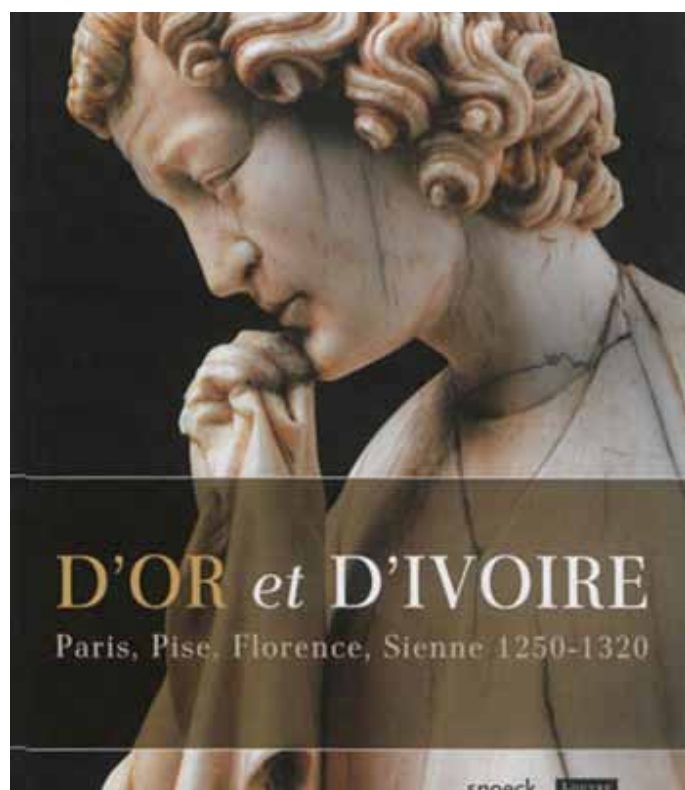
## VISIT:

### Gold and Ivory

Paris, Pisa, Florence, Siena. 1250-1320  
Louvre-Lens, 62300 Lens (France)  
27.05.2015 – 28.09.2015

## TAKE PART:

In connection with the exhibition an international symposium is organized in Rouen from 10.06.2015 – 11.05.2015:  
Dialogues entre les arts. Un nouvel imaginaire en Toscane, 1250-1480





Late Medieval Swabian  
Sculpture in Paris  
Musée de Cluny





## Late Medieval Swabian Sculpture in Paris at Musée de Cluny

Sweet, delicate, gentle are just a few of the epithets clinging to the current exhibition of late medieval Swabian sculpture at Musée de Cluny in Paris this summer

Swabia in the Middle Ages covered a larger region, than what it does today. At that time it approximately encompassed the land between the Vosges in the West and the Lech river in the East. To the South it was hemmed in by the Alpes and to the North by Franken. A large part of the region was covered in a forest, which today go under the name of Black Forest or Schwarzwald. Much of the former region now falls into the district of Baden-Württemberg.

One of the traditional crafts was wood-

carving, which was carried out by a mixture of local craftsmen and highly skilled artists. Witness to this are the so-called

*Altar by Daniel Mauch (?) from © Colmar, Musee unter den Linden*



Longinus Crosses, which are still abundant in the countryside. 3-4 metres high they are often topped by a hipped roof, which resembles the roofs of the traditional Black Forest houses. Together with the riches of late medieval carved sculptures, which may be found in museums and occasionally also local churches, this tradition serves to characterise the characteristic art-form of the region.

Exhibiting thirty highly evocative sculptures this summer, a small, but very beautiful exhibition at the Musée de Cluny focus on this specific art-form. Visitors are invited to enjoy exquisite sculptures from 1460 -1530 – winged altarpieces, abundant Marys, saints galore. They are all here, witnessing to an art-form, which was dealt a fierce death-blow in the wake of the protestant reformation and its accompanying iconoclasm.

Of course the exhibition shows only a fragment of the riches, which may be explored in museums in the region (primarily Würzburg, Colmar and Ulm). However, the small and intimate character of the exhibition has made it a veritable must-see for medieval art aficionados in Paris this summer.

The exhibition shows works by well-known artists like Niclas Weckmann (1481 -1526) and Daniel Mauch from Ulm (1477-1540) as well as Ivo Strigel (1430 – 1516) from Memmingen, Lux Maurus (1470 – ca. 1527) in Kempten and Jörg Lederer (ca. 1470 – 1550) from Kaufbeuren in the South. Most of the exhibits are currently in French museums; however a number of important works were borrowed from museums in Germany and Austria.

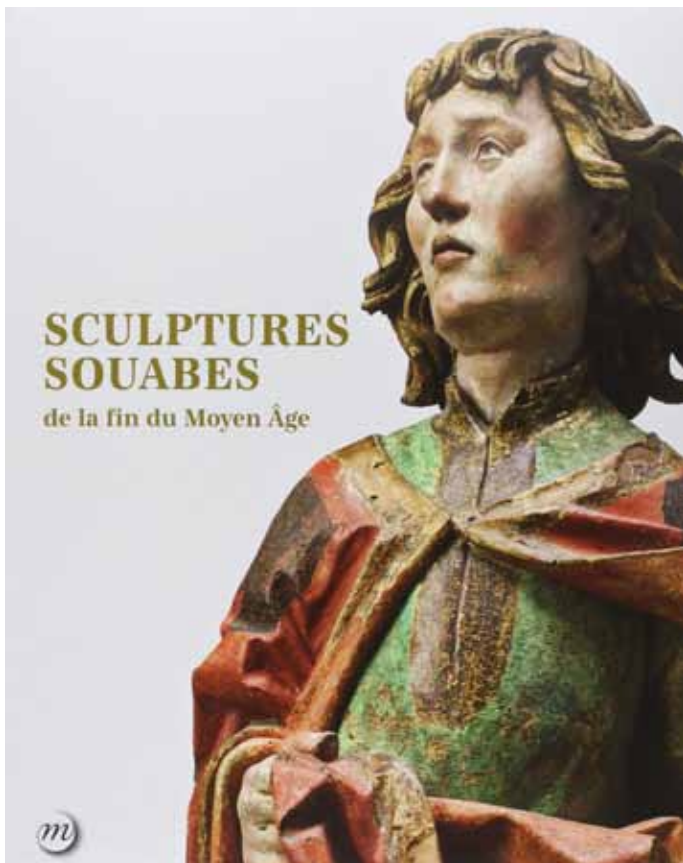
The exhibition is organised by The Musée de Cluny and La Réunion des Musee nationaux. However, it is inspired by the for-



*Saint Martin from Saumur: Musée des Arts Décoratifs-© Martine Beck Coppola*

mal collaboration between Medieval Museums in Germany (Museum Schnütgen) and in Italy (the Bargello), which was recently confirmed by the exhibition on “The Middle Ages on the Road”. According to the curator:” It is a sign of the new politics of the Musée de Cluny, which seeks to focus on medieval art from all of Europe and not just France.”

