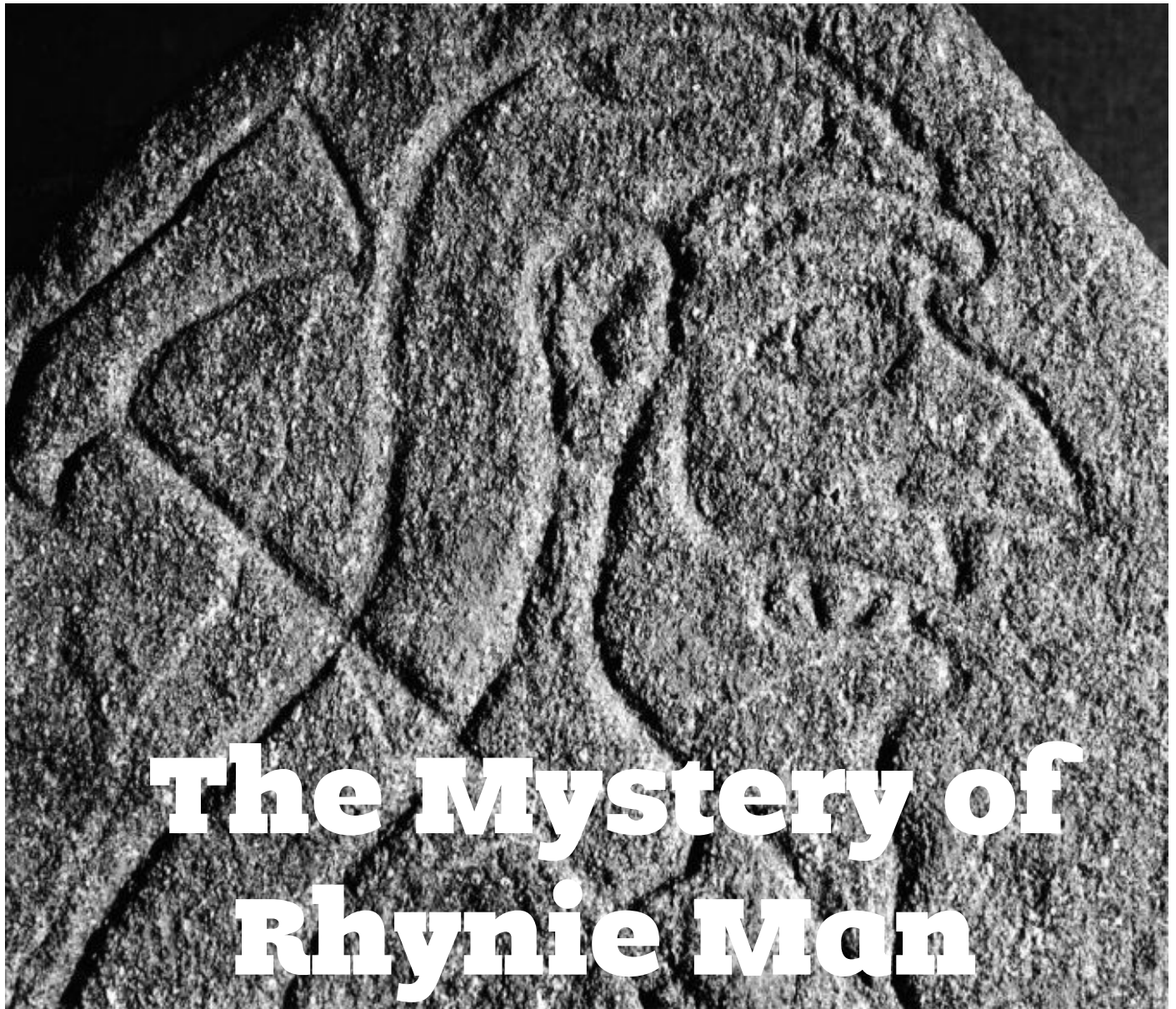


The Medieval Magazine

Number 34

September 21, 2015



The Mystery of Rhynie Man

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the Templars



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Fallen tree reveals medieval skeleton in Ireland

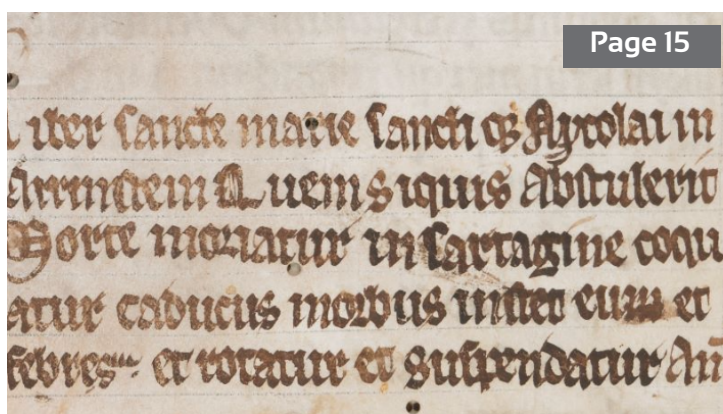
Last May a storm in northwest Ireland blew over a 215-year old tree. It also unearthed an unusual find – the skeletal remains of a young man who lived nearly a thousand years ago.



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Five Reasons We're Still Fascinated by the Templars

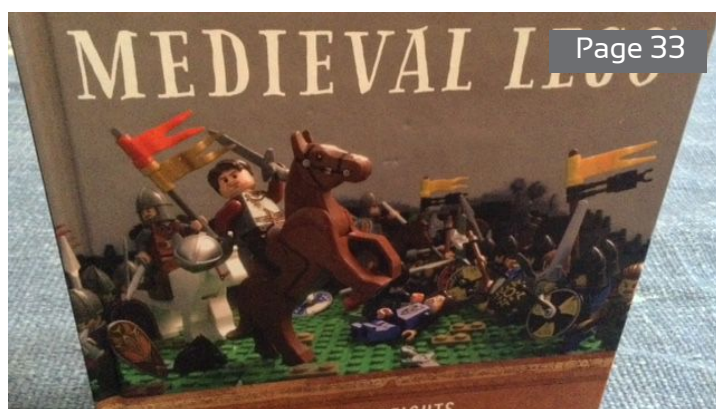
What is it about the Templars that makes them so fascinating?



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Top 10 Medieval Book Curses

Christ's curse upon the crook who takes away this book.



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Using LEGO to show the history of medieval England

Learn more about the great new book *Medieval Lego*, by Greyson Beights

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Cover Photo: The Rhynie Man –
photo courtesy University of
Aberdeen

Fallen tree reveals medieval skeleton in Ireland

Last May a storm in northwest Ireland blew over a 215-year old tree. It also unearthed an unusual find – the skeletal remains of a young man who lived nearly a thousand years ago.



Photo from Sligo-Leitrim Archaeological Services / Facebook

Sligo-Leitrim Archaeological Services announced the results of tests done to the remains on their **Facebook page**:

When winter storms blew over a 215-year old beech tree outside Collooney, Sligo, a human skeleton was brought up in the root system. The National Monuments Service commissioned SLAS to undertake a rescue

excavation and retrieve the badly disturbed remains. The burial was that of a young man (17-20 years old) and preliminary analysis indicates he suffered a violent death during the early medieval period (radiocarbon date: 1030-1200 AD). Several injuries were visible to the ribs and hand, probably inflicted by a knife. He had been given a formal Christian burial, however. As the photos show, the

the lower leg bones remained in the grave; but the upper part of the body was entangled in the tree roots and raised up into the air. Analysis of the skeletal remains is currently underway.

More details were revealed in an interview with **CBC Radio**. Archaeologist Marion Dowd, who is the Director of Sligo-Leitrim Archaeological Services, explained that "the excavation we did was a rescue excavation, so our goal was to go in there and recover the remains before further damaged was caused."

She added the young man was 5 feet 10 inches in height, which would have been very tall for this period. It indicates that he may have come from a Gaelic family with relatively good social status. Meanwhile the archaeologists are hoping to do more research in this area, to determine if this was an isolated grave or part of a large graveyard.

The skeletal remains will go the National Museum of Ireland.

