

# Medieval News



March 2016 No. 3

French Spectacles...

# Charade Surrounding Return of Joan of Arc Ring

A ring, purported to have belonged to Joan of Arc that was sold at auction last month for \$412,845, is now back in France. Its new home is the Puy du Fou theme park in the Vendée region of Western France where the ring was unveiled with great pomp on Sunday by the park founder, Philippe de Villiers, before a cheering crowd of nationalist Frenchmen.

It now appears that the ring was unlawfully brought to France. When the auctioneers gave the ring to the lawyers, representing de Villiers, they informed them that an export license would have to be secured before the ring could leave the country. Such a license was not procured. Instead, the ring was apparently whisked away.

According to de Villiers, the ring belongs in France. In a very defiant speech held at the unveiling he said that he had no intention of returning the ring, illegally exported or not. "The British government has sent our lawyer an unprecedented demand: the return of the ring to London. Is the ring perhaps part of England's national heritage?" he asked the booing crowd. Apparently – even if the European Court decides in favour of the English claim – the ring will not be returned.

The fact, though, is that the ring is in all probability a fake. Although an Oxford University laboratory has dated the ring to the 15th century based on its style, wear and engraving, the long track record of the history of ownership is entirely speculative.



To this curious controversy the socialists in France have added by raising a formal complaint concerning the guard of honour, which General Marc Paitier led the cadets of Saint-Cyr to form at the spectacle, at which the ring was "returned".

The École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr (ESM, literally the "Special Military School of Saint-Cyr") is the foremost French military academy.

Read the full story in this issue of Medieval News...

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## Medieval News

- read about new exhibitions,  
books, research and much more

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## Photo (frontpage):

Joan of Arc. Archives nationales  
France. Source: Wikipedia

Photos are to the best of our  
ability either published by per-  
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@ Puy du Fou

## Joan of Arc's Ring a Stage Prop at Puy du Fou

Recently the Puy du Fou foundation, which runs a historical theme park in Western France, bought the alleged authentic ring of Joan of Arc. The intention is to exhibit the relic in a specially dedicated house in the midst of the grand spectacles characteristic of the place.

A ring, which matches a description of a trinket given to Joan of Arc by her parents, recently went up for sale at Timeline Auctions.

The ring has a silver-gilt hoop with faceted outer face, expanding shoulders and two rectangular and angled fields to the bezel; the hoop shows incised niello-filled florid lozenges and triangles, while the design giving the appearance of three crosses, the ends of the shoulders with blackletter 'I' and 'M' (for 'Jesus Maria'), the lateral faces with blackletter 'IHS' and 'MAR' (as abbreviations for Jesus and Maria); a small

section inserted later to the hoop, was possibly done to enlarge it from a band suitable for a small, feminine finger to a larger male(?) hand; the degree of wear generally evident to the ring, including to the hoop insert, suggests an extended period of wear, long after the date of making, perhaps indicative of the ring's appeal as a talisman.

The ring is contained in an antique, small oak casket in the form of an architectural reliquary with pitched and hipped lid, the ridge surmounted by a plain cross in iron, the box red velvet-lined, with a removable



rectangular holder (the compartment beneath possibly having once held a small document or label), arranged to display the bezel and purpose-made to hold the ring, indicating the reverence in which the ring was already held when the box was made for it; the ring is very unusual in that the vast majority of rings with angled rectangular bezels have them engraved with pictures of saints rather than being inscribed (generally termed as iconographic rings); inscriptions on such rings are normally on the hoop part.

## Provenience

Its connection to Joan has been documented for more than a century. According to Timeline Auctions, the ring was offered for sale by the son of James Hasson, a French doctor who came to the UK with General de Gaulle in World War Two. The doctor himself had bought the ring at auction in 1947 for £175. who inherited it 1979 from Dr James Hasson of Harley Street, London. He acquired it at Sotheby's sale, 1 April 1947, lot 37. In the beginning of the

"Asked if on the crowned heads there were not rings of gold or other substance, she answered: "I do not know." Asked if she herself did not have some rings, she replied to us, bishop: "You have one of mine; give it back to me." She said the Burgundians have another ring; and she asked us, if we had her ring, to show it to her. Asked who gave her the ring which the Burgundians had, she answered her father or her mother; and she thought the names Jhesus Maria were written thereon; she did not know who had them written; she did not think there was any stone in it; and she was given the ring at Domrémy. She said that her brother gave her the other ring, which we had and she charged us to give it to the Church. She said she never cured any one with any of her rings

...Asked of what substance one of her rings was, on which the words Jhesus Maria were written, she answered that she did not properly know; and if it was of gold, it was not of fine gold; and she did not know whether it was of gold or brass; she thought there were three crosses, and to her knowledge no other signs save the words Jhesus Maria. Asked why she gladly looked at this ring when she was going to battle, she answered that it was out of pleasure, and in honour of her father and mother; and having her ring in her hand and on her finger she touched St. Catherine who appeared before her..."

From: Barrett, P. W., Trial of Joan of Arc, New York, 1932 (first English translation of the trial texts).

20th century it belonged to Lady Ottoline Morrell, who was descended through the Cavendish-Bentinck family (Duke of Portland) from Cardinal Henry Beaufort (1375-1447). Beaufort was present at the trial and execution of Joan of Arc in 1431.

The ring comes with a positive X-Ray Fluorescence metal analysis certificate, and an Oxford University laboratory has dated the ring to the 15th century based on its style, wear and engraving,

## Background

After Joan of Arc had been captured, she was effectively sold to the English, who moved her to Rouen and there tried her for heresy with her wearing male clothing being a major point and her 'relapse' in this regard being the final straw in her indictment. Another issue was the extent to which she had used the rings, she wore, as instruments for bewitching people in

her surroundings. Having being held guilty of this charge by an English dominated ecclesiastical court (Trial of Condemnation), she was burned at the stake 30 May 1431. Much about her and her trial (Trial of Condemnation) is controversial and another court (Trial of Rehabilitation) pronounced her innocent in 1456; since she has been a French icon par excellence; she was beatified in 1909, canonised in 1920 and, in 1922, she was declared to be a Patroness of France; she is perhaps the most studied and written about woman of the medieval period; no doubt due in part to the great extent of contemporary documents and records that have survived.

Cardinal Henry Beaufort (1375-1447) was one of the sons of John of Gaunt and uncle to Henry V. He was present during the heresy trial and at the execution of Joan of Arc. As the senior churchman present he conducted at least one interview in person with Joan.



It is worth noting that the Condemnation trial documents were not published (in France) before 1849 and that the first English translation was not published until 1932. Prior to these publications, the only access to the original documents would have been in the archives in Paris and, as the association between this ring and Joan of Arc was published at least as early as 1917, the connection appears to have been made before any details of Joan's description of her rings would have been generally known.

## A Fake?

Nevertheless, the authenticity of the ring has been severely questioned. The long track record of the history of ownership is entirely speculative. It's based solely on the fact that the owner in 1914, Lady Ottoline Morrell, could trace her ancestry back to Cardinal Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, who was present at the trial and execution of Joan of Arc. There are no references in archives

or histories that mention the ring being owned by anyone in the family at any time between 1431 and when it first appears on the historical record in 1914.

Based on this historians advised both the city of Orleans and Joan of Arc Historical Exhibition in Rouen not to bid for the ring. Among those historians figure the medievalist Phillippe Contamine, who is a member of the Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres, and professor emeritus at the University of Paris-Sorbonne as well as former director of the Centre Jeanne-d'Arc d'Orléans. He is also the author of the most comprehensive biography and dictionary about Joan of Arc. It is presumably on his advice that the ring was not acquired by the new Joan of Arc museum in Rouen.

