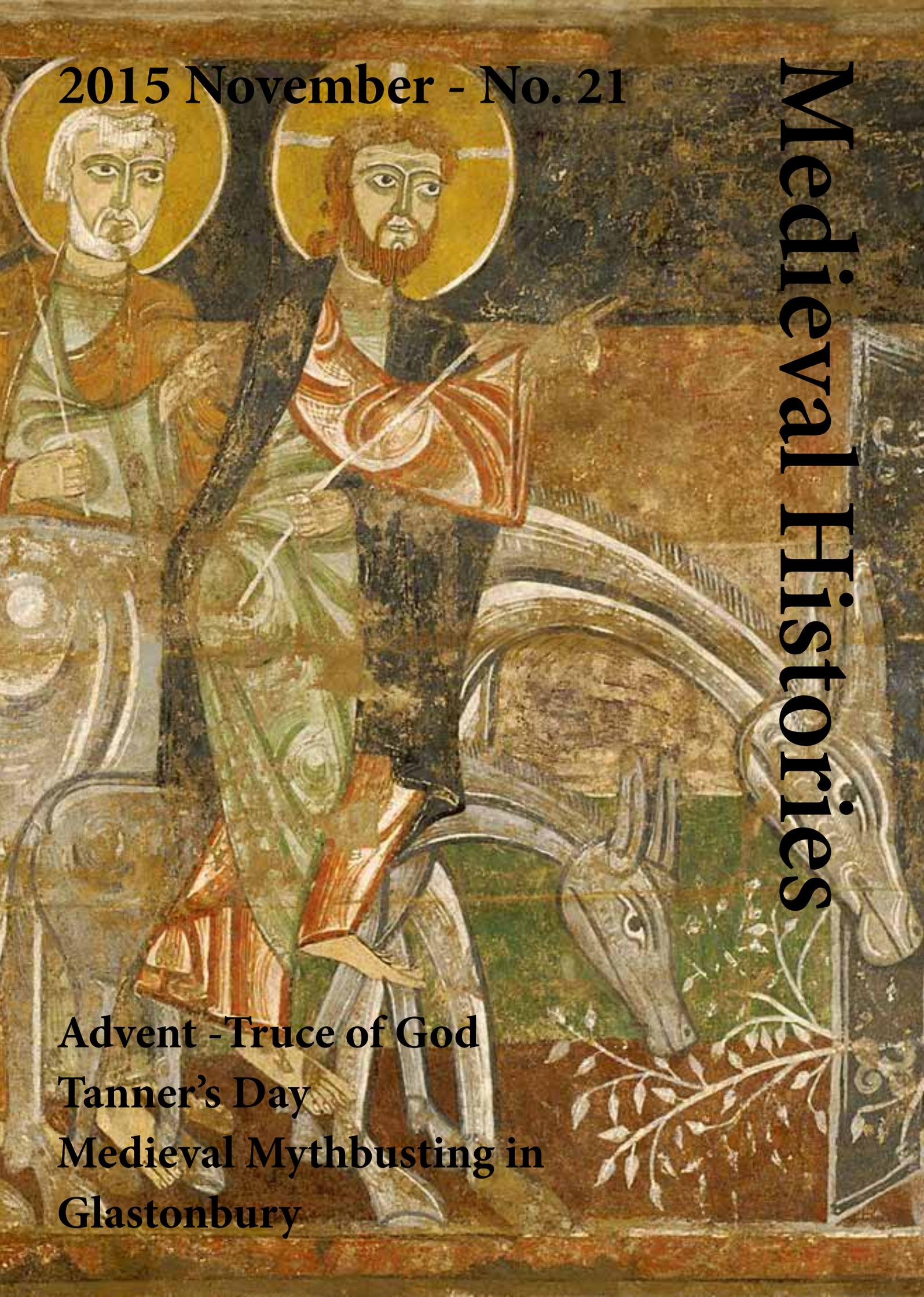


2015 November - No. 21

Medieval Histories

**Advent - Truce of God
Tanner's Day
Medieval Mythbusting in
Glastonbury**



QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

Syrians beseeching for a “Truce of God” according to Ezekiel 37: 1 - 3

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest (*King James Version*)

Fresco from from AD 244 in Dura-Europos, a Greek settlement on the Euphrates not far from Syria's border with Iraq, Dura-Europos later became one of Rome's easternmost outposts. It housed the world's oldest known Christian church, a beautifully decorated synagogue, and many other temples and Roman-era buildings. In 2014 Daesh (Isil) captured the site. Satellite imagery shows a cratered landscape inside the city's mud-brick walls, evidence of widespread destruction by looters. (Source: National Geographic)



Medieval Histories

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

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Photo (frontpage):

Entry of Christ into Jerusalem
Master of San Baudelio de Berlanga c. 1125. Wikipedia

Photos are to the best of our ability either published by permission or under the CCA



Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. From the Palace Chapel in Palermo. Source: Wikipedia

Advent – Truce of God

Originally Advent was a period of Parousia with Christmas signalling the Second Coming of Christ. Later it became an important period of peace, when warring and feuding was strictly prohibited. This was signalled by the Triumphant Coming of Christ - and his earthly representative: the king.

In 380 the council of Saragossa stipulated that Christians should go to church every day from the 17th of December until Theophany on the 6th of January. Later, around 480 Perpetuus of Tours prescribed fasting on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11/11 (the day of St. Martin). This was a decision, which councils in the 6th century continued to decree. Thus – in 581 – the Synod of Mac decreed a 40-day fast leading from St. Martin and up until Christmas. Although the evidence is slight,

the general opinion is that the stipulation of fasting was moulded over Lent with Epiphany designated as a proper time for baptism.