Fifty Medieval Skeletons discovered in Lichfield

Warwickshire County Council has reported the discovery of 50 skeletons on the site of the former St Johns' Hospital in Lichfield, Staffordshire. Archaeologists believe that this was a burial ground connected to a medieval pilgrimage site.

Last month developers uncovered rows of medieval burials and called in Archaeology Warwickshire to carry out an emergency excavation on the site.

Stuart Palmer, business manager for Archaeology Warwickshire, said: "The site of the excavation was a well-known site of pilgrimage in medieval times with pilgrims travelling from around the medieval world to be close to the remains of St Chad who was interred at the current site of Lichfield Cathedral.

"St John's in medieval Lichfield provided overnight accommodation for pilgrims for several hundred years and that many of the pilgrims visiting came to be healed and some may well have died, which carries the possibility that this burial ground was for these unfortunate pilgrims.

"Although medieval burial sites are not uncommon in the UK, those associated with known sites of pilgrimage are not so common and this work presents a rare opportunity to study such a particular assemblage.

"The remains are currently being processed at our offices in Montague Road and, once cleaned, will be aged and sexed and examined for signs of injury, disease, dietary deficiency and other pathologies. These tests can often reveal fascinating aspects of life, medical practise and life expectancy in medieval populations. This could provide us with a truly fascinating window into the past.

"At Archaeology Warwickshire, we are committed to inspiring future generations of archaeologists and we regularly provide training places for volunteers and students to come and work with us. Over the coming months, some lucky participants may well have opportunity to help us investigate this fascinating find."

Archaeologists aim to unravel the mystery of the Rhynie Man

When a farmer ploughing an Aberdeenshire field in 1978 uncovered a six-foot high Pictish stone carved with a distinctive figure carrying an axe, it quickly earned the name the 'Rhynie Man', coined from the village in which it was found.

But in the decades since its discovery, little more is known about the Pictish figure, who he was or why he was created. Now a team of archaeologists from the University of Aberdeen are leading a dig which they hope will yield answers to the mystery of Aberdeenshire's 'oldest man'.

Believed to date from the fifth or sixth century, the Rhynie Man carries an axe upon his shoulder, has a large pointed nose and wears a headdress.

Dr Gordon Noble, a Senior Lecturer in archaeology at the University of Aberdeen, said their excavations would focus on the area around where the Rhynie Man was first found by local farmer Kevin Alston at Barflat and around the Craw Stane, another Pictish standing stone.

He said, "We did significant work at Rhynie in 2011/12 and identified that the area was a high-status and possibly even royal Pictish site.

"We found many long distance connections such as pottery from the Mediterranean, glass from France and Anglo-Saxon metal work with evidence to suggest that intricate metalwork was produced on site.

"Over the years many theories have been put forward about the Rhynie Man. However, we don't have a huge amount of archaeology to back any of these up so we want to explore the area in which he was found in much greater detail to yield clues about how and why he was created, and what the carved imagery might mean."

Last month the archaeology team took part in public open days that showcased previous finds at Rhynie and spoke about some of their initial thoughts on the current dig.

Dr Noble explained, "From the evidence we have already, it looks like the Rhynie man stood somewhere near the entrance to the fort.



The Rhynie Man – photo courtesy University of Aberdeen

"We want to try and identify exactly where he was standing as this will give us a better idea how he fits into the high status site and what his role may have been.

"The Rhynie Man carries an axe of a form that has been linked to animal sacrifice and we hope to discover more evidence that might support the theory that he was created as part of ceremonies and rituals for high-status events, perhaps even those for early Pictish royal lineages.

"This may also help us to better understand the imagery used and why the Rhynie Man is depicted in this way. Standing at more than six-feet high the stone must have been an impressive sight to anyone coming to Rhynie

some 1500 years ago."

Aberdeenshire Council Archaeologist, Bruce Mann, added, "The ongoing work is not only helping us to reveal more about this little understood period of history, but is proving to be a fantastic opportunity for people to actively learn about part of the rich history of Aberdeenshire.

"One day we will understand not only 'who' the Rhynie Man was, but also what part the Picts played in the early development of the village. It's a very exciting time for the community, and I hope everyone enjoys visiting both the dig and the local area."

Simon Fraser University unveils its first medieval manuscript

University students in Paris, Toulouse, and Bologna in the late 1200s pored over anthologies of Civil Law such as the one Simon Fraser University in Canada has just acquired, which contains among other things the New Laws of the Roman emperor Justinian.

Written in Latin on parchment, and dated to 1269, it features student notes scrawled in the margins, as well as amusing decorative drawings.

The SFU Library recently obtained the medieval manuscript at an auction held at Christie's, London for £24,000 pounds sterling. Previously owned by a family in France for hundreds of years, no one else has had access to it, and it has not been described in academic literature.

Humanities professor Paul Dutton, who organized the funding to purchase the book, says it fills a gap in the SFU Library's Special Collections.

"The one thing we lacked was a medieval codex," he says. "Special Collections has a rare leaf of the Gutenberg bible, printed around 1450, and a magnificent collection of Aldines—books printed by Aldus Manutius in Venice at the start of the second age of print in 1500."

Dutton teaches Humanities 103, "The Invention of the Book," in which students study how ancient books were made.

It's an experiential course—students put their hands on cuneiform tablets, papyrus, parchment, and also make quill pens and medieval ink. But Dutton could never actually show them a book written on parchment.



SFU archivist Melanie Hardbatttle peruses the SFU Library's first medieval manuscript, dated 1269. Photo courtesy SFU News

parchment.

"We've gone 50 years with this gap," he says "so it's a nice Department of Humanities and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) contribution to SFU's 50th Anniversary."

Dutton cobbled together funding from three sources: chiefly from FASS Dean John Craig, the SFU Library, and a grant associated with the Jack and Nancy Farley University professorship, an appointment Dutton held until the end of August.

Purchasing the book at auction was a fascinating experience, says Dutton. He had to watch online, relying on an agent to make the deal, which cost approximately \$65,000 Canadian after factoring in Christie's fee, the

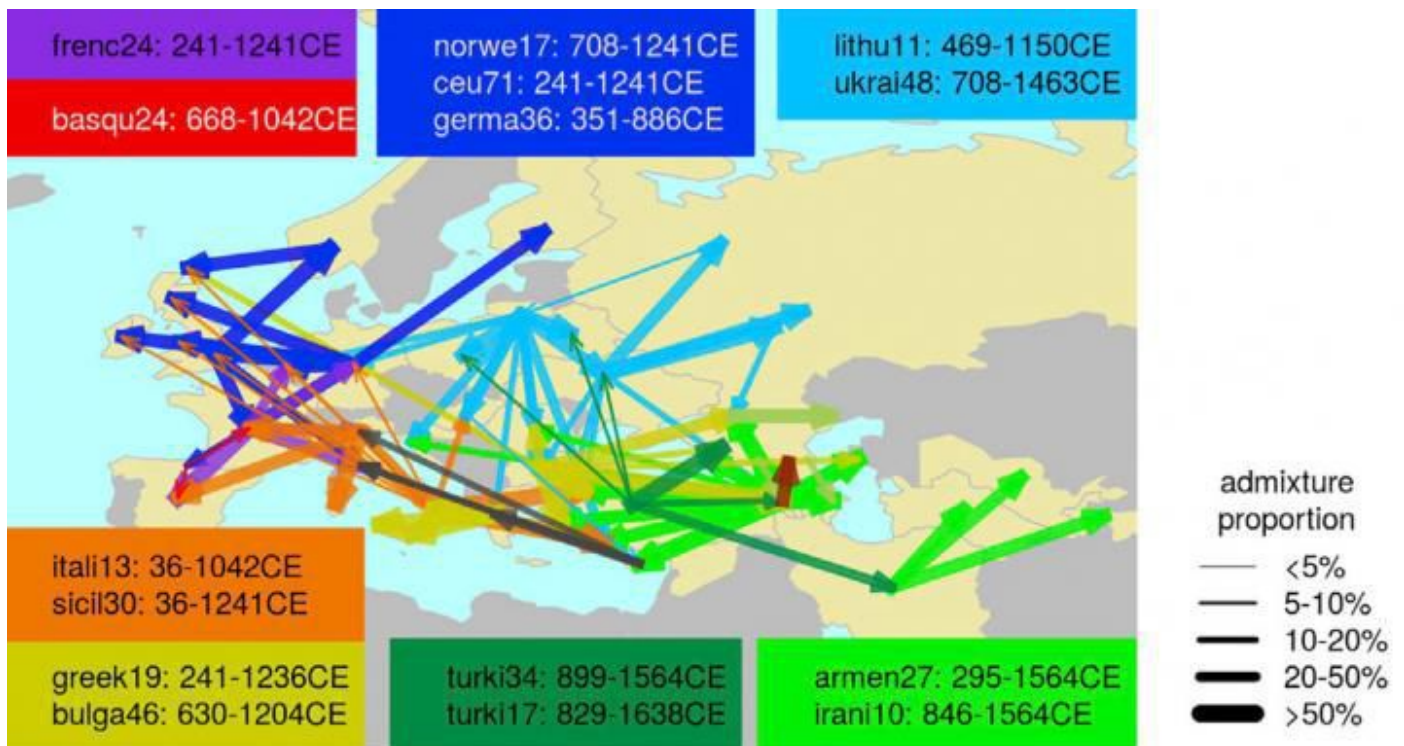
agent's fee, shipping costs and the exchange rate.

