FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

Warm greetings to all of you, as we enter the winter season. December is the time to renew your membership: just follow the easy instructions on the website and rejoin for 2017: http://www.medievalart.org/become-a-member. The election of new Officers and Directors is also under way: the deadline for casting your online ballot is December 31.

This issue of the ICMA Newsletter will be the last edited by Sherry Lindquist. Sherry has done a magnificent job keeping up with news in the medieval field and bringing it to us, commissioning thoughtful essays, and encouraging contributions and reports from many members. Access to the Newsletter has become one of the most valued benefits of a membership in the ICMA. Sherry has a worthy successor in Heidi Gearhart, who will take over in February; in the meantime, thanks to Sherry on behalf of the entire membership.

The ICMA has been active in a variety of scholarly events this fall. Larry Nees kindly agreed to repeat his Courtauld lecture, "Reading and Seeing: The Beginnings of Book Illumination and the Modern Discourse on Ethnicity," delivered last winter in London, to an audience at the University of Pennsylvania in September. There it was videotaped, and can be viewed online through the ICMA website. We sponsored a keynote talk by Bob Ousterhout at the Byzantine Studies Conference held this October at Cornell University; Bob spoke on “The Enigma of Cappadocia.” We also sponsored speakers at the three-day conference held in Boston in November in conjunction with the manuscript exhibition, “Beyond Words: Illuminated Manuscripts in Boston Collections.” The Forsyth and Stahl funds will support lectures this coming year by Jacqueline Jung and Barbara Boehm in Oregon and Arkansas respectively. And the ICMA is currently exploring a way to send a lecturer annually from the US to a consortium of museums in Europe. But for that, funding must first be found! Please help us get this project off the ground!

There have been several highly successful membership events as well. At the huge international congress of Byzantinists, which meets in a different country every five years, the Belgrade organizers from the Serbian Academy of Sciences and the university department of art history not only offered the ICMA space for a reception but provided the drinks and hors d’oeuvres; the ICMA was also invited to participate in a panel on research institutions, an honor for us. For this generous treatment, we are extremely grateful. Other membership events this fall have included a reception in November at the Cleveland Museum of Art following a special visit to the Gothic Table Fountain, led by Stephen Fliegel and Elina Gertsman,
From the President
(continued)

and celebratory drinks for the participants in the two-
day study day being offered at the end of November
by Gerhard Lutz at the Metropolitan Museum and the
Walters Art Museum.

The largest event of this fall was our evening celebration
of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the ICMA
in America. Held at the home of the Cultural Services
of the French Embassy, the Payne-Whitney mansion on
Fifth Avenue across from the Met, the reception featured
a group of musicians led by Laurie Monahan from Tapestry
in Boston, performing early music that included pieces
about Jerusalem and music composed for the Lusignan
court on Cyprus. Those who came enjoyed talking with
colleagues, eating and drinking (brilliantly orchestrated
by Ryan Frisinger, our Operations Manager), and hearing
these truly remarkable musicians. Immediately before the
reception, about 50 ICMA members had been treated to
two enlightening tours of the Metropolitan's exhibition
“Jerusalem 1000-1400: Every People under Heaven,” by the
curators of the exhibition, Barbara Boehm and Melanie
Holcomb. Warm thanks to Barbara and Melanie for taking
on such a double dose at the end of a long working week.

The Publications Committee will very soon be announc-
ing the establishment of a new cutting edge monograph
series. Supported by the Steven Scher Fund of the ICMA,
the series will be entitled “ICMA Books: Viewpoints”;
Beate Fricke and Aden Kumler will serve as its joint edi-
tors. With that major initiative achieved, Betsy Sears will
now step down as Chair of the Publications Committee
in February. No one could have worked harder and more
loyally on behalf of the ICMA than Betsy: it was she who
arranged our marriage with the University of Chicago
Press, and she who has brought this exciting new series
into being. I am delighted to report that Alexa Sand has
agreed to take over as the next Chair, and so, though
Betsy will be sorely missed, the future is bright!

Another innovative project has been realized this fall,
namely the Lordship and Commune: A Collaboratory, an
interactive digital website set up to create a dialogue
around the work of the late Barbara Abou El-Haj on the
cathedrals of Reims and Amiens in their medieval and
modern contexts. The site was created by Nina Rowe and
her team, working with our Projects Manager Danielle
Oteri. All are to be congratulated for the preparation of
the material and the expertise to make it work online as
an invaluable resource for teaching.

Gesta gets more impressive with each issue. Adam Cohen
and Linda Safran, who have served as its Editors for nearly
four years now, have streamlined the handling of the
manuscripts, kept the journal on schedule, maintained its
high standards and steadily broadened its scope. Though
hard to believe, it is already time for new editors to be
sought: you should have received an email notice from
Betsy Sears calling for nominations. Please do respond.
The new Editor(s) will start shadowing Adam and Linda
this coming summer, and will take over in early 2019.

Incidentally, the University of Chicago Press, our pub-
lisher for Gesta, has been incredibly responsive to our
desire to have publicity items to circulate at gatherings
such as these, and have generously mailed heavy boxes
of materials to ICMA events all around the world.

I would like to remind each of you to make sure your
library has bought the latest ICMA publication: Volume
III of the Census of Gothic Sculpture in America edited by
Joan Holladay and Susan Ward. If there are scholarly
occasions at which you think the volume could be dis-
played, do please let us know.

The winner of the first ICMA Book Prize will be
announced at the annual meeting of the ICMA in New
York in February. The jurors had many volumes to read,
and we appreciate the time that they have devoted to the
task of reading them all and reaching a decision.

I am happy to announce that the Kress research and pub-
lication grants for 2016 have been awarded to Katherine
Boivin, Christopher Lakey, Amy Neff, Anneliese Renck

The early music group, Tapestry, performs at the ICMA 60th Anniversary
celebration at the home of the Cultural Services of French Embassy, New
York City.
and Anne L. Williams. A few deadlines are coming up for other ICMA activities: March 1 is the deadline for submissions for the Student Essay Prize, AND for the student travel grant applications. Reports from the students who were awarded the travel grants for 2016 on their research and accompanying adventures are to be found in the Student Committee pages of this Newsletter and in the forthcoming April issue.

Finally, a word from the Finance Committee. A subcommittee was established last year, with David Ward at its head, to explore how the ICMA can be more ethically and environmentally responsible in its investments. The subcommittee developed a number of guidelines, and Barry Gross, the manager of our assets at Morgan Stanley, has been instructed to seek out socially responsible investments and to screen our current holdings for companies dealing in weapons-making or with poor environmental records.