Another inspiration has been a project at Louvre to catalogue Swabian sculpture in French museums and collections.



## CATALOGUE:

Sculptures souabes de la fin du Moyen âge cover  
 Sculptures souabes de la fin du Moyen Age  
 de Damien Berné, Collectif  
 RMN 2015  
 ISBN-10: 2711862631  
 ISBN-13: 978-2711862634

## VISIT:

**Musée de Cluny – musée national de Moyen Âge**  
 6, place Paul Painlevé  
 75005 Paris  
 01.04.2015 – 27.07.2015

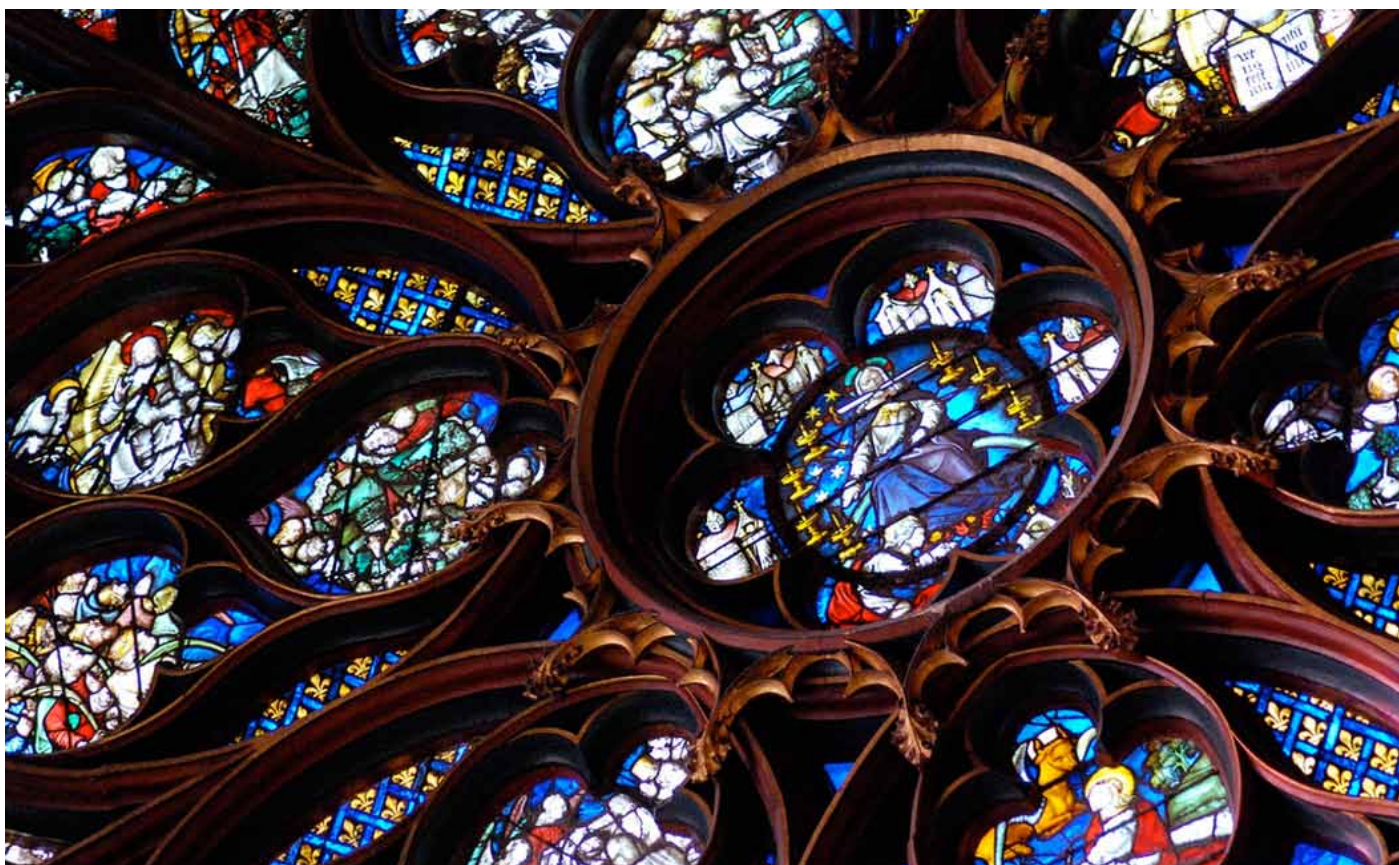
## READ MORE:

Die Mittelalterlichen Skulpturen in Museum Wüttemberg Cover  
 Die mittelalterlichen Skulpturen. Stein- und Holzskulpturen 1400-1530, Südliches Schwaben 1 – 2  
 By Roland Hahn, Hans Westhoff, Claudia Lichte and Heribert Meurer  
 Jan Thorbecke Verlag GmbH 2007  
 ISBN-10: 3799580387  
 ISBN-13: 978-3799580380

## SEE MORE:

Photos of the Sculptures have generously been made available in a collaboration between Musée de Cluny and Wikimedia

**Sculptures souabes de la fin du moyen âge**



*Sainte-Chapelle © Centre des Monuments Nationaux*

## Sainte-Chapelle Shines Again

It took seven years to restore the glorious windows of the Sainte-Chapelle and cost €9.5 mill. Now they shine in all their former glory

Sainte-Chapelle was commissioned by Saint Louis after he had bought a number of very important relics stemming from the Passion of Christ from the Byzantine emperor. Especially important was the Crown of Thorns, which arrived in Paris in 1239.