Later - in the Roman context - the number of Sundays were reduced and Advent was turned into a period of "waiting" and "preparation for Christ". During this period and probably inspired by the Columban monks, Advent gained a certain whiff of parousia. Not only did Advent herald

the birth of Christ, it also brought tidings about the Second Coming of Christ. Hence the Advent sermon, which Gregory the Great preached in Old St. Peter around 591 was delivered on this text from Luke:

'Ladder initial' at the beginning of Luke 21-9-16, Add MS 17341, f. 161r © British Library



And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

(Luke 21.25 - 38, King James Version)



Moses and Elias guarding the abbey church at Fleury (St. Benoit). Source: Wikipedia

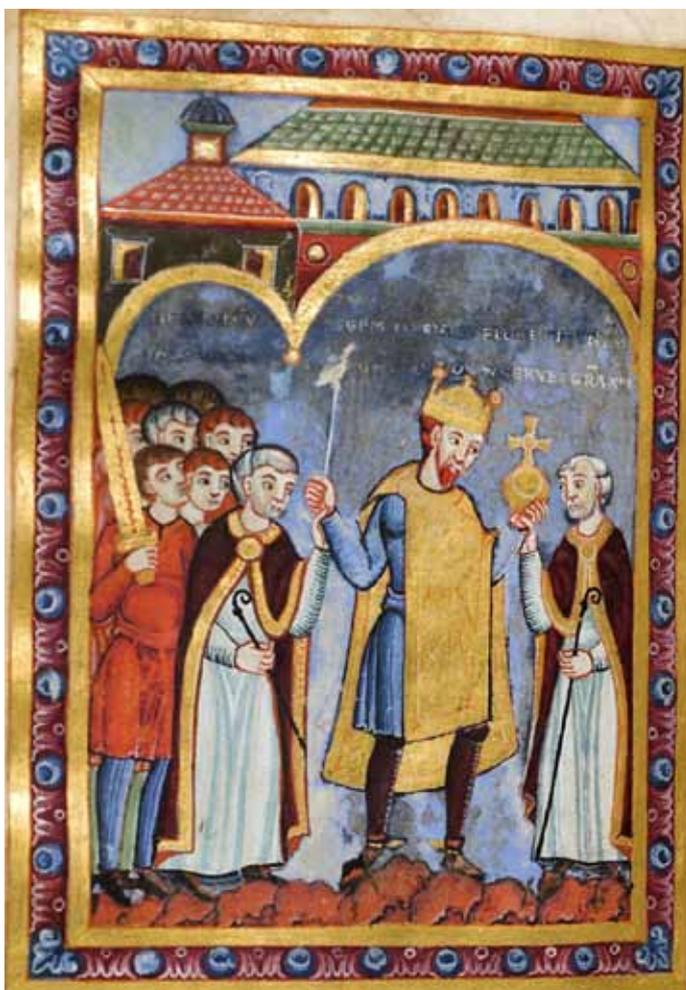
Gregory the Great worked with only three Sundays in Advent. This was generally amended in the 7th century when the outline of the common lectionary became less fuzzy and four seems to have been the norm in Rome. At least this was the case in the end of the 7th century, when a major liturgical work was instigated, which worked out not only the proper lectionary but also the sacramentary and antiphoner.

In 2000 the late James McKinnon forcefully argued that this work was carried out in Rome and began with the careful unfolding of the proper liturgies of the Mass proper during Advent. He called his book 'The Advent Project'. Around 750 the celebration – if not meaning - of the period of Advent had also been determined in Rome. At this point the period had been codified to encompass four Sundays and the texts had been slightly shifted. Now the Joy-

ful and Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem opened up the festive season, while Luke 21 had been relegated to the second Sunday, thus sending a rather mixed message to the congregations and members of the religious communities.

Advent 993 – 1038

However, in 993 Christmas fell on a Monday. This happens from time to time and means that the four Sundays in Advent get squeezed into a three-week period with Christmas Eve falling on the fourth Sunday. In 993 this gave rise to some confusion as some religious institutions “wrongfully” pushed back their calendar. Thus the monastic community at Fleury celebrated the first Sunday in Advent on the 3rd of December, while the Canons in Orleans - a mere 40 km to the West – had celebrated it a week earlier. This would



Evangelary of Henry III - procession with the Emperor at Stavelot 1040. From: Bremen, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Ms.b.21, Echternacher Evangelistar Kaiser Heinrichs III. Source: Wikipedia

not have been that important, had the two religious institutions not decided to meet for a joint celebration of the entombment of St. Benedict on the 6th of December. As this took place in Fleury, the monks began to celebrate Mass according to their calendar, which stipulated that they should use the liturgy for Advent Sunday, as they were still in this octave. However, soon after the joint celebration began, muttering broke out among the guests from Orleans (who had at that point moved on to the next octave). It soon turned into a petty row, which the contestants decided to make the Bishop arbiter of. A council was duly called. In the end, the position of the monks at Fleury won the day. Exultingly

they were able to claim that “If there is one faith and one baptism, may there also be a single unanimity in the church” (quoted from: Parkes 2014, p. 187, p. 186)

We, on the other hand, may safely conclude that even if liturgical anarchy was not quite as rampant as it had been earlier on, univocal peace had not broken out. Liturgical difference was a fact of life, writes Henry Parkes in his recent study on Ottonian Liturgy, where he also recounts the story above. In spite of Carolingian efforts, widespread variability was still the order of the day. However, in the 11th century this changed when the interested parties began once more to convene councils in order to create a harmony inside the church. The crisis of Advent came to signal these new efforts, which worked themselves out in a series of disputes, quarrels and settlements, which were later advertised through the media of canon law. Part

“Whenever we do not fully agree in the usage of an ecclesiastical ordo, we should hasten back to the council of teachers through whom, as scripture testifies with divine wisdom, “the depths of the rivers has searche, and the hidden things he has brought forth to light [Job 28.11]. Likewise, as the law-giver forwarns ‘Ask the father, and he will declare to thee: thy elders and they will tell thee’ [Deuteronomy 32.7].
(From: Parkes 2014, p. 187)

of these deliberations was seeking customary refuge in the patristic writings.

In 1038 Christmas once more fell on a Monday. This year the emperor Conrad II

and his son Henry turned up on Sunday the 26th of November in Strasbourg Cathedral finding Bishop William and his clerics celebrating the first Sunday of advent, even though it was not due until next week. The following week, this resulted in the Emperor and his retinue moving on to his newly founded abbey, Limburg an der Haardt, where the feast was celebrated according to the 'correct' (or at least ancient calendar). At this feast bishops from Worms, Speyer, Verona, Eichstätt and Hildesheim were present together with the dean and perhaps the bishop from Mainz. Here the matter was solemnly decided once and for all: the first Sunday in Advent would fall on the fourth Sunday before Christmas day. It appears it took an imperial hard hand to get the forces liturgically properly aligned.

Truce of God

However, an important reason for getting the day right may also have had to do with the fines connected with committing violent acts during specific periods during the year – the original meaning of sacrilege.