As the irony sinks in—the fact that the stock market is surging (welcome news for our endowment) just when it would seem that the values promoted by our organization are being fundamentally challenged—I urge us to hold fast to our faith in the relevance of the past, in the value of beauty and the beauty of truth, and to our vision of the humanities as a perpetual force for good.

All best wishes for 2017.

Sincerely,

Sherry C.M. Lindquist

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A Note From the Newsletter Editor

This is my final issue as editor of the ICMA Newsletter. I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to the many collaborators who contributed to the endeavor over the past three years. In particular, I thank my predecessor, Martha Easton, who fostered the new digital format, and graciously mentored me through my first issues. Our outgoing president, Nancy Ševčenko, is always wonderful work with, and she often made helpful suggestions and observations. It was a pleasure also to work with the dedicated medievalists who submitted news, updates, commemorations, reports, and photos. I would especially like to thank those who wrote feature articles, taking time out of very busy schedules to offer their wise and lively insights into topics of interest to ICMA members. Among the contributors have been a number of graduate students whose perspectives have greatly enhanced the Newsletter. Student Committee members have been unfailingly professional in managing the Student Committee pages—thanks are due especially to Newsletter liaisons Lehti Keelmann and Alicia Cannizzo, as well as Student Committee chairs Jennifer Grayburn and Andrew Sears. I welcome our new editor, Heidi Gearhart, who already has the next issue well in hand. She is fortunate to be working with ICMA staff members Ryan Frisinger and Danielle Oteri, who shoulder the responsibility of formatting and distributing the Newsletter. For this and for many other aspects of the operation of our organization, we are greatly in their debt.

Sincerely,

Sherry C.M. Lindquist

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Report From the Membership Committee

Elina Gertsman and Stephen Fliegel host an ICMA tour of the exhibition “Myth and Mystique: Cleveland’s Gothic Table Fountain” at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The membership committee has had a busy summer and fall, with publicity for ICMA being circulated at a number of conferences. Sonja Drimmer was especially active this summer, representing ICMA at conferences on both sides of the Atlantic (London and New Haven). In the Fall, the ICMA was a sponsor of the very successful Beyond Words. Continued on page 4
REPORT FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE
(continued)

conference in conjunction with the exceptional exhibition of manuscripts in the Boston area.

The ICMA is further encouraging members to come together around the rich offering of medieval exhibitions this Fall. On November 10, 2016, Elina Gertsman and Stephen Fliegel hosted a membership event around the jewel-box exhibition they co-curated, examining the exceptional Gothic fountain at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Ohio area members assembled on a Friday afternoon for a guided tour of the exhibition, enlivened by several Case Western graduate students who had assisted in the Mellon-funded exhibition seminar. Afterwards, members assembled for a small cocktail reception in the museum’s Provenance bar to continue the conversation. See below for an account of the study days in New York and Baltimore resulting from ICMA’s partnership with Gerhard Lutz (Hildesheim Dommuseum)—no stranger to North American medievalists.

The Membership committee, continue to seek opportunities to spread the word about the ICMA to interested communities. If you have any ideas, or an opportunity that we might not know about, please do not hesitate to contact me directly: guerinsa@upenn.edu. If you are speaking at a conference where you think the ICMA could be broadcast, especially outside of North America, please be in touch! We will organize promotional materials to be sent, including recruitment flyers in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Japanese.

Submitted by
Sarah Guerin

On November 21 and 22, Study Day Medieval Art, the ICMA, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Walters Art Museum organized to have around 40 curators and ICMA members explore the exhibitions “Jerusalem 1000-1400: Every People Under Heaven” at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and “A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe,” at the Walters Art Museum, both open through 8 January 2017. This is the eleventh such event that Gerhard Lutz has organized for Study Day Medieval Art in conjunction with medieval art exhibitions in Europe and the U.S. Curators Barbara Drake Boehm and Melanie Holcomb kicked off the first study day in New York with a discussion of the Jerusalem exhibition’s themes and goals, and considerations driving the physical layout of the exhibition. After lunch, participants reconvened with the curators to discuss specific objects and their display in various sections of the exhibition. Members were especially interested in the challenges of mounting such a historic exhibition, and the day was marked by lively discussion. By the late afternoon, the group traveled by train and car to spend the night in Baltimore before the second study day at the Walters.

On November 22, participants began the day with an introduction to “A Feast for the Senses” by The Walters curator Joaneath Spicer and then viewed the exhibition. After lunch, musicologist Emma Dillon discussed the medieval concept of sound in conjunction with various objects on display in the show. The group then moved to the museum’s parlor, where Claudia Bolgia, Susan Weiss and Joaneath Spicer made short presentations and led further conversations on individual objects in the exhibition. The day concluded with a conference call with curator Martina Bagnoli (now in Modena, where she works as director of...
STUDY DAYS AT “JERUSALEM 1000-1400” AND “A FEAST FOR THE SENSES”  
(continued)  

The Galleria Estense). Martina shared her conception of the show, and the group was able to contrast its very different layout and feel with that of the Jerusalem exhibition, driven not only by the different subject matter but also by the contrasting sizes and layouts of the exhibition spaces at both institutions. The study days concluded with participants enlightened and enchanted by these two unique and beautiful shows.

Submitted by  
Melanie Hanan

The Lordship and Commune Project is an interactive web site based on Barbara Abou-El-Haj’s research on the cathedrals of Reims and Amiens and their social and political environments.

It is set up as a collaborative with questions to activate online discussion. We hope that ICMA members will take this opportunity to grapple with issues at the foundation of our field and encourage students to participate in the debate!

Web address: http://www.medievalart.org/lordship-and-commune

For questions about Lordship and Commune, please contact Nina Rowe: nrowe@fordham.edu.

MEMBER NEWS

AWARDS

If you are a member and your work has recently garnered a prize in the 12 months prior to April, 2017, please send your information to Heidi Gearhart, newsletter@medievalart.org by March 15, 2017 (in advance of the April Newsletter).

Katherine Boivin, Bard College, for “The Medieval Urban Complex and the Politics of Pilgrimage.”

