



ICMA NEWS

...AND MORE

April 2015, no. 1

Sherry C.M. Lindquist, Editor

Inside this issue:

ICMA News	1
Contributors	2
Member News	5
Special Reports	9
New Acquisitions	9
Teaching Medieval Architecture	10
Medieval Art News	12
Resources and Opportunities	12
ICMA Student Committee Pages	14
The Crucifixion Conundrum	14
Exhibit Review	17

ICMA Newsletter is available through membership and is published every April, August, and December. Material should be addressed on or before March 1, July 1, and November 1, by e-mail to Sherry Lindquist, newsletter@medievalart.org. For inquiries about membership or any additional information, please contact Ryan Frisinger at the ICMA office; tel. or fax: (212) 928-1146; email: ryan@medievalart.org, web address: www.medievalart.org.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear fellow ICMA members:

Although it is now late March, we are still waiting for signs of spring here in Vermont. I hope that where you are, at least, it is already warm and beautiful and full of flowers! Here is a report on recent ICMA activities.

Annual Meeting: The ICMA held its annual meeting in New York City on February 13, coinciding as usual with the meetings of the College Art Association. Thanks to Chuck Little and Griffith Mann at the Metropolitan Museum and the Cloisters, we were able to hold the meeting in the Museum itself at a time when one volume and several pages of the famous twelfth-century Winchester Bible, plus its Morgan leaf, were all on exhibit upstairs.

The meeting this year was graced by the presence of Professor Jonathan Alexander, who offered an informal talk about the Winchester Bible with special emphasis on the scholars who were involved in the study of the Bible from the time of Walter Oakeshott on. Professor Alexander showed black and white photos of legendary art historians hovering over its pages; his affectionate presentation of the past drew all in the room into a warm and embracing continuum of scholarship.



Jonathon J.J.G. Alexander speaks on the Winchester Bible at the Annual Meeting of the ICMA in New York City, January 2015. Photo by Elizabeth Sears.

Assuming office at the time of the meeting was our new Treasurer, David Raizman. David is Distinguished University Professor at Drexel University in Philadelphia and author of a famous book on the history of design. But he is also a medievalist: his PhD, under John Williams, concerned Morgan Beatus and he publishes widely on Romanesque art and architecture in Spain. He has been a member of the ICMA Finance Committee since 2011.



Outgoing ICMA Treasurer Becky Corrie hands over a thumb drive to successor David Raizman. Photo by Elizabeth Sears.

Also assuming office at this time were the seven new members of the ICMA Board of Directors. The new members, who will serve until February of 2018, are: Robert Bork, Anne Derbes, Martha Easton, Beate Fricke, Elina Gertsman, Griffith Mann, and Nino Zchomelidse.

Warm thanks are due to the seven outgoing Board members who have contributed so much to the organization in the course of their three-year terms. They are: Martina Bagnoli, Sarah Bassett, Matthew Canepa, Anthony Cutler, Janet Marquardt, Elizabeth Moodey, and Christine Sciacca.

Our outgoing Treasurer, Becky Corrie, served two terms in this position, brilliantly steering the ICMA through the troubled waters of the recent recession. On behalf of a very grateful Executive Committee, Becky

Continued on page 2

FROM THE PRESIDENT

(continued)

was presented at the meeting with a sort-of-Byzantine bowl made in the studio of the potter Miranda Thomas. Miranda Thomas produced the “peace bowl” given to Kofi Annan at his retirement from the United Nations, and the bowl that Bill Clinton presented to Pope John Paul II when visiting Rome. We thought Becky deserved no less for her years of devotion to the ICMA!



Linda Safran and Adam Cohen, Editors of Gesta

Publications: It is my pleasure to announce that Linda Safran and Adam Cohen, who have been serving as Co-editors of *Gesta* since 2013, have agreed to stay on for a second term. They steered our journal through a crucial period of transition, as we shifted the publication and distribution

of *Gesta* to the University of Chicago Press; they have produced a series of excellent issues while managing to meet every deadline in the book. The new issue (vol. 54:1) is due out shortly.

Membership: The Membership Committee, under the energetic leadership of Jan Marquardt and Doralynn Pines, has been active in organizing special events around exhibitions and conferences in Boston, New York, Baltimore, and elsewhere. These events have proved a fine way to bring regional ICMA members together. Full details are given in Jan’s report on page 3.

Programs and Lectures: The annual “ICMA at the Courtauld” lecture was presented in February by Holger Klein, who spoke on “Art, Faith, and Politics in Late Medieval Venice.” The ICMA sponsored a session on “Moving Women, Moving Objects” at the College Art Association; it was organized by Tracy Chapman Hamilton and Mariah Proctor-Tiffany, who have organized two further sessions on the theme at Kalamazoo in May. There will be another ICMA-sponsored session at Kalamazoo on “The Cross in Medieval Art,” organized by Beth Williamson. The ICMA will be sponsoring two sessions on “Pseudo-Dionysius and the Arts,” organized by Francesca Dell’Acqua, one of our foreign Associates, at the Leeds Medieval Conference in July, and there will more sponsorships come fall. Funds for travel to sponsored sessions have been made available to us by the

Kress Foundation, which encourages us to widen our horizons and sponsor sessions at more conferences, here and abroad, than we do now. So think broadly. All proposals for ICMA-sponsored sessions should be forwarded to the Programs and Lectures Committee, chaired by Janis Elliott.

Website: Our website is being thoroughly overhauled and its beauties will be unveiled very soon.

Grants and Awards: Our newest venture is the institution of three student travel grants, designed primarily for students embarking on their PhD theses who need a chance to visit the monuments on which they will soon be spending countless months of research! The deadline for applying for the 2015 grants will have passed by the time this Newsletter appears, but we hope this, the first year of this initiative, will be a success, and lead to grants such as these being awarded annually.



Nancy Ševčenko,
President of the ICMA

Kalamazoo: We will meet soon at Kalamazoo: on Friday, May 15, at the ICMA evening reception, at the ICMA student reception preceding it, and at the three ICMA-sponsored sessions. In the meantime, I would most welcome your thoughts as to where we as an organization should be heading in the months ahead.

Nancy P. Ševčenko
President
nsevckenko8@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Madeline Caviness, Janis Elliot, Stephen Fliegel, Jennifer Grayburn, Tracy Chapman Hamilton, Lehti Mairike Keelmann, Sherry Lindquist, Janet Marquardt, Doralynn Pines, Mariah Proctor-Tiffany, Linda Safran, Elizabeth Sears, Nancy Ševčenko, Saygin Salgirli, Kyle G. Sweeney, and Andrew Tallon

REPORT FROM THE MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Membership and Developments Committee has been active in arranging special events for members from coast to coast.

Membership Committee activities



Boston: On Thursday evening, January 22, 2015, sixteen ICMA members and one guest gathered for a tour of the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum with new curator Christina Nielsen. It was a lovely nighttime exploration in a nineteenth-century palazzo replete with altars, dark corners, important artworks, and idiosyncratic displays. Christina did a wonderful job of contextualizing Mrs. Gardner's collecting and presentation decisions. Members of the group added commentary about some medieval pieces. Afterwards, seven stayed for dinner and drinks in the café. Everyone agreed that members welcome these activities and asked for more.

Members of the group added commentary about some medieval pieces. Afterwards, seven stayed for dinner and drinks in the café. Everyone agreed that members welcome these activities and asked for more.

Los Angeles: California committee members Meredith Cohen and Beate Fricke organized a special ICMA event at the Getty Museum on November 21, 2014 for the exhibition "Chivalry." Head Curator, Elizabeth Morrison, led the group and also pulled out some fascinating new acquisitions to show members, including a very interesting Ethiopian manuscript. People came from a wide geographic area around California and found the experience unifying. They hope to repeat with another event in the spring.

Milton Keynes, England: A Byzantine conference will be held at the Open University in Milton Keynes, March 28 though 30; Sharon Gerstel agreed to carry ICMA bookmarks for distribution there.

