FROM THE PRESIDENT

Warm greetings to all of you, colleagues and members of the ICMA. Winter is arriving, and the time for membership renewal is underway. I hope you will follow the easy instructions on the ICMA website and rejoin for 2016.

This past summer was full of ICMA activities. The three recipients of the student travel grants headed for Europe: their reports on their discoveries can be read in the Student Committee pages below. We will be offering three grants of this kind again in 2016. The application deadline is March 1; full details can be found on our website.

Other ICMA events over the summer included our sponsorship of two sessions at Leeds in July and a number of events at the German Forum Kunst des Mittelalters which met this year in Hildesheim in August: there we sponsored a double session on Carolingian art, the keynote speech by Christian Freigang which was delivered in the glorious church of St. Michael, and a reception following the talk.

The ICMA also sponsored a session at the Byzantine Studies Conference held in New York in October. And while there will be sponsored sessions/keynote talks this coming year at the usual sites, there may also be ones at conferences where we have not hitherto had a presence, such as at the St. Louis Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and the Canadian Conference of Medieval Art Historians, thanks to the energetic outreach efforts of Janis Elliot and the Programs Committee. Jan Marquardt as chair of Membership Committee has also been active this summer and fall in making sure that ICMA materials are distributed as widely as possible among colleagues and at conferences and gatherings here and abroad.

The untimely death of Barbara Abou el-Haj last spring has inspired a quite new ICMA project, namely a “Collaboratory”, whose aim is to expand the book on Reims and Amiens, Lordship and Commune, that was left unfinished by Barbara at her death. Her friends and colleagues, above all Nina Rowe, Jennifer Feltman and Janet Marquardt, are planning a form of online publication of the material that will be based on the principle of crowd-sourcing, with online contributions and debate solicited from the wider scholarly community. The website will be active for 5 years, after which the results will be archived.

Betsy Sears and the Publications Committee have been assiduously pursuing the goal of an ICMA Ebook publication, which will include a Print on Demand option. Progress has been made in delineating the character of the Ebook, and in defining our further course of action as we look about for publishers, editor and editorial board. More information will be coming your way soon.

We are also in the process of setting up an annual book prize for the best book in the field of medieval art published each year. Submissions will be welcomed in English,
French, Italian, German and Spanish. We will keep you informed about the relevant deadlines.

The year 2016 is a big anniversary for us: it is the 60th year since the Centre internationale d’études romanes (founded in France in 1953) established a US Committee in New York City in 1956. Ten years later, this Committee, by now fully independent of its parent, was incorporated as the International Center of Medieval Art. We are aiming to honor the anniversary of our birth with appropriate celebrations: we will keep you informed.

I hope to see many of you in February for our annual meeting, which this year will be held in the French Embassy in Washington, in honor of our French origins, on Friday evening, February 5. You will be receiving an email asking for your RSVP.

Until then, happy holidays, full of medieval splendor!

Nancy Ševčenko, President of the ICMA

Membership Committee

On October 22 and 23, ICMA members attending the Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC) in Pittsburgh were treated to medieval sites care of Shirin Fozi. The first evening we met in the hall of casts at the Carnegie Museum where, among other wonders, the facade of St. Gilles du Gard was magnificent in the gloaming coming through the skylight. The next day Shirin took us on a tour of neo-medieval downtown, beginning with H. H. Richardson’s Allegheny courthouse and jail connected by the “Bridge of Sighs,” inspired by the Venetian bridge of the same name. At the Gothic revival First Presbyterian Church, where a public pulpit still hangs over the street, we engaged in a lively conversation with the young men restoring the stained glass. We also visited H. H. Richardson’s smallest and oddest church commission in the Allegheny West neighborhood (once Allegheny City before Pittsburgh incorporated it), Emmanuel Episcopal, where the rector visited with us at length, discussing history of the building and the surrounding streets. The Membership Committee has recruitment flyers in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and now--Japanese. To distribute materials or gather members and interested potential members, or to volunteer to translate them to another language, please contact:

Janet Marquardt, Chair, Membership Committee
jmarquardt@smith.edu

Reports from ICMA-Sponsored Sessions

ICMA at the International Medieval Congress Leeds July 6-9 2015


The first session addressed whether Dionysius’ hierarchical vision of the celestial and terrestrial realms could be considered a consequence of a wider late antique mentality and not simply a development of the Neoplatonico legacy. In his paper, “The Concept of Hierarchy according to Pseudo-Dionysius...”
and the Pseudo-Hierarchical Vision of his Sources,” Ernesto Sergio Mainoldi examined the formation of the hierarchical conception throughout the Corpus Dionysiacum as an evident and consistent part of Dionysius’ background, while also taking into account its relations to Neoplatonic tradition. Katherine Marsengill’s paper, “Images of Holy Men in Late Antiquity: Framing Spiritual and Visual Hierarchy,” argued that Dionysius’ system was not one of ranking. Rather, he conceptualized creation as a spectrum of sanctity without strict divisions, characterized by various levels of spiritual authority, an interlocking hierarchy of spiritual ascent that is made accessible and apparent in images of holy men. Nicholas Marinides addressed “The Place of Monks in the Corpus Dionysiacum and its Byzantine Reception.” Since Dionysius’ ideas regarding the place of monks were accorded near-apostolic authority, they could not be rejected outright, but instead were variously embraced, evaded, and re-interpreted not only through texts but also the artistic presentation of monks in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The second session focused on how Dionysian thought is immensely important not only for the history of theology and philosophy, but also for the development of “visual thinking” – a way of memorizing, organizing, and delivering information that affected theological and philosophical writing, preaching, and the production of visual arts. In her paper, “Pseudo-Dionysius and the Arts: the Image of the Platytera,” Francesca Dell’Acqua examined the painted program of the crypt of Santa Maria in insula at the monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno (Isernia, central Italy), decorated by the Frankish abbot Epiphanius. By taking into account the cultural milieu in which it was conceived around 830, and the possible interaction with the Dionysian legacy and iconophile arguments, she interprets the image that art historians have identified as a Theotokos to be instead a Platytera, a rarer iconographic motif about the Incarnation that represents how Mary’s small womb becomes more spacious than Heaven to contain the unceircumscivable God. Angelo Tavolaro interrogated Dionysius’ aesthetic terminology in his paper, “Eikon and Symbolon in the Corpus Dionysiacum: Scriptures and Sacraments as Aesthetic Cathegories.” He discussed Dionysius’ new Christian interpretations of Neoplatonic terms, and how his symbolic imagery inspired the theology of the icon developed in the eighth century. Natalia Teteriatnikov’s “Pseudo-Dionysius and the First Figurative Mosaic Program in the Hagia Sophia after Iconoclasm” examined how the Dionysian concept of celestial hierarchy was adopted and visualized after Iconoclasm. The case in point is the construction of the first figurative mosaic program of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, the content and visual aspects of which were not fully explored from this perspective.

The sessions were very well attended – the room was full – and we were invited by a series editor for an important publisher to submit the proposal for a book. Thanks to the Kress Travel Award scheme and to the ICMA!

Francesca Dell’Acqua
University of Salerno

ICMA at the 41st Annual Byzantine Studies Conference in New York City, October 22nd-25th 2015

Sessions: “Gifts of devotion to ‘Outer Places’ (exō chorai),” organized by Cecily Hilsdale.