## Puy du Fou

The auctioneer initially estimated its value at between £10,000 and £14,000 (\$14,000 and \$20,000) – but it sold for almost 30 times that amount, £297,600.00 to the Puy du Fou Foundation.

*Jeanne d'Arc flanked by cadets from Saint-Cyr @ Institut Iliade*





The Puy du Fou foundation runs a historical theme park, which covers an area of 57 acres and presents a series of themed locations reaching from a Gallo Roman Villa to the battlefield at Verdun. At each of these locations, visitors are offered major and minor shows, telling dramatic stories as open-air theatre. At the centre is the rebuilt Renaissance castle, which the group acquired in 1977 and used as a setting for a local re-enactment group. The park is filled with restaurants, lodgings, shops and craftsmen and leads the visitor through the history of France from Roman times and up into the 20th century. Puy du Fou, even though it is located far from Paris in the heart of the Vendée region of Western France, brings in some 2 million visitors every year, making it the fourth most popular attraction in France after Disneyland Paris.

Puy de Fou was founded by Philippe de Villiers, the right-wing leader of the Movement for France party. As a local politician, he ran the Vendée département for over 20 years, and represents his own brand of Catholic, traditionalist, nationalist, anti-immigration, eurosceptic politics. Although his political career has waned – he ran for French president in 2007 and won 2% of the vote and has dismissed the European Parliament as a worthy venue

– he still promotes Puy du Fou across the world. Despite of the sanctions, he met in 2014 he met with Vladimir Putin in Crimea, signing a contract to create to Puy de Fou theme parks in Moscow and at Crimea.

## Illegal Export?

It now appears that the ring was unlawfully brought to France. When the auctioneers gave the ring to the lawyers, representing de Villiers, they informed them that an export license would have to be secured before the ring could leave the country. Any antiquity worth more than £39,219 and that has been in the UK for more than 50 years requires a special export license issued by the Ministry of Culture. Such licenses are only issued after the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA) gives the Minister its recommendation, and in the case of this ring, it's highly unlikely that they would have let it walk away without temporarily blocking export to give British institutions the chance to raise the purchase price and keep it in the country.

## Parade or Charade?

During Easter, the ring was nevertheless formally brought to Puy du Fou and paraded through the theme park before being lodged in its new “home”, an especially erected “shrine” for what is destined to become a Holy French Relic of the 21st century.

According to de Villiers, the ring belongs in France. In a very defiant speech held at the unveiling he said that he had no intention of returning the ring, illegally exported or not. “The British government has sent our

lawyer an unprecedented demand: the return of the ring to London. Is the ring perhaps part of England's national heritage?" he asked the booing crowd. Apparently – even if the European Court decides in favour of the English claim – "the ring will not be returned", he claimed.

## Socialist Uproar

To make matters even more controversial, the parade was accompanied by a Guard of Honour formed by the Cadets of Saint-Cyr under the command of General Marc Paitier.

The École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr (ESM, literally the "Special Military School of Saint-Cyr") is the foremost French military academy. It is often referred to as Saint-Cyr. Its motto is "Ils s'instruisent pour vaincre": literally "They Study to Vanquish" or "Training for Victory". French cadet officers are called "saint-cyriens", or "cyrards". The use of the Cadets at the parade has naturally bristled the Socialists in

the French government and a formal complaint has been filed.

It seems that not only did the presumably fake ring find its new home in a historical phantasy park. It was laid to rest there at a semi-religious event guarded by real soldiers taking part in a medieval reenactment!

## SOURCES:

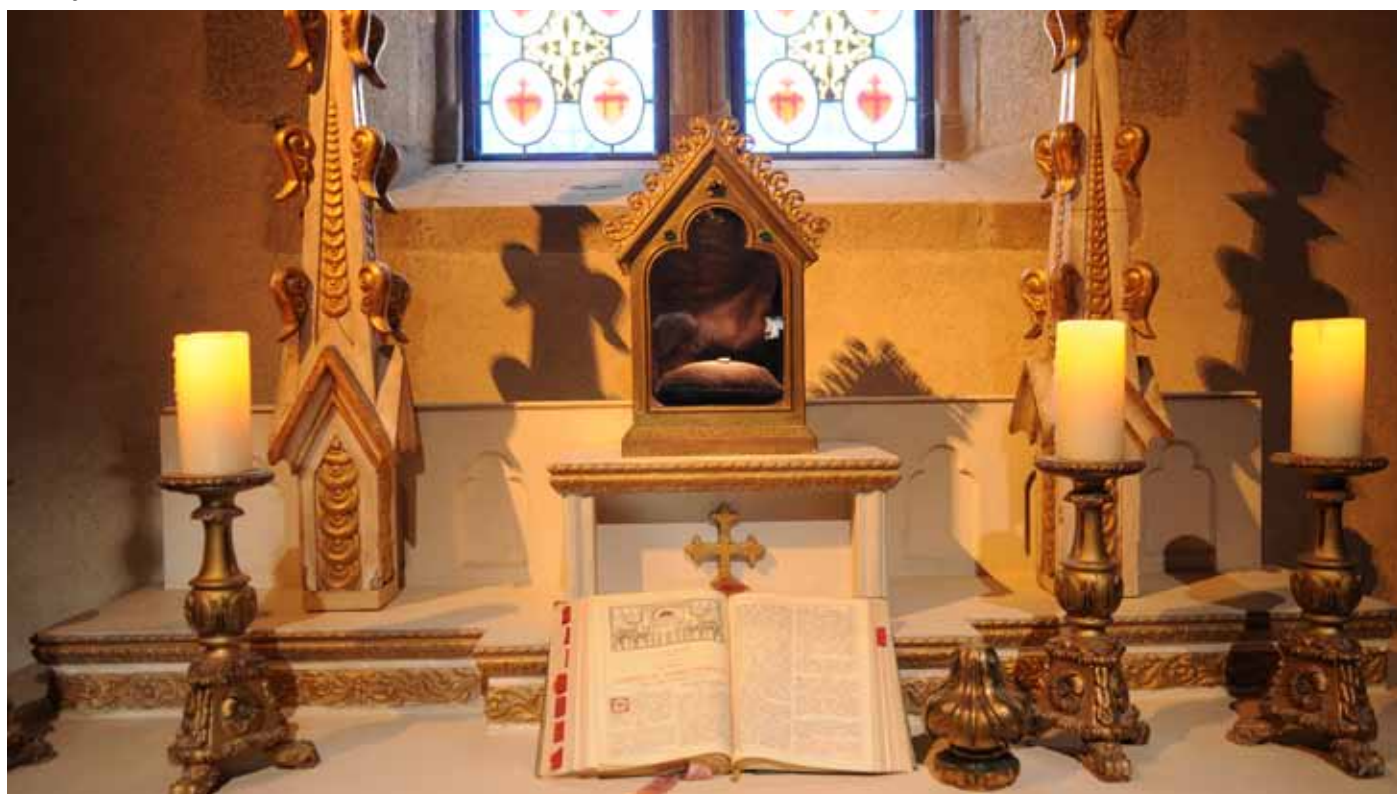
**Medieval Joan of Arc Devotional Ring with Casket and Documents - Timeline Auctions**