Although a prominent feature in the early Church councils of the 6th century, the idea of calling for such a “Truce of God”, though, is generally not believed to have been instituted before the turn of the millennium or approximately at same time as the controversy about the calendar broke out. The first time a “Truce of God” covering the Lord’s Day was declared seems to have been at the council of Toulouges in AD 1027 in the county of Roussillon. In the 30s and 40s this truce was developed

Limburg and Der Hardt was built in the beginning of the 11th century and one of the most important abbeys promoted by the Salians. It was destroyed in 1504 and never rebuilt © Gyrotours



You shall also keep this peace every day of the week from the beginning of Advent to the octave of Epiphany and from the beginning of Lent to the octave of Easter, and from the feast of Rogations [the Monday before Ascension Day] to the octave of Pentecost.
Internet Medieval Sourcebook: Truce of God - Bishopric of Terouanne, 1063

to encompass a large number of days and seasons.

Another reason why the Emperor, Conrad II may have been really angry is the way in which the wrong liturgy may have embarrassed him hugely. Here was the Emperor, all dressed up and riding into Strasbourg with all his retinue in order to play the significant role of "Christ, the King" arriving

in Jerusalem; and - ups! - the city was not correctly attired according to the "Ordines ad regem suscipiendum".

Although the oldest setting of these Orders seem to be the one found in the Cluniac Consuetudines from the Abbey of the Farfa from 1039, the ritual was fairly strict: elements prescribed were the proper dress, the aspersion of the comers, his descent from the horse to kiss the gospels and his censing. To this should be added detailed descriptions of the exact order of the processions with crosses, candles, liturgical books etc. (Buc, 2001, p.38 - 44)

Just try to imagine the wrath of an Emperor believing he was gracing Strassbourg with the "Adventus par Excellence" - and then discovering that the clerics in Strassbourg had got the date wrong and he had been invited to a party of divine judge-

The Emperor may have felt like tearing down the Strasbourg. In the end, though, the city triumphed. Today it is home to one of the oldest continuous Christmas Markets in Europe. © Andreas Metz



ment (Mat 25:31-46); something, which even kings were obliged to suffer. What a bommer!

The Lectionary and its aftermath

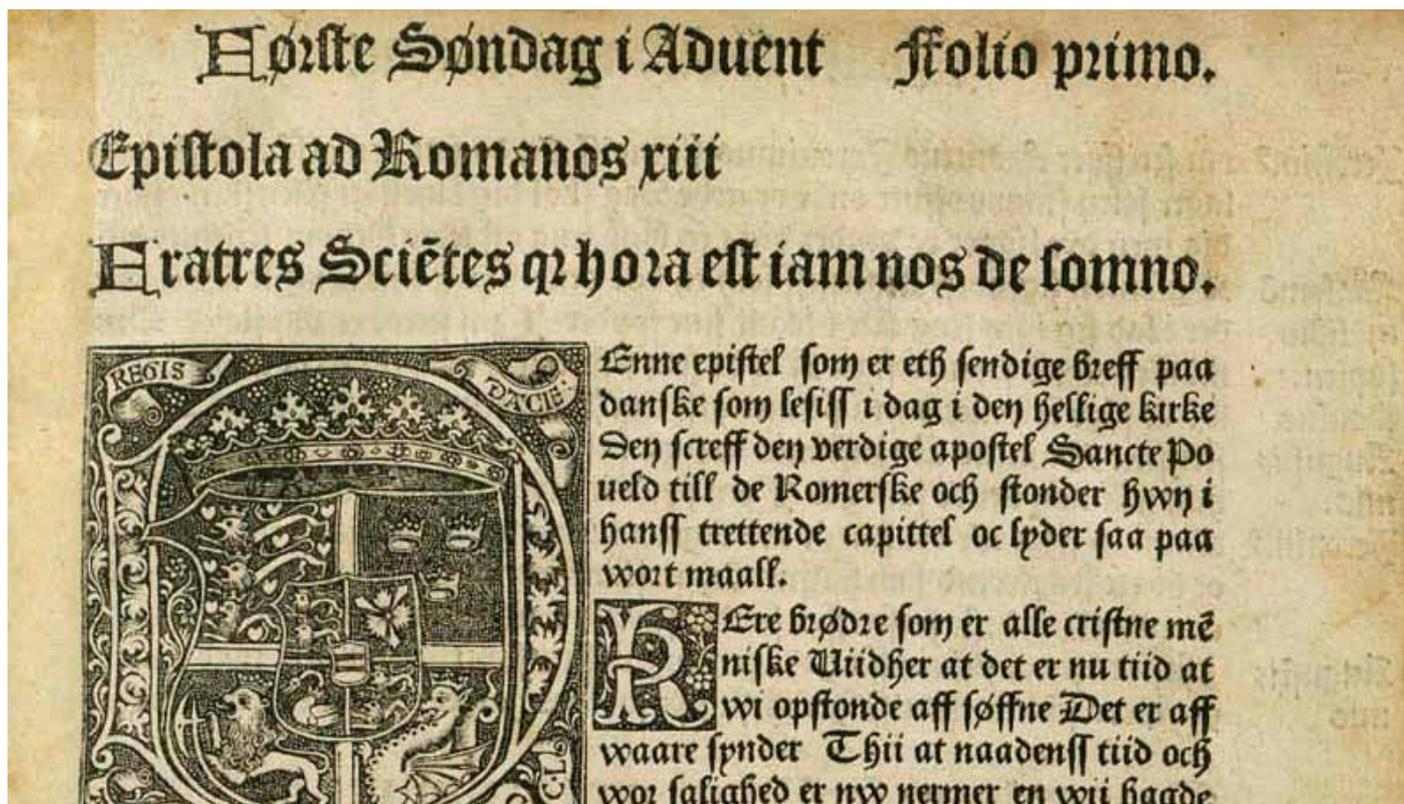
In the 11th century the designated texts to be read on the four Sundays of Advent had been codified for some time (since the mid 7th century). Those texts were taken from Matt 21, Luke 21, Matt 11 and John 1 – with variation typically allowed for the exact beginning and end of the pericope. This continued to be status quo until 1570, when the Tridentine lectionary reinvented the tradition of Gregory the Great as it could be ascertained from his '40 sermons to the gospels'. Perhaps this was a reflection of the more penitentiary character of his advent-homilies and their general apocalyptic tone. Once more Europe was in the grips of terror and war. Furthermore, the head to deal a liturgical blow to the Lutherans was obviously on the agenda. Meanwhile, the 'new' Lutheran

churches continued to use the old - post 7th century - medieval lectionary, which Martin Luther had felt no inclination to change.

Today, it is curiously enough the Lutheran Churches in Northern Europe, which have kept faith to the old selection of texts in Year A (most churches operate with several cycles). The Catholic Church, on the other hand, has since 1970 operated with three cycles and selections mixing texts from different traditions (and cycles), thus exhibiting rather weak links to the original selection of texts from the early Middle Ages.