When the royal chapel was consecrated in 1248, it appeared the architect had succeeded in creating a veritable jewel-box to hold this very precious relic. Part of this aura was due to the magnificent glass paintings, which seemed to soar into the sky.

With more than 750 m<sup>2</sup> and 1113 scenes they still tell the story of the chosen people. The cycle starts at the western bay of the north wall with scenes from the Book of Genesis. The next ten windows of the nave follow clockwise with scenes from Exodus, Joseph, Numbers, Leviticus, Joshua, Deuteronomy, Judges, (moving to the south wall) Jeremiah, Tobias, Judith, Job, Esther, David and the Book of Kings. The final window, occupying the westernmost bay of the south wall brings this narrative of sacral kingship right up to date with a series of scenes showing the rediscovery of Christ's relics, the miracles they performed, and their relocation to Paris in the hands of King Louis himself. In the apse windows feature scenes from the Infancy, Life of John the Baptist and the Passion. The overall message is to exalt the ideal of kingship.

It stands to reason that these paintings were harmed, changed, restored and mixed anew during the next 750 years. Not least the French Revolution caused a grievous destruction. Nevertheless, 2/3 of the windows are original.

In the 1970s, however, it was deemed necessary to restore this magnificent French monument in order to bring it back to its former glory. Finally, a few days ago, the result of the restoration-project was unveiled to the astonishment of everyone present, who had never seen the edifice without scaffolding and partially under wraps. Indeed a glorious moment!

The primary donation to finish the restoration of the bay-windows has been made by the Danish Company: Velux, which contributed 50% of the expense. The president of the Velux foundation, Lars Khan-Rasmussen, was present at the inauguration, where he committed further funding

for another French treasure, the windows at Palais d'Antin. The foundation has earlier on been active in for instance the rebuilding of the Dresden Frauenkirche and is active in a European context, whenever a restoration job touches upon the primary business of the Velux company: to bring daylight and fresh air to people. At the ceremony in Paris on the 20th of May 2015, the Velux Foundation was profusely thanked by the president of the Centre des Monuments Nationaux for its never wavering support and its exemplary way of supporting such a complicated project.

## SOURCES:

**La Sainte-Chapelle comme vous ne l'avez jamais vue**

**Les Fondations VELUX dévoilent ce jour le nouveau visage de la Sainte-Chapelle**

**Atelier Vitrail France**



## READ MORE:



### **La Sainte-Chapelle de Paris**

By Françoise Perrot

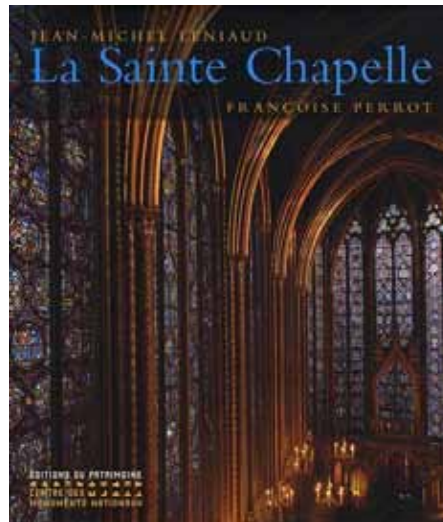
Series : Regards

Editions du Patrimoine

Centre des monuments nationaux 2013

ISBN-10: 275770270X

ISBN-13: 978-2757702703



### **La Sainte Chapelle Relié**

By Jean-Michel Leniaud and Françoise Perrot

Series: Monographies

Editions du Patrimoine

Centre des monuments nationaux 2007

ISBN-10: 2858229201

ISBN-13: 978-2858229208



### **Vitrail, Ve-XXIe siècle**

By Véronique David and Michel Hérol

Editions du Patrimoine

Centre des monuments nationaux 2013

ISBN-10: 2757703439

ISBN-13: 978-2757703





*The Right Hand of God Protecting the Faithful against the Demons. By Jean Fouquet (French, Tours ca. 1425–ca. 1478 Tours) Date: ca. 1452–1460  
Metropolitan Museum of Art: Accession Number: 1975.1.2490n (OASC) via the Met's Website*



Conference:

## The Medieval City in France

This year's annual symposium organized by the International Medieval Society focuses on the medieval city in France

After the decline of the ancient city during the fifth and sixth centuries, a renewal of cities began in the eleventh century. As documented by archaeological investigations and new historical research, this phenomenon radically transformed the medieval society.

The aim of the 12<sup>th</sup> symposium organized by the International Medieval Society is to present new research focusing on the medieval city in France from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Cartographic explorations, monuments, the spacial organisation of cities, city-politics and cultural history will be on the programme. Themes explored:

- urban morphologies, urban planning, architecture
- the city as performance – urban ritu-

als, processions, musical performances, theatres

- intellectual, spiritual and material cultural practices
- development of literate and political cultures
- the role of markets
- the daily life in the medieval city
- the development of intellectual institutions: schools, universities, philanthropy, beggars, etc.).
- urban philosophies – what was the idea of the city?

The symposium will take place in Paris from 25.06.2015 – 27.06.2015

Source:

**International Medieval Society**

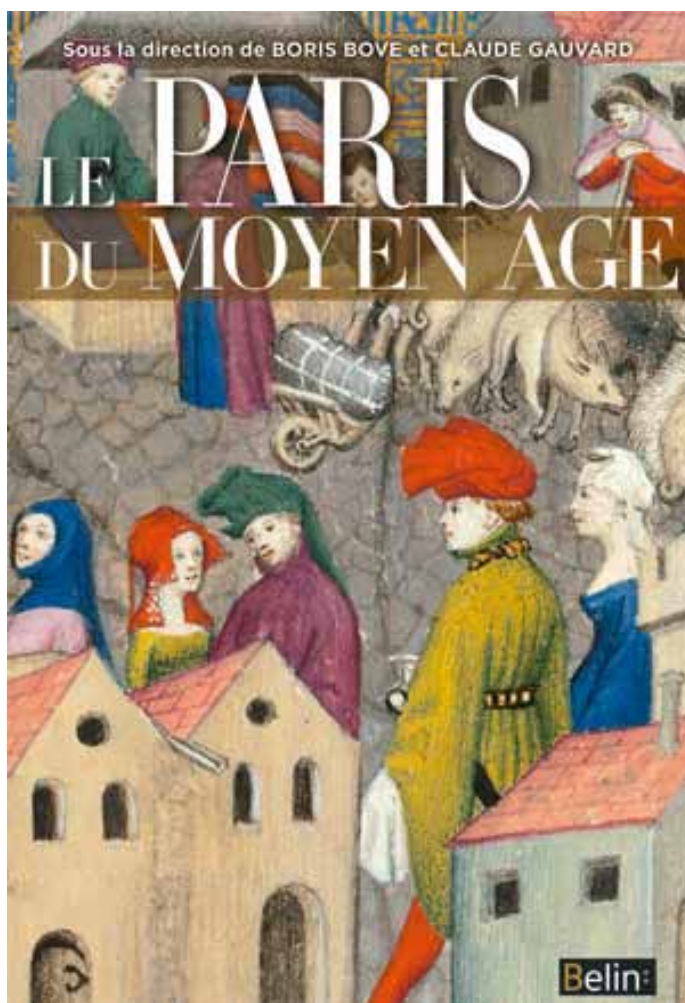
**Don't Forget:**

Next years conference organized by The British Archaeological society is held in Paris and focuses on **Paris 500 – 1500. The Powers that Shape a City**



## ESSENTIAL READING:

### For Participants in the conference: The Medieval City in France



#### **Le Paris du Moyen Âge**

By Boris Bove and Claude Gauvard  
Paris: Belin 2014

This book, which contains over 80 illustrations and maps, brings together presentations from a conference organized in 2012 by the History Committee of the City of Paris on the theme of Paris in the Middle Ages. Nine historians presents specific aspects the history of Paris as reflected in their research. Questions addressed are

- the place of the founding saints in the city
- the role of the bishop
- the role of the intellectuals
- the role of the bourgeoisie
- the position of women

- the king in his palace
- paris during civil wars

The aim is to present a rounded picture of Paris, which cannot be characterized in the same way as Ghent (the industrial city), Bologna (the university city) or Venice (the commercial hub).

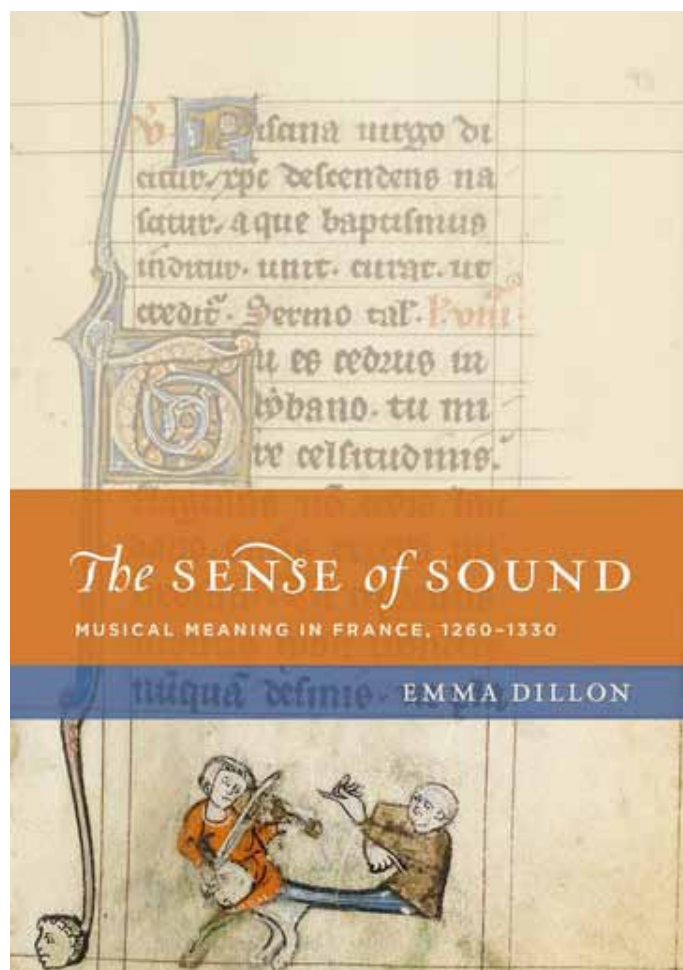
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#### **The Sense of Sound. Musical Meaning in France, 1260-1330**

By Emma Dillon

The New Cultural History of Music Series  
Oxford University Press 2012

Among the most memorable innovations of music and poetry in thirteenth-century France was a genre that seemed to privilege sound over sense. The polytextual motet is especially well-known to schol-

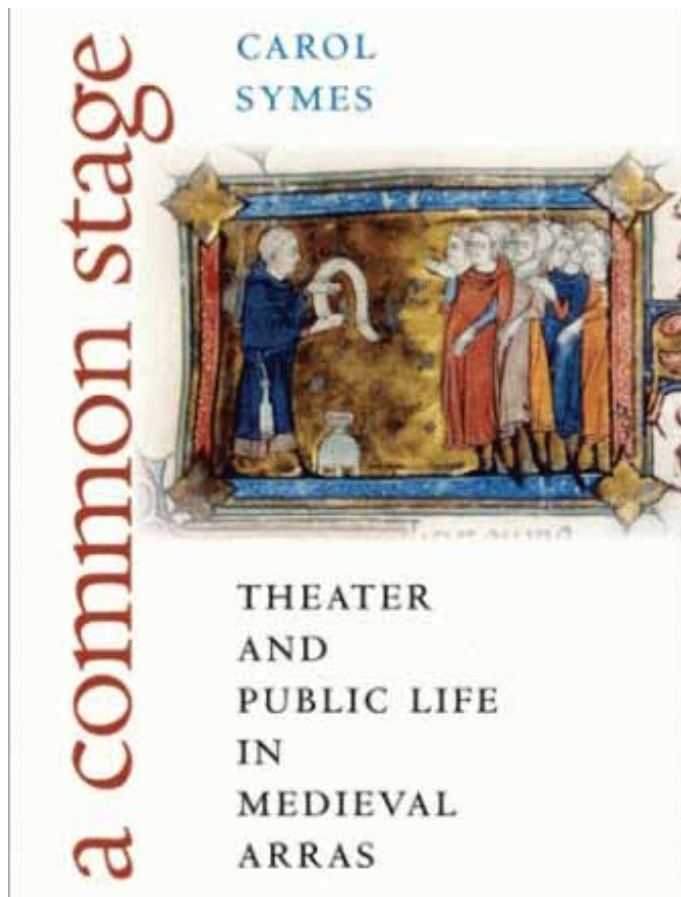


ars of the Middle Ages for its tendency to conceal complex allegorical meaning in a texture that, in performance, made words less, rather than more, audible. It is with such musical sound that this book is concerned.