This session succeeded in bringing together different approaches and evidence for understanding what exō chorai (“outer places”) truly meant for commissioning works of art and architecture in the relentlessly interconnected world of the Medieval Mediterranean and the Balkans of mainly the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Rhetoricians and their sponsors criticized places outside of Constantinople as exō chorai and saw wealthy provincial monasteries as pointless endeavors. Such considerations – evoked mainly in literature – stand in contrast to the ample body of artistic and archaeological evidence. The aim of this session was to explore the motivation for sponsoring gifts to these seemingly unappealing places.

Nathan Leidholm set off the discussion by analyzing documentary and literary evidence, as well as seals, for shedding light to the complicated relations between a patris and the koinē patris of Constantinople. Nathan highlighted the strong bonds of individuals with a patris and showed that these bonds combined a desire to maintain visibility in such localities and the memorialization of one’s family into perpetuity at a place, considered as home. Furthermore, a certain form of regionalism, encapsulated in the term “patris” and which became particularly visible in the outbreak of separatist unrest from the mid-1180s, is detectable in the sources from as much as a century earlier. According to Nathan, this identification with a patris outside of Constantinople was as foundational to individual and family identity as lineage (genos) in this period.

George Makris presented new archeological evidence from the monasteries on the remote and isolated slopes of Mt. Papikion and Sozopolis. Papikion, a monastic center of paramount importance – known mainly thanks to the unspoiled archeological material – was supported by the motivation of local inhabitants and members of the higher
echelons of Constantinopolitan society to donate gifts to local monasteries and commission large-scale projects. After exploring the evolution of monastic settlements over time, the changes that these sites evinced long after the process of donation and the mechanisms through which these communities survived the turbulent thirteenth century were highlighted. According to Makris, a strategic geographic location and high spiritual value were deemed equally important as patronage and protection for the survival of a monastic community.

Foteini Spingou’s paper examined donations of portable works of art on the basis of epigrams from the poetic anthology in MS Marcianus Graecus 524. These epigrams refer to gifts dedicated to monasteries in the Holy Land and the Balkans by members of the Constantinopolitan ruling class and even the emperor himself. After arguing for the collective understanding of an epigram (a text) and a work of the material culture (an object) as a single cultural product, Foteini suggested that these cultural products strived to ensure and enforce the identity of monastic establishments in the periphery as enclaves of Constantinopolitan cultural radiance. This re-assurance of cultural identity was realized by the performance of ritual acts and a personalized text at the moment of the dedication of the object.

The discussion was enriched with the comments of the session’s chair, Cecily Hilsdale. Donations of monumental and minor artworks to “outer places” proved to be a matter of continuities and memories. Such gifts, usually given to monasteries on behalf of individuals, were able to ensure the continuous remembrance of a family’s tradition and also of the imperial authority at a place. The close connections of a monastery to an individual’s lineage and/or the importance of its geographic position for the imperial power respectively also ensured the continuity of the establishment. In all, the session allowed participants to explore questions relevant to the relation of shaping memories and aristocratic sponsorship of works of art from the center to the periphery.

Foteini Spingou
Nathan Leidholm
George Makris

ICMA at the Forum Kunst des Mittelalters in Hildesheim, September 16-19, 2015


The third Forum Kunst des Mittelalters took place this year from September 16-19 in the episcopal city of Hildesheim, and these four days were packed with scholarly talks and cultural events that brought together a truly international group of hundreds of medieval art historians. Do mark your calendars for the next FKdM-4, which will take place in Berlin in September of 2017, with study days at Berlin museums. The ICMA sponsored a session, a keynote lecture, and a reception on Thursday, September 17, the first full day of the conference.

Those in attendance at this session had the luxury of being able to visit the Doors in their own well-lit enclosed anteroom at the western end of Hildesheim Cathedral and to reflect on the propositions they had just heard. Conserved and cleaned, the Doors look as though they were just cast yesterday. Other works such as the monumental Column of Christ have been installed inside the Cathedral, and smaller objects are on view in the beautiful new Cathedral Museum.

The ICMA sponsored a session on “Carolingian Art and the Quest for Authenticity,” which Adam Cohen and Genevra Kornbluth organized, and which Genevra Kornbluth and Heather Pulliam also moderated. This nearly four-hour session brought together German and Anglophone scholars from Switzerland, Scotland, Canada, and the United States for a series of six talks that each presented a different angle on authenticity in the Carolingian period. While there were many audience members from institutions in the UK and North America, the majority of those in attendance were from continental Europe.

Genevra Kornbluth’s presentation on a double-sided Carolingian jet intaglio from Sens started things off. Dr. Kornbluth presented a focused and clear analysis of this small object and ultimately asked us to question (or at least to be explicit about) the criteria we use to assign a particular work to one period or another. Julia Smith, the sole historian in the session, spoke about the role of authentics in Carolingian relic collections, and reminded us of the indexical function that they were expected to
perform. Where authenticity is culturally and historically variable, relics in the Middle Ages remained curiously unaffected by changes to these attitudes. Sigrid Danielson’s talk was devoted to the “discovery” of Carolingian art in the late nineteenth century, and how the story of Carolingian art was made to conform to notions of historical progress. At this early point in the history of our own discipline, art historians tended to isolate individual artists and authors—Tuotilo, Wolvinus, Einhard—as a way to narrate this history and to reinforce the authenticity of specific artworks and early “masterpieces” of Carolingian art. Anna Bücheler’s paper offered a close analysis of the flabellum that was made for the monks of Saint Philibert in Tournus in 875. The six ivories depicting scenes from Virgil’s *Eclogues*, Bücheler argued, were adapted to suit the story of the monks’ flight from Norman invasion. Rachel Danford’s talk examined the Westwerk at Corvey in relation to that monastic community’s attitudes toward its own recent past. She argued that the classicizing stucco figures on the Westwerk’s interior refer to the paganism of Antiquity as a way of commenting on the recent conversion of the Saxons to Christianity. In the final talk of the session, Adam Cohen posed the question of what Ottonian art and architecture can tell us about their relationship to the Carolingians. Indeed, Cohen’s talk reminded the audience of the problematic nature of the terms we use to talk about Carolingian and Ottonian period styles, and encouraged us to be more circumspect about how we employ those terms.

Later that evening, it appeared that nearly every conference attendee was present at the ICMA sponsored keynote lecture by Christian Freigang (Freie Universität, Berlin) entitled “Glockenklang und Glockenträger. Zur Interdependenz von Musik und Architektur im Mittelalter” (“Bells and Belfries: The Interdependence of Music and Architecture in the Middle Ages”). Dr. Freigang presented his paper from the eastern choir of Saint Michael, with the audience of hundreds of fellow art historians in the nave of the church. As the title of the talk suggests, Freigang considered how sound enhanced church architecture, and how each was designed with the other in mind. Two lovely events, also held in the church of Saint Michael, followed this talk. First, the ensemble *Gli Scarlattisti* took the stage for a moving performance of selections from Handel’s *Israel in Egypt*. After a standing ovation, the ICMA hosted a reception in the church. In spite of the late hour, nearly all of those who had come for the talk and the concert also stayed for the reception. It was a festive and collegial way to end a long day of talks.

The Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft is to be commended for supporting this conference, and its organizers are to be praised in the strongest possible terms for putting together an intense and lively four days devoted entirely to medieval art history. As is the case with all good academic conferences, one left with a renewed commitment to the work we do and with a new appreciation for the many ways in which we approach that work.

Eliza Garrison, Middlebury College
**Member News**

**Awards**

If you are a member and your work has recently garnered a prize in the 12 months prior to March, 2016, please send your information to Sherry Lindquist, newsletter@medievalart.org by March 15, 2016 (in advance of the April Newsletter).

Cecily J. Hilsdale, Associate Professor of Art History at McGill University has been awarded the Dionysius A. Agius Prize 2015 from the Society for the Medieval Mediterranean for her book, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014).

Katrin Kogman-Appel has recently been awarded the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship in Jewish Studies at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster.

**Recent Publications by ICMA Members**

If you are a member who has published a book (or equivalent research project) 12 months prior to March, 2016, and which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send your information to Sherry Lindquist, newsletter@medievalart.org by March 15, 2016 (in advance of the March, 2016 Newsletter).


**Commemorations**

If you would like to submit a commemoration of an ICMA member who has died in the 12 months prior to March, 2016, and which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send a 200-500 word obituary and, if possible, an accompanying photo to Sherry Lindquist, newsletter@medievalart.org picture by March 15, 2016 (in advance of the April, 2016 Newsletter).

**Nurith Kenaan-Kedar (1938-2015)**

Nurith Kenaan-Kedar passed away at home surrounded by her family on November 3rd, 2015 after a long battle with emphysema. She is survived by her husband, the Crusader historian Benjamin Kedar, her two sons and their families.

Born in Israel of a Sabra mother and Berliner father, Nurith received her PhD in 1964 from Basel University with a dissertation on the Romanesque church of Saint-Chef in France. She then returned to Israel to begin her career, teaching first at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (1965-67) and as a visitor at the University of Southern California (1971-1972). In 1969 she moved to Tel Aviv University where she was the founder and chair of its Department of Art History and served for many years as Dean of the Faculty of the Arts. She retired as the George and Mary Bloch Chair for Comparative Art History in 2006. Throughout her career, she kept an active international profile, lecturing widely and bringing her students to Kalamazoo, Leeds, CAA, CIHA, and Poitiers’ Centre de Civilisation médiévale as well as frequently taking her students on memorable travelling seminars to the main sites of medieval art. She is the founder of two journals, *Matar* and *Assaph*, that published the papers from international conferences she organized. She continued lecturing and publishing, and remained a great mentor and inspiration to a younger generation of Israeli art historians. She was a groundbreaking researcher and inspiring teacher who disseminated the love of learning and the desire for art and beauty.


*Continued on page 8*
the exhibition, *To the Fountain; The Maiden and the Jar; a Local and Multi-cultural Image* (2013).

Nurith will be remembered for her wide range of interests and the passion engendered in her work, which inspired others. She was a dear colleague and special friend to many of us, as was so well expressed in her Festschrift, *Pictorial Languages and their Meanings* (2006).

Christine B. Verzar
Professor Emerita, The Ohio State University

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

**Teaching Medieval Art History: Medievalism**

Whether one likes it or not, medievalism has become increasingly central to the teaching of medieval art. Usefully defined by Leslie Workman as “the continuing process of creating the Middle Ages,” our quarry as teachers of medievalism in art history is not the sculpture of Utá at Naumberg, but Walt Disney’s cinematic appropriation of it in *Snow White*, not the architecture of the medieval castle, but its employment in the Gothic novel where it serves as setting and protagonist, not the “freedom” of the medieval artist as manifest in painting, sculpture or architecture (such as it is), but John Ruskin’s use of this concept to advance his own socialist vision of the Gothic as an archetype for modern architecture. Once the subject of a first or last lecture of the year in surveys that attempted to reconcile “our period” with its subsequent revivals and restitutions (as it appears in our texts, like *Snyder’s Medieval Art*), medievalism is being taught as a subject in and of itself by medievalists and modernists alike in Europe and North America. I say “or not” because in conferences and scholarly publishing, as in our textbooks, medievalism continues to be marginalized by scholars of medieval art (proper) as not really medieval art history. Notably, medieval studies’ central publication *Speculum* has a policy of not publishing reviews or essays that fall under the rubric “medievalism.” Medievalism seems to exist in a woolly sub-category of medieval art history, something studied “by lazy scholars who don’t want to get their hands dirty with the monuments,” as one prominent Italianist once put it to me. Happily, this perception has lost ground with the publication of major studies by medievalists such as Bruce Holsinger, Michael Camille and others.

As some readers will know, I have developed a second area of interest alongside my research and teaching on Romanesque and Gothic art that deals in particular with the origins of the “Gothic Revival” in England within the circle of Horace Walpole (1717-97). Great antiquarian scholars and collectors of medieval art, patrons of some of the earliest Gothic Revival homes such as Walpole’s remarkable neo-Gothic villa at Strawberry Hill (Figure 1), and the originators of the “Gothic novel” (notably Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* [1764]) (Figure 2), these men substantially reimagined the Middle Ages for Georgian England and created a tradition of research and presentation that significantly informs our current sense of “Gothic” and “Medieval.” To them we owe tangible debts such as some of our earliest taxonomies of medieval architecture and some of our early histories of medieval architecture and painting, and less tangible debts such as our (still current) romantic vision of the Gothic as a style and locus of human alterity. Walpole’s literature in particular advanced the idea of Gothic architecture (and the castle in particular) as a dark, moody space of psychological exploration, of familial trauma and deep repression that morphed, via the technologies of psychoanalysis, into the modern genre of horror. Whether I like it or not, their work captured me and has occupied a good deal of my energy as a scholar and a teacher over the past few years.

My initial foray into teaching medievalism, however, was years earlier in my first permanent job at the University of London. Medieval art is not always an easy sell for undergraduate students, particularly in England, where a) its sheer proximity and ubiquity and b) its location within either elite tweedy and/or geek culture, means that it has far less romance than it does in North America (a romance created, it must be said, by medievalism). So, in order to allow students another point of entry into medieval art, I offered a course called “Gothic: From High Culture to Sub-Culture.” This, like many quickly conceived ideas, was not a very good one, at least not in its initial configuration. In term one I set out to explore the key ideas and forms of Gothic art from, say, 1150-1500, and then to follow in term two with interpretations or “replications” of the Gothic from Giorgio Vasari and Raphael in the sixteenth century through the Gothic “survivals” of the seventeenth century and “revivals” of the eighteenth and nineteenth in art, architecture, music, and literature (including the Gothic novel), then to the American Gothic in twentieth-century cinema. This was enormously fun and enormously challenging to teach. Disparate though it clearly was initially,
the course was actually a great success. It allowed me to break down some of the inherited myths students had learned about the dark, bleak, and mysterious “Middle Ages,” and to explain why (especially to British students) Monty Python’s *Quest for the Holy Grail* was actually very funny for medievalists.