Montréal: The 35th Annual Canadian Conference of Medieval Art Historians will be held in Montréal March 19 and 20. ICMA and *Gesta* materials will be included in the registration packets and Jan Marquardt will encourage membership during her presentation.

New York City: The Museum of Biblical Art in New York City hosted a special tour for ICMA members of the exhibition "Sculpture in the Age of Donatello" on March 12, 2015. Organized by our NYC subcommittee, headed by Doralynn Pines, the tour was led by Richard

Townsend, Director of the Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA). The 23 sculptures were able to travel from Florence, most for the first time, because the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence is undergoing extensive renovations. The redesigned museum, with significantly expanded galleries, is scheduled to re-open in the fall of 2015. The sculptures include 10 works signed, documented, or attributed to Donatello, including *St. John the Evangelist* from the facade of the cathedral, and *Abraham and Isaac* and the *Prophet* known as *Il Zuccone*, both from the Campanile. The exhibition continues at MOBIA until June 14, 2015.

Tel Aviv: On March 23, 2015, the ICMA held a reception at the IMAGO conference in Tel Aviv hosted by Assaf Pinkus, which took place before the final keynote address by Hans Belting. Materials about ICMA and *Gesta* plus refreshments were available, and our members attending the conference circulated and invited others to join.



ICMA at the IMAGO conference in Tel Aviv.



ICMA at the IMAGO conference in Tel Aviv.

If any member is attending an event or making a presentation where it would be possible to distribute materials or hold a small gathering of members and interested potential members, please contact:

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

ICMA SESSION AT THE COLLEGE ART ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK CITY, 2015: MOVING WOMEN, MOVING OBJECTS (300-1500)

As we examine medieval works of art like manuscripts, reliquaries, and jewels, today anchored and spotlighted in their museum vitrines, it is easy to imagine these sumptuous objects at rest in the hands of their original owners. But, in truth, they were in constant motion, and women were especially responsible for the movement of these works of art.

This panel sought to enrich the discussion of women and their relationships with their objects that, in the area of non-book arts, remains relatively unexplored. Luscious objects were gifts that traveled lesser and greater distances, some imported in brides' nuptial coffers and many more commissioned and used to unite women separated by their politically advantageous marriages. Sisters and mothers, grandmothers and aunts, daughters and cousins, as well as friends and allies, all exchanged works of art with shared stories and iconographies. These pieces were the tokens that served as tribute, the centerpieces of rituals and ceremonies, the precious keepsakes enjoyed in intimate places, and the markers of architectural spaces often also founded or endowed by these women.

Nancy Wicker's paper, "Gold in Motion: Women and Jewelry from Early Medieval Scandinavia," examined fifth- and sixth-century Scandinavian brooches and pendant bracteates that were carried across Europe by Nordic women who may have received such ornaments as bride price when they married foreign leaders to build political alliances. On a more intimate scale, displays of glittering jewelry reflected in the firelight must have dazzled onlookers during ceremonies in the Germanic great halls that are attested in literary and historical sources. Adornments were not only miniature works of art but also material evidence of a chain of relationships that linked the objects and the women who wore them, and that attest to women's roles in the transfer of gold.

Loretta Vandi discussed a precious silver gilt and enameled belt given to a bride entering the Fatinelli house in fourteenth-century Lucca in her paper, "A Gift for a Heavenly Wedding. Santa Zita's Belt in Fourteenth-Century Lucca." The belt passed to Zita, the family's servant, who had become a bride of Christ in death. Vandi reconstructed the socio-political context in which the Fatinelli family requested a chapel in the church of San Frediano where their servant's holiness, testified by a series of miracles, could publicly be asserted. Sumptuary laws enacted in Lucca at the beginning of the fourteenth century may cast new light on the psychological and social motivations underlying the gift of an object able to

mediate between intimacy and public display. Finally, Vandi took into account the exchange between two women of different social classes and the intentionality of gift-giving shown by a noble woman eager to honor a humble woman who passed from bondage to a heavenly wedding.

Lana Sloutsky explored themes of moving women and moving objects in terms of the exodus of elite women from Constantinople after 1453, when Mehmed II conquered the city and ended the Byzantine Empire. The ensuing devastation and conversion of the Byzantine capital to Islamic Istanbul contributed to wide-scale emigration. Driven by a sense of nostalgia, this small but educated and wealthy population became prominent for preserving Byzantine cultural identity. Sloutsky spoke about two female émigrés – Sophia Palaiologina (1450-1503) and Anna Palaiologina Notaras (d. 1508). Known to each other through Cardinal Basileos Bessarion (1403-1472), who was perhaps the most influential Byzantine émigré to the West, they were integral in this transfer of Byzantine culture to Moscow and Venice, respectively. By following the lives and social networks of these women and the objects they took with them from Constantinople, Sloutsky's research addresses questions of early modern identity retention and formation from the art-historical perspective.

Please join us at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan, at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. in Schneider 1220 on Sunday, May 17, 2015 for two more ICMA-sponsored sessions on this theme. Participants will be Amanda Luyster, Jennifer Borland, Julia Finch, Anne Stanton, Diane Antille, Nicolas Hatot, and Joan Holladay. We are developing a volume of essays, *Medieval Women, Medieval Objects*, from the talks in these sessions.

*Tracy Chapman Hamilton and
Mariah Proctor-Tiffany, Session Chairs*



Speakers respond to questions during the CAA session, Moving Women, Moving Objects (300-1500), CAA, New York City, 2015

MEMBER NEWS

Awards

If you are a member and your work has recently garnered a prize in the 12 months prior to August 2015, please contact newsletter@medievalart.org by July 15, 2015 (in advance of the August Newsletter).

ICMA Member Diane Wolfthal wins best article award from the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women

Congratulations to ICMA member Diane Wolfthal. In October 2014, she was awarded the best article prize for 2014 for her "Household Help: Early Modern Portraits of Female Servants," *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 8 (2013): 5-52.



ICMA member Jennifer Feltman wins National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend

Congratulations to ICMA member, Jennifer Feltman, who was awarded a 2015 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend for her book project, *Moral Theology and the Cathedral: Sculpted Programs of the Last Judgment in Thirteenth-Century France*.



ICMA member Douglas Brine wins the 2015 Arthur Kingsley Porter Prize

Congratulations to ICMA member Douglas Brine for winning the Arthur Kingsley Porter Prize, awarded by the College Association for his article, "Jan van Eyck, Canon Joris van der Paele, and the Art of Commemoration," *Art Bulletin* 96, no. 3 (September 2014): 265-28.

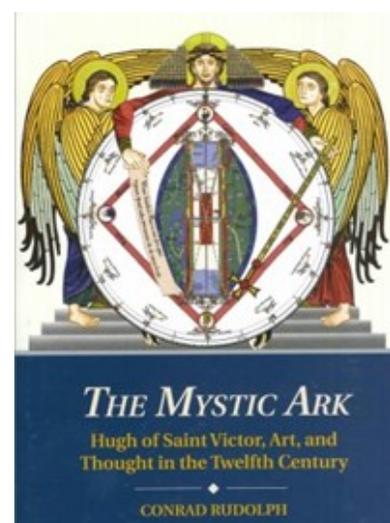
ICMA Member Alison Stones awarded the Chevalier de l' Ordre des Arts et des Lettres



Congratulations to Alison Stones for being named *Chevalier de l' Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the *Ministre de la Culture et de la Communication, République Française*.

ICMA Member Conrad Rudolf receives honorable mention from the American Publishers Awards for Professional and Scholarly Excellence (PROSE) in the category of Art History and Criticism, 2015

Congratulations to Conrad Rudolf for his honorable mention from PROSE in the category of Art History and Criticism (2015) for *The Mystic Ark: Hugh of Saint Victor, Art, and Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 2014).