Archivist Melanine Hardbatttle, acting head librarian, Special Collections and Rare Books, expects the manuscript will be an invaluable resource for faculty, scholars and students of history, humanities, and SFU's Print Culture Program.

Dutton plans to examine the book and produce a catalogue entry for the library that will give users the information they need to use the manuscript efficiently.

~ our thanks to SFU News for this article

DNA Research reveals movements of medieval peoples



Gene flow within West Eurasia is shown by lines linking the best-matching donor group to the sources of admixture with recipient clusters (arrowhead). Line colors represent the regional identity of the donor group, and line thickness represents the proportion of DNA coming from the donor group. Ranges of the dates (point estimates) for events involving sources most similar to selected donor groups are shown. Photo credit: Busby et al./*Current Biology* 2015

If you go back far enough, all people share a common ancestry. But some populations are more closely related than others based on events in the past that brought them together. Now, researchers reporting in the journal *Current Biology* have shown that it's possible to use DNA evidence as a means to reconstruct and date those significant past events. The findings suggest that evidence in our genomes can help to recover lost bits of history.

"We now have the statistical machinery to uncover which historical events have produced the mosaic genomes of people in Europe today," says George Busby of the University of Oxford. "The successful reconstruction of the genetic history of a region of the world that has been well investigated both archaeologically and historically suggests that these approaches have the potential to be applied to areas where history has not been so well recorded and where genetics might be the only way of

recovering history."

Busby and his colleagues applied a new method they've developed to compare single genetic variants among populations, taking into account the relationships among those markers based on their physical proximity along the chromosomes. That information can be used to infer subtle relationships among populations, including those that are genetically very similar, as well as the history of a continent.

The new work shows that all European populations have mixed over time as people picked up and moved from one place to another. Usually this mixing has involved nearby groups, but sometimes populations bear the mark of invading populations from more distant locations.

"Much as different cultures have often borrowed elements from each other, we are now seeing that the genomes of people alive in Europe today contain ancestry from multiple different places, from within Europe and outside," says Cristian Capelli, the study's senior author.

The results offer interesting insights into human history, including the lives of "regular people."

"History is often written by the winners and the elites--we often do not hear about the everyday life of people," Busby says. "By studying the DNA of populations and understanding how different groups are ancestrally related to each other, our analysis tells the story of all people."

For example, the researchers found evidence of contact across Central Asia with groups from Mongolia. In fact, they see evidence that Mongolians migrated into Europe in two waves: once at a time that matches the known expansions of Genghis Khan and the other occurring much earlier, prior to 1000 CE in groups of North East Europe, including the

Chuvash, Russians, and Mordovians.

The researchers also see evidence of mixing among Europeans in the Mediterranean and people from West and North Africa at many times and places over the course of history. The Slavic expansion also left its mark on European genomes, showing that this was a key event in the genetic history of the region.

The researchers say it's now "clear that migration and admixture have been the norm, rather than the exception, throughout human history."

The article, "The Role of Recent Admixture in Forming the Contemporary West Eurasian Genomic Landscape", by Busby et al., appears in *Current Biology*.

[Click here to read the article.](#)

Five Reasons We're Still Fascinated by the Templars

By Danièle Cybulskie

If you've only ever dipped your toe into the medieval world, you've probably still heard about the Templars. Modern fiction's favourite bad guys, The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon (a.k.a. the Templars) was an order of military monks whose primary functions were in helping to "free" the Holy Land from Muslim control, as well as helping the pilgrims who traveled there. They were not the only such order, and never actually achieved their objective to reconquer the Holy Land, yet a brief glance at the medieval history section of a bookstore will (more often than not) show more books on the Templars than any other subject. So, what is it about the Templars that makes them so fascinating?

1. They Were Impressive Warriors...and Also Monks

Right away, the Templars seem to be founded upon a mystery: how can an order of monks be militaristic? Isn't that a contradiction? In a word: yes. However, the Templars were not the only Christians who believed that killing

"infidels" was less egregious than allowing them to control the Holy Land. Plenty of popes were on board with the idea that there were different degrees of killing; for example, Innocent III forbade anyone to use crossbows on Christians, but using them on anyone else was not a problem. In fact, popes were behind many calls to crusade, so clearly, the



Knight Templar effigy at Temple Church in London – - Photo by Nick Garrod / Flickr

the contradiction between being Christian and being a soldier was not as big a deal to medieval minds as we might think. Still, the idea that those who devote their lives to being spiritually pure while also breaking one of the Ten Commandments is fraught with complexity, so wondering about the justification is a common draw, pulling the Templars into stories like that of Ridley Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven*.

2. They Were Also Impressive Bankers

Being a part of a much-needed military unit in a conflict in which land is being conquered and parceled out is a recipe for becoming very rich very quickly. The Templars amassed a huge amount of wealth and land over the years; so much that they were able to lend out money to kings. Being great warriors with the integrity of monks, the Templars were also good people to store your money with. Because of their vast network and their

capital, medieval people could deposit money at one temple and withdraw it at another. Like all bankers over the centuries, they were still sometimes vulnerable to robbery, though, with even Prince Edward (later Edward I "Longshanks") of England succumbing to temptation, and robbing them of somewhere around a thousand pounds (according to Marc Morris in *A Great and Terrible King: Edward I and the Forging of Britain*, p. 56). Anyone who controls that much money is rich pickings (pun intended) for villainy in medieval fiction, and the Templars unsurprisingly appear as a corporation in *Assassin's Creed*.

3. Theirs Was an Order of Secrets

As members of a religious order, Templars were required to take vows, which understandably involved ritualistic elements, just as any other swearing-in ceremony would. The general public didn't

seem to know much about these ceremonies, although there is some debate around whether or not the public could attend them. Nevertheless, the fact that no one knew much about these rituals was turned around on the Templars when they fell out of favour, and their secrecy became the source of great speculation over what sordid deeds they were performing (more on that later). All of a sudden, they were “hiding” things from the people, and hiding, of course, never means anything good. Because few documents exist that outline Templar activities, their secret ceremonies are another great source for invention, as in Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*.

4. They Were Present During the Most Famous Crusade

To think of crusading is to think of Richard I (the Lionheart) and his greatest foe Saladin (alā ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb) who were at odds during what we now call the Third Crusade. The Templars were right in the thick of the siege of Acre, Richard’s greatest victory in the Holy Land and also his greatest slaughter of captives. To picture military monks there at the site of both Christian victory and the utter brutality of the crusades is to see them at their most powerful and most troubling. Given the moral complexity of crusading in general, the Templars’ presence during this most famous crusade is good fodder for fiction. A novel which puts the Templars and Acre at front and centre is Andrew Latham’s *The Holy Lance*.