In shaping the second half of the course, i.e. the “medievalism” part, I followed Leslie Workman’s definition of medievalism and I also drew on literary theorists like John Fletcher and Umberto Eco who argued that the Middle Ages was a, or even the, dominant myth of modernity. Providing a temporal and aesthetic other to the present, the Middle Ages became modernity’s site of mourning and its medievalist productions become “the repository of whatever is felt to have been lost in the advance of civilization and enlightenment.” Working chronologically, my aim was to explore the morphology (rather than the history) of medievalism and the Gothic in particular. I was able to position our classes chronologically, on topics such as Walpole’s Strawberry Hill (then on our doorstep and easily visited), Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*, John Ruskin’s *Stones of Venice*, A.W.N. Pugin’s *Contrasts, or a Parallel between the Architecture of the 15th and 19th Centuries* (Figure 3), Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*, etc., as re-imaginings of medieval art, architecture or ideas. Each class focused on a specific monument or text and its broader medieval or medievalist context, and asked how the Middle Ages or a current perception of them was martialed to a specific use (in the case of Hitchcock, of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century medievalism that became central to the modern genre of horror). Part II was naturally a difficult jump from “medieval” to “medievalism” (here already these distinctions become difficult), and I became aware that the order was wrong. My students asked me to reverse the two terms in order to allow them to return to “medieval” once the legacy of medievalism had been explored, allowing them to divorce the perceived ideas about the Middle Ages that they had inherited from medieval art itself. Here, as elsewhere, they were right.

Radical though this course was in London at the time, my students “got it” within a couple of classes. This, I think, was for the simple reason that, as Umberto Eco would explain to them in one of our class readings, they too were living through a “New Middle Ages,” defined by

---

cultural productions that in one way or another reference or re-present the Middle Ages (or, rather, one of many modern recursions of it). When not playing the board game Carcassonne in which they construct fortified cities on a fictive map of medieval France, they were coming with me to the Tate Britain’s *Gothic Nightmares* exhibition of Henry Fuseli’s work (Figure 4), at home absorbing Peter Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, or watching Orlando Bloom heroize the crusade movement in Ridley Scott’s *Kingdom of Heaven* (Figure 5) (I was invited to the London premiere screening of it and took a couple of students with me, which was a high point of the class). As Bruce Holsinger would go on to explain, they were also absorbing the neo-medievalist rhetoric of the so-called “war on terror” or the (variously) “Western” or “American crusade” as then President George W. Bush would have it. They understood that perceptions of the Middle Ages are necessarily colored by post-medieval medievalist re-presentations. I have gone on to teach it (and significantly refine it) a number of times since, not only because the material is inherently interesting and tremendously attractive to students, but also because medievalism poses some useful challenges to the practice of medieval art history itself, both in teaching and in research.

Most obviously, perhaps, teaching medievalism draws “medieval art” beyond the chronological break between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. By stretching the temporal (and ultimately chronological and representational) parameters of the Middle Ages, we call into question its very integrity as a historiographical construct. Working in a marginalized field in art history, medievalists have been understandably protective of the imagined temporal and geographical borders of their discipline. Yet, given that “the Middle Ages” is a derogatory invention of Renaissance historiographers to separate the neo-antique present from the antique past (the very origins of our “Middle Ages” was itself a medievalist enterprise, albeit one couched in negative terms, as Erwin Panofsky so powerfully pointed out), did the “Middle Ages” actually happen, and if so, what were they? And when did the Middle Ages end, or as Willibald Sauerländer would have it, when do we allow them to end?³ Do we define this apparent rupture in terms of historical change, such as, in England at least,

the Dissolution of the Monasteries of 1540, or in terms of stylistic change? Given that neither clearly (or in some cases at all) offer obvious breaks in the years around 1500, how valid is the concept of “the Middle Ages” and of “medieval art” itself?

More significant still for my present purposes, what if anything is the difference between medieval art history and medievalism as scholarly and pedagogical practices? The answer to this last question provided by scholars of medievalism is that they are much the same thing. Medievalism allows or even demands that we align our current scholarly trajectories with those of our predecessors, whether they are Robert Branner and Meyer Schapiro, or Viollet-le-Duc and Horace Walpole (if not Edmund Spenser and Torquato Tasso) as co-creators of the Middle Ages. Our current technologies for studying and teaching the Middle Ages—PowerPoint slides, digital simulations, computer modeling and imaging—are our technologies of re-presentation, much as the elevation or cross-section was to A.W.N. Pugin, or indeed, the Gothic novel was to Horace Walpole and Matthew Lewis. Our Middle Ages is likewise mediated by our own medievalist productions that allow us to imagine the period (Game of Thrones, Vikings, etc., etc.); and our Middle Ages, like our post-modern present, is increasingly queer, trans-national, post-colonial, and encompassing of many faiths. In thinking along these lines as teachers and scholars, we may thank Kathleen Biddick for reminding us that medievalists have a rich intellectual genealogy, and that embracing current “institutionalized” perspectives on medieval art and whitewashing or ignoring the apparently “pre-institutional” phase of Pugin, Walpole and others, whether in research or in our own teaching pedagogy is potentially harmful and obfuscatory.

As I sit and write this within the stunning Romanesque Revival building at Queen’s University that houses the

Figure 5. Poster for Kingdom of Heaven, dir. Ridley Scott, 2005.

Department of Art History and Art Conservation, I do so as a “medievalist art historian” who believes that his task as a teacher is to explore the Middle Ages with my students both in and out of time (so to speak). This does not mean that the Middle Ages did not happen or are inexplicable as a period in themselves; rather, it insists that the Middle Ages is not ossified in the past but remains one of the dominant ideas of the Western tradition in which we teach and learn.

Matthew M. Reeve
Queen’s University

**Buried Treasures: The Treasury at San Isidoro in León**

The treasury at San Isidoro in León (Spain) holds a rich collection of objects from the central Middle Ages. Comprised of ivories, precious metals, and textiles, these works form the centerpiece of a new international research project, *The Medieval Treasury across Frontiers and Generations: The Kingdom of León-Castilla in the Context of Muslim-Christian Interchange* (c. 1050-1200). A team of scholars from Spain, the US, the UK, and Italy is about to embark on a study of these luxury objects, investigating the acquisition of Christian- and Islamic-made pieces in conjunction with each other rather


than studying them in isolation, as has generally been the case until now. Historians, art historians, archaeologists, and museum conservators will focus on the different materials from Islamic and Christian lands, together with the Latin chronicles and charters associated with them, the Arabic sources for a historical study of cross-border interchange, and the roles of mothers and daughters in the development of this treasury. To support this research, funding is currently being sought from several Spanish and US institutions.

As is well known, the creation of a medieval treasury provides a material witness that reveals the interests, possibilities, and aspirations of those who established it. In the written record, there is extensive evidence of the multiple uses made of treasuries by queens and kings during the central Middle Ages. Luxury objects with great intrinsic value became even more valuable when turned to sacred use. Beyond pious donations to favored churches, treasuries could function as a source of gifts for allies, which bound them with obligations; prestigious possessions for an owner's ostentation before an elite audience; or financial reserves that could be made use of in times of want. Pieces made of precious metals, like the Andalusi silver gilt and niello box in Figure 1, served to store wealth in the form of silver and gold until the need for liquidity arose.

In a typical act, it is recorded that Queen Urraca of León-Castilla gave the town of Conturiz in 1112 to the Cathedral of Lugo in exchange for “one hundred silver marks in sacred altar ornaments” to be used for her soldiers’ salaries. A generation earlier, Urraca’s father Alfonso VI had ceded several villages to his sister, the infanta Urraca, setting them under her rule and freeing them from the obligation of paying tribute to the royal fisc. In exchange, the king received from her an “adorra,” a tunic woven with gold, which was said to be purchased for two thousand pieces of gold. Chronicles and documents from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries describe the changing circumstances of precious metals and textiles woven or embroidered with gold, making clear not only the great importance that these works had for royal and ecclesiastic self-presentation, but also for the economy of the powerful.