What did it mean to create a musical effect so potentially independent from the meaning of words? Is it possible such supermusical effects themselves had significance? *The Sense of Sound* offers a radical recontextualization of French song in the heyday of the motet c.1260–1330, and makes the

case for listening to musical sound against a range of other potentially meaningful sonorities, often premised on non-verbal meaning.

In identifying new audible interlocutors to music, it opens our ears to a broad spectrum of sounds often left out of historical inquiry, from the hubbub of the medieval city; to the eloquent babble of madmen; to the violent clamor of charivari; to the charismatic chatter of prayer.



Medieval Arras was a thriving town on the frontier between the kingdom of France and the county of Flanders, and home to Europe's earliest surviving vernacular plays: *The Play of St. Nicholas*, *The Courtly Lad of Arras*, *The Boy and the Blind Man*, *The Play of the Bower*, and *The Play about Robin and about Marion*.

In *A Common Stage*, Carol Symes undertakes a cultural archeology of these artifacts, analyzing the processes by which a handful of entertainments were conceived, transmitted, received, and recorded during the thirteenth century. She then places the resulting scripts alongside other documented performances with which plays shared a common space and vocabulary: the crying of news, publication of law, preaching of sermons, telling of stories, celebration of liturgies, and arrangement of civic spectacles. She thereby shows how groups and individuals gained access to various means of publicity, participated in public life, and shaped public opinion. And she reveals that the theater of the Middle Ages was not merely a mirror of society but a social and political sphere.

**Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras Cover**  
**A Common Stage. Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras**

By Carol Symes

Cornell University Press 2007



© Staffordshirehoard/Birmingham Museums Trust

## NEW RESEARCH:

# Staffordshire Hoard reveals yet another helmet and rare pommel

Helmet and pommel pieced together from hundreds of fragments present new insights into the Staffordshire Hoard

Ground breaking research and conservation of the Staffordshire Hoard has uncovered two internationally important objects that link us to an age of warrior splendour, and further our knowledge of seventh century Anglo-Saxon England.

The research is being carried out by Barbian Research Associates and builds on previous research by teams around the country. After having cleaned all the fragments and objects, the conservation team

are now concentrating on physically joining the fragments together, just like a giant jigsaw puzzle, revealing the artefacts in their original form.

Chris Fern, project archaeologist, said: "The Staffordshire Hoard links us with an age of warrior splendour. The gold and silver war-gear was probably made in workshops controlled by some of England's earliest kings, to reward warriors that served those rulers, when multiple kingdoms fought for supremacy. The skill of the craftsmen is equally thrilling to behold, with many of the finds decorated with pagan and Christian art, designed to give spiritual protection in battle."



© Staffordshirehoard/Birmingham Museums

## The Helmet of a Princely Warrior

Section of reconstructed helmet band from the Staffordshire Hoard © Birmingham Museums Trust

Section of reconstructed helmet band from the Staffordshire Hoard © Birmingham Museums Trust

Archaeologists and a conservator worked for three solid days to begin to piece together the vast collection of some 1,500 thin, fragile silver sheets, and strips, believed to come from a dismantled helmet. Anglo-Saxon helmets are incredibly rare, and the hoard example is the fifth to be discovered. The painstaking job saw these fragments – many less than 10mm across

© Staffordshirehoard/Birmingham Museums Trust



and making up around a third of the Hoard in size – pieced together to reveal intricate, die-stamped designs. These remarkable designs depict human warriors and male moustachioed faces, as well as birds, animals and mythical beasts, like others seen in the rest of the hoard. Some warrior figures themselves wear helmets. It's possible these are ancestral or idealised warriors, intended to give spiritual support to the wearer.

The team has also pieced together the fragments of a 'helmet-band', that it is thought ran around the circumference of the helmet (and which held one of the warrior friezes). Many of the sheet friezes were gilded with gold. In comparison, the helmet found at Sutton Hoo in 1939, in the royal ship-burial, was silver. This and the rarity of the object point to a princely or even kingly status for its owner. There is still so much more to be discovered about this fascinating helmet and work continues.

## Pommel discovery

There are over seventy pommels (the part of the sword that fits at the end of a

sword-grip) in the hoard, but this newly constructed one is exceptional, marking a completely unique type. Conservation and research teams identified and reassembled it from 26 fragments. Although Anglo-Saxon in style, it also has British or Irish art influences. Its central garnet and glass inlaid disc can be seen to form an early Christian cross and on the other side is a motif formed of three serpents.

So both Christian and pagan beliefs may be represented. This incredible object, was also decorated with gold filigree (fine wire ornament), and inlaid with niello (a black inlay formed from copper, silver, and lead sulphides).

Most unusual is the rounded hump on the pommel's shoulder, known as a 'sword-ring' – there would have been two originally, one on each shoulder. Many swords from this period in England and Europe have such rings, but the hoard pommel is

the first to have had two. This, with its lavish ornament, points to it possibly belonging to an individual of significant status.

“The newly recognised pommel is truly exciting. It combines multiple different styles of ornament, much in the same way as the earliest 7th century illuminated manuscripts do, like the Book of Durrow. It suggests the coming together of Anglo-Saxon and British or Irish high cultures.”