5. They Had a Famously Brutal Ending to the Order

In the Middle Ages, money, politics, and religion almost always formed a messy and dangerous tangle. For the Templars, this culminated in the obliteration of their order, the torture of their members, and the fiery death of many, including their Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, in 1314. Their persecution was predominantly at the hands of Philip IV

(The Fair), who arrested all the Templars in France at once, and proceeded to draw confessions out of them through torture. This arrest was unusual, since the charges against them were heavily religious (not civil) in nature, as **this great article by Julien Théry-Astruc points out**. They were accused of heresy, including denying Christ and idol-worship, as well as homosexual acts, as part of their ceremony, although the evidence was scanty to say the least. Before the last executions were carried out, the Templars’ reputation was dragged through the mud and has never really recovered. Because the Order was so brutally and thoroughly destroyed, and because the motivations behind their sudden destruction remain unclear, what the Templars’ part in their fall from grace could have been is a compelling mystery. The curse of Jacques de Molay is the starting point of Maurice Druon’s *The Iron King*.

In a nutshell, the Templars remain compelling to modern minds because we just don’t know enough about them to sate our curiosity. Everything about them is mysterious in some way, and the dark shadow cast over them by Philip the Fair remains to this day. No matter where you meet them, the Templars are an interesting part of modern medieval fiction.

You can follow Danièle Cybulskie on Twitter @5MinMedievalist

Top 10 Medieval Book

Trying to keep your books from being stolen in the Middle Ages? If all else fails, include a curse against thieves!

Books were important and expensive items in the Middle Ages, which could take years to write, and those who owned them wanted to make sure they would be kept safe. However, security options were limited, and it could be very easy for a book to get taken from a monastery's library. Medieval scribes had one form of protection that we don't use anymore – curses.

In his book, *Anathema! Medieval Scribes and the History of Book Curses*, Marc Drogin explains how a few lines would often be added to a manuscript, warning those who stole or intentionally damaged a book that they would be punished by God. If caught, a thief risked a range of punishments from excommunication to execution. Hundreds of these medieval book curses have survived, and here our top 10 favourites:

1. At the end of a Bible, written around the year 1172, the scribe added this statement:

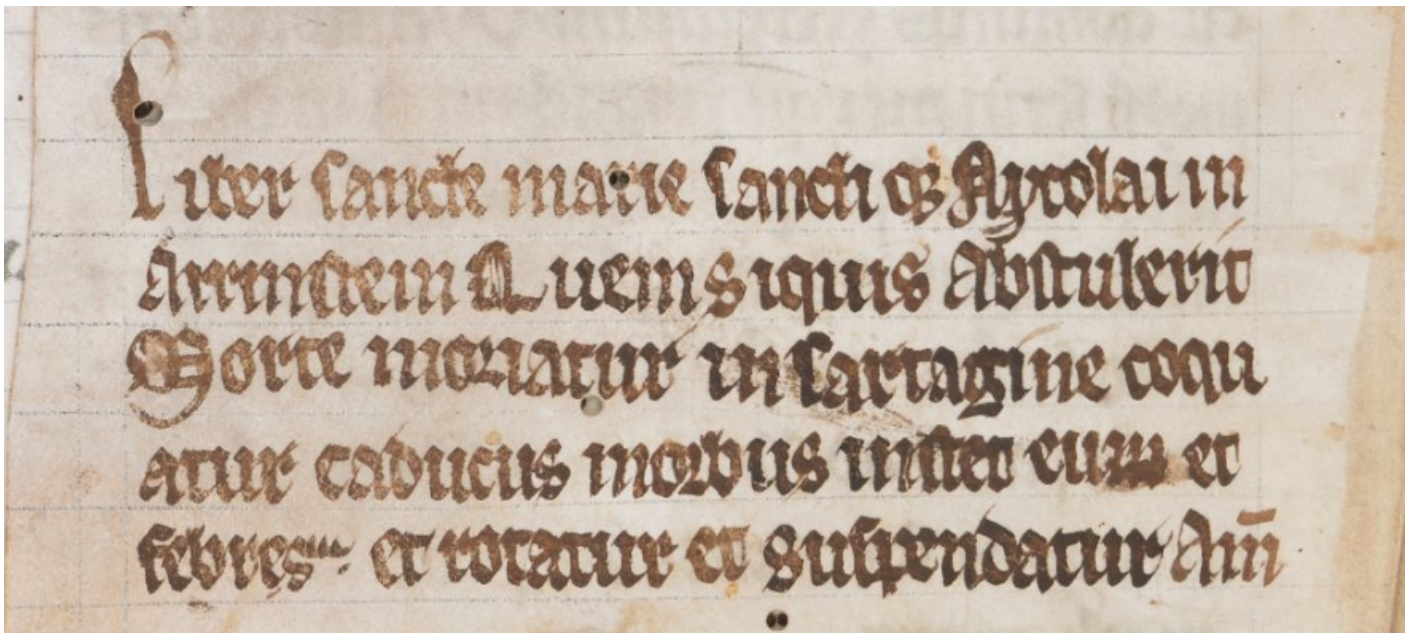
If anyone take away this book, let him die the death; let him be fried in a pan; let the falling sickness and fever seize him; let him be broken on the wheel, and hanged. Amen.

2. You will find this curse in a 13th century manuscript from England:

This is the book of St. James of Wigmore. If anyone takes it away or maliciously destroys this notice in taking it away from the above-mentioned place, may he be tied by the chain of greater excommunication. Amen. So be it. So be it. So be it.

3. Simon Vostre of Paris added this to a Book of Hours that he wrote in 1502:

*Whoever steals this Book of Prayer
May he be ripped apart by swine,
His heart be splintered, this I swear,
And his body dragged along the Rhine.*



Curse #1 - from British Library Harley MS 2798, fol. 235v.

4. From a 13th century manuscript kept at the Vatican Library:

*The finished book before you lies;
This humble scribe don't criticize.
Whoever takes away this book
May he never on Christ look.
Whoever to steal this volume durst
May he be killed as one accursed.
Whoever to steal this volume tries
Out with his eyes, our with his eyes!*

5. A scribe used Latin and German to write this curse:

*This book belongs to none but me
For there's my name inside to see.
To steal this book, if you should try,
It's by the throat you'll hang high.
And ravens then will gather 'bout
To find your eyes and pull them out.
And when you're screaming "oh, oh, oh!"
Remember, you deserved this woe.*

6. From a manuscript kept at the Monastery of St Gall in 880:

*May no one believe that ever have I been taken,
But that happily this place never have I forsaken.
Yet may no one doubt that the wrath of God upon him will fall
If he essays to take me from the confines of St. Gall.*

7. From a book written in the year 1178:

The book of Saint Marie and Saint Liborius in Patherburnen. A curse upon the one who takes this book, a blessing upon the one who keeps it safe. If anyone removes or cuts a page, may he be accursed.

8. A 15th century manuscript owned by Count Jean d'Orleans had this:

*Whoever steals this book
Will hang on a gallows in Paris,
And, if he isn't hung, he'll drown,
And, if he doesn't drown, he'll roast,
And, if he doesn't roast, a worse end will befall him.*

9. The 13th-century manuscript MS Bodleian 132 includes this statement:

This book belongs to St Mary of Robertsbridge; whosoever shall steal it, or sell it, or in any way alienate it from this House, or mutilate it, let him be anathema-marantha. Amen.

Below it is a note from Bishop Grandisson of Exeter, who lived a century later:

I John, Bishop of Exeter, know not where the aforesaid House is, nor did I steal this book, but acquired it in a lawful way.

10. Finally, a medieval book curse could be short and sweet, like this one written in 1461:

*Hanging will do
for him who steals you.*

Marc Drogin's book *Anathema! Medieval Scribes and the History of Book Curses*, was published in 1983. You can learn about medieval book curses from Got Medieval's article **Medieval Copy Protection** and in **Curses, and a blessing**, found in the *Dean's Corner* from Winthrop University. You can also learn other ways medieval monks kept their manuscripts safe in Erik Kwakkel's post **Chain, Chest, Curse: Combating Book Theft in Medieval Times**. Finally, one of the most popular book curses, which was thought to be from the Monastery of San Pedro in Barcelona, is actually a fake, written in the early 20th century, according to this post in **Times Higher Education**.

Exploring the Deutsches Histor



Article and photos by Sandra Alvarez

Middle Ages at Deutsches Historisches Museum

I just came back from Berlin where, in the heart of the city, the Deutsches Historisches Museum has a magnificent exhibit that I was fortunate to catch on my final day there. German History in Images and Artefacts is an extremely ambitious and comprehensive project that spans the course of German history from the 5th to the late 20th century. The exhibit is located in the Baroque Zeughaus, the former armoury. The upper floor covered the Middle Ages to the First World War, the ground floor covered the Weimar Republic to 1994. There were artefacts, clothing, statues, shields, weapons, jewellery, relics, documents, books and paintings.