Christopher Lakey, John Hopkins University, for “Sculptural Seeing: Relief, Optics, and the Rise of Perspective in Medieval Italy”

Amy Neff, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, for “A Soul’s Journey into God: Art, Theology, and Devotion in the Supplicationes variae, a Late Duecento Manuscript (Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 25.3)”

Anneliese Renck, Bucknell University, for “Translating Women in Late-Medieval France: From Christine de Pizan to Louise Labé”

Anne L. Williams, Virginia Commonwealth University, for “Satire, St. Joseph, and the Centrality of Humor in Sacred Art, c. 1300-1600”
More Award News

Sarah Bromberg received the Newberry Library and John Rylands Research Institute (University of Manchester) Exchange Fellowship for her book project, *Art and Exegesis: Nicholas of Lyra's Postilla.*

Caroline Bruzellius’s book, *Preaching, Building and Burying: Friars in the Medieval City,* won the Jaroslav Pelikan prize from Yale University. She has been named a project director of the online database, “The Medieval Kingdom of Sicily Image Database: A Visual Resource of Historical Sites c. 1100 - c. 1450” http://kos.aahvs.duke.edu/index.php

Ioanna Christoforaki was awarded a grant of 25,000 euros by the Fritz-Thyssen Foundation for the organization of a conference entitled, “Mendicant Orders in the Eastern Mediterranean: Art, Architecture and Material Culture (13th-16th c.),” to be held in Nafplio, Greece, April 18-23, 2017.

Susan Boynton, Columbia University, has been awarded the 2016 Solie Award of the American Musicological Society for her book, *Resounding Images: Medieval Intersections of Art, Music, and Sound,* edited with Diane J. Reilly (Brepols, 2015): (http://www.brepols.net/action/showBook?doi=10.1484%2FM.SVCMA-EB.5.109323). She has also received a three-year grant from the Partner University Fund (FACE Foundation) to train graduate students in digital humanities research on medieval musical iconography, in collaboration with Frédéric Billiet of Paris-Sorbonne University (Paris IV), with a focus on the Musiconis database. http://edblogs.columbia.edu/musiconis/

If you are a member who has published a book (or equivalent research project) 12 months prior to March, 2017, and which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send your information to Heidi Gearhart, newsletter@medievalart.org by March 15, 2017 (in advance of the April, 2016 Newsletter).

**Recent Publications by ICMA Members**


RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY ICMA MEMBERS


COMMEMORATIONS

If you would like to submit a commemoration of an ICMA member who has died in the 12 months prior to April, 2017, and which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send a 200-500 word obituary and, if possible, an accompanying picture by April 15, 2017 (in advance of the April Newsletter).

SPECIAL FEATURES

REFLECTION: Archaeology, Andy Goldworthy and Eduardo Paolozzi: The Early Peoples gallery at the National Museum of Scotland

By Heather Pulliam, Senior Lecturer in History of Art, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and David Clarke, Curator of Early Peoples and former Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum of Scotland, Visiting Professor, Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

In the basement of the National Museum of Scotland, locked within the ribcage of a larger-than-life robotic figure, glimmers a small, eighth-century brooch composed of delicate gold filigree. The figure is not alone, but one of several created by Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005). Their metal bodies deconstruct in space, revealing a series of glass and bronze cases that enshrine fifth-century Pictish necklaces of Roman silver, early medieval zoomorphic brooches and prehistoric Celtic bracelets (Figs. 1 & 2). As the visitor moves through the gallery, these figures give way to the larger display cases that quote the smaller ones lodged within the bronze sculptures.

Wedged between the larger cases is a large ball of bones, the remains of a pilot whale that had beached itself in 1987. Arranged by Andy Goldsworthy (1956- ), they are held together by gravity (Figure 3). While their form echoes the ornately carved prehistoric carved stone balls distinct to Scotland, their material and method of construction recalls prehistoric building techniques and the bones of a Viking burial in the nearby gallery. Other works by Goldsworthy, including an earthwork wall, similarly play upon shared materials and processes. The exhibition epitomizes Alexander Nagel’s “staged collision” of materials across boundaries of period and object, but also of artist and curator; display and displayed; accessible and inaccessible. The following short article presents two viewpoints, that of the curator/archaeologist and that of the visitor/art historian.

The Curator’s Justification (by David Clarke)

Curator of Early Peoples and former Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum of Scotland, Visiting Professor, Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

Engaging with a presentation of Scotland’s prehistoric and early historic past is for most people a challenging and demanding occasion. Displays of this material take us to largely alien worlds – no towns or cities, no developed forms of transport, no coins or monetary-based economy.

The objects have unfamiliar forms and are often fragmentary. Such studies as we have suggest that a key component in accessing these worlds is imagination. And focus groups told us that for our visitors the strongest expression of imagination is art in its broadest sense. Of course, the exhibition has many pieces that might be regarded as art, but the age of the object removes the immediate association with imagination. For that the art has to be demonstrably modern. So we hoped that the presence of pieces by modern artists throughout the exhibition would act as a constant reminder for the visitors that using their imagination was a proper way to engage with the material.

Acknowledging that modern art might enhance and encourage interactions with material from the distant past does not provide much of an answer to the questions, “what art and by whom?” Nor were there any precedents for the use of modern art in archaeological displays to guide us. Our choices were dictated by the need to identify artists whose work might help strengthen the presentation of important issues. A further consideration was that we hoped, it being the National Museum of Scotland, that the artists might have some connection with Scotland. There were two key questions where the contribution of modern art could be significant. Given that these questions were fundamentally archaeological in nature, it is not surprising perhaps that the chosen artists, Eduardo Paolozzi and Andy Goldsworthy, both had what many might consider “archaeological” elements in their methods and practices—although neither emphasized these when discussing their work.

Establishing a sense of humanity for the people of prehistory and early history was our first issue. For reasons we do not understand, human groups in Scotland made virtually no human images during the first 8,000 years of their presence. It is consequently easy to go through archaeological exhibitions without realizing that the objects displayed are made by people essentially no different than us. Paolozzi’s figures at the beginning of the exhibition create this initial human statement while at the same time signaling that this is not a conventional archaeology display. Arranged in collections of three figures expressing the difficulty of determining the meaningful actions of individuals in the distant past and bedecked with jewelry from all periods, the journey between the groups introduces the four major themes that conceptually structure the exhibition: processing resources; contact with the wider world; power and social organization; death, belief and ritual.