The research has pieced together the fragments of this incredible hoard and casts new light on the Anglo-Saxon world. Two extremely significant objects have been reconstructed and are now on display at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

**Source:**

**Press Release: Secrets of Staffordshire Hoard Revealed**

*Reconstructions of Anglo-Saxon Helmets made by Andrew Pilkington for the exhibition of the Staffordshire Hoard © Andrew Pilkington*





*The Helmet from Sutton Hoo ©Trustees of the British Museum*

## NEW RESEARCH:

# The Helmets from Sutton Hoo and Vendel in Sweden

Detailed study of the wider contexts of the burials at Sutton Hoo and Vendel in Sweden – and not least the helmets – helps to redraw the map of 7th century Northern Europe

Since its discovery in 1939, the early seventh-century ship burial at Sutton Hoo has been compared to the ship-burials at Vendel and Valsgärde in Uppland, North of Stockholm. The presence of ships in the mounds, the weaponry and not least the enclosed helmets made the comparison an easy task. Since then the popular understanding has been that the cultural connections were a reflection of the fact that the Anglo-Saxons were immigrants from Scandinavia and that the king or chieftain in Sutton Hoo obviously wished to demonstrate his continued affinity to his Scandinavian - swedish - roots.

But how were the two grave ensembles linked? Were the finds at Sutton Hoo a derivative of the finds at Vendel and Valsgärde? Or was it the other way around? And why have no equivalent finds been made in Denmark and Southern Sweden, which in other contexts appear to have been important economic and military centres in the 7th century? And how may answers to these questions be linked to the understanding of Beowulf and vice-versa?

In a recent article, historian and archaeologist Alex Woolf from the University of St. Andrews, takes these age-old questions up for renewed reflection and evaluation. In so doing, he offers us a tantalising glimpse of a world much different from what the usual understanding purveys. At the same time he actually succeeds in presenting us with a view of the cultural connections across the North Sea and into the Baltic, which actually makes sense of the disparate sources and finds.



*The Helmet from Sutton Hoo ©Trustees of the British Museum and from Valsgärde @ Wikipedia/Sven Rosborn*



His approach is to list a number of facts, which are often forgotten:

- Apart from the armoury and the boats, the Sutton Hoo and Vendel/Valsgärde burials do not share the same groups of artefacts. The Sutton Hoo burial also contains gold Coins from Gaul, a Byzantine hanging Bowl etc. This is not the case with the Vendel Burials. Further the SH-ship is larger plus the armoury – and especially the helmet – shows better quality.
- Vendel was never a power-centre; neither in a regional or anachronistic national (Swedish) sense. It was to be precise, obviously located in the periphery right on the border of the boreal zone in the North, which was inhabited by the Sámi hunter-gatherers. Vendel was located in a frontier society. But so was Sutton Hoo also.
- Until the end of the 6th century both regions must be – as reflected in their burial practices – recognised as pioneer societies, characterised by communality and collaboration.
- However, early 7th century a plethora of burials and graves – in East Anglia as well as in Uppland – suddenly begins to demonstrate more complex societies through the deposition of social and economic markers in elaborately furnished graves. This, of course, peters out in the end of the 7th century in England, as the social complexity becomes more entrenched and Christianity begins to set its mark. In Vendel and later Valsgärde and Uppsala, the practice continues.

This explains why elaborate burials are



not found at the same time in Denmark, where investments seem to have been allocated elsewhere: to the building of huge halls at economic centres – Uppåkra, Lejre and Gudme-Lundeborg – and the constant building and reinforcement of defensive structures like the earliest Dannevirke (a wall constructed at the foot of Jutland from the late 5th century and onwards).

Alex Woolf does not at this point refer back to the important work on centres and peripheries, which was carried out by the Anthropologist, Jonathan Friedmann in the 1980's [1]. And which was a major inspiration for Lotte Hedeager, who was one of the first archaeologists to write about the geo-political landscape of the 7th century (and who Alex Woolf duly cites) [2].

However, it is pertinent to remember that this theoretical approach helped us to understand how “centres” usually downplays their “culture” and instead reposition themselves as “natural powers”, while the peripheries have to work “culturally” in order to demonstrate their significance. Hence the lack of spectacular 7th century graves in the Danish archipelago. It seems, there was no need for a king settled in the “centre of his world” = Lejre [3] to actually sacrifice a ship when being buried.

Alex Woolf writes that “In the late sixth and seventh centuries, Uppland and East Anglia lay at opposite ends of a cultural world, which had its centre in Skåne [Scania or the southern-most tip of present Sweden] and the Danish Islands, almost certainly the original homeland of the Germanic-speaking people, and, in precisely this period, the core area of the emerging North-Germanic or Scandinavian dialect grouping” (p. 11).

There is simply ample evidence for a



*Roman ridge helmet (Berkasovo I), early 4th century AD. Made of iron and sheathed in silver-gilt, it is decorated with glass gems. From the “Berkasovo treasure”, Muzej Vojvodine, Novi Sad (Serbia). Source: Wikipedia/Jebulon*

*Late Roman ridge helmet (Berkasovo-type), found at Deurne, Netherlands. It is covered in silver-gilt sheathing and is inscribed to a cavalryman of the equites stablesiani c. AD 320. Source: Wikipedia/Michiel*



centralised Danish Kingdom or at least a stable political and hegemonic power-structure at this time, located right in the middle of two “peripheries”, the Western coast of Sweden and the Eastern coast of England; which also – as it happens – help us to understand the localisation of the more memorable events in Beowulf in a Danish context, says Alex Woolf.

Finally Alex Woolf focus on the iconic helmets from Sutton Hoo and the burials in Vendel and Valsgärde; and which the finds in the Staffordshire Hoard are busy complementing. He begins by noticing that the helmets have their obvious roots in the parade helmets of the Late Roman Empire. However, the he proceeds to refer to the study by the archaeologist, Monica Akemede, who already in 1991 studied the helmets and the so-called pressbleche, they were covered with. Her conclusion was that the helmets from Sweden were in fact “relatively poor quality emulations” of the helmet found in Sutton Hoo; which however, according to Alex Woolf, cannot be considered the socio-economic and cultural centre of the North-Sea and Baltic late-iron-age “empire”. This centre was probably located in Denmark

The article is more than highly recommended!

## **Sutton Hoo and Sweden Revisited**

Alex Woolf

In: *The Long Seventh Century. Continuity and Discontinuity in an Age of Transition.* Ed by Alessandro Gnasso, Emanuele E. Intagliata, Thomas J. MacMaster and Bethan N. Morris.

Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford and Wien: Peter Lang 2015, pp. 5 – 18

## **Notes:**

[1] *Cultural Identity and Global Processes*

By: Jonathan Friedmann,  
Sage Publications 1994

[2] *Iron-Age Societies: from tribe to state in Northern Europe, 500 BC to AD 700*

By Lotte Hedeager  
Oxford: Blackwell 1992

[3] *Lejre beyond the Legend. The archaeological evidence.* By Tom Christensen.