The Medieval and Early Modern portion of this monumental retrospective starts off with an interactive map of Europe showing the formation of Germany's borders and the changes to them over the past 1500 years. You can sit down on a bench for a few minutes and watch nations come and go, borders appear and disappear, and country names evolve. The exhibit also provides plenty of detail about the development of the German language, migrations, and the formulation of German identity.

I started off my visit looking at treasures from the time of Charlemagne, Karl der Große (742-814), the "Founding Father" of future France and Germany. The exhibit then moves chronologically through German history and touches on warfare, the rise and expansion of medieval German towns, the Hanseatic League, guilds, plague, politics, religion, Martin Luther and the Reformation, and important moments in social history, such as the German Peasant's War of 1524-1525. The collection contains over 7,000 objects, therefore, picking a few poignant pieces from the Middle Ages and Early Modern period was daunting, but nonetheless, I narrowed it down to a few favourites.

The Ceremonial Saddle



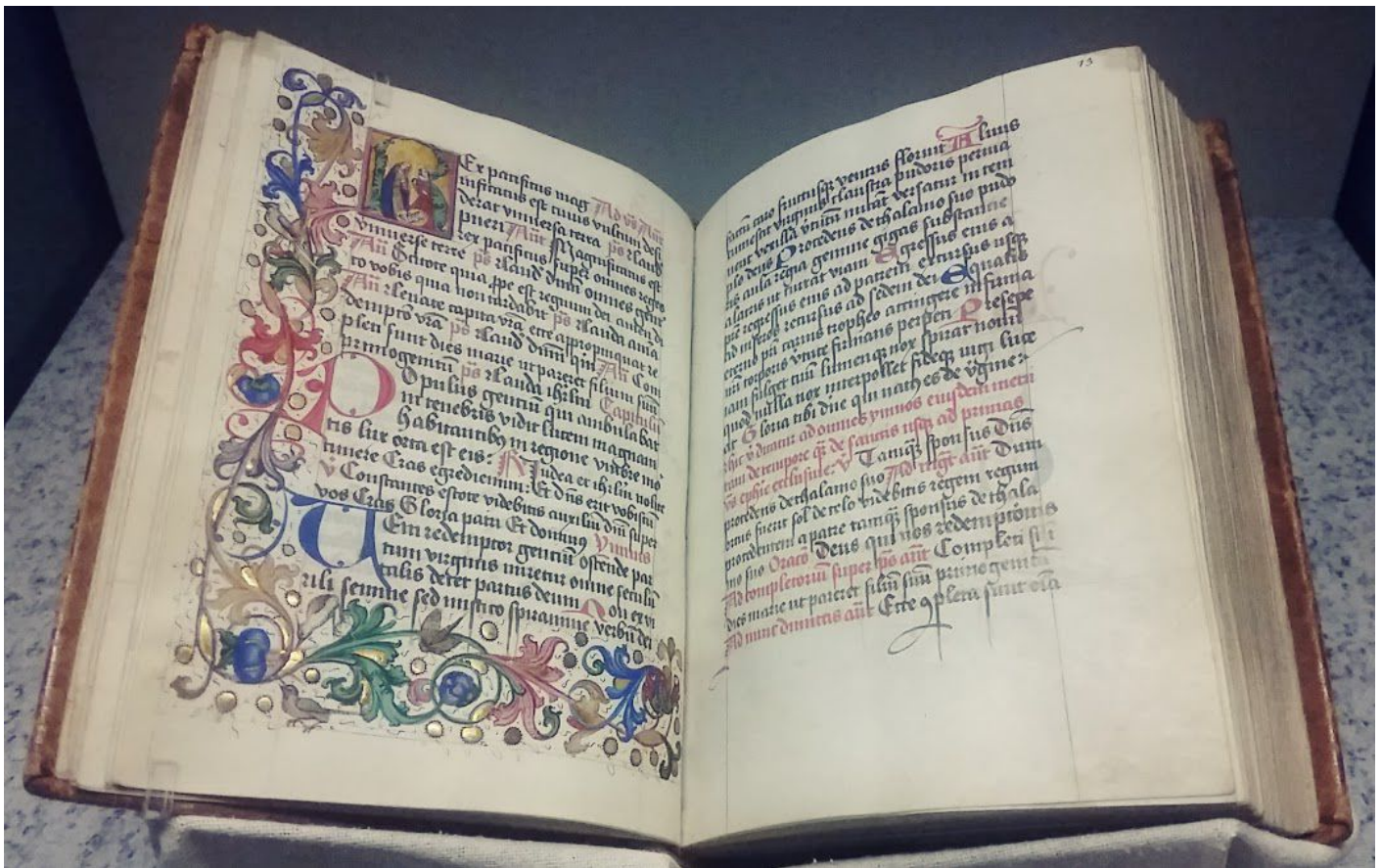
This beautifully carved saddle, "Prunksattel", hails from either Southern Germany or Austria. It was one of two ornamental saddles in the collection that immediately caught my eye. I preferred this one for its intricate carvings that depict scenes of chivalry, St. George, a couple representing true love, and a virgin for chastity. It is made of bone, wood and leather and dates to 1440. Saddles such as this one were popular in Germany in the Middle Ages, and the use of bone became common in the Rhine region by the 14th century. Unfortunately, lovely as they are to look at, they were uncomfortable; these were the "Ferrari's" of medieval saddles, good for show, but not for daily use.

Print by Lucas Cranach the Elder



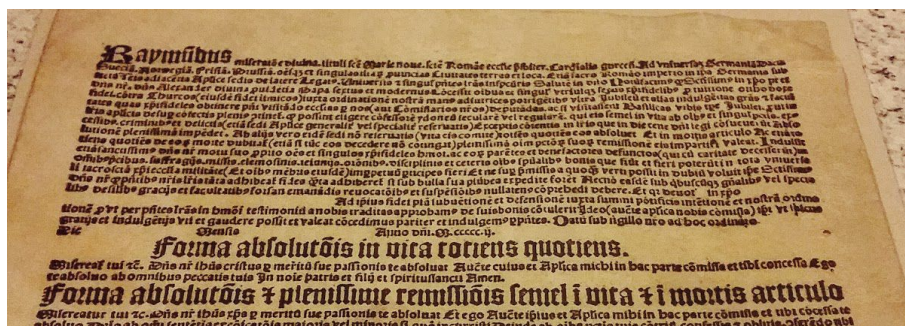
Cheekily entitled, *The Birth of the Pope and His Cardinals*, by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553), this drawing was part of a biting series of prints that poked fun at the Catholic Church during the height of the Reformation. Cranach was a close friend of Martin Luther (1483-1546), stood witness to his marriage, and was also godfather to his son, Hans. Cranach made numerous prints eschewing Reforming ideals and also several portraits of Martin Luther. In this caustic print, a monstrous demon shits out the Pope and his Cardinals while other demons mockingly breastfeed and tend to the Pope in a crib.