Another difference is the vibrant tradition of Lutheran psalms written specifically for Advent, which have only tenuous links to the medieval musical tradition, which the foundation was laid to in Rome in the late 7th century.

Christiern Pedersen: Epistler og Evangelier som læses alle søndage (Paris 1515) © Royal Library in Copenhagen



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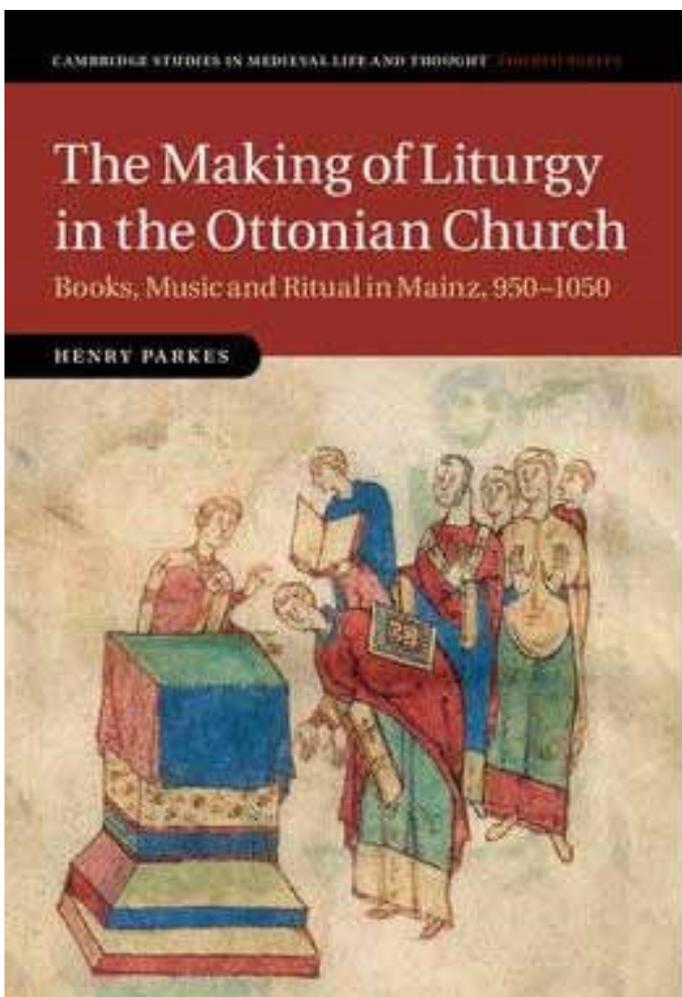
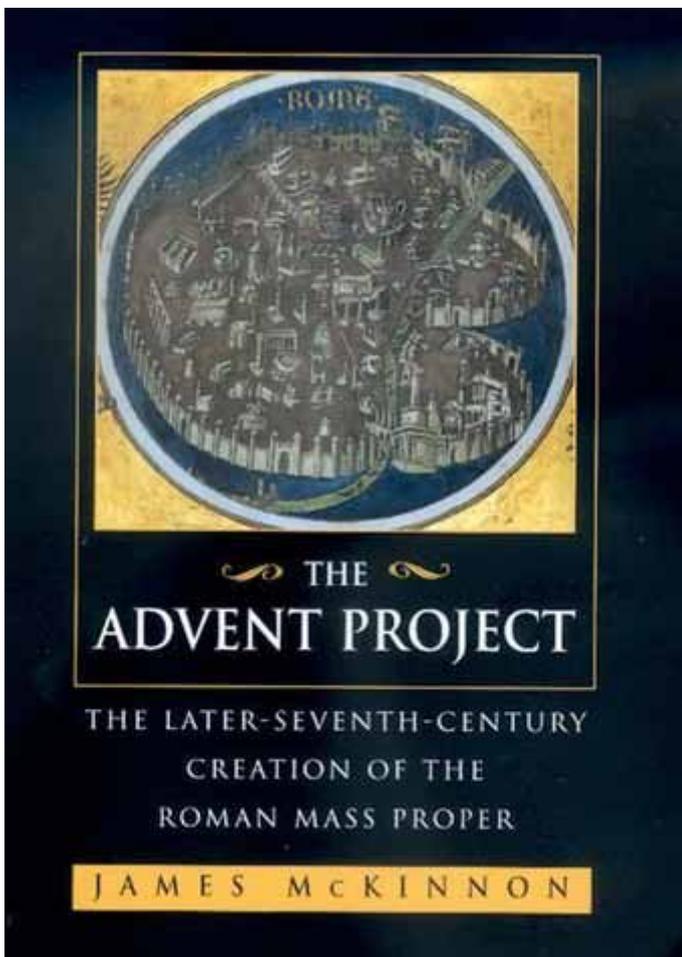
READ MORE:

Die Macht der Rituale. Symbolik und Herrschaft im Mittelalter

By Gerd Althoff
Darmstadt, Primus Verlag 2003 (2. ed. 2012)
ISBN: 3896784730

Spektakel der Macht: Rituale im Alten Europa 800-1800

By Gerd Althoff et al.
WBG (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft) 2009



Advent in Århus

Bernt Notke (c. 1440 – 1509) was a German Painter and wood-carver responsible for the intricate altarpiece in Århus Cathedral, which has three positions, feast, Passion and Advent

The Notke family originally came from Reval in Estonia and Bernt Notke may have been the son of a ship-owner, Michael Notke, who traded on Flanders. Notke may have spent his apprenticeship in the southern Netherlands, where he learned to carve, build and paint Late Medieval altarpieces. His works, however, were taken to another level with their grandiose over-size and their effectual impact on viewers.

He is perhaps best known for his inventive Dance of Death frieze, which was painted with tempera on linen and which was later copied as a mural in Lübeck (destroyed in 1942). The Dance of Death shows 24 representatives of different social classes and professions alternating with skeletons and dancing in front of late medieval towns like Lübeck.