In: *Siedlungs- und Küstenforschung in südlichen Nordseegebiet* 2010, Vol 33. pp. 237 – 254





© Oxfordshire Museum

NEW RESEARCH:

## The Hanney Brooch

The Hanney Brooch belongs to a small group of composite Anglo-Saxon brooches from mid-seventh century. New research argues the brooches witness to the important role of a group of women in the consolidation of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms

In 2009, a metal-detector find of a rare garnet-inlaid composite disc brooch at West Hanney, Oxfordshire, led to the excavation of an apparently isolated female burial sited in a prominent position overlooking the Ock valley. The burial dates to the middle decades of the seventh century, a period of rapid socio-political development in a region, which formed the early heartland of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex. The Hanney Brooch belongs to a select

group of 19 other composite disc brooches of which 13 have been found in Anglo-Saxon graves in Kent. They constitute an elaborate form of the more ordinary disc brooches, which were widely worn as an emulation of Frankish fashion. The Hanney burial as well as the brooch is presented in detail in a recent article.

The de luxe brooch links the wearer to two other burials furnished with very similar brooches at Milton, some 10km to the east and only c 1km from the Anglo-Saxon great hall complex at Sutton Courtenay / Drayton, just south of Abingdon. All three brooches were recently treated to a full composition analysis and CT-scan. This documented the likelihood of the three brooches having been made in the same workshop and – perhaps – with copper alloy from the same source.

In the article it is argued that all three women must have been members of the region's politically dominant group, known as the Gewisse. The burial's grave goods and setting add a new dimension to our understanding of the richly furnished female burials that are such a prominent feature of the funerary record of seventh-century England and which was prominent at the same time as Anglo-Saxon women were seen to play significant roles as both landowners as well as managers in the new large monastic institutions.

The article is an important presentation of the Hanney burial and its context.

## SOURCE:

### **A High Status Seventh-Century Female Burial, West Hanney, Oxfordshire**

By Helena Hamerow et al.

In: *The Antiquaries Journal*. Published online: 04 March 2015

*The Antiquaries Journal* / FirstView Article © The Society of Antiquaries of London 2015

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003581514000742>.

*The Milton Brooch. © V & A Images*



Conference:

## Saxo Grammaticus in the 21st Century

The Danish Historian from the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Saxo Grammaticus, is the first author to give a full account of Hamlet, corresponding surprisingly closely with Shakespeare's play. For the first time his full history has been translated into English. The event is marked by a Conference

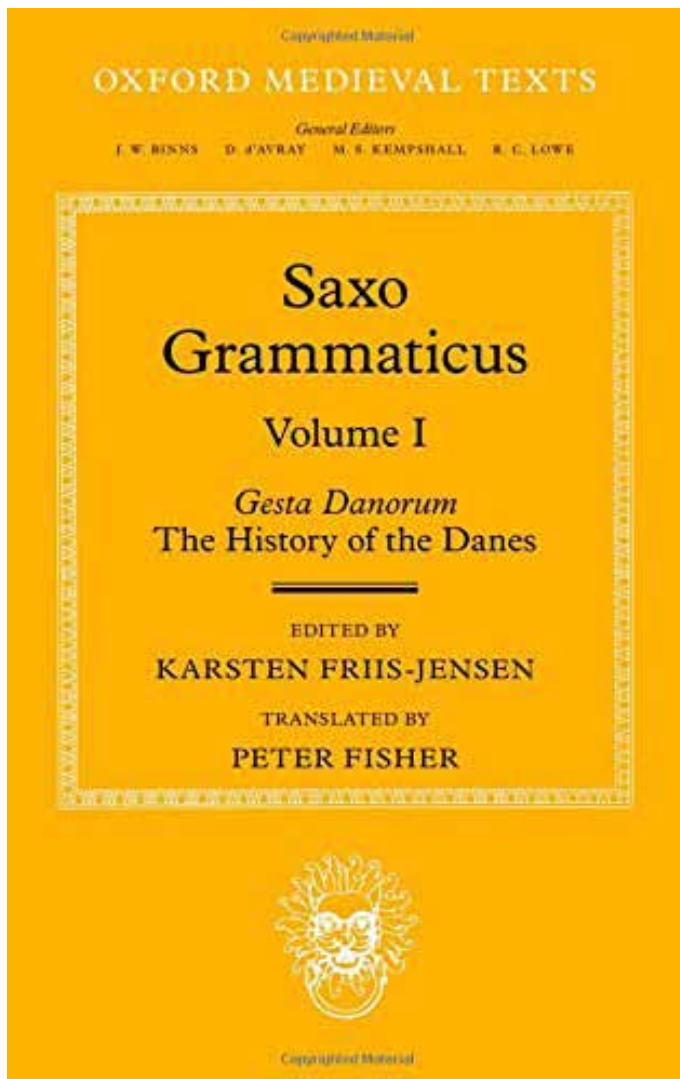
Saxo was probably a canon of Lund Cathedral and lived from c. 1160 -1208 He was in the service of Archbishop Absalon, who encouraged him to write a history of his

own country from the beginning up to his own time, but with a strong Christian bias.

Starting with the myths and heroic tales of primitive Scandinavia, he devoted the first nine of his sixteen books to legendary material before dealing with the first kings of the Viking age and finishing, after having related the early exploits of King Cnut Valdemarsson (1182 - 1202). The activities of the Danish kings were intimately bound up with the monarchies of Norway and Sweden; Cnut the Great, one of Saxo's heroes, whose empire stretched as far as Britain and Iceland, was ruler of both these countries. In the last books Saxo was particularly concerned with describing the campaigns of Valdemar the Great and his warrior archbishop, Absalon, against the Wends of North Germany.

The work is a prosimetrum, that is, in six of the first nine books he inserts poems in Latin metres, which are intended to parallel verses of old Danish heroic poetry. Saxo's Latin prose style is often complex, based as it is on models like Valerius Maximus and Martianus Capella, but he is a lively and compelling story-teller, often displaying a rather sly sense of humour, and an interest in the supernatural. He is the first author to give a full account of Hamlet, whose adventures he relates at some length, the elements of which in a great many respects correspond surprisingly closely with the characters and incidents of Shakespeare's play.