**Comment Philippe de Villiers récupère le mythe de Jeanne d'Arc - Le Monde**

**Un historien s'interroge sur l'origine de l'anneau de Jeanne d'Arc - Le Figaro**

**Hands off, it's ours: French buyer refuses to return Joan of Arc ring to UK - The Art Newspaper**

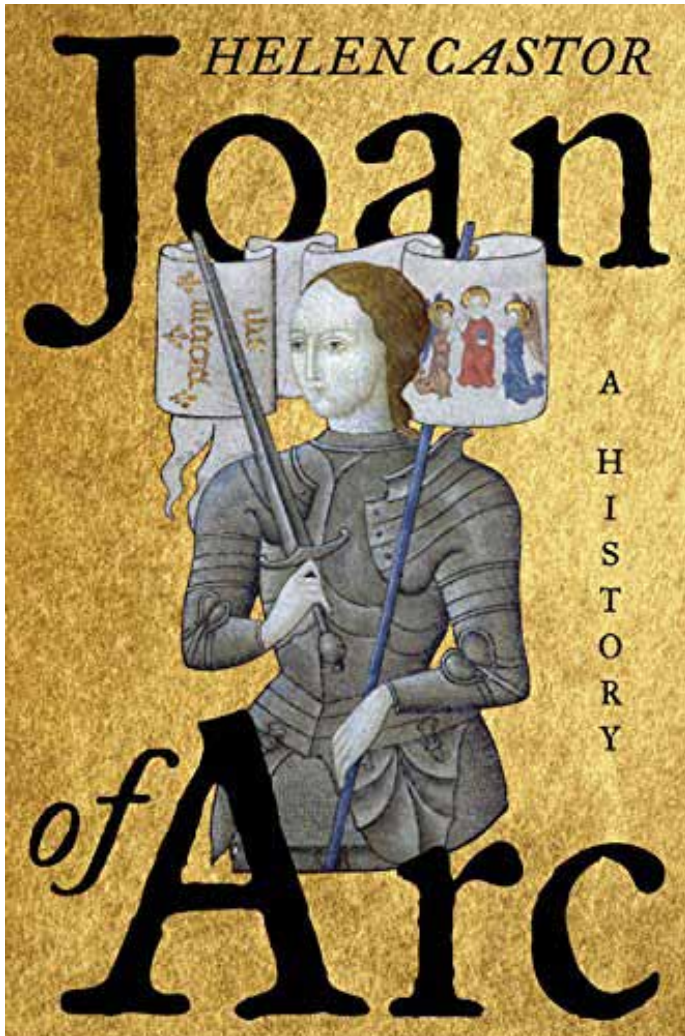
@ Puy du Fou





READ MORE:

# Joan of Arc - Where to Begin...



## **Joan of Arc – A History**

By Helen Castor

Faber & Faber 2014

ISBN-10: 0571284620

ISBN-13: 978-0571284627

Helen Castor tells afresh the gripping story of the peasant girl from Domremy who hears voices from God, leads the French army to victory, is burned at the stake for heresy, and eventually becomes a saint. But unlike the traditional narrative, a story already shaped by the knowledge of what Joan would become and told in hindsight,

Castor's *Joan of Arc: A History* takes us back to fifteenth century France and tells the story forwards. Instead of an icon, she gives us a living, breathing woman confronting the challenges of faith and doubt, a roaring girl who, in fighting the English, was also taking sides in a bloody civil war. We meet this extraordinary girl amid the tumultuous events of her extraordinary world where no one—not Joan herself, nor the people around her—princes, bishops, soldiers, or peasants—knew what would happen next.

Adding complexity, depth, and fresh insight into Joan's life, and placing her actions in the context of the larger political and religious conflicts of fifteenth century France, *Joan of Arc: A History* is history at its finest and a surprising new portrait of this remarkable woman.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Helen Castor is an English historian of the medieval period and a BBC broadcaster.

## **READ A REVIEW:**

### **Joan of Arc by Helen Castor – a triumph of history**

There have been many lives of the saint, but none quite like this masterly narrative drawing on strictly contemporary sources, writes Janet Nelson in this review

## **Jeanne d'Arc. Histoire et Dictionnaire.**

By Philippe Contamine, Xavier H  lary  
and Olivier Bouzy

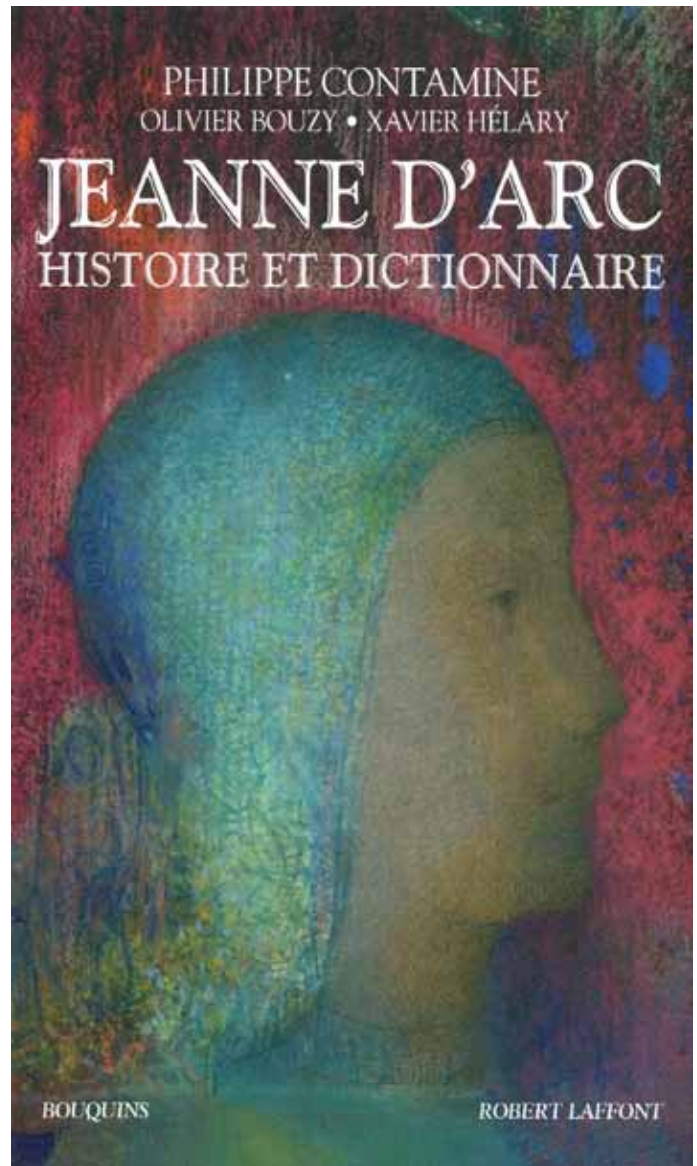
  diteur : Robert Laffont 2012

ISBN : 2221109295

After so many historical and literary writings about Joan of Arc a recent French publication reaching more than 1200 pages presents the history and the many stories and legends with a multi-faceted approach. Here no simple or ready-made answers are offered.

Thus, this book restores the complex physical and mental environment in which the phenomenon of Joan of Arc rose - a tightly woven fabric of misery and hope, where the "mystery of vocation" was followed by a brief period of glory at Orleans and in Reims, and later followed by failures, incomprehension, imprisonment, trial and death by fire.

Obviously, Joan of Arc upset the political calculations and projects of her contemporaries in a century where people universally believed in God's intervention; politics turned into theology. This is the foundation of the trial of Joan of Arc, illustrated by two major documents that have been preserved: one relating to the conviction (1431), which is the most moving, and that concerning the reversal (1455-1456),



which is the most surprising.

Hence the fate of Joan of Arc was immediately understood as being linked to the providential history of the Kingdom of France, while at the same time arousing both admiration, skepticism and mockery.





VISIT:

## Joan of Arc Museum at Rouen

In Rouen a Joan of Arc Installation has been set up to surpass Madame Tussauds and turn her into a digitized saint.

Joan of Arc was tried and burned at the stake in Rouen. Afterwards her ashes were spread in the river to avoid pilgrimages and secret veneration. As is well known this did not hinder her afterlife as the French Saint par excellence.

Today, though, she is also the tourist-beacon for the city of Rouen. No wonder the city together with the Archdiocese some years ago decided to build a new museum, commemorating her life, death and afterlife. But as should be expected the new museum is filled with a typical French mixture of Son-et-Lumière, garish video-shows and 3D-mapping; in short, turning the new museum into a digital triumph and in itself a piece of installation art.