Another well-known piece is the altar of St. George, which was commissioned by

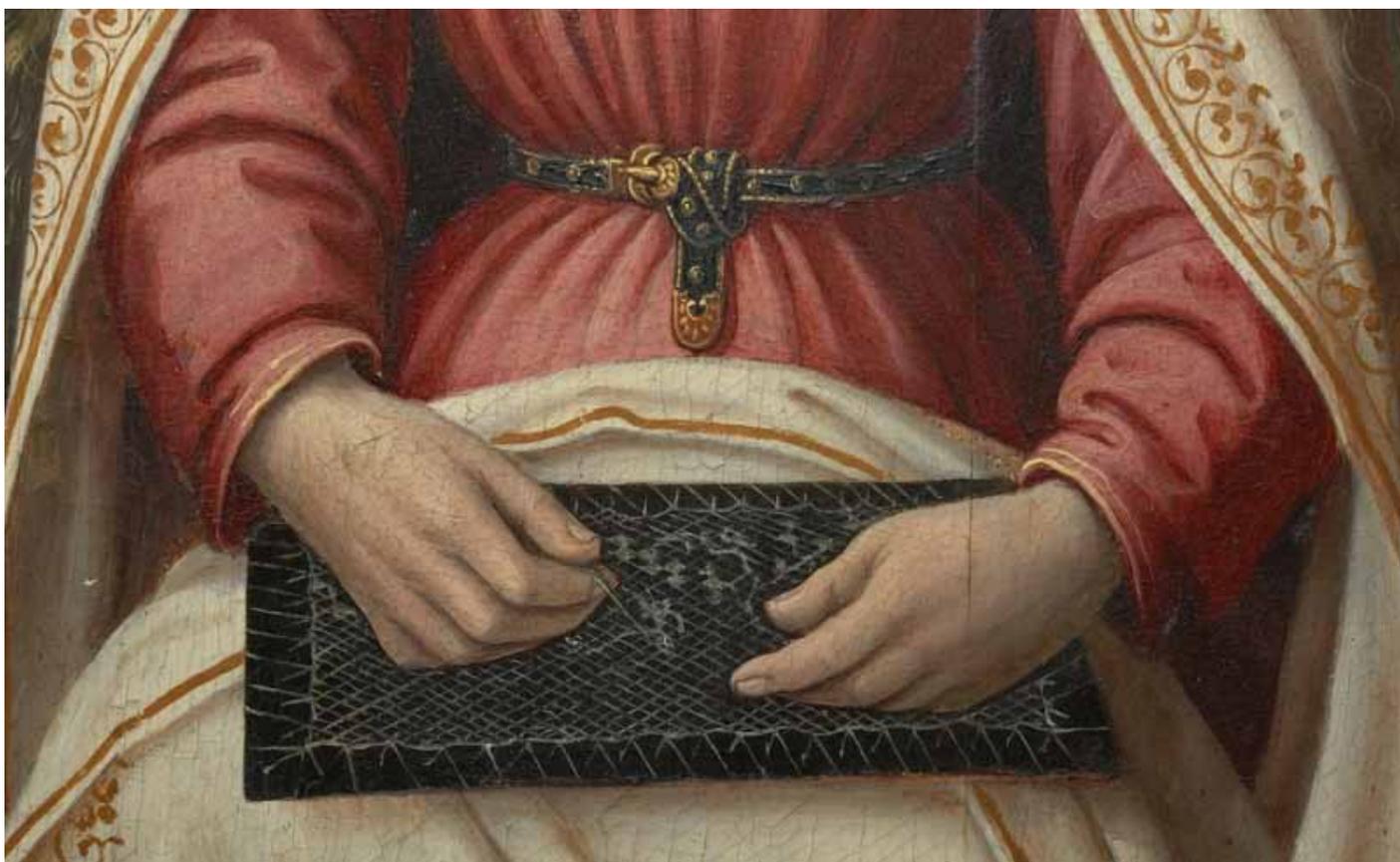
the Swedish administrator, Sten Sture, who summoned him to Stockholm c. 1483 -7. This massive and overwhelming piece of art consisted of a number of carved life-size figures of which St. George and the Dragon and the princess with the lamb may still be admired in the Storkyrkan.

Yet another important piece is the altar in the Cathedral in Århus in Denmark, which was commissioned in 1477 by the Bishop of Århus, Jens Iversen Lange for the high altar in the Cathedral of Our Lady. Notke is attested as the carver on the bases of the carved figures in the central panel.

One of the features of the altar is that it can be folded and unfolded according to season – festive, passion and advent.

A fascinating video demonstrates **how this is still done.**





The Virgin Making Laces ca 1541 - 60. Kerk Sint-Denijs Source: Pinterest

Tanner's Day, Catherine of Aragon and Lace Making

Tanner's Day – also known as St. Andrew's Day – falls on the 30. November. It used to be a holiday celebrated by the lace makers in Bedfordshire. The tradition might go back to Catherine of Aragon.

Catherine of Aragon (first wife of Henry VIII) was known as a very proficient needlewoman, who made the shirts of her husband to perfection. She was staying at Ampthill Castle in 1533, when she was served the final notice of the king's banishment. Later she was transferred to Kimbolton Castle in 1534.

It is believed that she taught lacemaking to the village women during her stay in Ampthill, and that this was the start of the production of 'Ground lace' in Bedfordshire together with Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire.

Whether or not Catherine had a hand in the introduction of grounded lace-making into the region cannot be documented. And it is a fact that paintings of her do not show any use of bobbed lace on her clothes. Rather her shifts appears to be bordered with embroidered braids, which may have been adorned with picots. Or they were simply made with so-called Spanish Stitch - worked with black silk and gold on the white linen.

However, lacemaking did become an important income for inmates and children in the poorhouses in the Midlands in the Early Modern Period and this may have been a inspired by her.

Grounded lace is made with bobbins or thread carriers and following patterns pricked out on parchment or strong cards. The lace was worked through weaving, plaiting and twisting the threads, which were held in place with pins according to the pricked pattern fastened to a pillow. Pins were typically made of brass. 'Ground Lace' or "plaited lace" was different from 'Point lace', or 'needle lace' where embroidered motives were cut out and linked (also called cutwork). While medieval lace-making is known of from medieval convents, lacework for more profane uses came into fashion around 1450.

Early evidence of simple plaited or braided laces can be found in the 15th century, like those, which have been found in the church of Riddarholmen in Sweden. Probably the first time instruments for working bobbin lace are mentioned is in an Italian instrument of portion between two sisters, Angela and Ippolita Sforza Visconti, from 1493. Apart from a number of textiles, which are obviously made with sown laces, we hear about "tarneta una d'oro et seda negra fact da ossi" - a lace of gold [thread] and black silk made with 'bones'. Initially bobbins were made of chicken



*Catherine of Aragon © Lambeth Palace
Catherine of Aragon by Anonymous. The queen wears a dress with a shift beneath. But frills sticking out beneath her sleeves do not look like lace. Ca. 1520 © Lambeth Palace*

bones, and they used to be called 'osso' or 'ossoletto' in Northern Italy.