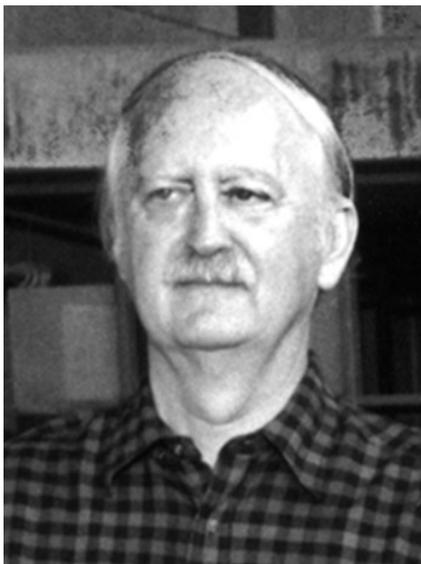
MEMBER NEWS

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Commemorations

If you would like to submit a commemoration of an ICMA member who has died in the 12 months prior to August 2015, and which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send a 200 to 500 word obituary and, if possible, an accompanying picture by July 1, 2015 (in advance of the August 2015 Newsletter) to newsletter@medievalart.org.

Larry M. Ayres



Larry M. Ayres died in Santa Barbara, California on November 14, 2014 at the age of 75. Professor Emeritus of the University of California at Santa Barbara, he had retired in 2003 after teaching there for some 45 years. He was involved in training two generations of graduate students, who greatly appreciated

his deep knowledge and love of medieval manuscripts and of Italian cultural production, and his wit and good humor; one described to me how some of his phrases still ring in her ears. For his part, Larry always seemed surprised to find himself on the western seaboard, where he moved in 1970; he used to call himself “the California dreamer,” and chuckled about the surf boards propped up outside the classrooms. Yet within a year of his arrival in Santa Barbara, he published an article on a manuscript in the collection there: “The Miniatures of the Santa Barbara Bible: A Preliminary Report,” *Soundings: Collections of the University Library, University of California, Santa Barbara* 3, no. 2 (1971). And he represented regional interests very ably, pointing out for instance that the composition of the ICMA board strongly favored the eastern seaboard, making the organization less desirable to members elsewhere; a balanced nominating committee was one of the results of such criticism. He was a contributing member and served two terms on the Board of Directors, from 1976 to 1984.

Larry and I were classmates as graduate students in the Fine Arts Department at Harvard University, receiving our doctorates together in 1970. We had much in common: our undergraduate work was not in art history, but we had begun graduate study in the field in Europe; Larry had spent two years in Oxford, and we shared an enthusiasm for English art of the late twelfth century, even though French was the vogue. An additional bond was a shared ironic sense of humor that sheltered us from the indifference of a department where the Kingsley Porter Chair remained a *sedes vacante* for many years and medievalists had no mentor after the departure of Linda Seidel. Yet Larry was fortunate to be there when Ernst Kitzinger arrived from Dumbarton Oaks, and he benefitted from Ernst’s immense knowledge, his wise reassessment of the glib notion of Byzantine influence on western European art, and his attention to ornament as well as figural representation. The Vietnam War had taken me to Japan, but Larry kept in touch, sending me his thoughts on some of the English manuscripts that might have a connection to Canterbury stained glass. However, he was less lucky than I in his choice of dissertation topic; it turned out that the Winchester Bible was jealously guarded by the British art historian Walter Oakeshott, who was preparing a large study. This turned out to be unfortunate for the field as well as for Larry, because his breadth of vision gave him a clear purchase on stylistic trends on the continent.

During the 1970s, Larry published a number of thoughtful studies of stylistic exchange across the English Channel: “The Work of the Morgan Master at Winchester and English Painting of the Early Gothic Period.” *The Art Bulletin* 56 (1974); “Problems of Sources for the Iconography of the Lyre Drawings,” *Speculum* 49 (1974); and “The Role of an Angevin Style in English Romanesque Painting.” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 37 (1974). In 1976, he contributed an essay on the influence from Poitou in some English works to an important volume on *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Patron and Politician*, ed. William W. Kibler (Austin: University of Texas Press). Larry usually spent his summers and sabbatical leaves in Europe, with fellowships at different times from the American Academy in Rome, the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He described spending weeks in one or other of the great libraries, calling up any manuscripts that interested him based on the catalogue. Some useful studies came from that kind of exploration (for instance: “Parisian Bibles in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek.” *Pantheon* XL [1982]). He began to concentrate on German and Italian manuscript collections

and was frequently in touch with Florentine Mütterich, who had taught a course at Harvard; they shared an interest in the Carolingian legacy in Italy. In the 1980s, Rome became Larry's second home and, like so many of us, he particularly enjoyed the friendly exchanges between scholars in the Vatican Library that were fostered by Leonard Boyle.

During the decade 1985-1995, Larry pursued several aspects of Italian Romanesque manuscript painting and began to frame a larger study of the Bibles. Publications included: "An Italianate Episode in Romanesque Bible Illumination at Weingarten Abbey," *Gesta* 24 (1985); "Gregorian Reform and Artistic Renewal in Manuscript Illumination: The Bibbia Atlantica as an International Artistic Denomination." *Studi Gregoriani* 14 (1991); "An Early Christian Legacy in Italian Romanesque Miniature Painting," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 46 (1993); and "The Italian Giant Bibles: Aspects of their Tournonian Ancestry and Early History," in *The Early Medieval Bible*, 1994. His last article, published after his retirement, "A Fragment of an Italian Giant Bible from San Benedetto di Polirone and its Position within the Genealogy of the Italian Giant Bibles," *Aevum* 81(2007), gives some idea of the way this project might have developed.

Intensely aware of the vitality and richness of manuscript studies, Larry was greatly amused to have been asked in a job interview why he worked on such *small* things; the Winchester Bible is hardly that, nor are the Italian giant Bibles; to borrow Hanns Swarzenski's phrase, they are "monuments of Romanesque art." He planned to complete a major book on the Bibles, but the hypertension that had threatened his health for many years pre-empted that dream.

For an additional tribute posted by the Department of Art History, University of California, Santa Barbara: <http://www.arthistory.ucsb.edu/HAAnewsletter/Winter2015/index.html>.

*Madeline H. Caviness
Mary Richardson Professor Emeritus
Tufts University*

Barbara Abou-El-Haj

Barbara Abou-El-Haj passed away in Plymouth, Massachusetts on March 6, 2015. She had recently retired from her post at Binghamton University, where for almost 30 years she rigorously and joyfully taught, wrote, and mentored. Barbara was my advisor, and I owe a great deal to her insights in



finding my own path in art history. Rightfully, many will remember her as one of the key figures instrumental in transforming the way we see medieval art today. But she was much more than all of these. She was one of those few art historians whose perspectives on life and scholarship were productively and critically interwoven.

Her seminal book, *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) reveals a world of economic ambitions and political rivalries behind the taken-for-granted façade of a peaceful spirituality, which the abbots and bishops of the eleventh and twelfth centuries carefully orchestrated by inventing relics and miracles, producing elaborately illuminated manuscripts, and sponsoring extravagant churches and cathedrals. Contextualizing each manuscript in its locality, but with careful regard to the dynamics of a changing medieval economy, Barbara asserted the inseparability of processes of artistic production from art historical analyses. However, her contextualizing approach to medieval art should not be mistaken with economic determinism. On the contrary, as is particularly clear in her studies on Reims and Amiens, for Barbara, economics was never about the availability of funds, but about the ability to extract funds. It was, in other words, essentially political. Hence, in many instances, construction projects became grounds for violent disputes between the patrons (bishops or abbots) and the burghers. Connectedly, the latter were often antagonistically transposed onto the sculptural programs of the churches and cathedrals, built with their own labor and resources.

MEMBER NEWS

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Barbara was an extraordinary medievalist, and in order to see how extraordinary she really was, one must see her operating in venues that many would assume to be outside her comfort zone. In *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity* (University of Minnesota Press, 1991), edited by Anthony D. King from papers presented at a symposium at Binghamton University, she debates, quite comfortably, with Ulf Hannerz about terminologies of globalization, center and periphery, reciprocity and synthesis. But, we must also pay attention to her still valid observations, especially nowadays when so many medievalists are interested in cross-cultural exchange. Even then, she underlined our “failure to generate a comparative language beyond the set of tidy binaries which reproduce the global regime in the very attempt to eviscerate it;” and called for a “language capable of describing equal exchange in a world of unequal exchanges.”