For the first time the work of Saxo Grammaticus has been completely translated into English. This translation is now published in a parallel edition together with



a scholarly Latin text of Saxo Grammaticus. Thus, this important text is made available for a new generations of medieval historians.

### Saxo Grammaticus:

Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes I - II

Edited by Karsten Friis-Jensen and Peter Fisher

Series: Oxford Medieval Texts  
Oxford University Press 2015

## Conference

### Saxo Grammaticus in the 21st Century

On the occasion of K.Friis-Jensen and P. Fischer's new edition and translation (Oxford Medieval Texts 2015)

The Noble Women's Convent, Albani Torv, Odense 22.06.2015

10:00-10:15: Welcome

10:15-11:00: Peter Fischer (Cambridge)

"The New Edition and Translation of Saxo"

11:00-11:30: Michael Gelting (Copenhagen) "Saxo Grammaticus in the Archives"

12:00-12:30: Mia Münster Swendsen (Roskilde) "Saxo and Sven Aggesen"

12:30-13:00: Per Andersen (Aarhus) "Saxo's Legal Thought - a Research Status"

14:00-14:30: Sverre Bagge (Bergen) "Saxo's Norwegian Narrative (c. 1150-1170)"

14:30-15:00: Björn Weiler (Aberystwyth) "Saxo as an International Author - in the 13th and the 21st Century"

15:30-16:00: Peter Zeeberg (Copenhagen) "Saxo Translations - into Danish and English"

16:00-16:30: Lars Boje Mortensen (SDU) "Which roles will Saxo play in Emerging Non-national Literary Histories?"

16:30-17:00: Thomas Heebøll-Holm (SDU) "Saxo Grammaticus and English Twelfth-Century Historiography Revisited"

For additional information and free admission please contact

Charlotte Thorup: thorup@sdu.dk

*The Angers Fragment is believed to be part of the original manuscript of Saxo's. It was found in France in the 19th century and is believed to have been brought to Paris in connection with the first printing of Saxo's Chronicle in 1514. Source: Public Domain/Wikipedia.*





The specific rendering of the motive “Mary and Joseph at the Inn”, has been found in at least 8 different versions in illuminated Late Medieval manuscripts from Flanders. The two above stem from:  
 1) Mayer van den Bergh Brevier, Maximilian Master ca. 1500 – 1510. Antwerpen Museum, Mayer van den Bergh, inv. 946, fol. 158v  
 2) Vostre Demeure Hours. Close associate of the Vienna Master of Mary of Burgundy ca. 1470 – 1473. Madrid, BN MS Vitr. 25-5

## NEW BOOK:

# Artistic Patterns in Late Medieval Manuscripts

### Re-Inventing Traditions. On the Transmission of Artistic Patterns in Late Medieval Manuscript Illumination

Ed. by Joris Corin Heyder and Christine Seidel

Series: Zivilisationen & Geschichte / Civilizations & History / Civilisations & Histoire – Volume 34

Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang 2015  
 ISBN 978-3-631-65907-6 hb.

### ABSTRACT:

The volume comprises 16 papers given at the conference Re-Inventing Traditions held in Berlin in 2012. It negotiates the question of the transmission of artistic patterns in late medieval manuscript illumination. The model as such is often regarded as a mere working tool but recently the conditions of its creation and transformation have been discovered as a field of research. Among the central themes of

these essays are textual tradition, workshop methods and the development and changeability of artistic models throughout different media and in various European regions.

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- Natasa Golob: Floral Borders: Some comparative aspects
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- Brigitte Roux : Du multiple à l'unique : le cas du livre d'heures de Philibert de Viry (Genève, BGE, lat. 367).

## ABOUT THE EDITORS:

Joris Corin Heyder holds a scholarship of the Gerda Henkel Foundation and works on his PhD at the Freie Universität Berlin. Christine Seidel got her PhD at the Freie Universität Berlin and was Silvia Foundation Interdisciplinary Fellow at the Alan B. Slifka Foundation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



### *Re-Inventing Traditions*

On the Transmission of Artistic Patterns in Late Medieval Manuscript Illumination

Joris Corin Heyder/Christine Seidel (eds.)

PETER LANG  
EDITION





*Poor Sisters of Clare . San Damiano near Assisi. Source: Wikipedia/Gunnar Bach Petersen*

## NEW BOOK:

# Women in the Medieval Monastic World

## **Women in the Medieval Monastic World**

Ed. by J. Burton and K. Stöber

Series: Medieval Monastic Studies (MMS 1)  
Brepols 2015 (June)

## ABSTRACT:

women in the medieval monastic world  
CoverThere has long been a tendency among monastic historians to ignore or marginalize female participation in monastic life, but recent scholarship has begun to redress the balance, and the great contributions made by women to the religious life of the Middle Ages are now attracting increasing attention. This interdisciplinary volume draws together scholars from Spain, Italy, France, the Low Countries, Germany, Transylvania, Scandi-

navia, and the British Isles, and offers new insights into the history, art history, and material culture, and the religiosity and culture of medieval religious women.

The different chapters within this book take a comparative approach to the emergence and spread of female monastic communities across different geographical, political, and economic settings, comparing and contrasting houses that ranged from rich, powerful royal abbeys to small, subsistence priories on the margins of society, and exploring the artistic achievements, the interaction with neighbours and secular and ecclesiastical authorities, and the spiritual lives that were led by their inhabitants. The contributors to this volume address issues as diverse as pa-

tronage and relationships with the outside world, organizational structures, the nature of Cistercian observance and identity among female houses, and the role of male authority.

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the End of the Middle Ages, by Michael Carter

- Neither Male nor Female in Christ: Gender, Space and Cistercian Nunneries in Thirteenth-Century Flanders, by Erin Jordan
- The Symbolic Meaning of Space in Female Monastic Tradition, by Anne Müller
- The Location of the Choir in German Nunnery Churches, by Matthias Untermann
- FemMoData – A Database on Medieval Female Monasteries in Europe, by Hedwig Röckelein

## ABOUT THE EDITORS:

Janet Burton is Professor of Medieval History at The University of Wales

Karen Stöber is a Lecturer in Medieval History at the University of Lleida, Spain.