However, it is probably first with the *Nüw Modelbuch* from 1561 (printed in Zürich) we can know that bobbin lace had become

Italian lace from the late 16th century. © The Lace Museum, California





Italian lace from the late 16th century. © Lacethread

fashionable. On the cover two women are shown lace making with pillows, bobbins and needles.

One of the curious traditions of lace makers in the Midlands is the fact that St. Andrew was their patron saint. Hence, lace makers used to meet on the 30th of November at what was later called the “Tandering Feast”.

It is perhaps pertinent to the legend concerning St. Catherine, that the church in the village of Ampthill was dedicated to St. Andrew. But we shall probably never really know.

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Queens and Power in Medieval and Early Modern England

By Carole Levin and R. O. Bucholz
University of Nebraska Press 2009

ISBN-10: 0803229682

ISBN-13: 978-0803229686

A History of Lace

By Bury Palliser

London, Sampson, Low, Son and Marston
1869 (1875)

Kantcentrum in Brugge is an important museum for lacemaking





Detail of calendar page for December with a bas-de-page scene of men warming themselves by a fire. From the Golf Book (Book of Hours, Use of Rome), workshop of Simon Bening, Netherlands (Bruges), c. 1540, Additional MS 24098, f. 30r. © British Library. Source: Pinterest

St. Andrew's Day - Popular Pastimes

St. Andrews Day (30th of November) used to be the traditional day for squirrel hunting. After the animals had been pelted, they were probably stewed with onions, roots, apples and thyme. But we know better the custom of baking Tandry Whigs

The word Whig or Whig probably stems from Old Norse and means 'soft'; thus Wigs or Whigs (modern Norse/Danish: Vegger). Originally it meant buns made of wheat as opposed to rye or barley. According to very early murals in Denmark they were perhaps originally formed as crosses. Later they became buns softened with eggs and butter or lard. Because of the soft dough, they often had an oval or trapezoid form. As anyone used to working with dough made of wheat, water yeast, it is best to mix it to a structure akin to porridge and then let it stand around for a day or a day and a half. The the dough may be

spilled onto a floured surface and gently cut into buns, which as often as not end up looking like whigs or verger, oblong soft buns.

According to some reports "Tandry, Tandra or Tandrew" cakes or wigs were enjoyed on the feast day of St. Andrews.

In the 18th century Tandry (Tandra) cakes turned into a kind of slightly sweetened bun made of a plain dough of flour, eggs, sugar, butter and water mixed with yeast. To this was added currants and lemon peel.

Recipe for Medieval Tandy Whigs

Sourdough-starter

Half a litre of water is mixed with 10 gr of fresh yeast and as much flour as it takes to make mixture like a thick porridge. It gets tastier if half the flour is whole-grain, but in the Middle Ages people would have wished to get it as sifted and soft as that which was served at court. Cover it with a cloth and let it stand in a warm kitchen for a day and a night.

Dough:

Mix the sourdough with a litre water and c. 1,2 - 1,5 kilo flour (for the healthy but slightly non-medieval version 1/3 whole grain and 2/3 normal flour). To this should be added 7 tsp. salt.

Work the wet and sticky mixture slowly with your hands, then let it stand around for a bit. Keep coming back the next two hours and repeat the procedure with wet hands until it is less sticky. Cover the bowl with a cloth or a wrap and keep it cool until evening.