Medieval Books



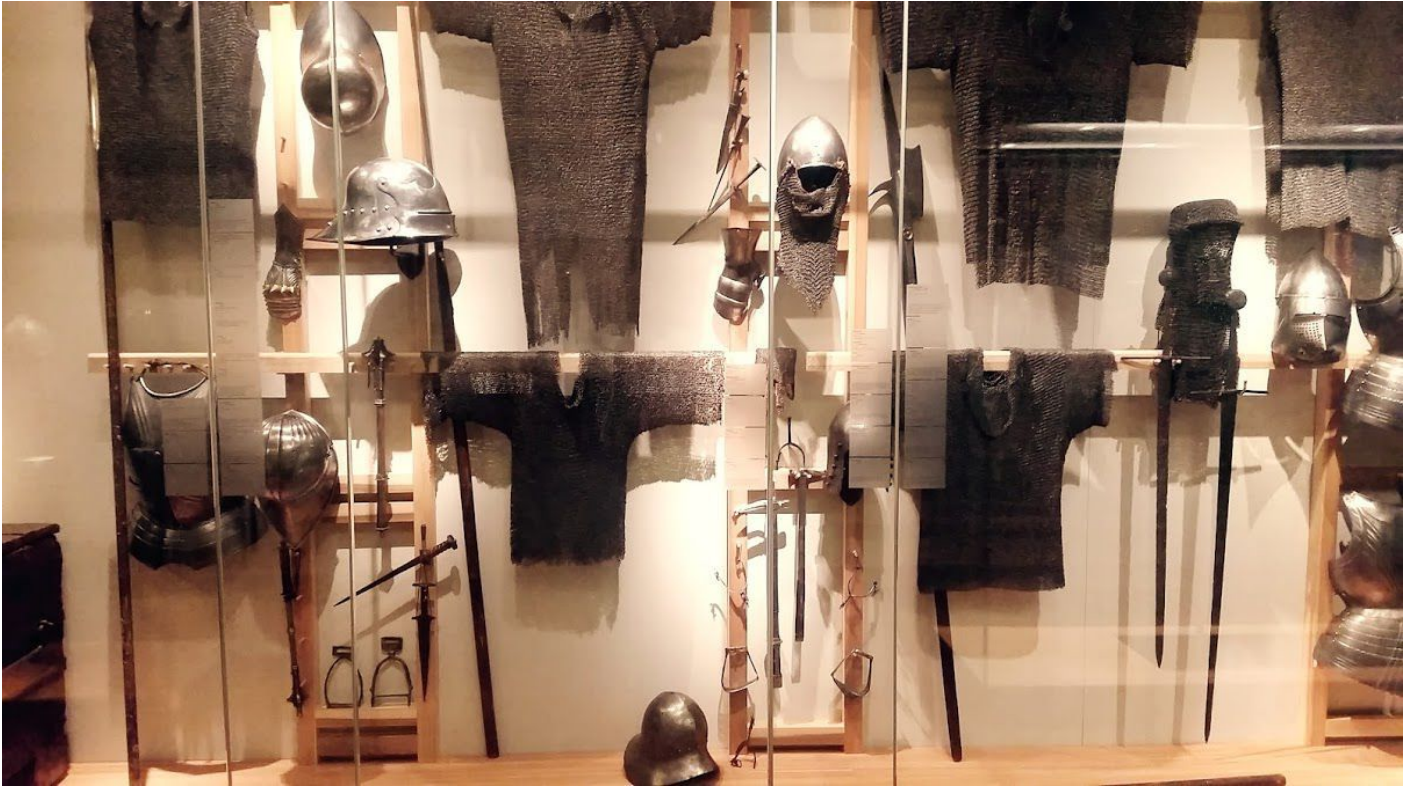
The collection has many beautiful Medieval and Early Modern books, making it difficult to choose just one. This gorgeous book is a Breviary; a book that contained short prayers, hymns and readings for the celebration of the Liturgy of Hours, the monastic divisions of the day. This 16th century book comes from Augsburg, Bavaria.

Letters of Indulgence



There is an impressive array of documentation in this exhibit, but aside from the formal letters and marriage contracts, I was captivated by several Letters of Indulgence. These fascinating bits of paper that permitted the carrier to be pardoned for their sins (not mortal sins, just temporal ones). This gave rise to serious abuse in the late Middle Ages with people buying letters like the one pictured here, to wipe away the stain of sin, much like one today would buy an insurance policy. Indulgences were also used as a sort of medieval "crowdfunding" for expensive causes, like the Crusades, and the building of religious houses and Cathedrals. There were even professional pardoners (more like scam artists) who sold such letters, and made lofty promises of avoiding eternal damnation. It was big business and something German Protestant Reformers, like Martin Luther, railed against. They disliked the idea that all one had to do was shell out money to buy their way to salvation. This Letter of Indulgence was given to Cardinal Raimond Peraudi (1435-1505) in 1502 by the Pope to celebrate the Jubilee Indulgence of the War against the Turks.

German Arms and Armour



This exhibit has one thing in heaps: armour and weapons. If warfare, swords and shields are your cup of tea, you've come to the right place. Want to know about German knights? That's all here too. Most of the armour is Late Medieval/Early Modern and it's quite an impressive collection. I loved the monstrously large pavises (large shields) that were covered in artwork of personal, or city emblems.



This list certainly doesn't encompass everything, there were many beautiful objects that I had to leave off the list for the sake of brevity, but it is a taste of Germany's extensive medieval history. If you plan on visiting Berlin, this exhibit is not to be missed. The good news is that, since it's part of their permanent collection, it's not going anywhere. I would strongly recommend allocating a good chunk of time here, it's not something to be rushed through, and well worth it.

[Click here to visit the Deutsches Historisches Museum](#)

Ten Castles that Made Medieval Britain

Tintagel Castle

By James Turner

The bleached bones of a blasted cliff-top castle, scourged by leaping sea and howling wind, Tintagel made as much from tempered dreams as carved stone still has the power to inspire. While the Castle that once crowned it is now reduced to jagged splinters, the site itself, set deep into the labyrinthine Cornish coast upon a great spur of wave hewn rock, is perhaps the most evocative in the British Isles, possessed of a wild yet deeply permeating and reverberating beauty. Built atop an ancient fortress and inexorably tied to one of Britain's most pervasive legends, Tintagel's political reality stretches deep into the Island's mist shrouded past while its mythical legacy echoes to this day.

Unlike the majority of its fellow castles that share Iron Age roots, many of which benefited from continuous habitation, Tintagel Castle's medieval rebirth came relatively late and was a direct result of the transmuted Celtic folk tales which had, during the flourishing of the Middle Ages, come to rest upon Tintagel. When these tales fired the imagination of a newly rising royal prince, Richard Earl of Cornwall, he raised a grand castle upon the misremembered ruins of a lost royal court. For in the great shared canon of romance literature hungrily devoured by the noble courts that criss-crossed Europe and which

alongside the universality of the church bound it together with a singular aristocratic culture, Tintagel is the place wherein the story of Arthur's chivalric monument and the Once and Future King begins.

In 43 AD, the clockwork of the monolithic Roman Empire began to spin towards the conquest of Britain, cranked by the hand of the Emperor Claudius. Claudius had been elevated as a result of the machinations of the fickle and avaricious Praetorian Guard and politically exposed due to his dubious claim to the Imperial title, embarked upon a series of military expansions as a way of building credibility and support within Rome. It remains unclear what the Romans found at Tintagel as the legions and administration of the empire unfurled itself across Britain, since archaeological surveys performed on the site have thus far found no trace of Celtic settlement although the Dumnonii tribe had settled the area and there was undoubtedly a hill fort located at nearby Wilapark. Similarly, as of yet no buildings have been discovered at Tintagel dating from the Romans' long occupation.

However, examination of the site has revealed a cache of Roman material including a substantial number of pottery fragments,



Tintagel Castle - photo by Ben Salter / Flickr

including a substantial number of pottery fragments, other household goods and a chronologically diverse hoard of Roman minted coins. This alongside Tintagel's position athwart what is now a long gone Roman road into the heart of Cornwall, which was then one of the Empire's biggest suppliers in the lucrative tin trade, indicates that on the balance of probability Tintagel was already settled by the time the Empire entered its twilight although the size and nature of the hypothetical settlement remains a mystery.

Following the completion of the struggling Empire's slow withdrawal from Britain in 410, the famed and sophisticated but increasingly localised Roman administration collapsed into a number of fledgling kingdoms often based upon old but still extant tribal distinctions. Tintagel fell under the domains of the Kingdom of Dumnonia which

controlled much of what would become south western England and it was here under the Dumnonian kings that Tintagel would reach the height of its temporal power and importance.

The site quickly transformed into a crucial trading hub and major Romano-British settlement, archaeologists have uncovered luxury Mediterranean imports including high quality North African pottery and glassware in numbers far outstripping those seen anywhere else in Britain during this period, articulating Tintagel's great wealth and importance. If, although it is often disputed, Britain had entered a Dark Age where civilization teetered on the brink, then Tintagel was undoubtedly one of its brightest lights. The site and the large compound built both atop the island and stretching to encompass the surrounding cliff top was one of the principal centres for the semi-

the semi-migratory and often embattled royal court of Dumnonia alongside Exeter and Cadbury.