Similar to her call for a language of equal exchange in a world of unequal exchanges, in “Artistic Integration Inside the Cathedral Precinct: Social Consensus Outside,” published in *Artistic Integration in Early Gothic Churches*, edited by K. Brush, P. Draper, and V. Raguin (University of Toronto Press, 1995), Barbara proposed to approach Gothic cathedrals “from bottom up and from outside in” by bringing in the people who were excluded from official histories and often from art historical analyses. I believe that this is where the convergence between her perspectives on life and scholarship becomes most apparent. Because Barbara struggled to include the excluded in academia just as she included the excluded in her work, and just as she searched for a language of equal exchange in a world of unequal exchanges, she struggled and hoped for a world of equal exchanges. That is why she remains an inspiration whether looking at a manuscript page or watching the news. Barbara was a medievalist, and an extraordinary one at that, but she was also a Marxist. She lived as a Marxist, taught as a Marxist, wrote as a Marxist, and should be remembered as a Marxist who could simultaneously hope for a better world and better scholarship.

For additional tributes posted by the Department of Art History at Binghamton University, State University of New York (SUNY): <https://binghamtonarthistory.wordpress.com/2015/03/12/in-memoriam-professor-barbara-abou-el-haj-1943-2015/#respond>.

Saygin Salgirli
Sabanci University

Recent Publications by ICMA Members

If you are a member who has published a book 12 months prior to August 2015, and which has not yet been announced in this Newsletter, please send your information by July 1, 2015 (in advance of the August 2015 Newsletter) to: newsletter@medievalart.org.

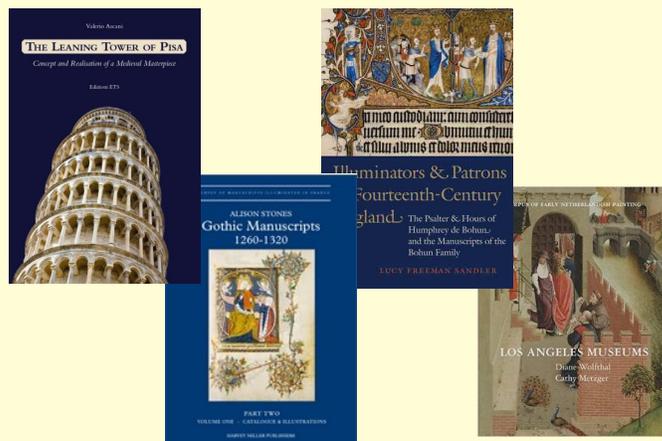
Ascani, Valerio. *The Leaning Tower of Pisa: Concept and Realization of a Medieval Masterpiece*. ETS: Pisa, 2014. <http://www.edizioniets.it/scheda.asp?N=9788846739087>.

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Wolfthal, Diane and Catherine Metzger. *Corpus of 15th-Century Painting in the Former Southern Netherlands*. Los Angeles. Museums Turnhout: Brepols, 2014. <http://www.amazon.com/15th-Century-Painting-Southern-Netherlands-Netherlandish/dp/2930054212>.



SPECIAL REPORTS

New Acquisitions



Virgin and Child in Majesty (Sedes Sapientiae). Wood (walnut) with polychromy, 40 × 22 × 24 cm. France, Auvergne, second half of the twelfth century. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund 2012.52. Photo by Cleveland Museum of Art.

embodies the complex and core Christian doctrine of the Virgin's role in the Incarnation (the moment in which Christ became flesh) and ultimately in the redemption of humankind. The sculpture is carved from walnut and still retains traces of the original polychromy. It is stylistically datable to the second half of the twelfth century and is among the smaller examples of its type (h. 40 cm.). Mary is seated frontally and hieratically on a throne. Her gaze is towards the beholder. Just as she is seated on a throne, she in turn becomes the throne to the Christ Child, thus symbolizing her role in giving birth, not only to the human Jesus, but also to the divine Christ. The Incarnation gave Mary a unique role as principal mediator between heaven and Earth, and between God and humankind.

Sculptural depictions of the Virgin and Child in Majesty were once abundant across Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and especially in France. Representations in wood have generally not survived well. Some 170 such sculptures have been documented. The new Cleveland *sedes* belongs to a much smaller and elite

group of the Throne of Wisdom sculptures produced in the Auvergne region of central France during the second half of the twelfth century. These "Auvergne" *Sedes Sapientiae* are estimated to number only about 25 or 30 and are characterized by their softer sculptural qualities and especially their linear, calligraphic draperies, which form beautiful swirls and contours. This sculpture, though lacking its throne and lower extremities, adds a powerful and beautiful example to the documented corpus of the type. The small scale of the Auvergne *sedes* figures and their material, wood, made them intentionally mobile. Evidence suggests that they were moved from altar to altar or church to church, and were frequently carried in procession within churches and town streets on Marian feast days. Though damaged on its lower extremities, the upper portions of the sculpture, including all critical areas, have survived well. The visual integrity of the sculpture remains intact. The statue provides representation in the Cleveland collection of the significance of the Auvergne region to the body of French Romanesque wood sculpture.

The second sculpture in oak, a standing figure of the Virgin and Child, was acquired on the London art market in late 2014. It is a rare survival from an important region noted during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries for the production of ecclesiastical art: the Valley of the Meuse. The sculpture may on stylistic and technical grounds be localized to the Mosan region and dated to the late thirteenth century. The River Meuse was among the key European trade routes and was noted for the presence of numerous wealthy abbeys, churches, and convents, most of which were major patrons of ecclesiastical art.

Only a handful of such sculptures in wood of the Virgin and Child, either as standing or seated variants, are known to be extant from the Mosan region. The present figure is elegantly draped and is remarkable for the preservation of much of its original painted decoration and gilding. This includes the gilded mantle highlighted with decorative bands of geometric patterns and the green dragon on which she stands. There are small apertures around the Virgin's neck and along the border of the mantle, which would have originally been set with glass or gemstone cabochons in imitation of the richly adorned metalwork for which Mosan art was highly esteemed. The settings for these cabochons provide some hint of the original opulence of this sculpture. The Virgin's serene features and beautiful countenance are noteworthy as is the refined execution of the draperies. This can be seen in the way the heavy cloth of her mantle

SPECIAL REPORTS

(continued)



Virgin and Child. Wood (oak) with polychromy and gilding, h. 83.5 cm. Mosan, Liège(?), late thirteenth century. The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund 2014.392. Photo by Cleveland Museum of Art.

falls in fluid and balanced folds at her feet. The carving is of the highest standard and the figure is an example of the finest Mosan sculpture of the thirteenth century.

Like all wood sculpture of the thirteenth century and earlier, this Virgin and Child does not survive in perfect condition. The head of the child and the Virgin's right hand were once dowelled into place. These are now lost. There are also obvious losses of gilding and the original cabochons. None of these losses are unexpected for an 800 year old sculpture

in wood, nor do they severely impact the aesthetic appeal or the visual integrity of this sculpture. Indeed she seems to be one of the finest such sculptures extant.

The sculpture comes from the collection of Gustav Rau of Stuttgart, who acquired it in the 1960s. Works of Mosan art in any medium are almost unheard of on today's market. This acquisition is therefore a rare addition that fills a major gap in the medieval holdings at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Together, both sculptures now provide greater depth and balance to this segment of the medieval collection. Both sculptures deserve to be more widely known among the scholarly community.

*Stephen N. Fliegel
Curator of Medieval Art
The Cleveland Museum of Art*

Teaching Medieval Architecture in the Information Age

As a graduate student in the Department of Art and Archeology at Columbia University in the early 2000s, with an appointment in the Media Center for Art History, and with Stephen Murray as mentor, the world of digital humanities could not have been more exciting. I had the good fortune to have been engaged in a host of projects, from the Amiens Cathedral Trilogy animation and CD-ROM to the less well-known but equally compelling NEH-funded *Real Virtual/History of Architecture* project (<http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/ha>), for which we created a series of spherical panoramic photographs of a wide range of key buildings—a collection that would eventually be shared in part with ArtStor. It was an excellent education in the promises and perils of technology applied to the humanities: thanks to Murray's vision, the distinction between *digitized* humanities and *digital* humanities remained eminently crisp.