Although there is an ample bibliography on the medieval treasuries of France, Germany, Italy, and England, Spain has not yet received the same level of scholarly attention. And this despite the fact that a site like San Isidoro still holds major artworks that were made expressly for it in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, such as the well-known reliquary of San Isidoro, lined by a gold and silk embroidery (Figures 2a, b, c) or the chalice of Urraca (Figure 3—recently hailed as the Holy Grail itself!).

Other pieces, such as the magnificent cross of Fernando and Sancha (Figure 4—today in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional), are of such high caliber that they have ended up in major museums in Madrid, Paris, and New York. It is true that, despite a strong presence in written sources, few medieval treasuries from the Iberian Peninsula have come down to us in a more-or-less intact state. Rather, sumptuary goods are usually found dispersed among various museums or private collections—in the best of cases—or utterly lost in the worst. For this reason, the royal monastery of San Isidoro in León, with its substantial treasury from the central Middle Ages, offers a most uncommon set of circumstances for interdisciplinary investigation. At San Isidoro, the material reality of luxury objects can be analyzed together with an extensive archive including documents, chronicles, and miracles that make reference to the treasury. For its abundance of both high-quality artworks and written sources, the treasury of San Isidoro functions in the present project as a jumping-off point to examine larger questions about Iberia during the central Middle Ages.

One question to be addressed is whether a treasury like San Isidoro’s reflects more the accidents of survival or the deliberate preservation of highly prized pieces. If the latter, is it significant that of the seven luxury objects from San Isidoro inscribed with the names of donors, five record the names of women while two name a male-female pair, but none bears a man’s name alone?

The five objects with a woman’s name are the above-noted chalice of the infanta Urraca (c. 1067, Figure 3), a lost crucifix also of the infanta Urraca with both her name and her repoussé figure kneeling in prayer (before 1101; documented by J. Manzano, 1732), the portable altar of the infanta Sancha (1144), and the tablet-woven stole and maniple with gold embroidery of Queen
Leonor (1197 and 1198). The inscription on the textiles reads: + ALIENOR REGINA CASTELLE FILIA + HENRICI REGIS ANGLIE ME FECIT + SVB ERA MCCXXXV [MCCXXXVI] ANNOS +. For this pair of liturgical textiles, we do not know if the queen claimed a role as maker because she put her own hand to the stuff, or because she donated the materials and commissioned the work.

The royal couple Sancha and Fernando left their names on the aforementioned ivory crucifix (c. 1063, Figure 4) and on a once-splendid reliquary with ivory plaques (1059). The inscription in gold on the latter was lost when Napoleon’s troops sacked San Isidoro, but it had been recorded by Ambrosio de Morales in 1572. A similar pattern of naming can be seen in four illuminated manuscripts from the eleventh century at San Isidoro: one bears Queen Sancha’s name alone (with her daughter the infanta Urraca’s added later); in a second Sancha’s name is paired with her son Sancho’s; in a third Fernando and Sancha appear in parallel; and in the fourth, Sancha appears prominently in both colophon and donor portrait as the conceiver of this book as a gift to her husband. In sum, the striking presence of women’s names on eleventh- and twelfth-century objects at San Isidoro is a matter to be investigated in this study to determine if it is particular to León or indicative of a larger phenomenon.

One of my overall goals for the project is that members of the team from different specializations, especially across the art history/history and Latin/Arabic divides, will learn from each other and be able to incorporate new areas of research into their own work. I am interested in taking further the issue of interchange of luxury goods across frontiers, so a question that I will be posing is what might...
be found in the Arabic sources about Christian goods in Andalusi hands—no objects survive that I know of, which means that we are dependent on written sources to tell us if a parallel sort of collecting occurred on both sides of the border. I also hope to trace the ways by which Andalusi, Fatimid, and Sicilian objects arrived in northern Iberia; beyond trade, gifts, or booty, what more might both documentary and visual sources have to tell us? Finally, the treasury at San Isidoro boasts an extraordinary number of ivories (made in León, Córdoba, Egypt, and Sicily), and I would like to know what can be learned about the movement of both raw and worked ivory, as well as the movement of the sculptors themselves. These and other questions being pursued by the different members of the team will be addressed at an interdisciplinary conference to be held at Princeton University in May, 2017.

Therese Martin, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid

ICMA Opportunities

Calls for non-ICMA sponsored papers, fellowship opportunities, exhibition and conference announcements are now posted to the website and social media, where they are available to members in a format that is timelier than the triannual Newsletter. Visit our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/InternationalCenterofMedievalArt), and follow ICMA on Twitter. ICMA members can also share calls-for-papers, conferences, lectures, grants, employment opportunities and other news that benefits the medieval art community on the Community News page of the ICMA website: http://medievalart.org/community/

Call for Submissions to the “Encounters” Series in Gesta

ICMA members are invited to submit short “Encounters” (approximately 1500 words) for possible publication in Gesta. Inaugurated in 2013 (Gesta 52, no. 1), these are personal pieces that recount an important or formative encounter the author has had with a (deceased) medieval art historian, a monument of medieval art/architecture, or both together. Forthcoming Encounters include Caroline Walker Bynum on the beguine cradle at the Met and Mary Carruthers on a cloister capital from Moissac. All thoughtful contributions will be considered, including those from junior scholars. The editors are happy to respond to any queries at gesta@medievalart.org. Encounters may be submitted via the Editorial Manager system at http://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/journals/journal/ges.html.

Call for Submissions for the New ICMA Book Prize

The ICMA is pleased to announce the inauguration of an annual book prize for the best single-authored, printed book on any topic in medieval art.

The prize is international and ICMA membership is not required for consideration. The book must be in one of the following languages: English, French, Spanish, Italian, or German.

Books published in 2016 will be considered for the 2017 prize.

Presses should send a copy of the book directly to each jury member. (Contact Ryan Frisinger, ryan@medievalart.org for names and addresses). For self-nominations, send

Figure 4. Cross of Fernando and Sancha, Ivory, c. 1063. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid. (Photo: José Luis Senra.)
five copies of the book (or one hard copy and an emailed pdf) to Ryan Frisinger, International Center of Medieval Art, The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park, New York, NY 10040.

For questions contact: Nino Zchomelidse, nzchome1@jhu.edu

**Call for Submissions for the ICMA Graduate Student Essay Award**

The International Center of Medieval Art wishes to announce its annual Graduate Student Essay Award for the best essay by a student member of the ICMA. The theme or subject of the essay may be any aspect of medieval art, and can be drawn from current research. The work must be original and should not have been published elsewhere. The winner will receive a prize of $400.

Thanks to the generosity of one of our members, we are now be able to offer a second prize as well, of $200. The donor of this prize has suggested that “special consideration be given to those papers that incorporate some discussion of the interconnections among medieval science, technology, and art.” Although the prize will by no means be restricted to papers that address this theme, papers that do so will be given special attention by the selection committee.

The deadline for submission is 1 March 2016. The winners will be announced at the ICMA meeting in Kalamazoo in May.