Goldsworthy’s art, in contrast, addresses a more diffuse subject – the wealth of resources the environment provided for the people of prehistory and early history. His art is bound up with exploiting that wealth. Yet most of our visitors are now urban dwellers. They do not have that intimate relationship with local environment once enjoyed by rural communities. This is a recurring matter throughout the displays and Goldsworthy’s pieces are consequently spread through the exhibition. Employing a variety of materials – roofing slates, clay, bone and wood – his pieces provide commentaries on the range of available possibilities. They offer multiple contexts for the objects on display. This is most strikingly so in the segmented circular structure built of re-used roofing slates around a notional central hearth, reflecting the circularity of most structures in prehistory and early history. Together with a suite of clay walls, these pieces offer a nuanced evocation of the wider landscapes of the distant past (Figure 4).
The Visitor’s Experience
(By Heather Pulliam)

Located in the museum’s lowest level, the “Early Peoples” gallery is a disorienting, labyrinthine space, with unclear borders between rooms, spaces and sections. Labelling is zealously minimalist. The usual comforts of a museum visit—clear signage and a linear chain of rectangular rooms—are not here. The visitor, at first, is presented with a riddle: why, in a display of prehistoric to medieval art, are there large robotic bronze figures, (which only a few visitors will immediately recognize as Paolozzi sculptures)?

Like hulking, corporeal reliquaries, Paolozzi’s bronze figures facilitate visual access while simultaneously protecting and preserving the ancient objects lodged within their glass and metal bodies. The Pictish chains of Roman silver will never tarnish and no finger print will smudge or bend the paper-thin gold of the Bronze Age collar. The Paolozzi giants, however, are now less alien, due to the warm, golden patina marks that trace thirteen years of human fingers exploring these bronze bodies.

Visitors typically stop, glancing around, before hesitantly approaching the figures (Figure 5). Some laugh or comment and quickly walk away while others peer into the more accessible cases, and may lightly touch the sculptures. The patina indicates that visitors who touch the sculptures gravitate to areas of the body that would be appropriate if the sculptures were “flesh and blood” strangers—the hands and arms. The length and intimacy of the encounter varies, but I have yet to see anyone engage with the statues in such a way that would enable them to see every one of the objects located in the figures’ cavities.

Visitors must interrupt the cluster of figures who are engaged in their own private exchanges and conversation in order to see every object. Like an outsider at a cocktail party, we might hover on the periphery before interjecting into a knot of people we only vaguely know or hope to know. The bronze figures, however, never pause in their conversation, or turn to acknowledge us, and we must physically insert ourselves into their midst, ducking to avoid their heavy, larger-than-life-fists while bending, wiggling and/or shuffling awkwardly and presumptuously into their embrace (Figures 6a & b).

The display breaks down the “disembodied Eye.” We must depend upon our bodies to negotiate their bodies in order to see. In the glass pane, we perceive the ancient object and the ghosts of keepers past, future and present: the bronze figures, the display, ourselves, the museum with windows to its city and nation beyond. It is here that I would question Nagel’s choice of the word “collision,” as “palimpsest” better captures the ghostly delicate meetings of multiple lives and experiences.

The display highlights aspects of medieval viewing and keeping. The awkward physicality required for viewing reminds us that churches and reliquaries were not viewed by a timeless lens, but rather by tired, squirming, penitent bodies. The forced intimacy of close viewing points to different levels of access, and it is perhaps worth noting that the elite of early medieval Britain and Ireland had close, physical contact with the people they ruled in a manner far removed from the ritualised spaces of Mediterranean empires. Most of all, the display reminds us that these things do not belong to us, or if they do, ownership is

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temporary and we have obtained them “over someone else’s dead body.”

This piece emerged from a paper presented at an ICMA-sponsored session organised by members of the Material Collective, Jennifer Borland (Oklahoma State University) and Ben Tilghman (Lawrence University) at the College Art Association Conference in January, 2016, “Out of Time and Out of Place: Comparative Approaches.”

Teaching Medieval Art History: Teaching Future Generations at The Met Cloisters

By Leslie Tait, Museum Educator, Metropolitan Museum of Art

The installation of architectural elements, stained glass, tapestries, and other medieval works of art suggest for the modern museum visitor an environment sympathetic to how they may have been experienced during the Middle Ages. This creates an exceptional place for teaching a wide variety of audiences about medieval art in Western Europe. When plans for The Cloisters were being considered by Curators James Breck, and then James Rorimer, in consultation with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., they envisioned a unique setting where the modern museum visitors could escape the noise and burdens of their daily lives to a contemplative space suggestive of how people would have seen and lived with such works of art several centuries ago. While The Met Cloisters can still serve as a meditative respite, it is often filled with tourists from around the world, as well as school and day camp groups of all ages. Not only the cloister installed with elements from the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa with its capitals carved in the 1130s, but the garden with its continuously changing plantings, provide an ideal environment to discuss medieval monastic life, especially with one of the galleries leading into the chapter house from Notre-Dame at Pontaut. Last summer, visitors at the end of the day were treated to a majestic hawk flying in to bathe in the fountain in the center of the Cuxa cloister, resonating brilliantly with The Falcon's Bath tapestry in a neighboring gallery.

http://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/in-season/2016/watch-the-birdie

Ever since I first began giving gallery talks at The Met Cloisters, I found the unique environment presented challenges and exciting opportunities compared with classroom teaching. While the ability to show images of comparative objects and related subject matter is an advantage of the slide/PowerPoint presentation, there is something transformative about the connection with the work of art “in the flesh” that has a visceral impact. Whether it is asking students to step up close to see the texture of the tapestry weave as you explain the warp and weft, or getting day campers to move their head slightly back and forth to notice the subtle concentric circles in a stained glass window that indicates it was created with crown glass, there is great pleasure in seeing museum visitors engage with a work of art in a way they had never done before. Interacting with the actual work of art is especially valuable at The Met Cloisters when it comes to the architectural spaces. Here one can appreciate the subtle changes of surfaces, the manner in which light falls over the skillfully carved architectural elements, and the proportion of spaces as one enters and passes through them.

One of the most rewarding parts of my job is teaching the summer interns. For the eight interns of various years in their undergraduate studies from universities near and far, the nine-week program combines a crash course in medieval art and architecture, stimulating meetings with curators and conservators connected with the Department of Medieval Art & The Cloisters as well as colleagues of various fields throughout the Museum, pedagogy tutorial, conducting gallery Workshops/tour for day-campers, independent study on a chosen research topic, and, finally, public performance.

Each summer, two different themes are developed to form the focus of study for the interns, and the topics for the gallery workshops for day camp groups. Since the interns are at different levels in their coursework and have varied majors and interests, the first three weeks include seminars on the two themes, discussions in the galleries, guest
lectures and field trips, as well as instruction and practice of teaching methods. Conducting the gallery workshops, which include discussion at various works of art followed by a collaborative project, is an opportunity for the interns to develop their public speaking skills, learn how to maintain the attention of what is typically a very energetic audience, and get young visitors as excited about medieval art as they are. As many of these campers are visiting for the first time, the “wow” factor goes a long way.