The world of digital humanities has changed much in the intervening years—so much so that it seems time to drop the technological qualifier from the couplet. Teaching art—and particularly architectural—history *without* the contribution of new media is hardly conceivable today. From the explosion of high quality online image databases—the entire Book of Kells can now be consulted in nearly all of its glory (<http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home>)—to the rapid advances in technology that have opened new means of representation to subjects that have traditionally resisted imaging, the chances to lessen conversion loss when bringing art and architecture into the classroom have never been greater.

In what follows, I will focus on architecture: because it is multi-dimensional and spatial, it presents special challenges when collapsed into two dimensions. We might begin by naming the space that lies between real and virtual, this gap that initially would seem to be the primary impediment in the successful translation of building to classroom. There is no question that a faded Kodachrome slide of the interior of still-blackened Chartres Cathedral leaves much to be desired, and will do little to engage the imagination of the student immersed in a culture of rich and fluid media. And yet, we must also acknowledge, as Nicholas Adams has done recently, that there is a productive engagement of the imagination in the real-virtual gap.¹ A near-perfect architectural simula-

¹ Nicholas Adams, "Opening Technology's Door: Perils and Possibilities," *Architectural Research Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (2011): 25-34.

crum—if such a thing were even possible—would run the risk of trivializing actual experience, of deadening the multi-sensory wonder of architecture through somatic passivity.

The following techniques of virtualization make no attempt—do not even aspire—to replace the building; each is comfortable with its fundamental experiential incompetence. Yet, each moves us just a bit closer than had been possible using the once-conventional binary slideshow, while still respecting the creative tension of the gap between real and virtual, the rewarding mental effort required to synthesize what is lost in translation. They are arranged in order of decreasing “gap,” from the conventional architectural photograph to the three-dimensional computer reconstruction.



Figure 1. Amiens Cathedral, façade. Photo by Andrew Tallon, 2008. <http://mappinggothic.org/image/30086?view=zoom&mode=sea>.

Architectural photographs are not new; what is new, however, is our ability to deploy them effectively on the internet and in the classroom. High resolution rectified images such as those on the Mellon-funded *Mapping Gothic* website (Figure 1) can be zoomed into and displaced; with such an image of a facade, not only can details be recovered that were not easy to spot, but the entirety of the architectural and sculptural program can be explored without recourse to details—the context is never lost.

In a similar way, so-called gigapixel photography lends itself well to capturing monumental sculpture. The tympanum of the abbey church of Sainte-Foi in Conques, for example, photographed in 2011 as part of the *Mapping Gothic* project (Figure 2), makes it possible to bring the sculpture into the classroom with uncommon detail and precision. The image is nearly 12 gigabytes, composed of 560 images acquired with a robotic camera mount and then stitched together, but it is deployed progressively, as



Figure 2. Photographing the tympanum at Sainte-Foi in Conques. Photo by Sofia Gans, 2011. http://faculty.vassar.edu/antallon/zoomify/Conques_Tympanum.html.

needed, so that only a small fraction of the image is present at one time in the browser window.

We are currently at the receding edge of the most recent vogue for stereoscopic imaging, brought on in large part by James Cameron’s 2009 film *Avatar*. Three-dimensional televisions were proposed as the promise of the future a few years ago, but people realized, I suspect, that they long had been synthesizing the missing third dimension, *sans goggles*, in conventional films, and that they had not missed out on much in the process. There is something



Figure 3. Anaglyph stereo photograph of the nave of Amiens Cathedral. Photo by Andrew Tallon, 2009. <http://mappinggothic.org/image/35061?view=zoom&mode=naked>.

to be said nonetheless for attempting to recover stereo vision when dealing with architecture, because a true sense of space is impossible without it.

The stereoscopic images on the *Mapping Gothic* website (Figure 3) are presented as red-cyan anaglyphs because the paper and film glasses required to view them are widely available.

Continued on page 12

SPECIAL REPORTS

(continued)

More sophisticated stereoscopic viewing systems do a better job of rendering color and light but require either special screens paired with goggles or head-mounted displays, which make their use in the classroom impractical.

Perhaps the most successful approach to architectural virtualization, in terms of ease of use and production, is spherical panoramic photography, which has been around for several decades but has enjoyed a renewed life thanks to the ease with which such photographs can be presented in the classroom and given to students for use out of class. A spherical photograph is composed of a number of smaller photographs made with a special bracket and then stitched together; the viewer is placed at the center of the sphere and looks out through a virtual window (Figure 4); the sphere can then be displaced “around” the viewer’s head.



Figure 4. Simulation of the virtual viewing window in a spherical photograph of the Corona at Canterbury Cathedral. Photo by Andrew Tallon, 2014. http://faculty.vassar.edu/antallon/vr/canterbury/Canterbury_Cathedral_14_interior_Corona.html.

Some additional examples of spherical photographs, integrated into multi-level plans of the cathedrals of Chartres and Paris, can be seen here:

- <http://faculty.vassar.edu/antallon/chartres/vr/chartres.html>
- <http://faculty.vassar.edu/antallon/ndp/vr/ndp.html>

A related imaging technology, in which the virtual camera looks on from the exterior rather than from the interior, is better suited for objects. An early thirteenth century

enthroned Virgin with Child from the collection of the Loeb Art Center at Vassar College (<http://faculty.vassar.edu/antallon/vrobject/flac/LoebMadonna.html>) is an example. The technique can also be used for architectural models. Figure 5 presents a 3D reconstruction of the cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris from my recent book with Dany Sandron (Paris: Parigramme, 2013); when converted into a web object, it can be rotated and viewed from nearly any angle.



Figure 5. Recreation of the state of Notre-Dame in Paris, ca. 1245. From Dany Sandron and Andrew Tallon, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (Paris: Parigramme, 2013). http://faculty.vassar.edu/antallon/vrobject/ndp_1245/1245.html.

It is equally possible to take such a model and place it in a gaming environment, such as Unity 3D, to allow students to move through it. Such attempts must be carefully contextualized, however—it has to be made clear that this is not an attempt to supplant the actual building but rather to recover something lost through modification. And every attempt should be made to adhere to a human viewpoint: it should not be possible to leap and fly, for example, as much as a close look at a (virtual) high capital might be tempting.

The perpetual cycle of innovation will bring new technologies of virtualization: a recent arrival is spherical video, in which a student could displace a virtual sphere like that of standard spherical photography, but while moving along a scripted path filmed in a real building. It is computationally demanding and somewhat expensive to produce, but these impediments will soon disappear. Imagine the excitement of combining movement with a fully spherical viewpoint! Yet such excitement must be tempered as we remember to “mind the gap”—to make sure that the technological cart has not been set before the pedagogical horse.

Andrew Tallon
Vassar College

<http://gothicstructure.org>

MEDIEVAL ART IN THE NEWS

Members are encouraged to bring brief news items regarding medieval art to the attention of the editor at Newsletter@medievalart.org. Only a small selection of highlights will be included in each Newsletter.

Medievalist Daniel H. Weiss Named Next President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Daniel H. Weiss, a medievalist known for his work on the art of the crusades, has been appointed the new President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City following the retirement of Emily Kernan Rafferty:



<http://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-museum/press-room/news/2015/daniel-weiss>.

A New Database on Gothic Ivories

The Gothic Ivories website hosted by the Courtauld Institute of Art provides images and detailed information on nearly 5,000 objects: <http://www.gothicivories.courtauld.ac.uk/>.



The 'Flaxley Casket' (lid). Story of the Swan Knight (Chevalier au Cygne). Wraxall, Tynesfield, ivory and wood with metal fittings. 133 mm X 203 mm X 140 mm.

RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Calls for non-ICMA papers, fellowship opportunities, and 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 (see: <http://www.medievalart.org/tag/call-for-papers/>). For more, visit our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/InternationalCenterofMedievalArt>), and follow ICMA on Twitter. ICMA members can 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/>.