Applicants must submit:

1. An article-length paper (maximum 30 pages, not including footnotes) following the editorial guidelines of our journal Gesta.
2. Each submission must also include a 250-word abstract written in English regardless of the language of the rest of the paper.
3. A curriculum vitae.

Students must be current members of the ICMA for their essays to be considered.

All submissions are to be sent as PDF attachments to Ryan Frisinger, at awards@medievalart.org. The winning essay will be chosen by members of the ICMA Grants and Awards Committee, which is chaired by our Vice-President.

---

**Call for Applications for the ICMA Graduate Student Travel Award**

The ICMA has initiated a new form of grant for graduate students in the early stages of their dissertation research. Three grants will be awarded this year, at $3,000 each, to enable a student to travel to Europe (including the Eastern Mediterranean) to visit the monuments or museum objects or manuscripts on which the dissertation will be based. The grant is designed to cover one month of travel.

The grant is designed primarily for the student who has finished the preliminary exams, and is in the process of formulating a dissertation topic. Students who have already submitted a proposal, but are still very early on in the process of their research, may also apply. **All applicants must be ICMA members.**

Other application requirements (also available at [http://www.medievalart.org/student-travel-grants/](http://www.medievalart.org/student-travel-grants/)).

1. Outline of the thesis proposal in 800 words or less.
2. Detailed outline of exactly what the student would like to see on his/her travels, and how this relates to the proposed thesis topic.
3. Proposed budget (airfare, lodging, other travel, per diem).
4. Letter from the thesis advisor, clarifying where the student stands in his/her graduate career, and explaining the relevance of the trip to the thesis.

Upon return, the student will be required to submit a letter and financial report to the ICMA and a narrative to the student section of the Newsletter. **Applications are due by 1 March 2016.** The ICMA will announce the winners of the three grants by 13 May 2016.

Please submit materials as PDF attachments to Ryan Frisinger at awards@medievalart.org.

**Calls for ICMA-Sponsored Session Proposals**

Association of Art Historians (UK), 2017

The International Center of Medieval Art (ICMA) seeks proposals for sessions to be held under the organization’s sponsorship in 2017 at the Association of Art Historians.
annual meeting to be held 6-8 April 2017 at Loughborough University near Nottingham, England. Proposals to the ICMA must include a session abstract and a CV of the organizer(s).

Please note the following:

- The AAH does not require a slate of speakers; the AAH will generate a CFP once sessions have been selected. Therefore the ICMA will not request a slate of speakers.
- The ICMA requires the CVs of the session organizers, but the AAH does not.
- Session organizers and speakers must be ICMA members but are not required to become AAH members. However, AAH members receive a preferential conference rate.
- Sessions at the AAH conference are built of 70-minute blocks, with a minimum of two blocks per session, up to four blocks in a day. Each block consists of two papers of 25 minutes plus 10 minutes of questions for each paper. The ICMA seeks to sponsor one session of two 70-minute blocks (four papers).

Thanks to a generous grant from the Kress Foundation, funds may be available to defray travel costs of sponsored session speakers. Please direct all session proposals and inquiries by 3 April 2016 to the Chair of the Programs Committee: Janis Elliott, School of Art, Texas Tech University. Email: janis.elliott@ttu.edu

The ICMA Programs and Lectures committee will select a session to sponsor and will notify the successful organizer(s) by 12 April 2016. The organizer(s) will then submit the ICMA-sponsored proposal to the AAH, which will make the final decision. Submit session proposals to the AAH by 18 April 2016 at AAH2017@lboro.ac.uk following the guidelines posted on the AAH website: http://www.aah.org.uk/annual-conference/2017-conference

**Student Committee Pages**

The student committee pages provide a forum for early career medievalists to voice their interests and concerns, to serve as a vehicle to introduce themselves both to other student members and to the larger membership of the ICMA. Many thanks to Student Committee Newsletter Liaison, Lehti Keelmann, for her role in soliciting features for this section.

---

**ICMA Student Committee Update**

As 2015 draws to a close, the ICMA Student Committee is excited about its upcoming initiatives for 2016. Early in the year, we will be promoting the ICMA Graduate Travel Grants, which fund three students during their summer research, and the ICMA Student Essay prize, which offers a cash prize for the best student essay. Keep an eye out for updates starting in January! We also anticipate two fantastic ICMA Student Committee panels for the 2016 Leeds and Kalamazoo congresses. Our student presenters include Dustin Aaron (Courtauld Institute of Art, London), Andrew Sears (University of California, Berkeley), Laura Tillery (University of Pennsylvania), Amy Jeffs (University of Cambridge), and Julia Gogoleva (University of Zurich).

The Student Committee is also now taking self-nominations for the committee membership through our website: http://www.medievalart.org/student-committee/. We are looking specifically to replace a number of committee positions, so let us know if you are interested in any role in particular! If you have any questions, please email our Membership Officer, Ashley Paolozzi: ashley.paolozzi@queensu.ca

---

Jennifer Grayburn  
PhD candidate, University of Virginia  
ICMA Student Committee Chair
ICMA Student Travel Grant Reports

Kaelin Jewell, PhD Candidate, Temple University

During August 2015, I had the absolute pleasure of conducting on-site research in Italy and Croatia for my dissertation project, “Architectural Decorum and Aristocratic Power in Late Antiquity: The gens Anicii.” Generously funded by the ICMA’s Graduate Student Travel Grant, I spent two and a half weeks travelling almost non-stop through the upper Adriatic and the last week and a half in Rome.

I began my research in Venice, where I investigated the architectural spolia from Constantinople that is now on display throughout the city, most notably on the façade of San Marco. (Figure 1) This material came from a variety of Constantinopolitan churches and palaces in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade of 1204 CE. While all of this sculpture is of interest to me as I attempt to understand the architectural mechanics of power in late antiquity, it is the two large pillars found in the Piazzetta that are of particular interest to my research on the Anicii family. These pillars, traditionally thought to have arrived from Crusader Acre, were identified with the sixth-century Church of St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople, built by a prominent member of the Anicii family, after identical sculpture was discovered in archaeological excavations in Istanbul during the 1960s. Having the opportunity to spend several days in Venice allowed me to document fully these pillars and other directa membra of St. Polyeuktos found elsewhere in the city.

From Venice, I travelled by ferry to Croatia where I explored the late antique and early medieval remains of Pula and Poreč, cities located on the country’s Istrian peninsula. Research in Poreč was particularly fruitful, as I was able to spend an entire day photographically documenting the town’s Basilica Eufrasiana, large portions of which are roughly contemporary to St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople and San Vitale in Ravenna. (Figure 2)

Once my work was complete in Croatia, I made my way back to Italy. After a short stay in Trieste and a visit to the early Christian remains of San Giusto and the adjacent Civico Museo di Storia ed Arte, I spent two wonderful days in Aquileia. There I was able to make multiple visits to their medieval basilica complex, which is built over the remains of an earlier fourth-century double basilica, which can be seen in the expansive floor mosaics that are visible to the public. After a quick afternoon trip to Aquileia’s ancient port city of Grado, I made my way south to Ravenna.