While the collection at The Met Cloisters is focused on Western Europe, we make every effort to dispel the notion that medieval Europe was cut off from the rest of the world. Themes for the day camp workshops (as well as our docent-led school tours during the academic year) are often developed in order to include objects that will lead to discussions of trade, commerce and travel between Western Europe and the East as well as Africa.

We recently switched from having the campers make individual craft projects to creating a collaborative project that would go back to camp with them. These are related to works of art that the campers would see as they explored the galleries, and the interns stressed the concept of medieval craftsmen mainly producing works in a workshop rather than working independently.

For the “Artist” theme, campers created a “stained glass window” using craft paper, drawing pencils, and transparent sheets of different colors.

For the “At Home” theme, campers decorated shields with heraldic symbols inspired by works of art displaying heraldry throughout the museum.

While the interns are studying and researching the works on their day-camp itineraries, they are also developing their own independent studies for their gallery talks presented during the final week of the program. Between meetings

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and day camp tours, field trips, and hands-on workshops such as illuminating an actual initial on vellum, the interns spend much of their time in the museum library conducting research on their chosen topics.

The interns have weekly assignments to help them keep on track, and they have regular meetings with me and my colleagues in Education at The Met Cloisters, including Nancy Wu, Emma Wegner, and Denia Lara. The interns are generally receptive to our guidance and feedback. Because of the tight schedule, they often amaze me in their ability to digest criticism, read suggested sources, and revise their talks. Their growth from week one to week nine is nothing short of exponential, and it is inspiring. Depending on the topic, interns will often consult curators, conservators, and horticulturists who are eager to help guide them. Each intern devotes much time to practice, rehearsing with their fellow interns as well as the Education staff, in order to polish their delivery and ensure that they are making what may be complicated intellectual or theological concepts accessible to a general audience. When it comes to the many hours of rehearsals, our veteran contractual lecturers are also very generous with their time. By the end of the nine-week program the interns have not only advanced their education and cultivated new skills, but are leading visitors to appreciate treasures of the past in their historical context as well as in their continuing relevance to our lives today.
The Newly Discovered Library at Altomünster Now at Risk

By Corine Schleif, representing the Extraordinary Sensescapes Working Group

The impressive Baroque architecture of the recently closed Birgittenkloster Altomünster dominates the idyllic market town that is named after the monastery, located in a fertile agricultural region of Bavaria and today connected to Munich via commuter train. The first monastery on this site was erected in the 11th century for Benedictine nuns and dedicated to Saint Alto. A group of Birgittines sent from Maria Mai in Maihingen took over the monastic complex in 1496. The structure was rebuilt and expanded in the second half of the 18th century. Although the monastery was secularized in 1803, the nuns refused to leave and the institution was re-established in 1842, making it the oldest continuously inhabited Birgittine foundation in the world.

In October 2015, the Birgittenkloster Altomünster under Prioress Apollonia Buchinger hosted a two-day session of the workshop “The Sensual World of Late Medieval Nuns” that Volker Schier, Karin Strindholm Lagergren and I organized. A group of 20 experts from various fields: art history, musicology, history, vocal music, media design, acoustic engineering, and 3D modeling were invited to Germany for one week to explore the sensory experiences of nuns during the Middle Ages. We began our excursion in the north at Ebstorf, Wienhausen and Lüne and then continued on to Gnadenberg and Altomünster in south Germany. It was our aim to experience surviving monastic spaces, process and sing in late medieval cloisters, view objects used in liturgical monastic environments, extrapolate information from architecture, artefacts and texts, and finally to discuss the feasibility of transferring the ever-shifting multisensory perceptions on to a virtual reality platform using the latest developments in 3D multimedia technology. We now propose a total immersion virtual reality reconstruction of portions of Vadstena Abbey in Sweden.

At Altomünster, we requested that a small number of illuminated antiphoners containing the unique Birgittine office liturgy of the so-called cantus sororum be brought to us for our collective study. These manuscripts were known to us through published sources and our own research. Then shortly before we adjourned, in an unprecedented move, the prioress, Sister Apollonia Buchinger, allowed several individuals from our group to enter the monastic library and peruse its books. The library rooms are located within the nuns’ enclosure, and therefore they have been off limits to scholars. No catalogue of the collection exists. To our great astonishment we found a sizeable collection of manuscripts, some illuminated, some dating back to the late 15th century, and unknown in the literature. We now believe the library may contain as many as 30 nuns’ processional - about 3 times the number previously known to exist. The library likewise constitutes incunabula and early modern printed books as well as archival materials from more recent centuries, much of which can be used to establish the history of practices within the order and potentially to reconstruct earlier no longer extant materials.
Because the newly discovered books promise valuable additional material for our project, the participating scholars took as many photographs as time would permit. We also received permission from Sister Apollonia to return to the library, to catalogue the holdings -- at least provisionally -- and, to digitize selected manuscripts.

Quite unexpectedly, however, in the beginning of December 2015, the Vatican announced the permanent closing of Birgittenkloster Altomünster. The decision was based on the extremely low number nuns who have recently professed there. Although we again asked for access to the newly discovered collection of Birgittine art and music, our requests have been denied. Our working group has sent an open letter to Cardinal João Braz, head of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life of the Vatican, ultimately responsible for the monastery’s future, Cardinal Reinhard Marx, archbishop of Munich and Freising, and Sister Gabriela Konrad, the papal commissar named as administrator. Journalists too have been barred from entering the monastery, and in the 11 months since the closure no official announcement has been forthcoming as to the holdings, condition, or future of this unique historic library.

Our working group continues to advocate for a positive outcome. We hope that by making the existence of this rare treasure known to the scholarly community and to the public at large, efforts will be made to continue the collection as an ensemble, to take any and all necessary measures to maintain and preserve the books, and to ensure that the works are safe and accessible by placing them in an appropriate institutional library.