Calls for ICMA-Sponsored Session Proposals

ICMA at the College Art Association, New York, February 15-18, 2017

The ICMA seeks proposals for sessions to be held under the organization's sponsorship in 2017 at the annual College Art Association. Session organizers and speakers must be ICMA members. Proposals must include a session abstract, a list of speakers, and a CV of the organizer(s), all in **one single Document or PDF with the organizer's name in the title**.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Kress Foundation, funds may be available to defray travel costs of sponsored session speakers up to a maximum of \$600 for travel within the US or of \$1,200 for international travel. For details go to: <http://medievalart.org/kress/travel/>.

Please direct all session proposals and inquiries by **August 15, 2014** to the Chair of the Programs Committee: Janis Elliott, Texas Tech University. Email: janis.elliott@ttu.edu.

ICMA at International Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2016

The ICMA seeks proposals for sessions to be held under the organization's sponsorship in 2016 at the International Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo. Session organizers and speakers must be ICMA members. Proposals must include a session abstract, a list of speakers, and a CV of the organizer(s), all in **one single Document or PDF with the organizer's name in the title**.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Kress Foundation, funds may be available to defray travel costs of sponsored session speakers up to a maximum of \$600 for domestic travel and of \$1,200 for international travel. For details go to: <http://medievalart.org/kress/travel/>.

Please direct all session proposals and inquiries by **May 1, 2015** to the Chair of the Programs Committee: Janis Elliott, Texas Tech University. Email: janis.elliott@ttu.edu.

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



Jennifer Grayburn,
ICMA Student Committee Chair

The ICMA Student Committee is excited to announce a new opportunity for ICMA student members. In addition to the annual Student Essay Prize offered early every year, ICMA is now offering three ICMA Graduate Student Travel Grants for student members at the preliminary stage of their research. These grants will allow recipients to travel for one month to help develop and strengthen their dissertation topic. This is an exciting opportunity for students which reinforces ICMA's commitment to supporting the research and professional development of its student members.

The Student Committee looks forward to our sponsored conference sessions “Super Medieval! Visual Representations of Medieval ‘Superheroes’” at Kalamazoo, “The Scandalous and the Marvelous in Medieval Art” at Leeds, and “Career Options for Graduate Students and Recent PhDs beyond the Tenure-Track Job” at ANZAMEMS. We hope that you can join us! Also, if you plan to be at Kalamazoo, do not forget to keep an eye out for the ICMA Student Committee Reception!

In anticipation of Kalamazoo, we are now accepting self-nominations to the ICMA Student Committee! Membership in the ICMA Student Committee is open to all students, regardless of your degree track. If you are interested in learning more about the ICMA Student Committee or would like to become a member, please contact Jennifer Grayburn, the ICMA Student Committee Chair, at jng3au@virginia.edu.

Finally, thank you to all of the student members who have submitted articles for the Student Section of the Newsletter! Keep them coming! This is a great opportunity to introduce your work to a larger audience and build your CV; previous contributors have even had their articles picked up and circulated by their supporting/

research institutions! If you have any questions or would like to submit something for the next Newsletter, please contact the Student Committee Newsletter Liaison, Lehti Keelmann at lehtik@umich.edu. You can also stay up to date with all ICMA Student Committee news and updates on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ICMAStudentCommittee>.

Jennifer Grayburn
ICMA Student Committee Chair

The Crucifixion Conundrum of Medieval Ethiopian Art

Sixty years have gone by since John Martin's seminal article on “The Dead Christ on the Cross in Byzantine Art” (in *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias*, [Princeton: 1955]), yet there are still a number of issues regarding the development of this motif that escape our understanding. Some, who believe that ecclesiastical schisms are at the heart of the problem, have sought to explain the use of this iconography in the light of the Christological divergence between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians. One may mention as examples of this view Kathleen Corrigan's “Text and Image of an Icon of the Crucifixion at Mount Sinai” (in *The Sacred Image: East and West*, eds. R. Ousterhout and L. Brubaker [University of Illinois Press, 1995]) and Leslie Brubaker's *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999). In this respect, one of the aims of my research as a PhD candidate at the School of Oriental and African Studies is to show that the peculiar treatment of the subject of the Crucifixion in medieval Ethiopian art can contribute to the more general study of the use of Crucifixion imagery.

In medieval Ethiopia, prior to the fifteenth century, the Crucifixion appeared in two forms. In the first, attested in a small number of engraved crosses dating to the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a living Christ, with a loincloth and a cruciform halo, is fastened by four nails to the cross (Figure 1). In the second, attested in a series of Gospel manuscripts dated to 1280/81 onwards, the cross is empty, surmounted by the Lamb of God, and flanked by the two thieves, Stephaton, and Longinus; the latter two figures are portrayed thrusting a spear towards, and offering a sponge to an invisible body (Figure 2). This second Crucifixion type, more than the first, has captured the attention of scholars such as Ugo Monneret



Figure 1. Crucifixion, late thirteenth century (?), processional cross, Lalibela type, silver. Addigrat, Maryam Dengelat Church. Photo courtesy of Blair Priday.

de Villard, who already in 1939 had recognized that the closest parallels to its iconography were to be found in early Christian art. Thus, he tentatively tried to ascribe its use in Ethiopia to an ongoing presence of followers of Julian of Halicarnassus, an anti-Chalcedonian theologian accused of denying the reality of Christ's suffering and death on the cross. According to materials written by John of Ephesus and Michael

the Syrian, among others, followers of this heresy were present in Ethiopia during the sixth century.

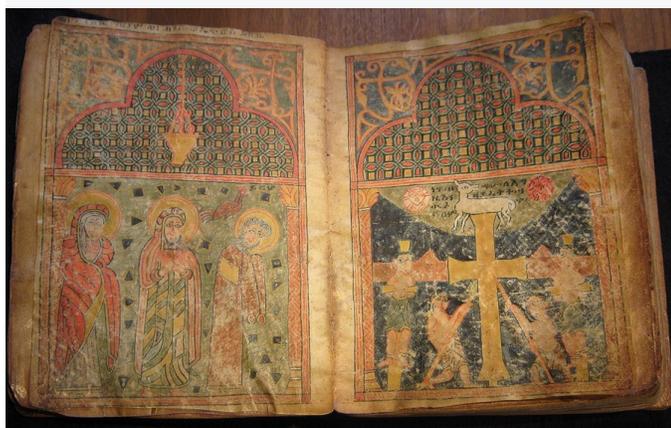


Figure 2. Crucifixion without Christ, late fourteenth century, ink and pigments on parchment. London, private collection, fols. 15v-16r. Photo by author.

Overall, successive studies of the second Crucifixion type have tended to refute Monneret de Villard's hypothesis, but the use of a motif long dismissed elsewhere in Christendom in Ethiopian art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries has continued to intrigue and perplex scholars. Interpretational difficulties arise from the lack of Ethiopian examples of the Crucifixion dating from before the late twelfth century, although it is believed that the art of painting was practiced in Ethiopia since at least the seventh century. In 1954, Patrick Skehan proposed that Ethiopian artists adopted the motif of the Crucifixion without the Crucified under the influence of such apocry-

phal works as the *Martyrdom of Pilate*—in which Christ reproaches John for depicting him as he appeared during the Crucifixion instead of illustrating the joy of his Resurrection. The prevailing view is that such works reached Ethiopia, and were translated from Arabic into Ge'ez (classical Ethiopic), under the aegis of the Coptic Metropolitan Sälama the Translator (c. 1350-1390). Thus, the main issue with Skehan's hypothesis is the existence of examples that predate this wave of translations, such as the one found in the late twelfth- or thirteenth-century church of Yämrähännä Krästos (Figure 3). Moreover, as first noted in 2003 by the late Gianfranco Fiaccadori, a series of Ethiopian coins from the Middle Aksumite period (c. 350-550), decorated with the motif of a cross under an arch, offer evidence, albeit not conclusive, that the roots of the second iconographic type go back to this period. The motif of a cross under an arch is evoked by examples of both the second (Figure 4) and first iconographic type of the Crucifixion (Figure 1), although this latter type may have also been inspired by the Indian iconography of Shiva Nataraja (Figure 5), given that Indian influences on Ethiopian art are attested for this period.