Gently toss the dough out onto a floured

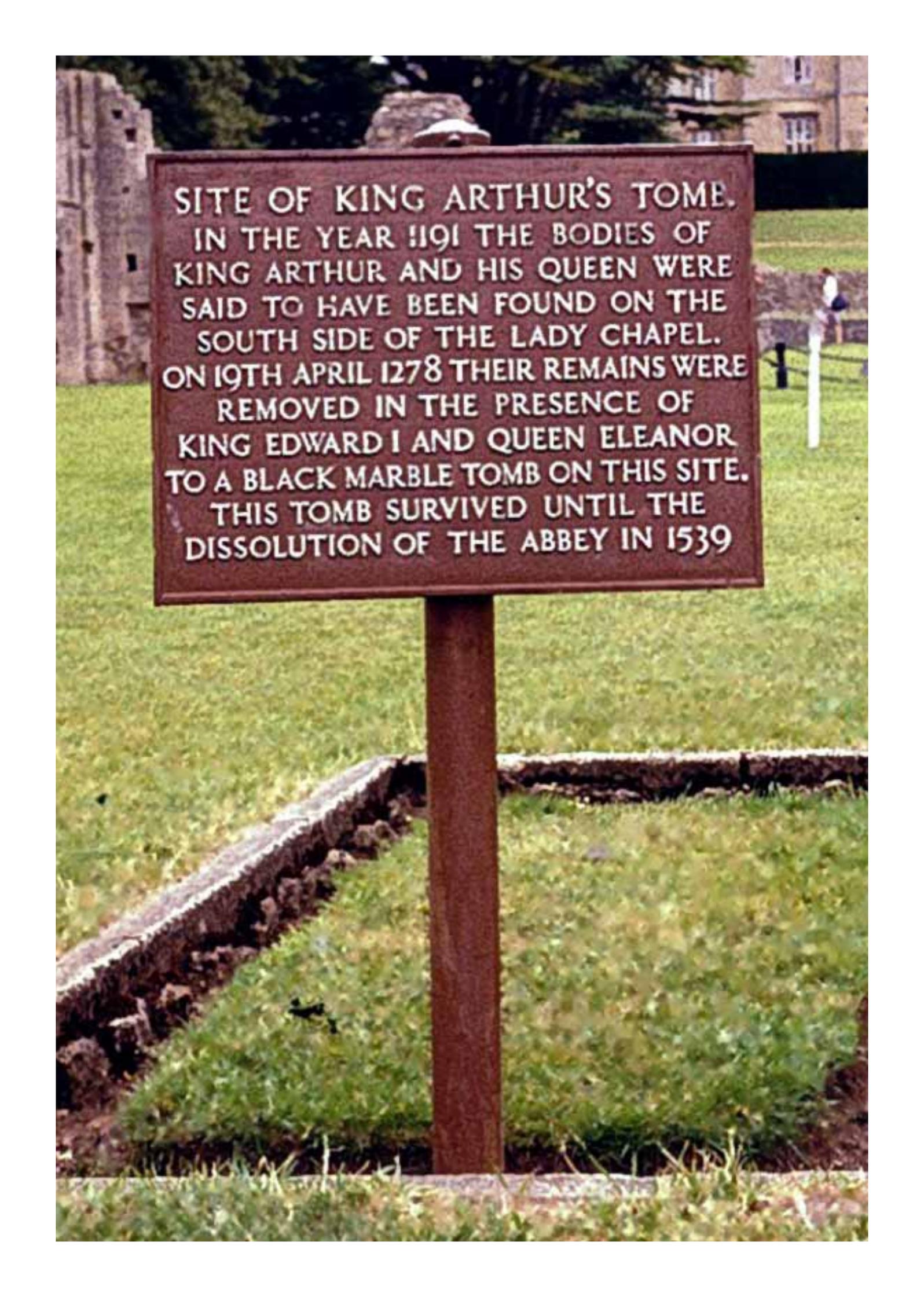


table or surface and fold it carefully once until it forms an oblong mass. Now it should be possible to cut the whigs by using a floured dough-cutter. Place them on a baking sheet. When the oven is warm place or drag the sheet unto the hot baking-tray. Give them 10 min until brown and then another 5 min at 200 c.

Serve “the whigs” with stew made from rabbit, hare or squirrel cooked with roots and herbs in a mixture of apple-juice and broth.

The Last Supper in Belling Church in Denmark. The mural from 1496 shows a table spread with the two common types of daily bread marketed in Late Medieval Denmark - the oblong 'vegger' (wheat) and the three-cornered 'Skonrogger' (sifted rye). © Hans A. Mosbach



A wooden signpost stands in a grassy field. The sign is dark brown with white text. In the background, there are stone ruins, including a large wall on the left and a building on the right. A person is visible in the distance on the right. The sign is mounted on a single wooden post.

SITE OF KING ARTHUR'S TOMB.
IN THE YEAR 1191 THE BODIES OF
KING ARTHUR AND HIS QUEEN WERE
SAID TO HAVE BEEN FOUND ON THE
SOUTH SIDE OF THE LADY CHAPEL.
ON 19TH APRIL 1278 THEIR REMAINS WERE
REMOVED IN THE PRESENCE OF
KING EDWARD I AND QUEEN ELEANOR
TO A BLACK MARBLE TOMB ON THIS SITE.
THIS TOMB SURVIVED UNTIL THE
DISSOLUTION OF THE ABBEY IN 1539

Medieval Mythbusting in Glastonbury

Myths made by medieval monks in Glastonbury may have fooled archaeologists searching for King Arthur's grave

Arthur's body, which the fables allege was like a fantastic thing at the end, and as it were moved by the spirit to far away places, and not subject to death, in our own days was discovered at Glastonbury between two stone pyramids erected in the holy cemetery, hidden deep in the ground by a hollow oak and marked with wonderful signs and marvels, and it was moved into the church with honor and committed properly to a marble tomb. Whence a leaden cross with a stone underneath, not above as it usually is in our day, but rather lower nailed on the side, (which I have seen, and in fact I have traced these sculpted letters - not projecting and protruding, but carved into the stone) contains the words: "Here lies buried the famous King Arthur with Guinevere, his second wife, in the isle of Avalon."

From: Gerald of Wales: The Discovery of the Tomb of King Arthur, from On the Instruction of a Prince (De Instructione Principis), c. 1223 ©1994, translated by Scott McLetchie.

In 1184 Glastonbury Abbey was engulfed in a devastating fire and the monks were left with a dire need to raise money to rebuild their church. That meant raising money by increasing the numbers of visiting pilgrims and that meant keeping the myths and legends alive

Accordingly, the monks laid out the buildings in a very distinctive way to emphasise the 'earliest church' story.

Seemingly they also manipulated the evidence and 'created' the site for the burial of King Arthur. Since then, Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset has held a special place in popular culture.

- Uniquely, the religious and cult focus of the site was to the west of the Abbey church, centred on the Lady Chapel. This occupied the site of the legendary early church, allegedly founded by Joseph of Arimathea, tells Professor Roberta Gilchrist, who for some years have lead a team of researchers sifting through the history and the archaeology of this iconic place.

The analysis has shown how the medieval monks simply spin-doctored the Abbey's mythical links to make Glastonbury one of the richest monasteries in the country.

- The monks deliberately designed the rebuilt church to look older in order to demonstrate its ancient heritage and pre-eminent place in monastic history, using



Glastonbury Abbey. Source: Wikipedia

archaic architecture style and reused material to emphasise the Abbey's mythical feel. This swelled pilgrim numbers - and the Abbey's coffers, says Gilchrist.

- It was a strategy that paid off: Glastonbury Abbey became the second richest monastery in England by the end of the Middle Ages. Re-examination of the archaeological records revealed the exceptional scale of the abbot's lodging, a luxurious palatial complex to the southwest of the cloister.

Archaeology Revisited

The four-year project has reassessed and reinterpreted all known archaeological records from excavations at the Abbey between 1904 and 1979, none of which have not been published until now.

Analysis revealed that some of the Abbey's best known archaeological 'facts' are themselves myths - many of these perpetuated by excavators influenced by the fabled Abbey's legends. The project, conducted with the Trustees of Glastonbury Abbey and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, involved a team of 31 specialists.

- Our project has rewritten the history of Glastonbury Abbey. Although several major excavations were undertaken during the 20th century, dig directors were led heavily on by Glastonbury's legends and the occult. Using 21st century technology we took a step back from the myth and legend to expose the true history of the Abbey, Gilchrist says.

Research thus revealed that the site was occupied 200 years earlier than previously



Model of Glastonbury Abbey in the site museum on site. Source: Pinterest

estimated - fragments of ceramic wine jars imported from the Mediterranean represents evidence of a 'Dark Age' settlement.

The project also explored the archaeological collections of Glastonbury Abbey Museum, including chemical and compositional analysis of glass, metal and pottery.

A comprehensive new geophysical survey of the Abbey grounds was also undertaken. A key focus for the researchers was the work of Raleigh Radford, who excavated there in the 1950s and '60s. Radford claimed to have discovered a Christian 'British' cemetery, a Saxon cloister that was believed to be the earliest in England, as well as the site of King Arthur's grave, allegedly located by the monks in 1181.

However this latest analysis disputes these findings, with the graves Radford judged

to be 'Dark Age' shown to be later than the Saxon church and cemetery. Additionally the site of Arthur's 'grave' was revealed to be a pit in the cemetery containing material dating from the 11th to 15th centuries, with no evidence linking to the era of the legendary King Arthur and Queen Guinevere.