If you would like to voice your concern about the future of the library, please write to Cardinal Reinhard Marx

Erzbischöfliches Ordinariat München
Postfach 33 03 60
80063 München
Germany

or send an email to cardinal Marx c/o the vicar general:
generalvikar@eomuc.de

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 (https://twitter.com/icmanews). 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://www.medievalart.org/community-news/
CALL FOR ICMA SPONSORED SESSION PROPOSALS

ICMA @ St. Louis Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 19-21 June 2017

The International Center of Medieval Art (ICMA) seeks proposals for sessions to be held under the organization’s sponsorship in 2017 at the St. Louis Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies to be held 19-21 June 2017 in St. Louis. Session organizers and speakers must be ICMA members. Proposals must include a session abstract, a CV of the organizer(s), and a list of speakers for a 90-minute session, all in one single Doc or PDF with the organizer’s name in the title. Please direct all session proposals and inquiries by 10 December 2016 to the Chair of the ICMA Programs & Lectures 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 organizer(s) by 20 December 2015. The successful organizer(s) will then submit the ICMA-sponsored proposal by 31 December 2016 directly to the St Louis Symposium Committee which will make the final decision: http://smrs.slu.edu/cfp.html

STUDENT ESSAY AWARDS

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 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.

STUDENT RESEARCH GRANTS FOR TRAVEL

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 ICMA will contact institutions and/or individuals in the area to be visited; these will help the student gain access to the relevant material and aid in other practical matters.

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.

Applicants must submit:

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.
**STUDENT RESEARCH GRANTS FOR TRAVEL**

(continued)

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 Committee Pages of the ICMA 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.

**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, Alicia Cannizzo, for her role in soliciting features for this section.

**ICMA Student Committee Update**

Greetings from the Student Committee chair! For this winter issue of the newsletter we are devoting our Student Committee section to reviews of two wonderful (ly popular) current exhibitions. Meg Bernstein (University of California, Los Angeles) connects the contribution of the V&A’s *Opus Anglicanum* show to current trends in our field, and Darienne Turner (Bard Graduate Center) discusses the powerful and timely “Jerusalem 1000-1400: Every People Under Heaven” at the Met.

See the ICMA Opportunities section of this Newsletter for more information on the next cycles of the Student Essay Award and the Student Travel Grants. We also encourage you to follow us Facebook (ICMA Student Committee) and Instagram (@icmaofficial) for this and more! The travel grant recipients’ takeover of the Instagram account to share about their research trips has been a huge success, thanks to Ryan Frisinger’s work, so expect more ways in the near future for getting involved with the ICMA electronically! See the narratives of two of the winners below.

All best,

Andrew Sears
Fellow, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz
– Max-Planck-Institut
University of California, Berkeley
ICMA Student Committee Chair

**STUDENT TRAVEL AWARD REPORTS**

Peter Bovenmyer
PhD Candidate,
University of Wisconsin,
Madison

Student Travel Grant Recipient, 2016

Thanks to the generous proceeds of the ICMA student travel grant, I recently traveled to the United Kingdom to complete research for my dissertation on medieval anatomy and its representation of the body. My research took me to three different libraries: the college library of Gonville and Caius in Cambridge; the Bodleian Library in Oxford; and the Wellcome Institute in London. In each location I consulted anatomical manuscripts from the 12th–15th centuries and saw some of the earliest depictions of the body’s interior in existence—exciting stuff that I had been hoping to see for a long time!

I first traveled to Cambridge to examine a twelfth-century anatomical manuscript (Gonville and Caius MS 193/223) containing diagrams of nine body systems—veins, arteries, bones, nerves, muscles, eyes, brain, and genitals (both male and female) (Figure 1). This manuscript is not well known, but it includes some of the earliest and most detailed anatomical illustrations in existence. These figures are part of a short treatise that circulated independently in the twelfth century. Drawn in strange squatting position with unusually shaped organs, their
presentation of anatomy is almost unrecognizable today. Nevertheless, these strange images were radical for their time and reveal a growing interest in anatomy, a subject that was swiftly altering the practice of medicine and philosophy in the twelfth century.

After Cambridge, I traveled to Oxford to view a better-known manuscript, Ashmole MS 399, which had been partially copied from Gonville and Caius 193/223 (Figure 2). Ashmole 399 is a huge medical compendium containing treatises ranging from philosophical texts to poems about urine. At the heart of this book exists a complete copy of the nine anatomical models from the Cambridge codex, only arranged in a slightly different order. Like the Cambridge anatomical figures, they were probably produced in a monastery and circulated as an independent treatise before being bound into their present codex. Anatomical works such as these were eagerly imported in the twelfth century and used by theologians to resolve pressing ontological problems concerning the relationship between body and soul, the nature of vision, and the process of gestation. It is my theory that anatomical illustration first developed in monasteries as monks attempted to map this complex new information about the body through images. Working from these two manuscripts, I plan to develop this idea further in the first chapter of my dissertation.

My final stop was in London at the Wellcome institute where I examined a fifteenth-century anatomical treatise attributed to the ancient physician Galen (Wellcome MS 290) (Figure 3). The book is written in English and was likely owned by either a surgeon or a physician—who were typically not literate in Latin.

At the rear of the book resides a set of illustrations showing the bones and muscles, a pregnant uterus, and a “woundman” (a figure that shows the most common wounds and injuries sustained in the Middle Ages). This manuscript demonstrates just how much had changed by the fifteenth century. The images are naturalistic and based on observation gained from dissections, which by the fifteenth century had become central to medical practice. Wellcome MS 290 in fact describes just how to perform one: tie a cadaver to a beam, hoist it vertically, and then “you shal karue he in ye medyl of the throte.” Working from the observations of this manuscript, I will explore the birth of scientific illustration and the transference of the body’s image from religious philosophy to medical theory in chapters two and three of my dissertation.

I would like to thank all the members of the ICMA committee for giving me the opportunity to perform this exciting and valuable research. I also want to thank...
the Gonville and Caius College Library (especially Neil Kirkham!), the Bodleian Library, and the Wellcome Institute for inviting me in to see their collections. This trip has given me many new insights that will enrich and enlarge my dissertation in unexpected and exciting ways.

Sophie Ong
PhD Candidate,
Rutgers University

Student Travel Grant Recipient, 2016

Thanks to the generous support of the ICMA’s Graduate Student Travel Grant, from May to July 2016, I had the great fortune to conduct research in France, England, and Italy for my dissertation on late medieval pendants, presently titled, “Hanging on the Body: Pendants, Materiality, and Touch in the Late Middle Ages.” My dissertation examines the multi-layered significance of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century pendants as highly portable, composite pieces of jewelry and devotional objects—in many cases, containers for relics worn on the body. I consider how the sense of touch and the power of relics and precious materials interacted in meaningful ways to shape the experience of the owner when the pendants were worn, held, opened, and manipulated.