Figure 3. Crucifixion without Christ, late twelfth- or thirteenth-century, fresco. Lasta, Yämrähännä Krästos Church. Photo by author.

There is little need to dwell on the ties between Ethiopia and the Mediterranean world in Late Antiquity. Let it suffice to recall that the Ethiopian ruler Kaleb (c. 500-530) exchanged embassies with Justin I (518-27), and that reports suggesting that Justinian I (527-65) sent craftsmen to Ethiopia have been partly confirmed by the discovery that Proconnesian marble was employed in the construction of sixth-century churches at Adulis. It is no surprise then that most research on the second Crucifix-

STUDENT COMMITTEE PAGES

(continued)



Figure 4. *Crucifixion without Christ*, fourteenth-century, Təgray (Northern Ethiopia), ink and pigments on parchment. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, W.836, fol. 6v. Photo by The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

ion type has been concerned with outlining the similarities and differences between the interpretation of this motif in early Christian art and in medieval Ethiopia, looking mostly, but not exclusively, towards the sixth century and the *loca sancta* in an attempt to pinpoint the prototype that influenced Ethiopian artists. In such studies, the belated use of the Crucifixion without Crucified in fourteenth-century Ethiopia is generally seen as an expression of conservatism or as a sign of the country's alleged isolation from

the rest of Christendom after the Arab conquest of Alexandria.

While there may be some truth in these conclusions, it seems quite evident that religious sensibility also shaped



Figure 5. *Shiva Natarāja*, 11th century, Southern India. Paris Musée Guimet, MG 17471. Photo by Wikimedia commons.

the choices of Ethiopian artists. The Ethiopian iconography of Crucifixion without Crucified is infused with a wealth of eschatological and liturgical allusions. Moreover, both Crucifixion types used in pre fifteenth-century Ethiopian art are devoid of references to Christ's suffering on the cross. This reflects a more general tendency in Ethiopian art, from the thirteenth to the early fifteenth century, to favor images that nobilitate the Passion. Hence, for instance, during this period Ethiopian artists overturned the conventional iconography of the Washing of the Feet, in which Christ bends or kneels towards Peter, and painted Peter bending towards an enthroned Christ. This is likely an allusion to coeval liturgical practices, but it also expresses a religious sentiment. Expressions of the same sentiment are found in the earliest surviving examples of the Ethiopic Bible, in which the translator has omitted passages from the Greek original deemed disrespectful. Hence, for instance, the passage from Matthew (27:28) in which the soldiers mock Jesus is shortened in the Ethiopic version to suppress the fact that they "undressed him."

The Ethiopian Church, like the Alexandrian (to which it was subjected until 1948), is non-Chalcedonian. The antiquity of its non-Chalcedonian tradition was questioned in the past, partly because of the pre-Chalcedonian nature of the *Qerǝllos*, arguably the most influential collection of Christological works in Ethiopia until the fifteenth century. However, the discovery of a body of anti-Chalcedonian texts (*Aksumite Collection*) translated from Greek into Ethiopic during the Aksumite period has proven such a hypothesis wrong beyond doubt. If one accepts that the Melkites used images of the dead Christ to support their views, as suggested in such studies as the aforementioned ones by Corrigan and Brubaker, then it is legitimate to believe that, for some time at least, the non-Chalcedonians must have favored images that avoided references to his death. Although the wealth of evidence supporting this view is too vast to be covered here, it is worth mentioning that a tendency to favor images that ennoble the Passion has been observed in Coptic art. Yet, the Copts had started using the motif of the dead Christ long before its appearance in Ethiopian art. Thus, in light of the above, one cannot help but wonder whether the decision to not represent the dead Christ in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Ethiopia represents, in a sense, a late manifestation of what was once a more general, non-Chalcedonian, artistic tradition.

Jacopo Gnisci
Ph.D. Candidate, School of Oriental and African Studies
University of London

Exhibition Review: “Viollet-le-Duc: les visions d’un architecte,” Cité de l’architecture & du patrimoine, November 20, 2014 to March 9, 2015²

Catalogue: Finance, Laurence de, and Jean-Michel Leniaud. *Viollet-le-Duc: les visions d’un architecte [exposition, Paris, Cité de l’architecture & du patrimoine, 20 novembre 2014-9 mars 2015]* (Paris: Norma, 2014). 260 pp. 450 illustrations. 38€

This exhibition, devoted to Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc at the Cité de l’architecture & du patrimoine, avoids taking a stance on the legacy of the (in)famous restorer of medieval French monuments in favor of presenting a much more comprehensive and nuanced investigation into his life. Curated by Jean-Michel Leniaud, director of the École nationale des chartes, the exhibition tells the story of the life and work of Viollet-le-Duc through his countless memoirs, letters, drawings, paintings, and accounting records. The objects reflect Viollet-le-Duc’s diverse interests in a wide variety of the arts, physical sciences, and travel, and cast light on the creative and

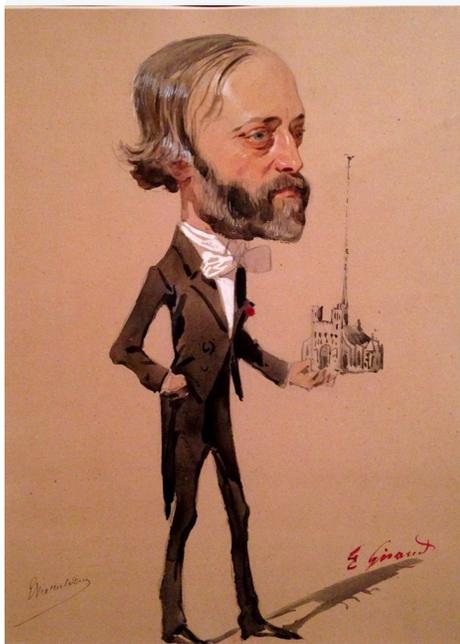


Figure 1. Eugène Giraud, Caricature portrait of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, 1860, Drawing; watercolor with white highlights, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Réserve NA-87-Boîte FT 4, dessin n°153. Photo by Kyle G. Sweeney.

constructive influences that inspired his theories and governed his restoration designs. Collectively, these objects generate a profound biographical profile of Viollet-le-Duc; however, the temporary exhibit leaves viewers with an incomplete sense of the impact of his work since there is virtually no critical or objective commentary addressing his

controversial restoration plans or doctrines. This absence is reflected in the limited range of the exhibition’s source material, which is comprised almost entirely of his personal belongings. Consequently, viewers are left with a rather limited perspective on the significance of Viollet-le-Duc’s projects, the validity of his doctrines, and his contribution to the larger field of architectural history.

The exhibition is planned around eight themes that comprise a narrative of Viollet-le-Duc’s life and body of work. Because of its chronologically-inspired arrangement, each successive gallery builds on the displays and objects contained in the one preceding it.

The first gallery introduces Viollet-le-Duc as an artist, architect, writer, and scholar—“A man of his time.” Largely biographical, it features historical portraits of the architect as well as some amusing caricatures (Figure 1).