The primary feature is an audioguide, which accompany visitors on the 1 h 15 m long tour around the palace. The story is narrated in the “voice of Jeanne” (Jean Juvenal) and guides the person on virtual pilgrimage from Domremy through Chinon, Orléans and Poitiers for finally to turn up in Rouen. The tour ends with a pre-

sentation of the many myths, which were created afterwards by shifting political factions in France.

The museum also exhibits a large collection of the typical bric-a-brac, which the saint has given the impetus to over very many years, where she has been used to market anything from brie to perfume, complete with a slight wife of smoke.

The exhibition is housed in parts of the former palace of the Archbishop, in itself a marvelous piece of Medieval cum Baroque architecture. Bombed in WW2 it stands partially naked against the sky. This was the site, where she was tried, condemned and in front of which, she was burned. For the first time, the 18th century chapel and the beautiful gigantic state hall has been opened to the public in general.

VISIT:

**Historial Jeanne d'Arc**

7, rue Saint-Romain  
76000 Rouen

# Domremy-La-Pucelle - Birth Place of Joan of Arc

The house, which is known as the birthplace of Joan of Arc, was recognised as such early on in the 15th century and soon became a focus for pilgrimages and tourists. A famous visit was thus undertaken by Michel de Montaigne in 1580 when he inspected the place (see above). In 1586 the present house was named “the House of the Virgin” in a deed and there is no doubt the location is correct. According to contemporary descriptions the house was located next to the cemetery and surrounded by other houses.

The rear part of Joan of Arc’s house includes part of the original house. Joan was born there in January 1412. Her father was a well-off peasant - who rented part of the old chateau.

The house continued to be in the possession of her family until 1586, when it was bought by Louise de Stainville, Comtesse de Salm. In 1818 it was bought by the re-

We passed along the river Meuse and came three leagues from Vaucouleurs to a village calle Domremy-sur Meuse, where the famous maid of Orleans, who was called Jane Day or Dallis was born. Her descendants were ennobled by the king’s favour and we were shown the coat of arms, which the king had presented her with, which was blue with a crowned sword and two crowns to either side ... the front of the house, where she was born, was painted all over with the stories of her achievements. However, age had corrupted these murals. There is also a tree along a vineyard, which is called the tree of the Maid; else there is nothing else to notice.

From : Journal de voyage de Michel de Montaigne, 1580, ed. by F. Rigolot. Paris 1992 (My translation)



gional administration and in 1840 it was formally recognized as National Heritage in 1840. At this point the surrounding buildings were torn down. Later, a visitor centre was erected next to it.

As it stands today, the house is reminiscent of a major reconstruction, which took place in the late 15th century after the family and the village were granted royal privileges in commemoration of the achievements of Joan of Arc. However, the building has never been comprehensively studied and still awaits a proper archaeological investigation. An important issue would be to discern the layers of reconstruction and conservation, which has taken place over the centuries. Further, as other medieval rural buildings are partly preserved in the Vosges a comparative exploration should be fruitful.

Domremy is first listed in AD 1070 with livestock being the main income. Of the 864 ha, forest covered more than half and it is obvious pastoral economy and wool was primary. Only 26 ha were dedicated to winegrowing. The chapel, where Joan of Arc went to pray, lay there. This site is now



dominated by the Basilica Sainte-Jeanne d'Arc.

### VISIT:

**Domrémy-la-Pucelle**, Lorraine, Department of the Vosges

### SOURCES:

**Revisiter la maison natale de Jeanne d'Arc à Domremy**

By Ivan Ferrarresso,  
In: De Domremy... à Tokyo, Jeanne d'Arc et la Lorraine, Archéologie, espaces et patrimoines, PUN - Edition Universitaires de Lorraine, Nancy, p. 45-62.



## NEW RESEARCH:

# Was Joan of Arc Epileptic- or Just a Saint?

From the age of thirteen, Joan of Arc experienced frequent episodes of auditory and visual hallucinations. Did she suffer from epilepsy? Or just a Saint?

### Joan of Arc: Sanctity, Witchcraft or Epilepsy?

By N. Nicastro and F. Picard  
In: *Epilepsy & Behavior* 2016

From the age of thirteen, Joan of Arc experienced frequent episodes of auditory hallucinations associated with elementary or complex visual hallucinations (e.g., a great light or human faces). These had sudden onset, lasting seconds or minutes at most, and occurred when awake or during sleep, arousing her. Some could be triggered by an auditory stimulus. Thus describes two neurologists the condition of Joan of Arc in a new and very thorough article published in a Special Issue of "Epilepsy and Behavior" entitled "Epilepsy, Art, and Creativity".

One of the many hypotheses, which have been circulating, was that Joan of Arc suffered from a psychiatric illness, especially schizophrenia. However, most specialists find this explanation dubious, as she had no disorganized thought between the episodes. Also, the fact that she experienced the voices as starting from the outside, points in this direction; schizophrenic patients usually experience the voices as playing out in the inside.

In a recent article, two neurologists claim that the semiology of the episodes is more suggestive of epileptic seizures, which have been considered as ecstatic by some



*Epileptic sufferer or Maid on a Mission?*  
Joan of Arc, Ink sketch by Clement de Fauquem-  
bergue from Protocol of the parliament of Paris,  
1429, France, 15th century. Source: Wikipedia

authors or as partial epilepsy with audi-  
tory features by others.

The descriptions of her religious experi-  
ences as they were rendered in the reports



*The Passion of Joan of Arc. Maria Falconetti in the film of Th. Dreyer. Source: Wikipedia*

from her trial of condemnation seems to point in this direction; according to these her experiences took place at the borderline between sleep and awakening and were mostly of a positive content.

The authors argue that the auditory and visual hallucinations could have gained a religious content as she was manifestly brought up in a religious environment during her childhood and adolescence. This led her to interpret her hallucinations as sacred communications, which gave her a sense of her divine mission, hence, a real strength to try to accomplish the orders she heard during the episodes. "Being educated in a particular cultural or religious context can modulate or influence the content of hallucinations", writes Nicastro and Picard, and points to the stories of well-known epileptics like Caesar, St. Paul, and Bonaparte. "It is possible that some political leaders, saints, and artists, who have made great achievements suffered from a medical condition that could have played a major role in the perception of the world they lived in and of the shape they wanted it to take", they conclude.

As is well known, her role during the Hundred Years' War and her narration of her strange episodes led her to be burned for heresy at the age of nineteen. 25 years later, she was rehabilitated. In 1920, she was canonized.

The authors are naturally keen to point out that the diagnosis is based on her own description of her symptoms, as these were reported by the Inquisition, and that no firm medical conclusion can be reached.

What they do not discuss in their article are the arguments, which may be raised against the hypothesis, some of which are of a clinical nature. These are outlined in a "comment" written by Joseph Kamtchum-Tatuene and Yannick Fogang in the same issue. They write that the number of auditory "events", which she recorded were far more frequent than should be expected, if she suffered from epilepsy. Also, she never claimed that they happened during sleep or that they manifested themselves as "incoherent" (which is how such sensations normally present themselves). In a reply Nicastro and Picard debates these

comments and brings new evidence to the table.

However, none of the authors debate to what extent the so-called “hallucinations” of Joan of Arc might in fact better be understood as “religious experiences” induced through meditational prayer; a phenomenon which has been heavily studied by psychologists and cognitive scientists and widely published. In a pertinent article (not quoted by Nicastro and Picard) Cottam et al recently compared the experiences of three different voice hearing groups, which comprised: 20 mentally healthy Christians, 15 Christian patients with psychosis, and 14 nonreligious patients with psychosis. According to their review of the phenomena, a number of surveys of the general population indicate that between 10 and 25% have had hallucinatory experiences at least once in their lifetime - without suffering from any psychiatric condition at all.