In Paris, I worked most days at the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Institut national d’histoire de l’art consulting French publications on medieval jewelry, goldsmiths’ work, and sumptuary laws. I spent several days in the Department of Manuscripts at the BNF, looking at lapidaries and manuscripts that depict pendants, such as an early sixteenth-century Flemish Book of Hours that includes pendants within its marginalia. At the Musée national du Moyen Âge and the Louvre, I met with curators who allowed me to examine, handle, and photograph objects. I noted material composition, wear patterns, trends in fabrication of the pendants I am studying, as well as signs of alteration and repair. I also visited the Musée national de la Renaissance in the Château d’Écouen, just outside of Paris, to consult object files and look at some of the earliest pendants in its collection.

At the end of June, I traveled to Florence, specifically to see the Reliquary of the “Libretto” in the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, a fourteenth-century, French reliquary pendant of royal commission now encased within a grandiose, sixteenth-century, Florentine tabernacle (Figure 1). During this four-day trip, I also explored the late medieval pendant collections in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello and Museo degli Argenti, and visited the city’s major museums and churches searching for images of pendants depicted in contemporaneous paintings and sculptures. My time in Italy culminated with a day-trip a few hours north to Vicenza to see the Museo del Gioiello, a relatively new museum in Italy dedicated solely to jewelry.

From Florence, I went to London for several weeks where I consulted more illuminated manuscripts and medieval English inventory reports at the British Library. The highlight of the summer was examining one of the central pendants in my dissertation, the British Museum’s Reliquary Pendant of the Holy Thorn, a complex, multimedia pendant composed of gold, amethyst, basse-taille enamel, rock-crystal, vellum and, of course, a thorn (Figure 2). Together with curator Lloyd de Beer, I studied and photographed the Holy Thorn pendant; we even brought out a microscope to scrutinize details hard to decipher with the naked eye. My last two days in London were spent looking at devotional pendants and curatorial files at the V&A—research that led me to form an entirely new chapter of my dissertation.
Because of my dissertation’s focus on issues of materiality, touch, and tactility, this kind of direct examination of late medieval pendants is imperative to my project. Meetings with scholars and curators held throughout the summer helped to refine the questions I was asking about my case studies and determined new avenues for exploration, allowing me to finalize my chapter outline. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the ICMA, especially to Nancy Ševčenko and Ryan Frisinger, and the European institutions and scholars I visited for supporting my project and making this extensive research trip a possibility and success.

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The report of Student Research Award Winner Kriszta Ilko (University of Cambridge) will appear in the April Newsletter.


This exhibition is something of a family reunion. Known and sought throughout Europe, *opus anglicanum*—English-made textiles covered with embroidered iconography and utilizing luxury materials like thread made of precious metals—traveled far from this artistic center and are now in the permanent collections of museums and churches all over the continent (Figure 1). They are brought back together at the Victoria & Albert Museum. London is the ideal place to gather these high-quality crafts; the city was known in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries for its skilled and creative embroiderers and the production of these textiles. Like the term “opus francigenum,” referring to Gothic architecture, *opus anglicanum* is a rare phrase in our discipline that has its origins in the Middle Ages rather than reflecting a nineteenth-century qualitative judgment.

The exhibition begins by focusing on this point; a schematic map shows some of the myriad places throughout Europe where these objects found their homes. As we progress, we learn that vestments that were separated from Whalley Abbey are reunited in the V&A’s cases. Likewise, the Butler-Bowden cope and Chichester-Constable chasuble, orphrey, and stole probably originated in the same workshop—an argument that becomes extremely compelling when we see the objects displayed together and note their formal similarities (Figure 2).

Figure 2. French (Paris), Reliquary Pendant of the Holy Thorn, ca. 1340, gold, enamel (basse taille), amethyst, rock-crystal, vellum, 4 × 2.65 × 2.5 cm. The British Museum, London. (Photo: Sophie Ong)

Figure 1. Installation image, Opus Anglicanum at the V&A. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Figure 2. The Chichester-Constable chasuble and the Butler-Bowden cope, 1330-50. Installation image, Opus Anglicanum at the V&A (Photo: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London)
One does not get the sense that *Opus Anglicanum* is thesis-driven. Rather, it is vaguely chronological, plotting the spread of *opus Anglicanum* from the earliest examples of episcopal use (objects surviving to us as grave goods) through popularization and eventually transference into secular garments owned by high-status lay people, like the Black Prince’s funeral achievements on loan from Canterbury Cathedral, featuring an embroidered wool surcoat. The vestments are displayed alongside a variety of contextual objects, some of which are quite compelling in their own right. Parallels are offered for the designs of the embroideries in other media, in particular stained glass and manuscript illumination; in a section on embroidery and the court, one finds the extant panels from Henry III’s painted chamber, loaned by the British Museum. The curators have included rubbings on paper of monumental brasses in situ that show their subjects wearing *opus Anglicanum* vestments, a clever way to bring representations from the parish church into the V&A (Figure 3). Certain included objects seem to have sacrificed their resonance at the altar of logistical concerns, however, such as a fantastic cope chest from York Minster. The chest, topped with ironwork, with hinges shaped like beasts, is a fortunate survival (one of only six in the country), but its position at the beginning of the exhibition, grouped with the unrelated map of the spread of *opus Anglicanum* downplays the experience of seeing an object which ought to be viewed in the round.

In most instances, though, the design of *Opus Anglicanum* is advantageous to the objects. Copes are displayed in one of two ways: flat against a wall so the entire object can be viewed at once, or on a stand that represents the way the garment is worn. In the second instance, they are displayed in cases that can be seen from both sides as one snakes through the exhibition. The display is minimal and pleasing, but one wonders if the slick exhibition design contributes to the interpretation for some objects being frustratingly obscure. For example, one must turn to the exhibition catalogue for a clear description of the main technical skills involved the production of these embroideries (underside couching and split stitch). One of the final objects in the exhibition is the fantastic Steeple Aston cope which survives as two separate liturgical furnishings. It is covered with foliate green men, depictions of saints’ lives, and musical angels on horseback. Though a wonderful video has been commissioned which represents the way that the cope was taken apart and reused, there is no clear label that indicates that the two objects, contained in different cases, are of a piece.