As well as its undeniable value as a trading post and its geographical location, the royal favour shown to Tintagel may well have been informed by its formidable natural defences. The island which formed the heart of the palace complex was accessible to the mainland only via a narrow causeway and further protected on the landward side by a wide ditch. Such concerns must have loomed increasingly in the minds of the successive ranks of Dumnonian kingship as they were forced to contend not only with rival Romano-British kingdoms but also the predatory attentions of the swelling tide of Saxon settlement. The Saxons had originally come to Britain as mercenaries before, like mercenaries the world over, striking upon a more direct method of transferring their employers cash and land to themselves and then writing home to their friends and family about a rich new land ripe for the taking.

The why and when of Tintagel's abandonment has been lost in the mists of time, the Romano-British world was wiped away by the advancing Saxons and Germanic tribes who taking advantage of the opportunities arising from their hard won conquests quickly set about continuing their own internecine wars. While their political manifestations were destroyed, elements of Brythonic language and culture lingered in Cornwall. They were further preserved within Wales and the Kingdom of Strathclyde alongside a greater degree of polity, albeit fragmented and transitory, in the cases of Wales and Strathclyde respectively.

In 1136, Geoffrey of Monmouth finished his *Historia Regum Britannia*, a vastly intriguing and imaginative pseudo history in which he traces the history of Britain all the way back to Brutus, a Trojan refugee whose people settled the Isles after defeating the terrible race of giants who lived there. Furthermore,

it was one of the first and certainly the most widespread exposure of non Welsh speakers to the legends of King Arthur. Gaining steadily in popularity as they spread through the aristocratic network of western and central Europe, the Arthurian tales conflated with the rapidly coalescing principles and pageantry of chivalric practice soon emerged as the centrepiece of Romance literature, forming a potent cultural movement and becoming Europe's most pervasive and enduring fad. Eagerly devoured by nobles throughout Europe, the legend of Arthur often changed with the telling and soon new versions of the story were being written including new characters and episodes as a means of expounding upon favoured themes.

In many ways King Arthur was the Batman of Medieval Europe enjoyed by many, worshiped by some but instantly recognisable to all. Similarly the enduring popularity of the character spawned a host of re-telling and re-imaginings which greatly altered the details and even tone of the story while still upholding the inalienable and instantly recognisable core of the character. In the rich riotous medley of Arthurian legend throughout the Middle Ages, Arthur's association with Tintagel is one of the few points of continuity. According to Geoffrey, Arthur was conceived when Merlin in a horrifying and flagrantly irresponsible use of magic, transformed King Uther Pendragon into the form of his enemy Duke Gorlois of Cornwall so that he could infiltrate the Duke's great castle at Tintagel and sleep with his wife, Igraine. A problematic and uncomfortable origin to say the least for England's greatest hero. The immense tapestry of the flourishing Romance genre could often be a tangled affair and Tintagel also came to be associated with the Court of the duplicitous King Mark of Cornwall, in the widely celebrated medieval version of the ancient romance of *Tristan and Iseult*.

In 1233, Tintagel Castle which until now had existed only as a mis-remembered dream of



Door to Tintagel Castle - Photo by Robert Linsdell / Flickr

existed only as a mis-remembered dream of a Dark Age palace complex was raised by Earl Richard of Cornwall and the nominal Count of hotly disputed Poitou. Ambitious and capable, yet frequently frustrated, Richard, born in 1209, was the second son of the cunning yet short sighted King John and grew up during the long reign of his elder brother Henry III. Despite the generous grant of the Earldom of Cornwall, Richard was an often problematic ally of his often struggling brother, for while he acted as Henry's lieutenant in both Wales and France, he was extremely touchy about his dignity, rebelling several times when he felt that it had been impinged upon.

Richard went to considerable expense to acquire Tintagel as the site of his new seat within the Earldom and it seems clear that the otherwise strategically and economically irrelevant Tintagel was selected for its Arthurian pedigree and its intertwined association with Cornish cultural and political autonomy. In order to emphasise and further project this affinity, Tintagel

Castle was deliberately designed to be archaic by contemporary standards. These affectations served to boost Richard's own status within the wider European nobility and help woo his famously truculent and independently minded Cornish subjects. The Earl's love for romance literature and his recognition of its political utility perhaps informed the views of his nephew, the future Edward I who would decades later employ the legends of The Round Table as a way of increasing the flagging ranks of English knighthood and to build solidarity amongst his nobles.

Richard's long and distinguished career took him far away from the Castle he so carefully built, going on crusade in 1240 following the death of his wife, Isabel, the daughter of the famed William Marshall and in 1256 amidst rather confused and murky circumstances Richard was elected 'King of the Romans' by a majority of the German Dukes, although it seems the reality of the Dukes' relative strength and Richard's unorthodox position precluded him from wielding any real power



Ruins of Tintagel Castle - photo by Robert Linsdell / Flickr



Remains of the island courtyard of Tintagel Castle.

within the Holy Roman Empire.

Following Richard's death in 1272, the Castle, the primary value of which was symbolic, was abandoned by his heirs and given to successive generations of sheriffs to administer in the course of their expansive and often profitable duties. While the Castle was used briefly as a prison, it swiftly fell into ruin. Upon his accession to the newly created Duchy of Cornwall in 1337, Edward the Black Prince, the legendary warrior son of Edward III visited the Castle and commissioned its repair and refurbishment but since he himself never spent any significant amount of time there and because the Castle still lacked any tangible significance, this proved only a halting measure with the Castle quickly sliding back into decay. There Tintagel languished, reduced to ruination until it was once again resurrected by its

Arthurian connection in the Victorian era when the Castle of Arthur's birth ringing with the crash of the sea and open to the bite of the wind once again stoked the imagination of a nation.

Tintagel then does not derive its importance from the deeds performed within it or for the greatness of the lord that raised it, although great he was, rather Tintagel is an exemplar of the profound effect the self created mythology and chivalric pantheon had upon medieval aristocratic culture. It truly is a castle made from the stuff of dreams.

[Click here to visit the Tintagel Castle website](#)

Machiavelli and Botticelli Movies to Hit the Screen in 2016

Machiavelli and Botticelli are set to hit screens in 2016. We sat down to chat with Italian director, Lorenzo Raveggi about his two ambitious projects.

Italian cinema has a rich history and has been in the movie making game from its inception. We interviewed Italian director Lorenzo Raveggi about his ambitious project of bringing 2 movies to life set in 15th century Florence. Raveggi, a Florentine himself, was excited to bring 2 of the most famous Florentines in Italian history to the big screen. Raveggi's fascinated by Italian history and released a historical short in 2014, *Le Gialle Viole di Santa Fina* (*The Yellow Violets of Santa Fina*).

His first film, *Niccolò Machiavelli: Prince of Politics*, is a biography about the Italian writer and "father of modern politics". The second film is still in production but shaping up to be a murder mystery. It follows the story of famous Italian Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli, after he is accused of murder while under the patronage of Lorenzo "il Magnifico" de' Medici. *The Secret of Botticelli*, has a modern day Professor, Dr. Carla Renzi, played by up-and-coming American-Italian actress, Eve Mauro, trying to solve a 500 year old whodunit. Although there are no records indicating that Botticelli was accused of murder during his time with the Medicis, the tale still makes for an interesting spin on the painter's life.

We interviewed Lorenzo Raveggi by email to discuss his films and his interest in history:

You have two new movies about to be released, *The Secret of Botticelli* and *Niccolò Machiavelli: Prince of Politics*, both movies set are in the Quattrocento, in Florence, Italy. Why were you were drawn to this this period in Italian history?

Since I was a child I've loved history, chivalry, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. I loved building stories, especially romance stories, and I wanted to study them as much as possible. I love to create a lot, and I enjoy creating fiction from real stories about great historical figures like Niccolò Machiavelli or Sandro Botticelli.

When do you anticipate the the two films will be released?

Hopefully, all these movies will be released and distributed between 2016 and 2017 at the latest. As for Niccolò Machiavelli, Prince of Politics, it will be released first in Italy on television. As for The Secret of Botticelli, I am in the middle of talks with distributions that will guarantee to me a budget to starting producing the movie.