Perhaps Joan of Arc was after all just a saintly character!

## SOURCE:

### **Joan of Arc: Sanctity, Witchcraft or Epilepsy?**

By N. Nicastro and F. Picard  
In: *Epilepsy & Behavior* 2016

### **Comment on “Joan of Arc: Sanctity, witchcraft or epilepsy?”**

By Joseph Kamtchun-Tatuene and Yannick Fogang  
In: *Epilepsy & Behavior* 2016

### **Reply to Kamtchun-Tatuene and Fogang**

By N. Nicastro and F. Picard  
In: *Epilepsy & Behavior* 2016

The articles are part of a Special Issue entitled “Epilepsy, Art, and Creativity”.

## READ MORE:

### **Does religious belief enable positive interpretation of auditory hallucinations? A comparison of religious voice hearers with and without psychosis**

S. Cottam, S. N. Paul, O. J. Doughty, L. Carpenter, A. Al-Mousawi, S. Karvounis & D. J. Done

In: *Cognitive Neuropsychiatry*, Volume 16, Issue 5, 2011 pp. 403-421

*Joan of Arc listening to her voices. By François Rude. Louvre. Source: Wikipedia/ Marie-Lan Nguyen*





Oldest Viking Crucifix from Denmark...



## Christ from Aunslev – Denmark's oldest Crucifix

Some time around 900 a Danish Viking woman went for a walk in the fields near Aunslev on the Island of Funen and lost a very precious piece of jewellery: a viking crucifix. The pendant may witness to an early presence of Christianity in Denmark

Last Friday an amateur metal detectorist in Denmark literally struck gold. Dennis Fabricius Holm had found a unique golden pendant measuring 4.1 cm and weighing app 13.2 gr. With a smooth back and an eye on the top, it is obvious the item was meant to be worn as part of a necklace. The figure is made of fine articulated gold threads and filigree.

The cross is very similar to the famous gilded silver cross found in Birka near Stockholm in Sweden in 1879, in a woman's grave from the Viking Age (tomb 660). However, the new find is double in size and presumably made of solid gold. Further, fragments of similar hanging pendants have been found in graves in Ketting on Als (early 10th century) and a fragment found in a newly discovered treasure found at Omø (from the time of Harold Bluetooth).

The cross from Avnslev is remarkable on three counts. First of all it is made of gold as opposed to the other similar crosses, which were made of silver. The woman, who lost it, was presumably both very wealthy and Christian. Secondly, its design is very much like those found in Birka and Ketting, which can be dated to the early 10th century. Third, it is double the size of the other pendants belonging to the group.

What we can visualize now, is a wealthy woman walking about in the early decades of the 10th century – before Christianization was formally adopted in Denmark – and loosing a prized – large and golden – pendant, which she might have dangled proudly in front of her from a string of beads. It needs to be said, though, that cleaning and closer inspection of the find may change this preliminary interpretation.



## Viking settlement

Today, Aunslev church lies west of the present-day village Aunslev. The cross was found in the fields lying next to the church. Other finds from the same area indicates that the present church from around 1200 may originally have been built next to a Viking settlement, located South west of the church, which lies next to the old high-way running across the island of Funen. Somewhat to the east archaeologists have located what seems to be a very rich market-place and/or craft-centre peopled by craftsmen and artisans.

*Reconstruction of Crucifix pendant from Ketting © The Museum of Southern Jutland*



However, further excavations have to be carried out in order to determine the exact context of the find of “Christ from Avnslev”.

What we know is that detailed studies of artefacts with Christian connotations seem to be exclusively found in female graves. For instance, 7 pendant crosses found in Birka, were excavated from female graves. However, in the case from Ketting, the woman with the cross-pendant was buried in a coffin created out of a wagon – an element traditionally interpreted as pagan, thus perhaps signalling a mixed Christian/Pagan worldview.

Whichever way to interpret the new find: Christ from Aunslev is sure to add to our understanding of a society in a religious flux.

## SOURCE:

Extraordinary find: Denmark's oldest crucifix

## SEE MORE:

Christ from Aunslev is exhibited at the Viking Museum in Ladby during Easter 2016. Afterwards it will be handed over for restoration and study at the National Museum in Copenhagen.

## READ MORE:

### **Med Hammer og kors – religionsskifte i Danmark.**

By S. Eisenschmidt

I: Vikingetid I Danmark.

Forhistorisk arkæologi, SAXO-instituttet på Københavns Universitet 2013

### **Birka: die Gräber, Volume 1**

By Holger Arbman

Series: Kungl.Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien

Almqvist & Wiksells, 1943

### **Trons försvarare in Birka.**

By G. Trotzig:

In: Fornvännen (2004) Vol 99, No 3 p. 196 – 208

### **The Cross goes North: Christian Symbols and Scandinavian Women.**

By Jörn Stäcker.

In: The Cross Goes North. Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe AD 300 – 1300. Ed by Martin Carver. Boydell Press 2003., pp. 463 – 482.



Not far from Avnslev...

## The Ship Burial at Ladby

Not far from Avslev the “king” of Ladby was buried around 925 AD in his ship, which measured 21.5 meters in its length and was 3 meters wide. However, while the woman from Avnslev was proudly showing her Christian Crucifix off, a heathen burial mound was raised above his ship. His grave was furnished with all his fine possessions, including 11 horses and 3 or 4 dogs. In the bow of the ship was placed the original anchor and anchor chain. Unfortunately, the grave was plundered or desecrated back in the Viking times, so the deceased was removed and

most of the grave goods destroyed. Nevertheless, some very precious items were preserved, for instance a very delicate metal fitting to a dog harness. The Jelling style of this piece has helped to date the burial to c. 925 – 50.

Renewed explorations of the finds resulted in a number of fragments of the gold-embroidered clothes of the deceased as well as his belt-buckles and strap-fittings. Other finds are an axe, a shield boss, a quire of 45 lanceolate arrows and perhaps part of a sword-hilt. To this should be

added three sets of riding-gear consisting of bridles, cheek-pieces, strap-buckles and stirrup irons. The grave also contained tableware: a partially gilded silver-plate, a bronze dish, two buckets and a set of finely decorated knives. To this should be added a curious small gold-mount, fragments of painted wood and the fragments of a gaming board.

Another fabled item is a ring with six Thor's hammers, which was found in a ditch very close to the mound. It is speculated that the grave-robbers or perhaps grave-desecrators dropped the item while leaving the place. The plundering of the grave is by some believed to have been a public and willful desecration of the grave of a petty king at a time, when the Jelling Dynasty was trying to conquer all Denmark.

## The Ship and the Mound

The museum consists of two buildings. One holds the museum with a reconstruction of the grave and an exhibition of the finds. The other is simply a concrete dome built on top of the grave. It is thus possible

to enter the mound and explore the ship in situ.

Inside the burial mound, you can see the imprint of the ship, the approximately 2000 rivets that held its planks together, and the shroud rings for the rigging of the mast. In the bow, the original anchor with its chain and the 11 horse skeletons can be seen. The stem is decorated with the "dragon's mane", in the form of iron curls. (The originals are on display in the exhibition building.)

In 2012, the old florescent lights were taken down, a new ventilation system was installed, and the walls were painted in a dark color to signal that this is a burial chamber.

Enter, and let your eyes get used to the darkness and allow yourself the time to see all the fascinating details of the ship.