The present reviewer is grateful that no corny attempt has been made to make the space feel like a church or look medieval; rather the objects are well served by the clean and modern design that prioritizes them. A series of videos have been commissioned that show a modern embroiderer using the techniques of *opus Anglicanum*, zoomed-in details of the stitches, and a reconstruction of the Steeple Aston Cope as it originally was. Only in one instance did the objects feel overshadowed: early in the exhibition, an unexplained marquee that hangs from the ceiling records the names known of the makers of *opus Anglicanum* (Figure 4). Made to look like a cinema billboard, this strikes the viewer as a moment of rupture. One eventually puzzles out that the names listed there are known monikers of the craftspeople, men and women, who made *opus Anglicanum*—names like Mabel of Bury St. Edmunds who embroidered goods for
Crossing the Hanseatic Threshold and Beyond
(continued)

Henry III, Gregory of London, and Rose, wife of John of Bureford. Though I question the relationship of the marquee to the rest of the design, I appreciate its inclusion as a means of showing that names are known of the embroiderers (unusual enough in a medieval context), and that people of both genders were successful in making and selling opus anglicanum.

Though the interpretive thread is occasionally lost, Opus Anglicanum is a well-curated exhibition that brings together finely-crafted garments and furnishings now dispersed throughout Europe, offering a chance for close study and for new viewers to be captivated by their luxurious materials and fine details.

Meg Bernstein
PhD Candidate, UCLA


Upon entering the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s spectacular and wildly popular exhibition Jerusalem, 1000-1400: Every People Under Heaven, one encounters a curious map created by the Benedictine monk Matthew Paris in the 13th century (Figure 1). The map features a strange and compelling vision of medieval Jerusalem. It’s a colorful Jerusalem, a small, walled-off Jerusalem, and an entirely imaginary Jerusalem, as Paris, like so many of the visitors to the exhibition, had never set foot in the holy city.

Like the exhibition, Paris’ map invites viewers to partake in an imaginary pilgrimage. His map begins in London and ends in Jerusalem (while ours begins and ends on 5th Avenue). In a way, the map exists outside the bounds of time and space, as it seamlessly positions contemporary cityscapes alongside Biblical sites, such as the resting place of Noah’s Ark. By bringing together disparate objects and narratives, the exhibition achieves a similar effect, creating a cohesive whole that invites the viewer in.

The outsider’s view of Jerusalem presented in Paris’ map reflects the power of imagination to transform the identity of a place. His longed-for Jerusalem becomes equally palpable and real to audiences as the actual medieval city itself. This is a fact beautifully represented in the exhibition, where Jerusalem — the Jerusalem of the Jewish salutation “next year in Jerusalem” and of the old adage “Paradise longs for Jerusalem and Jerusalem longs for Paradise” — is present in the resplendent reliquaries, precious manuscripts, and ornate mosque lamps of the treasure trove of artifacts that the exhibition contains (Figure 2).


Figure 2. Installation image, Jerusalem, 1000-1400: Every People Under Heaven. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. (Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art: http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2016/jerusalem/exhibition-galleries)
Modern day Jerusalem, the site of religious conflict and acts of terror, is often understood through the lens of the conflict religion brings. The exhibition challenges the viewer to see beyond this one narrative, and consider the city as a historical wellspring of narratives, which proliferate relentlessly across the world on the backs of pilgrims and conquerors, tourists and tribesmen. The Jerusalem of today is still very much a generator of narratives that the rest of the world uses to understand itself. Through the exhibit’s wild variety of cultural relics and spectacular objects, the city can be understood to have always been this source of narratives—a hot center in the collective mythmaking of both East and West.

Every People Under Heaven boasts over 200 objects harking from sixty lenders located all over the globe—from libraries in France, to the Vatican, to numerous institutions within Jerusalem itself. The multi-cultural compendium does indeed shed light on the material history of Jerusalem, but more importantly, it illuminates the city’s legacy of storytelling and of longing.

In the exhibition catalog, Curators Barbara Drake Boehm and Melanie Holocomb claim that the four centuries represented in the show were defined by “Jerusalem Fever,” or a “profound obsession” that compelled countless devotees to make a pilgrimage to the sacred sites. This fever spread through the masses by virtue of stories; narratives from the Bible provided a map for pilgrims to follow in the footsteps of the divine, while stories written by contemporary pilgrims recounted miracles they witnessed within the city’s walls. These stories superimposed one another, shaping the meaning of city through the accretion of the holy. In turn, Jerusalem wielded a magnetism that drew believers from all different faiths across the globe.

The effects of that magnetism are present within countless objects featured in the exhibition. While soldiers stodically march towards the terrestrial Jerusalem on stained glass from the Abbey Church of Saint Denis, images on a Limoges Chasse allude to the promise of the Heavenly Jerusalem. The most arresting object in the show, the Chasse of Ambazac, stops viewers in their tracks with its resplendent and luminous interpretation of the heavenly light of Jerusalem (Figure 3).

Turning to the modern day museum, one wonders how such religious fervor could be replicated (or even faithfully represented) within the secular environment of the museum. How does one approach the holy without the prerequisite of belief?

The exhibition tackles this issue on multiple levels, primarily through the layout and thematic grouping of the objects, and the overall ambience of the space. Upon entering the exhibition, the museumgoer leaves behind the bright, cheery painting galleries and enters into new space. The low-lighting and dark walls cue a state change within visitors, which in turn prepares them for the virtual pilgrimage on which they are about to embark.

In the entryway to the show, films of modern Jerusalem are projected on the walls, revealing a peaceful city, undisturbed by urban commotion (Figure 4). In this space, the holy meets the mundane, as some of the world’s most sacred sites are projected alongside...
laundry fluttering on clotheslines. The film seems to purposefully exclude actual life, instead opting for mere signs of life. These projections, like many of the objects in the exhibition, present a highly curated vision of the Holy Land—one that is based not on the terrestrial Jerusalem, but rather, the one that exists within our collective imagination. It is a much more modern Jerusalem than the one portrayed in the collection, but it is a Jerusalem that tugs at the modern love of finding the sacred in small things, of our fascination with a metropolis that might be able to contain at once the mundanities of laundry and parking and the preciousness of sacred sites that have survived so much of our collective iniquity, and are destined to survive more. The images are understated and beautiful, and they invite us to project our own desires onto the imaginary city and to draw our own meaning from the objects to come.

by Darienne Turner
Curatorial Fellow, Bard Graduate Center

**Contributors**

Meg Bernstein, Peter Bovenmyer, David Clarke, Sarah Guerin, Janis Elliot, Ryan Frisinger, Elina Gertsman, Melanie Hanan, Sherry C.M. Lindquist, Gerhard Lutz, Nina Rowe, Heather Pulliam, Sophie Ong, Corine Schleif, Andrew Sears, Nancy Ševčenko, Leslie Tait, Darienne Turner