I spent five research-filled days in Ravenna, where I visited the city’s most important late antique and early Byzantine monuments, all of which are contemporary to major Anicii-commissioned projects. These included San Giovanni Evangelista, Sant’Apollinare Nuovo, Sant’Apollinare in Classe, and, of course, San Vitale. Each of these buildings

Figure 1. “Pilastri Acriani,” architectural sculpture from Constantinople’s St. Polyeuktos, ca. 520s CE, Piazzetta San Marco, Venice (Photo: Kaelin Jewell.)

Figure 2. Basilica Eufrasiana, ca. mid-6th c. CE, Poreč, Croatia (Photo: Kaelin Jewell.)

Continued on page 18
figure prominently in my dissertation and the chance to examine their architectural fabric up close was invaluable. In addition to these exciting site visits, I also spent significant time in Ravenna’s museum collections, including the Museo Arcivescovile and the Museo Nazionale. It was at the Museo Nazionale that I encountered one of the highlights of the entire research trip: the original, sixth-century bronze cross that topped San Vitale. (Figure 3) Displayed alongside a mosaic fragment of an angel and a chancel barrier also from San Vitale, this monumental bronze cross provides interesting evidence for a portion of the original exterior appearance of the building—an aspect of monumental architecture that I am exploring in my dissertation.

My travels ended in Rome, where I had ten days to consult museum collections, numerous churches, and archaeological parks for material evidence of Anicii patronage. As a result, I made several important discoveries, which have opened up new avenues of dissertation research that include the monuments of the Celian Hill and those found along the Via Latina. Because my work considers the socio-political implications of architectural space, it was essential that I visit and experience these monuments first hand and I would like personally to thank Nancy Ševčenko, Ryan Frisinger, and the ICMA as a whole, for making this fantastic opportunity possible!

**Joseph Williams, PhD Candidate, Duke University**

Between June and July of 2015, with the blessing of an ICMA graduate student travel grant, I visited Italy and Croatia to develop a project that depends heavily on fieldwork and interpersonal engagement in Europe. My dissertation, tentatively titled *Architecture as Practice and Production in the Medieval Mediterranean: the Church of S. Corrado in Molfetta (ca. 1185-1303)*, is a case study of the “old cathedral” of Molfetta, in coastal Apulia, a building known for its heterogeneous form (combining a towered facade with multiple domes) and eclectic decoration (including Islamicate interlaced arches and local “archi lunati”). My study zeroes in on the diversity of architectural techniques and constructive processes present at this church, which I parse using the tools of *archéologie du bâti* (archaeology of wall construction). On the basis of a more granular, practice-oriented understanding of the building than is offered by traditional formal analysis, I draw comparisons to contemporary monuments, both local and foreign, in an attempt to situate Molfetta in relation to the specific productive systems by which men, materials, and architectural knowledge were brought together at the site. The building emerges as a product not only of local building traditions, such as quarry-based stone-cutting techniques, but also of practices that circulated through a larger, seaborne web of relations, such as the structural concepts and assembly methods of traveling master masons.

By visiting three locations, Molfetta (Italy), the island of Krk (Croatia), and Rome, I had the opportunity to commence my archaeological analysis of the cathedral, participate in an international conference about the medieval history of the Adriatic, and expand my bibliography in peerless research libraries. The ICMA, in encouraging me to combine multiple opportunities in a single visit, helped me to integrate the physical evidence of the site with the search for historical contexts and systems.

When researching the cathedral, I was allowed to visit all parts of the church to take photographs, make charcoal sketches, and execute measurements and molding profiles. Joined at the building by art historians from the Department of the Science of Antiquity and Late Antiquity at the University of Bari “Aldo Moro,” I learned to see the church not as a static fait accompli, but rather, to quote one scholar, as a “layered onion” of interventions, consisting of outer layers, such as the 20th-century restoration of the west facade, and inner ones, such as the unfinished 12th-century crypt. These interventions could be studied by examining palimpsests and variations in wall surfaces, or by recognizing shifts in the units of measurement. The discovery of a stratified building process allowed me to draw specific comparisons with nearby monuments in Barletta, Trani, Giovinazzo, and Bari, and sometimes identify links in a network of production. For example, the cathedrals
of the neighboring towns Molfetta and Giovinazzo are a unique pair on the Apulian coast, as both buildings feature facades with interlaced arcades. A closer look at these arcades reveals that in both cases, the stereotomy (geometry of stones) changed over time. There is a period of congruence between the techniques of the ateliers of each building, as well as a period of divergence, suggesting a mix of conditions that first permitted, then undermined, a sharing of methods.

The need to ground comparisons and theoretical connections in the details of the particular was a recurrent theme during my research travel, and it was reinforced by my experience attending an international conference. Held in Krk, Croatia, by the École Française de Rome, and entitled Les sources pour l’histoire de l’Adriatique orientale (IVe-XVe siècle): Textes, archives, archéologie, the conference was structured in the following way: junior scholars and graduate students presented case studies grouped into sessions by the types of primary evidence under consideration, while more established scholars presided as respondents. The latter, after hearing the papers, drew connections between them and posed thematic or systems-oriented questions. My paper on the architectonic decoration of Molfetta, and its possible ties with the architecture of the Dalmatian coast, formed a group with two other architectural and archaeological papers. The respondents pointed out that all three papers contributed to an understanding of the Adriatic region as a site of contact between the building traditions of the Latin West and the Byzantine East. The format of the conference also encouraged a comparison of like approaches. One of my co-panelists presented an illuminating study applying the French method of archéologie du bâti to the study of an Albanian church. Her paper introduced me to a number of recent innovations in construction archaeology, a method I had recently begun to engage in relation to my own research on Molfetta Cathedral.

The final weeks of my travel were spent in the unique research libraries of Rome, where I concentrated on readings suggested to me by art historians in Apulia and conference-goers in Krk. The trove of regional journals available in Rome, at libraries such as the Hertziana, the American Academy, the Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo, and the École Française, presented the opportunity to properly situate my site in relation to larger systems. It was my first time perusing many of these journals, and in cases where I happened to be familiar with a particular title, it was refreshing to access it directly rather than order it from an offsite location or use an electronic version. Because the relevant literature was present in the stacks, the process of finding cited sources and exploring leads was swift and dynamic. For example, I spent one day in the Hertziana Library reading a series of publications in the Collection de l’École française, all discussing the urbanization of the Southern Italian borders of the Byzantine Empire in the tenth century: an important historical condition affecting the layouts of the cathedral precincts of Molfetta and contemporary cities. The concentration of relevant materials in the Hertziana permitted flexible and spontaneous research, abetting my goal of relating the particularities of my subject to other case studies and to broader patterns.

This travel grant allowed my dissertation to progress on two fronts at once: that of site analysis and documentation, and that of comparison and explanation. Key to the success of these agendas was my ability to pursue both at once, by engaging in different modes of research—looking, reading, and conversing—over the course of a single itinerary. Studying my subject in three different locations was equally vital. Much like the diverse body of architectural practice that makes up Molfetta Cathedral, the resources and perspectives needed to understand it are not rooted in one place, but dispersed across a larger geography.

The Report of ICMA student travel grant winner Bevin Butler will appear in the April, 2016 Newsletter.