## VISIT:

### **Vikingsmuseet Ladby**

Vikingevej 123, 5300 Kerteminde, Denmark



# Medieval Heritage News...





*Durham is not just a significant World Heritage Site. It is also a thriving community with a well regarded University, which ranks 10th on the national list. This photo is from the University College in Durham Durham versus Newcastle University 2015. Source: Wikipedia*

# New Management Plan for Durham Cathedral and Castle

Durham Castle and Cathedral is a World Heritage Site. As such it is required to work according to a Management plan. Currently this is under revision and a public consultation is reviving the community

Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site is one of 29 in the UK and only 1031 globally. UNESCO manages the WHS list and requires that they should have a management plan. Durham's first plan was published in 2006 and it now needs updating. A new draft plan has been produced and the WHS Committee is carrying out a consultation on its proposals. The consultation will follow immediately after the traditional celebration of St. Cuthbert, taking place on the days leading up to and on the 19th of March 2016.

The consultation runs from 15th February

to 18th April 2016. The Draft Management Plan can be accessed using the navigation on the left, or you can download the **full document here**.

The 2006 Management Plan was the first and covered important essential aspects of management such as the site boundaries and coordination, examples are the inclusion of Palace Green and the establishment of a Coordinating Committee, both of which were achieved.

After reviewing the 2006 Plan the draft plan looks in greater detail at what con-

tributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the site – this is the way that UNESCO describes what makes a site significant. It covers research, the relationship of the site to its surrounds and its cultural traditions.

In this, the plan is dedicated to envision Durham as so much more than “just” a couple of iconic buildings and a unique townscape. It is also a thriving community living in a very beautiful setting. The question is: how best to preserve this in its totality at a time when architects and business developers are keen to find ways of encroaching upon the land? Should a new buffer-zone be implemented? This question seems especially pertinent since the iconic tower of the Cathedral may be seen from more than 20 km afar. Another challenge seems to be the lack of coordination between different stakeholders - Cathedral, University, City - in the management

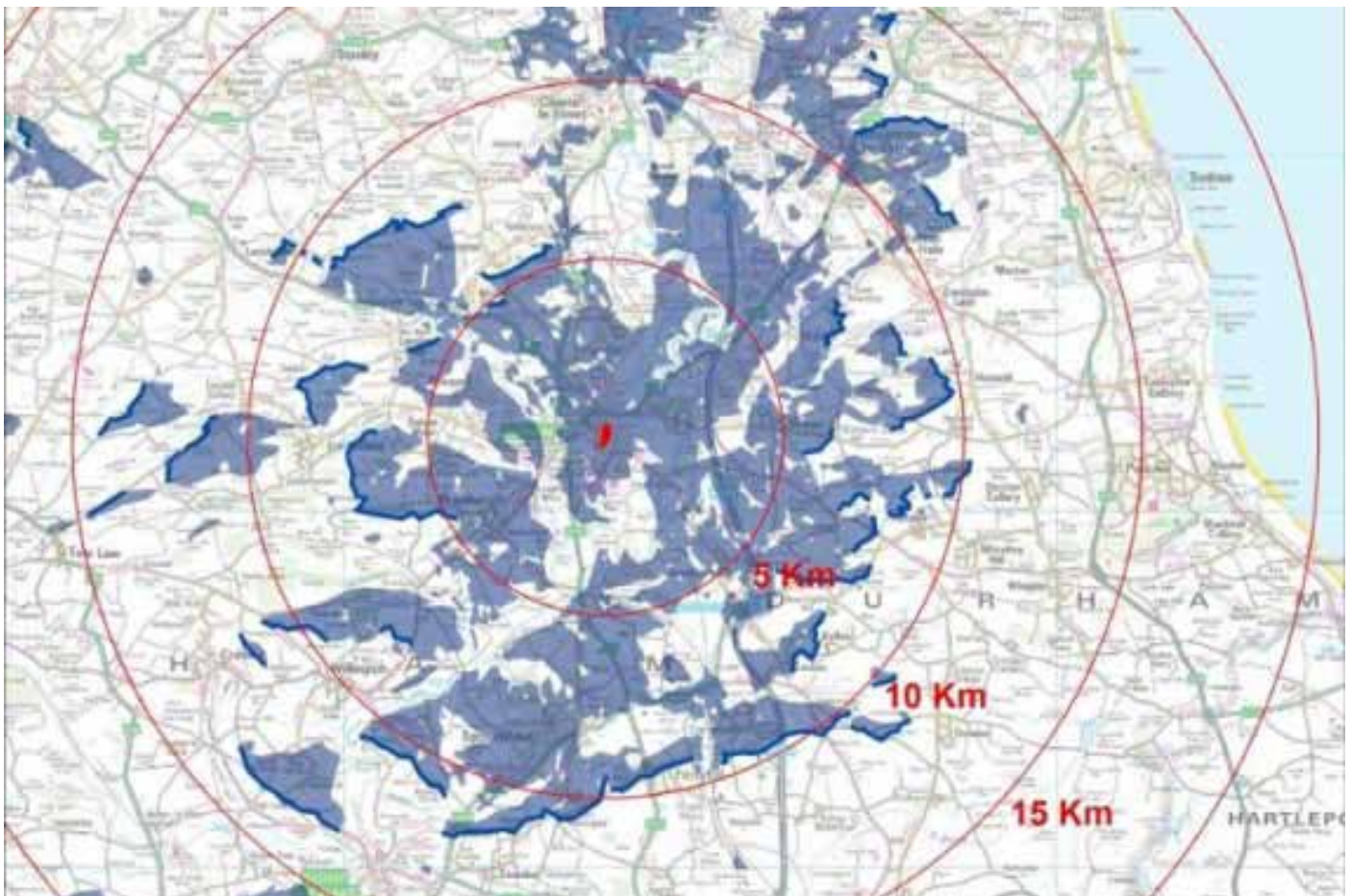
of Durham as a WHS.

The draft Management Plan aims to:

- Describe the Site’s attributes
- Describe who might use the site
- Describe the Site’s intangible heritage – the ways in which people have lived, worked, worshipped and studied on this site for over 1,000 years’
- Protect the site through greater understanding including its setting
- Outline a research framework
- Set out actions for the next 6 years in an action plan

The Management Plan was produced under the editorial leadership of the World Heritage Site Coordinator on behalf of the World Heritage Site Committee. Members of the Committee contributed to the Plan with assistance from Durham County Council, the Institute of Modern and Early Medieval Studies and volunteers.

*The dramatic visibility of the iconic towers of Durham Cathedral as seen from afar. Blue shades denote visibility. Source: Management Plan 2016-2021*



# Auckland Castle to be New Touristic Hotspot

In 2012 Auckland Castle, the former home of the Bishops of Durham, was taken over by trust fund. Plans have been unveiled to turn the Castle into a major new touristic hotspot in Northern England.

Auckland Castle was the medieval palace of the Prince Bishops of Durham from 1183. These were powerful men who, in effect, represented the monarch in this part of the country.

The original building was a manor house or hunting lodge constructed by Bishop Pudsey in the late 1100s. Around 100 years later, Bishop Bek established Auckland Castle. He preferred to live here rather than at Durham Castle because of the

vast hunting grounds. By now, the king had granted the Bishop of Durham immense power: he was the Prince Bishop, a strong ally to protect the rest of England from Scottish marauders.

The Prince Bishop controlled this part of North East England, and Auckland Castle was the seat of power. He could raise money from taxes, mint his own coins, lead his own army and even establish his own parliament. As long as he remained loyal to

*The dining room with the thirteen paintings by Zurbarán. Source: Wikipedia*





*Vision for a new visitor hall and gallery at Castle Auckland © Castle Auckland*

the king, the Prince Bishop would continue to be one of the most powerful political and military men in the country.

The 17th Century saw Auckland Castle become the home to Bishop Cosin; a large part of what can be seen today is the result of his renovation and foresight. For example, the original banqueting hall was renovated and turned into the magnificent chapel, which rates as the largest private chapel in Europe.