Part of a film maker's process is to blend history and fiction. Botticelli had close ties to the Medici family during this height of his career, what gave you the idea to create a murder mystery involving Sandro Botticelli and the Medicis?

MACHIAVELLI

The Prince



Botticelli was bound to the Medici family. He positioned himself near this Florentine artistic power. Around this power evolved a mystery. Botticelli was also very close to beautiful and intelligent women like Simonetta Vespucci, and Lucrezia de' Medici. Mysterious things happened around these beautiful and fantastic women. In this story, I tried to create situations that merged Renaissance lives with such mysteries.

What sparked your interest in creating a movie about the life of Niccolò Machiavelli?

Niccolò Machiavelli is one of the most difficult, particular, and modern people (even if he lived during the most important period of the Florentine and European Renaissance) in the world. It is incredible to think that he wrote, "The Prince" and it's still used today as a reference for individual success or political group achievement etc...Machiavelli was one of the most important people of modern politics. I am the first person to write a real feature on him.

What were some of the challenges in producing two films at the same time?

The challenge is to create a sort of "re-birth" of this period of our (Italian) history. I think it is important that people, our friends, and society today can dream about re-creating our origins. All of us have to think that even if we are in 2015, we have our predecessors to thank for all these wonderful things. My dream is to give to our wonderful Italian history a re-birth, a new Renaissance through fiction, through this wonderful means that is cinema or television.

How do you think a film maker balances historical accuracy with creating a film that is appealing to audiences?

It's not simple to build something about Italian history that can attract the masses. Sometimes the results are very difficult, but I think people want to dream and a good screen writer, and a good director, need to make people dream.
What are the challenges and advantages of

making a film set in Renaissance Italy?

Italy has many wonderful sets to satisfy a movie production crew, director, and the actors. Florence is called the "Renaissance Cradle" so I'd like to transform my town into a great set to give it a re-birth for wonderful characters such as Niccolò Machiavelli and Sandro Botticelli.

Raveggi's passion for Florence doesn't stop here, he also has a third film in the works on Florentine explorer, Amerigo Vespucci's landfall in Brazil. Vespucci also worked for the Medici, and was the first navigator to coin the term "The New World". This film will be released in 2017.



Lorenzo Raveggi with Angelo Maggi on set

Using LEGO to show the history of medieval England

Medieval LEGO guides readers through English history in the middle ages, written by world-renowned historians and medievalists including John France, Christopher Given-Wilson, Anne Lawrence-Mathers, Stephen Morillo and Kathleen Neal.

The unique twist is that every historical event is illustrated by a tiny LEGO scene built by several of the most talented builders in the world. The author who compiled this book is Greyson Beights, a fifteen-year-old college student with a passion for medieval history and LEGO.

You can read about 32 important individuals and episodes from England's medieval history, including the Battle of Hastings, the Signing of Magna Carta, the Peasant's Revolt and Margery Kempe.

We interviewed Greyson to learn more about his book:

What was the idea behind creating a medieval history book that makes use of LEGO?

History has always been my favorite subject, and I truly believe that we can better prepare ourselves for the future by learning from the past. I strongly support teaching history to the next generation, and when the US National Assessment of Educational Progress reports that 82% of 8th graders are below "proficient" level in knowledge of the history of their own nation, there is a big problem. Our education system isn't working, and we need to find

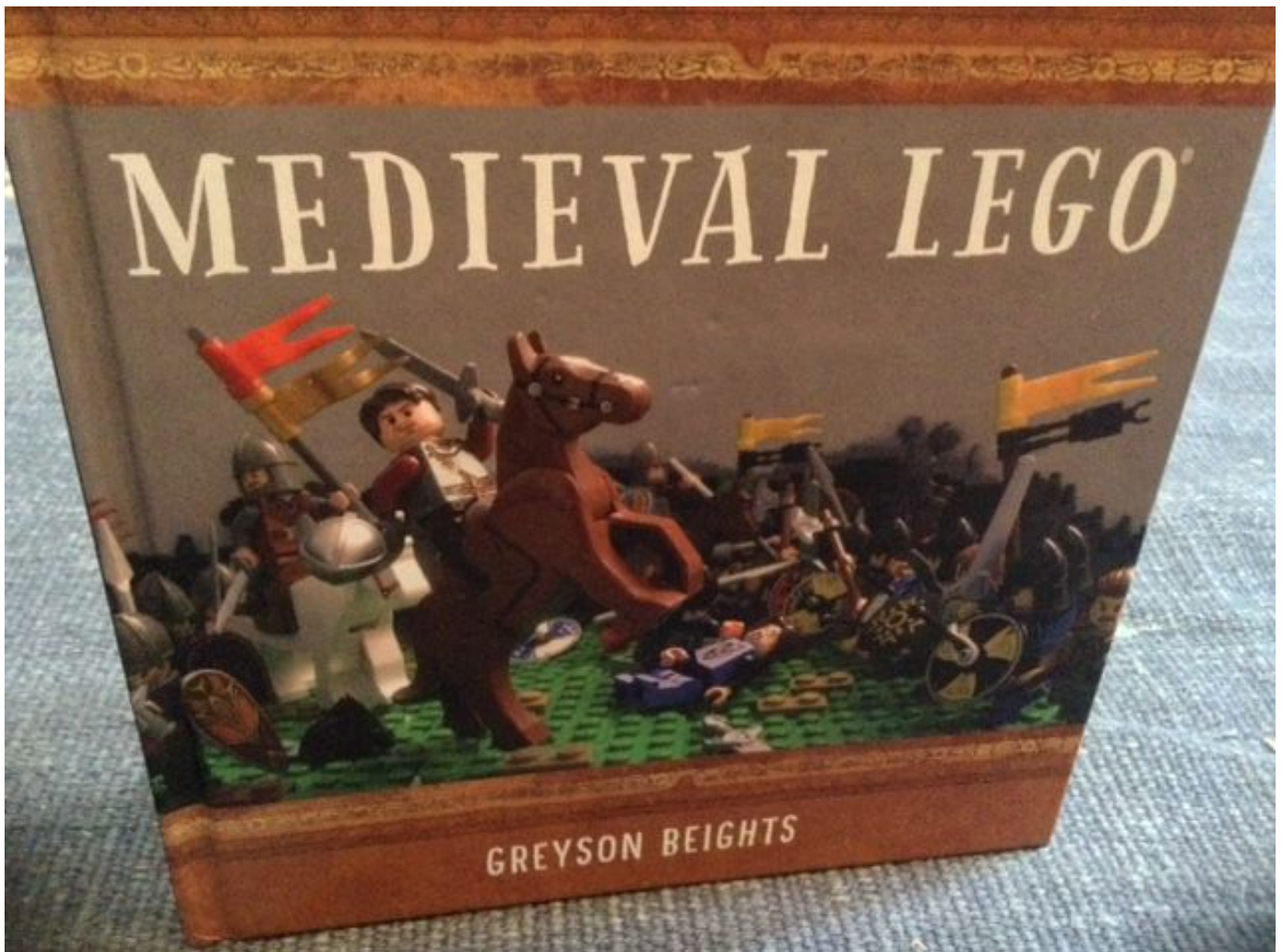
outside and intuitive ways to teach history. Using LEGO to teach it seemed like an obvious choice to me.

LEGO has been around for over 80 years, and in the last decade or so it has seen a big revival. Why do you think that this fairly simple children's toy has been so successful, both as a product and as a way of fostering creativity among children and adults?

I don't think there's one direct reason for LEGO's massive popularity. Rather, it is a combination of things. One reason is that LEGO itself is an ingenious invention. Everyone can become a builder or engineer right in their own bedroom and create their own domains with these little plastic bricks. I've also heard LEGO bricks described as combining the fun of painting and putting together a puzzle, without the negatives of either.

In this book you put together a team of both builders and historians to create the images and write about medieval England. What was that process like?

It was an exciting process. We had contributors with a variety of backgrounds from over six countries spanning three continents, and bringing them all together was a fun



continents, and bringing them all together was a fun challenge. During the whole journey, the contributors' passion for both the subject and teaching it to others never ceased to amaze me. They saw my vision and helped me accomplish it selflessly. Their passion was inspiring to me then and still is today.

You can learn more about Medieval LEGO from No Starch Press

Click [here](#) to visit Greyson Beights's website



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