Figure 1. Molfetta. The “Old Cathedral,” or Church of S. Corrado. (Photo: Joseph Williams.).
How does a cobalt glass cup discovered in Japan’s imperial treasure house inform our understanding of the medieval world? Once a year in autumn, the Nara National Museum in Japan organizes a special exhibition showcasing the collection of the Shōsōin Repository (hereafter Shōsōin), the imperial treasure house located in the Tōdaiji Temple in the city of Nara (Figure 1). Built in 756, the treasure house contains priceless artifacts of exquisite quality from different parts of the medieval world, ranging from glass cups of possibly Roman, Byzantine, or Persian (Sassanid) origin (Figure 2), Persian brocade, Indian sandalwood, to game boards, mirrors, musical instruments, and furniture from medieval China. These artifacts were transmitted to Japan via diplomats, merchants, and monks that traversed across the Silk Road. The collection not only underscores the extent of global exchanges in people, ideas, and objects in medieval times, but also sheds light on a connective history of the medieval worlds where political centers and peripheries, or even the very concept of “East” or “West,” were constantly reshaped and negotiated. Affiliated with the Institute for Research in Humanities in Kyoto University, this year I had the opportunity to visit the 67th Shōsōin annual exhibition, which informs my research on the discourses surrounding the treasure house and its impact on the historiography of medieval art history.

The Japanese curatorial world has long been invested in positioning the country’s artistic development beyond the perimeter of East Asia. The 2003 exhibition entitled Alexander the Great: East-West Cultural Contacts from Greece to Japan at the Tokyo National Museum, for example, ambitiously seeks to chart the multiple trajectories under which Greco-Roman sculptural motifs and aesthetics conditioned the development of Buddhist art across the Silk Road. In particular, statues and reliefs from the region of Gandhāra...
These issues are particularly relevant in the portrayal of Shōsōin, whose collection is often mobilized to reinforce the image of the Silk Road as one that fostered peaceful exchanges across cultures. Yet, the collecting habits of Japan’s imperial court were driven more by the urgency to compete with political rivalries over material wealth than a curiosity towards foreign culture. Especially in the Heian Period (794-1185), coastal cities like Daizaifu (in modern-day Fukuoka Prefecture), which rose to prominence in the eighth century through access to international trade, maintained certain political and economic independence from the imperial court. As such, the exotic objects amassed at Shōsōin might indicate the court’s anxiety in maintaining proper control and interpretation of foreign goods and ideas that were considered disruptive to its political and religious foundations. The court’s uneasy relationship with the outside world culminated in the year 894 when it abolished the dispatch of official envoys to China. Such a shift from a politics of inclusion to one of self-imposed seclusion thereby challenges the validity of Shōsōin as a nodal point of international exchange.

Moreover, it seems more likely that the edifice was originally constructed for storing military supplies. As Yoshimizu Tsuneo observed, at times of civil wars over imperial succession, different political factions occupied Shōsōin for its large caches of arms and medicine. In its first official inventory compiled in 756, over two-thirds of the items listed were not used primarily for artistic reason, and thereby it raises questions on how and when the storehouse became associated exclusively with the development of art, and on what grounds were items added or removed in subsequent centuries. Given the lack of uniform purpose underneath the collection as a whole, it is crucial not only to reexamine critically the modern discourses surrounding Shōsōin, but also to delineate how individual items were appropriated across times to negotiate identities and Japan’s place in the world.

Taken together, the Shōsōin collection complicates the geographical and temporal perimeters for the study of medieval art. Its afterlives also compel us to address the impact of modernity in the understanding of medieval times, and the role of curatorial practices in ascribing artistic values to its collection. Rather than being the end point of cultural exchanges, Shōsōin affords us a new departure point for reconceiving the potential and limit of writing a connective history of medieval worlds.

Chun Wa Chan
PhD Candidate, University of Michigan

Continued on page 22
Perspectives on “Liturgical Textiles of the Post-Byzantine World”

A new installation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art explores the formulation of Christian identity in the wake of the Byzantine Empire through the lens of rarely-displayed ecclesiastical fabrics. “Liturgical Textiles of the Post-Byzantine World” features sacramental fabrics and fragments of vestments that were created between the 15th and 18th centuries across Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The installation was guest-curated by CUNY Byzantinist Warren Woodfin in collaboration with the Antonio Ratti Textile Center and succinctly explores the increasingly multi-cultural influences that were incorporated into ecclesiastical garments after the conquest of Constantinople by Ottoman Turks in 1453.

“Liturgical Textiles” showcases many objects that have not been displayed in living memory because they fall between the traditional scopes of the Met’s curatorial departments. The installation is comprised of 15 objects from the departments of Medieval Art and the Cloisters, Islamic Art, and European Sculpture and Decorative Arts; however, as post-medieval, Christian, non-Western works they fall between the Met’s current categorizations. Consequently, the temporary show provides an exceptional opportunity to view these works as a collective, cohesive group and to reflect on the evolution of liturgical garments after the Byzantine Empire.

From the first centuries of Christianity, the Late Antique tunic was adopted as the traditional garb for Christian clergy. However, by the fourth century, elements were added to this simple robe, sticharion, and outer cloak, phelonion, to distinguish between clerical ranks. The show begins with a display of ornately embroidered patches and elements that were affixed to clerical robes over the thigh, knee, or cuff or attached to liturgical stoles.

These embroidered fabrics were made in contexts such as Moscow, Greece, and Georgia and incorporate far-reaching styles into their designs. For example, one pair of ornate crosses created in Constantinople at the turn of the 18th century demonstrates the eastern spread of the Baroque style through Venice and shows the easy appropriation of Catholic imagery into Eastern Orthodox use (Figure 1). Elsewhere, a 15th century Georgian chalice cover incorporates Arabic, Georgian, and Greek script around the figures of Christ, angels, and seraphim highlighting the complex exchange of languages in the region at that time.

The second section of the installation focuses on the Orthodox use of Ottoman silks made from the fifteenth century in Istanbul and Bursa. These textiles incorporate Christian motifs such as crosses, seraphim, and the figures of Mary and Jesus and were imported as luxury goods into Orthodox regions. Even where Ottoman fabrics were not themselves used, post-Byzantine textiles incorporated typically Ottoman motifs such as the tulip, saz leaf, and carnations. This is particularly evident on the yoke of a liturgical robe made in the 17th century in Russia, which features both tulip and saz designs in gold-wrapped silk thread (Figure 2).

Although the installation takes place in a single gallery located outside of the Ratti Textile Center, it neatly communicates the continued prestige of textiles created after the fall of the Byzantine Empire. In addition to displaying a rich and diverse group of liturgical fabrics, it demonstrates meaningful cross-cultural interactions with recourse to
Western engravings and images of Ottoman paintings and Turkish textiles. Although these comparisons underline Orthodox Christians’ desire to incorporate outside influences to enhance their liturgical textiles, the installation has the additional effect of highlighting the perseverance of the central forms of Byzantine liturgical dress even after the fall of the empire.

Katherine Werwie  
Kress Interpretive Fellow at the Worcester Art Museum

Figure 2. Yoke of a Phelonion (Chasuble), Russia, 17th century, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.157

Contributors

Chun Wa Chan, Janis Elliot, Ryan Frisinger, Eliza Garrison, Jennifer Grayburn, Kaelin Jewell, Nathan Leidholm, Sherry Lindquist, George Makris, Janet Marquardt, Therese Martin, Matthew Reeve, Nancy Ševčenko, Foteini Spingou, Christine B. Verzar, Katherine Werwie, Joseph Williams