Although the power of the Prince Bishops declined in more recent times, Auckland Castle remained as the official home of the Bishop of Durham until 2010. However, in 2012 ownership of the Castle and its collection of paintings, the Deer Park and the Gardens were transferred to **The Auckland Charitable Trust** by its saviour, Jona-

than Ruffer. The Trust's ambitions are high – and if we are to achieve them we will need to raise well over £10m to fund the restoration and redevelopment of the site.

## Auckland Castle in the Future

The plan is to restore, repair, redevelop and reinterpret the castle, gardens and park to provide inspiring experiences for 130,000 visitors each year and generate over 100 full and part-time jobs plus inject £3 million into the local economy.

Secondly, the aim is to create an exhibition telling the history of the religions in the British Isles and exploring the experience of faith. This part of the project recently won £9m of Heritage Lottery Funding to create a permanent series of galleries. One of these will be a specific exhibition of

17th century religious art with the famous Zurburán pictures at their centre, one of the most appealing features of the castle. Auckland owns all but one of the Spanish artist's cycle of portraits of Jacob and his 12 sons. A copy stands in its place, and the 13 canvases, which stand eight feet tall, have been one of the artistic highlights of the north east for more than 250 years. They were bought in 1756 and still hang in the dining room that was specially built for them.

Religious faith as well as religious art may have turned deeply unfashionable in a world, which is being invaded by Jihadists bent on marketing their totalitarian beliefs through never-ending orgies of blood and violence. This, however, has not stopped the self-professed Evangelical Christian cum Wolf of Wall Street, Jonathan Ruffer, to invest his wealth in taking a stand. Jonathan Ruffer is a dedicated Christian with a contemplative side to his character. According to his own admission, an Ignatian

retreat in Wales inspired him to find a way to work for the “deprived”.

Accordingly, the third part of the plan is to create a proactive, dynamic education centre with an extensive library to enable study by children and students of all ages as well as work engage with the community to make the Castle a natural centre for community activity.

As the bishop will continue to have his offices at Castle Auckland, the aim is to create both a living and working complex as well as preserving the traditional practice of prayer in a spiritually uplifting atmosphere.

It is a fundamental ambition of the Trust that this project will secure a viable and sustainable future for the Castle, and in achieving this secure the castle as a source of economic and social regeneration for Bishop Auckland, Weardale and the wider region.

© Kynren





© Castle Auckland

## Historic Festival al la Puy du Fou

A parallel project is thus to turn Auckland Castle into a galvanizing centre for the local community. Sometime in the future, the plan is to develop part of the estate into a historical leisure park. Inspiration is the hugely successful **Puy du Fou in France**.

In its first phase a series of spectacular re-enactments of Viking invasions, Roman gladiatorial combats and the like is being marketed as part of a historical festival, called Kynren.

Taking its name from the Anglo-Saxon word for generation, Kynren hopes to take up to 8,000 spectators on a journey through 2,000 years of British history, from the Roman and Viking invasions through to the industrial revolution and the WW2. The hope is to generate £9 mill turnover in the local community; All profits made from the show, which is a registered charity, will be used to fund the project's education and community development initiatives, with a view to being a catalyst for social and economic regeneration in the region.

While the castle of Auckland is thus scheduled to become a serious – and perhaps – more traditional exhibition venue, it appears the Kynren festival is much less pre-occupied with historical veracity. Kynren will obviously be as much about spectacle as it is educational. However, it is likely that it will help rejuvenate the local tourist economy and raise the economic and social prospects of a part of England, which is one of the most downtrodden and deprived. The hope is that more shows will be staged in 2017 and that eventually the site will become a permanent theme park a la Puy du Fou in Western France. In the end, though, the aim is the same: to revive a local community and a region lost in transition from its industrial past and into modernity.

## SOURCE:

**Official website of Auckland Castle**

**Kynren – an epic tale of England**

# White-washing a Scandal?



## Matrera Castle in Spain and the Vilharigues Tower in Portugal have recently been rebuilt rather than restored. What should we think?

When parts of the Matrera Castle - Castillo de Matrera - slid into the ground in 2013 it prompted a red alert from Hispania Nostra. Officially designated as important cultural heritage, locals set about restoring it. Now the result has caused horror among conservationists.

### Matrera Castle

Matrera Castle was built by Omar Ben Hafsun in the late ninth century. In 1256, the town, the castle and the dependent villages, were donated by Alfonso X to the Military Order of Calatrava, who had conquered the area. In the early fourteenth century, it returned to Muslim hands. However, in 1341 it was definitively reconquered by Alfonso XI. In 1342, the monarch gave the castle and its territories to Seville. It is situated on the last frontier and was finally besieged by the Muslims in Granada in 1408 and 1445.

However, in 2013 the vaults of the tower sank after previous landslides. The collapse caused the complete loss of the three floors of the tower and its vaults, the entire north wall and part of the West. This catastrophe was expected and the municipality of Villamartín had repeatedly warned the Government of Andalusia, which nevertheless had decided to disregard it.

Subsequently (in 2014) Hispania Nostra placed the Matrera Castle on the Red List, in order to draw attention to the disaster and warn that the deterioration continued. This led to an intervention by the regional government, which has caused horror among conservationists all over Europe. Using a concoction of steel and cement,

the tower may have had its profile reconstructed. Nevertheless, to anyone, familiar with the landscape of Southern Spain dotted with more or less romantic ruins it seems unnecessarily harsh. Afterwards, the public has speculated whether the restoration was done to make a statement about the present non-interventionist custodial practice, which basically works to keep any ruin “as is”

The architect in charge of the project has defended the restoration, telling the Guardian there “were three basic aims behind it”. Carlos Quevedo said: “To structurally consolidate those elements that were at risk; to differentiate new additions from the original structure ... and to recover the volume, texture and tonality that the tower would originally have had.” Responding to the criticism, he added: “As far as I’m concerned, opinions are always welcome and constructive criticism and debate are always enriching.”

*Matrera Castle before and after “restoration”. © Fundación arquía.*





*Tower of Vilharigues before restoration. Source: Wikipedia*

The project has been specifically designed to avoid “aesthetic mimicry involving falsification and loss of authenticity” using for instance original lime wash on the parts set up to preserve the ruin. Such a coating would originally have covered the tower. According to the architect the project thus intends to capture a memory, rather than mimicking the past.

## Vilharigues Tower in Portugal - Torre de Vilharigues

Tower of Vilharigues - before restoration  
Tower of Vilharigues - before restoration.  
Source: Wikipedia

Another example of a ruin, which has suddenly achieved a whole new look, is the Vilharigues Tower in Northern Portugal. Like other such castles, this tower is located on a sharp rise, providing magnificent and superb views of the town of Vouzela and the valley of Lafões. The tower was built in the late thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth century, and is typical of the military buildings, which

were introduced in the reigns of Alfonso III, and Dinis. It is one of three towers, which together controlled the valley and served as prestigious houses for the local lords. Another tower, in the city of Alcofra, is much less dilapidated. Plans have been unveiled to

Tower of Vilharigues after restoration  
Tower of Vilharigues after restoration.  
Source: Wikipedia

The tower is fitted with battlements and arrow slits, which are typical of castles built with royal permission at this time. However, its function was obviously not military. It consisted of three floors, with stock room on the ground, followed by an audience room. On top were the living quarters for the lord and his family. It is not known for whom it was built. The tower has been classified as a Building of Public Interest.

In 2006 the local magistrates in the town of Vouzela decided to have the tower restored as part of a general restoration campaign of medieval monuments in the area. The architect, Renato Rebelo has

*Tower of Vilharigues after restoration. Source: Wikipedia*



created a plan for an intervention, which might make the tower accessible for people wishing to get a sense of the wider landscape. The new ground floor is dedicated to house a memorial exhibition of the Portuguese hero, Duarte de Almeida (1476), while the upper floors hold the collections of the local museum and a library. The restoration was carried out in 2013 and plans are underway to follow up with the construction of a local Eco-museum in Cambra - Ecomuseu de Carvalhal de Vermilhas - focusing on life in the middle ages. The museum is expected to open in 2019.