The second and third galleries, “Romanticism and traveling in France” and “Journey in Italy,” respectively, aim

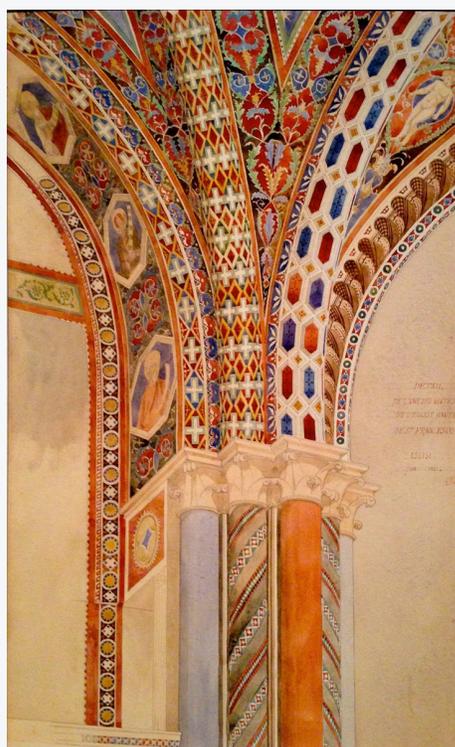


Figure 2. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, upper church of Saint Francis of Assisi, survey drawing of the decoration of a part of the vault, June 1837, drawing; watercolor; Charenton-le-Pont, Médiathèque de l’architecture et du patrimoine, 1996/083-52. Photo by Kyle G. Sweeney.

to chart Viollet-le-Duc’s extensive travels and intellectual influences. During the 1830s, Viollet-le-Duc produced countless drawings and illustrated letters documenting his travels across all regions of France and Italy that illustrate the development of his visual and architectural acuity. Indeed, his passion and ability to reproduce architecture stemmed from these travels

² I wish to thank Lindsey Hansen and Rachel Hooper for their invaluable feedback on this review.

STUDENT COMMITTEE PAGES

(continued)

with his uncle as he chose to forego a classical education in architecture. Viewers can examine for themselves many of Viollet-le-Duc's sketches, drawings, and illustrated letters for proof of the skills he acquired and refined during his travels (Figure 2).

In 1840, Viollet-le-Duc was invited to serve as the second inspector of the restoration of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. The fourth theme of the exhibition centers upon the restoration of the building, Viollet-le-Duc's friendship with the first inspector, Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus, and their submission of an extremely meticulous and thorough proposal for the restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and Jean-Baptiste Lassus; restoration project for Notre-Dame de Paris for the competition of 1843; southern façade (left), the central portal of the cathedral (center), western façade (right); 28 January 1843; Charenton-le-Pont, Médiathèque de l'architecture et du patrimoine; 1996/083-1840 [southern façade]; 1996/083-21702 [central portal]; 1996/083-4358 [west façade]. Photo by Kyle G. Sweeney.

Drafting the proposal galvanized Viollet-le-Duc's thoughts concerning creation and restoration. The fifth theme, "Architecture, a Living Organism," explores his theory about the link between the laws of nature and architectural creation. He relates architectural processes to zoological, botanical, and geological processes he witnessed in nature during his travels and completes numerous studies of nocturnal animals, floral life, and Mont Blanc in preparation for his work at Notre-Dame. His fascination with the natural world strongly influenced his designs for gargoyles, vegetal ornament, decorative arts, and structural massing.

The restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris is the sixth theme of the exhibition. It presents an overview of the project through a wide variety of objects and drawings related to the decoration of the building, its urban environs, Viollet-le-Duc's restoration plans and drawings, and documents pertaining to the administration of the worksite (Figure 4). According to the curators, the worksite represented "the first application of theory concerning monumental restoration" and was "an opportunity to carry out all sorts of experiments..."³ The experiments did not go unnoticed by Napoleon III, who, in 1856, exclaimed that Viollet-le-Duc and his associates were "going to destroy Notre-Dame." The exhibition does not explore the tension generated by the invasive restoration process. Instead, museumgoers can try their hand at restoration by playing a fast-paced interactive computer game that simulates the structural dynamics of Gothic architecture and the challenges faced by Viollet-le-Duc and his restoration team.

Viollet-le-Duc aspired to address not only on the structure of Notre-Dame but to "give back to the building" by installing a "new décor"—the seventh theme. This gallery showcases several of the architect's creative furnishings to be installed inside Notre-Dame, including a lectern (Figure 5), candelabra, altar carpets, and choir gates—all

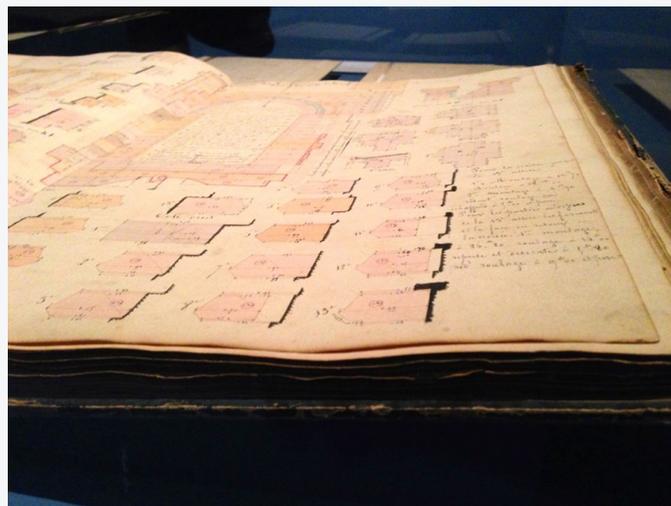


Figure 4. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris, masonry attachments, no. 7, first crossing of the triforium of the nave, facing south, June-July 1853, drawing; ink, lead pencil, watercolor, Charenton-le-Pont, Médiathèque de l'architecture et du patrimoine, 0080/014-92. Photo by Kyle G. Sweeney.

³ Information quoted in my review was taken from the wall labels inside the exhibition.



Figure 5. Placide Ponsielgue-Rusand after a design of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, Great lectern of Notre-Dame, 1868, 2.8 m, Goldsmithery, bronze, gold-plated iron, Paris, Trésor de la cathédrale Notre-Dame, NDP300; Classé MH le 16 mai 1980. Photo by Kyle G. Sweeney.

of which seem to prefigure the Art Nouveau movement.

“Understanding the Middle Ages to be of one’s own time” is the eighth and final major theme of the special exhibition.⁴ This gallery offers a small glimpse into the political qualities of the Gothic style vis-a-vis the formation of national identity for the romantic generation. More importantly, it opens up

Viollet-le-Duc’s doctrine to criticism. Evidently, his quest to “find a reason in every form” allowed him to understand the allegedly cohesive visions of medieval architects and the generative processes behind their monumental designs. Armed with this knowledge, Viollet-le-Duc believed his restoration operations successfully returned the building in question to its true or “ideal” form. His analyses were scientific and paid close attention to detail; however, viewers are left to ponder how, exactly, Viollet-le-Duc extracted the medieval creative process from the stones he surveyed.

Viollet-le-Duc’s drawings and a large nineteenth-century model of the “ideal cathedral” (Figure 6) can be examined and compared easily with his proposals for the restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris. Did modern stability and soundness come at the high price of medieval authenticity at Notre-Dame? What was his understanding of the medieval design process and how did it influence his own creative work? Does Viollet-le-Duc’s concept for the “ideal Gothic cathedral” belong more to the Middle Ages or his own time? To what extent was stylistic unity valued during the Gothic period? This line of questioning

has produced a rich and varied historiography concerning Gothic style and design theory. The importance and relevance of this scholarship and its methodologies was made abundantly clear to me as I poured over the details of the “ideal cathedral” model and thought about what Viollet-le-Duc’s restoration project for Notre-Dame de Paris *could* have been.

Similar questions raised by the exhibition underscore the relevance of the Middle Ages in more recent times and tend to lead towards a different historiography. What are the pros and cons of “returning” a Gothic church to a state of completeness it never witnessed during the Middle Ages? What did Viollet-le-Duc destroy *and* create in the process of restoration? Who gets to create a historically authentic medieval edifice? Indeed, for the medievalist, the conclusion of this special exhibition is quite provocative.



Figure 6. Marcel Dap after Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, model of the “Idea of a cathedral from the 13th century,” 1972-1992, model; paper pulp, Reims, Palais du Tau, Centre des Monuments nationaux, TAU2001000151. Photo by Kyle G. Sweeney.

While the installation succeeds in mapping Viollet-le-Duc’s life and intellectual development, it misses an opportunity to offer a fresh, critical assessment of his work and contributions in light of debates on similar issues facing today’s global society, including the preservation, restoration, and protection of medieval architecture; the ownership and politics of architecture; cultural heritage; and national identity.

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⁴ A supplemental gallery includes information about Viollet-le-Duc’s office, his philosophies about education, and his wish to open a museum of comparative sculpture.