Professor Gilchrist added: "It's likely the judgement of excavators like Radford was clouded by the Abbey myths. They were also less critical of historical sources than we are today and did not have the luxury of 21st century technology.

On the other hand the team relying on radiocarbon dating and chemical analysis has been able to make some amazing new discoveries. "We identified an early timber building of very high status, as well as a large craft-working complex of five **glass**



furnaces radiocarbon dated to c. AD 700. This represents the earliest and most substantial evidence for glass-working in Saxon England”, she tells

The next stage in the project will see the researchers work with the Trustees of Glastonbury Abbey to enhance the visitor experience. Digital reconstructions and an interactive map will be developed as well as a new guidebook and education packs for schools.

A monograph, which reports on the analysis of the archaeological archives is already available. The dataset is publicly available through **a recently completed digital archive.**

VISIT:

Glastonbury Abbey

Abbey Gatehouse
Magdalene Street
Glastonbury, Somerset, England

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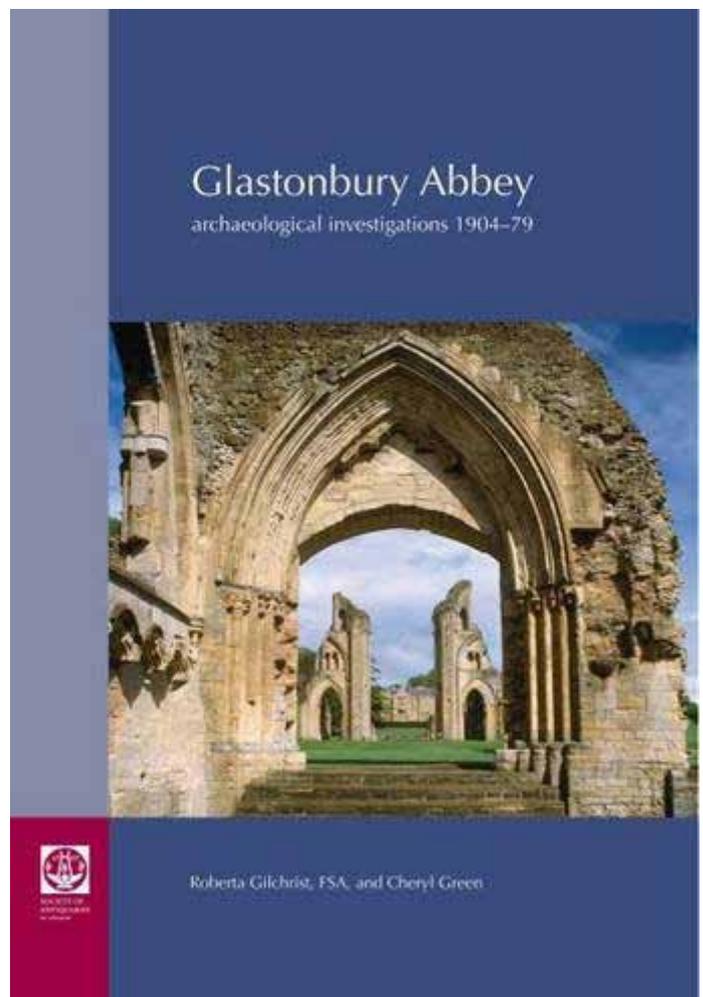
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The Maniple from the Tomb of St. Cuthberts in Durham Cathedral. Source: Pinterest

NEW RESEARCH:

Anglo-Saxon Women as Patrons of Art

In 918 Ælfflæd, wife of King Edward the Elder, donated her royal headband and other embroideries to bishop Frithestan in Durham in order for them to be placed in the coffin of St. Cuthbert. It seems as if such donations of art were meant to bring Anglo-Saxon women closer to the sanctum – the altar, the priest or the saint.

The occluded role of royal women and lost works of pre-Norman English and Irish art (tenth to twelfth centuries)

By: Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigha

Journal of Medieval History

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Judith of Flanders 1033 -1094 is one the few women whose active role as patron of the art of churches and religious institutions can be followed in detail. Not only do we know of her active role as patron, which was described by contemporary chroniclers. We also know of some of the

books, which she gifted. Two of those still have their original splendid covers, with reliefs in gilded silver and embellished with jewels. Our knowledge of her, though, is singular.

However, “the very fragmentary nature of the sources means that it is well nigh impossible to connect extant works of art with any historically attested women other than royal wives or daughters, enforcing a narrow perspective, writes Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigha in a new article about women as patrons. But even such a narrow perspective can yield new and substantial in-

formation, “about the art and architecture that they patronised, owned or even simply used or gazed upon.” But it may also yield information about “devotion, politics, family and power”.

More specifically, she outlines how these women as patronesses used their gifts to “place” themselves at or near the altar; as is demonstrated by a number of specific cases:

- Land of Osraige and her church for St. Brigit at Kildare, 868
- Æthelflæd (d. 918) and the church of St Oswald’s in Gloucester
- Edith as the Magdalen (d. c.984/7) and her embroidered alb
- Derbforgaill as the Virgin? Donation of nine altar cloths and a chalice of gold
- Ælflæd, Frithestan, Æthelstan and Cuthbert – her gift of vestments to St. Cuthbert in AD 918

The history of women and art in late Anglo-Saxon England is difficult to write, concludes Ní Ghrádaigha and continues: “There is no doubt that art was produced for, and sometimes by, women. But the paucity of extant remains along with the elliptical quality of evidence from written sources combine to frustrate any easy delineation of the relationship between elite women and the art and architecture that they patronised, owned or even simply used or gazed upon.”

READ MORE:

JeniferNí Ghrádaigha has been a member of the research group, which from 2010 – 15 has been working to reassess the roles of women as ‘makers’ of medieval art. The project was founded by a grant from the European Research Council. In 1015 Ma-

drid hosted the final workshop, which will result in special issue of Journal of Medieval History (March 2016). The article by JeniferNí Ghrádaigha is the first of these. Interested may read more about the project at the dedicated website **Reassessing the Roles of Women as ‘Makers’ of Medieval Art and Architecture**

The group has also published a large two-volume book with results from the research project:

Reassessing the Roles of Women as ‘Makers’ of Medieval Art and Architecture Cover Reassessing the Roles of Women as ‘Makers’ of Medieval Art and Architecture (2 vol. set)
Ed. by Therese Martin
Series: Visualising the Middle Ages
Brill 2012 (Pb: 2015)