The intervention of the tower was constructed in such a way, that it might be removed in the future. Nevertheless, it has been regarded by some as a rather heavy-handed restoration project.

*Plan for the restoration. Source: Wikipedia*

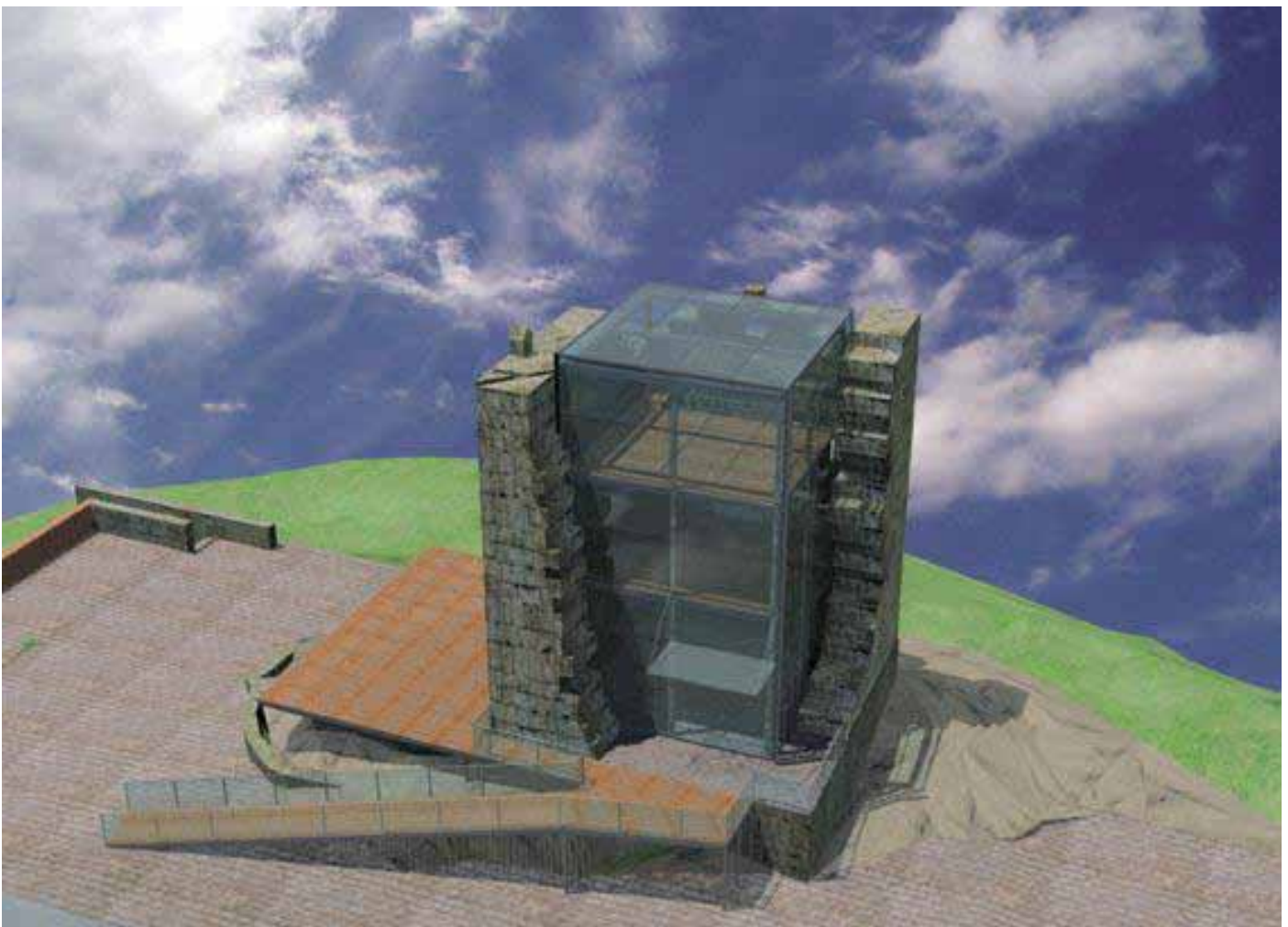
The question is, of course, whether such ruins should be reused in a modern context? Or whether historical authenticity should be preserved?

## SOURCES:

**Restauración de la Torre del Homenaje del Castillo de Matrera. By Fundación arquia**

**Vouzela quer recuperar potencialidades históricas e arqueológicas que o tempo apagou**

**Torre Medieval de Vilharigues reconstruída**



# CONFERENCES:



## The 2016 Harlaxton Medieval Symposium: The Great Household, 1000 - 1500.

### **The 33rd Harlaxton Medieval Symposium: The Great Household, 1000-1500**

Harlaxton Manor, Harlaxton, Grantham,  
Lincolnshire, Grantham NG32 1AG, United  
Kingdom

19.07.2016 -22.07.2016

The theme of the 2016 Symposium is the medieval great household, from the eleventh to the early sixteenth century, with a focus on elite contexts in the British Isles. Papers will look at changing structures within the household; household membership, lords and their servants; domestic material culture; literature, music and entertainment in the household; the role of the household chapel; sensory environments, consumption and the routines of the household. Delegates will be given a guided tour of Harlaxton Manor (our own 'Great Household') and our afternoon outing will be to Gainsborough Old Hall, one of the finest and best-preserved fifteenth-century manor houses in England. Our conference banquet will feature food inspired by authentic medieval cuisine.

The keynote will be delivered by Chris Dyer (University of Leicester), who will be speaking on Households great and small: aristocratic styles of life across the social spectrum

### Themes

- Politics and Households
- The Household, Literature and Writing
- Education and courtesy
- Religion, Ceremony and Plate
- Music and the Household
- Households of the Clergy and of Women
- Service and the Household
- Goods, Consumption and the Household

The symposium includes an excursion to Gainsborough and a conference dinner in the Great Hall where a medieval inspired banquet will be organised by Harlaxton College and Caroline Yeldham (University of Leeds); black tie welcome!

## The Harlaxton Symposium

The Harlaxton Symposium is an interdisciplinary gathering of academics, students and enthusiasts which meets annually to celebrate medieval history, art, literature and architecture through a programme of papers selected around a chosen theme. The Symposium, which began in 1984, was the brain-child of Dr. Pamela Tudor-Craig, Lady Wedgwood, and the host of the four-day conference has always been Harlaxton College in Lincolnshire, a delightful Victorian Baroque mansion which is now the British campus of the University of Evansville, Indiana.

Harlaxton has long been able to boast a strong participation by international scholars from educational establishments

as far afield as America and Australia. In recent years, the profile of the conference has increased, and the high standard of papers delivered – as well as the varied programme which always includes a conference dinner and an outing – creates a forum for friendly intellectual debate which attracts people back to Harlaxton year after year.

For additional information, please contact the Symposium Secretary, David Harry at [harlaxtonsymposium@gmail.com](mailto:harlaxtonsymposium@gmail.com)

### READ MORE:

The proceedings of the former symposia have been published in a series by **Paul Watkins Publishing**

### MUST READ:

#### The Great Household in Late Medieval England

By C. M. Woolgar  
Yale University Press 1999  
ISBN-10: 0300076878  
ISBN-13: 978-0300076875

An investigation of life in the great household of late medieval England. Based on household accounts and related primary documents, it looks at the daily routines, weekly and annual patterns, and the life-cycle observances of birth, childhood, marriage, death and burial.

