

The Medieval Magazine

Volume 2 Number 18

May 30, 2016

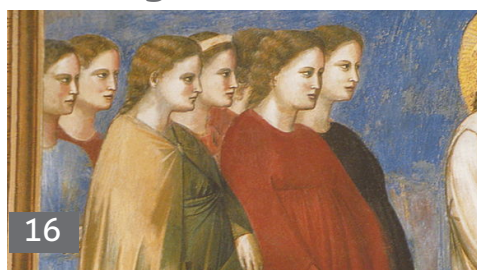


Jeanne de Valois, Queen of France

Mapping the Black Death



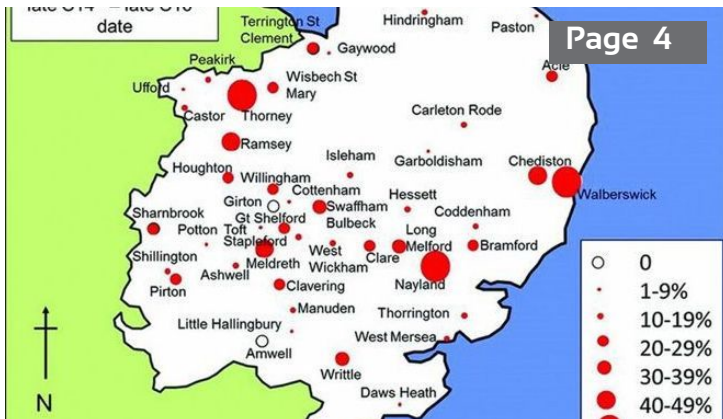
Medieval Advice for Pregnant Women



Medieval Magic Tricks



Medicine or Magic: Viking Age Health Care



New research maps the devastation of the Black Death on medieval England

An innovative new archaeological study has revealed in detail for the first time how individual towns, villages and hamlets across swathes of medieval England were decimated by the Black Death.



Why St Thomas Becket's elbow still matters in the 21st century

A small piece of **bone** thought to belong to **St Thomas Becket** is, after centuries of exile in Hungary, returning to Canterbury Cathedral where the archbishop was murdered in 1170



Medieval Advice for Pregnant Women and Their Friends

Of all the events in human life, pregnancy is perhaps the one most prone to superstition.



Jeanne de Valois, Queen of France and Duchess of Berri

Jeanne de Valois was the daughter, sister, and wife of kings. She was born with disabilities and suffered through a miserable marriage. In the end she became devoted to and died in a religious life, eventually becoming a saint.

Table of Contents

- 4 New research maps the devastation of the Black Death on medieval England
- 6 Archaeologists will be in demand in the UK, report finds
- 8 Strathclyde study identifies descendants of medieval Scottish king
- 10 Centuries Come to Life at Dumbarton Castle
- 12 Why St Thomas Becket's elbow still matters in the 21st century
- 15 Getting Crusaded: History and the Targets of Medieval Holy War
- 16 Medieval Advice for Pregnant Women and Their Friends
- 19 How young William Marshal was saved from being catapulted into a castle
- 22 Medieval Magic Tricks
- 26 Medicine or Magic: Viking Age Health Care
- 28 Jeanne de Valois, Queen of France and Duchess of Berri
- 32 Shakespeare In Ten Acts at the British Library
- 36 Book Excerpt: A Year in the Life of Medieval England

THE MEDIEVAL MAGAZINE

Editor: Peter Konieczny

Website: www.medievalists.net

This digital magazine is published each Monday.

Cover Photo: St. Jeanne de Valois, copy after the gothic original. Porch of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, Paris. Photo: © Marie-Lan Nguyen / Wikimedia Commons / CC-BY 3.0

New research maps the devastation of the Black Death on medieval England

An innovative new archaeological study has revealed in detail for the first time how individual towns, villages and hamlets across swathes of medieval England were decimated by the Black Death.

The research, led by Professor Carenza Lewis from the University of Lincoln, UK, drew together data on finds from thousands of test pits excavated in rural locations across the East of England over the past decade.

Using pottery sherds as a proxy for the presence of human populations, Professor Lewis calculated the drop-off in finds after England was struck by the plague epidemic which killed millions of people across Europe and Asia between 1346 and 1351.

The stark results, published in the journal *Antiquity*, indicate 'eye-watering' falls in population within rural communities which are still inhabited today and generally regarded as 'survivors' of the Black Death. The new data reveal which places were most severely hit by plague, from the level of individual plots and parishes up to whole towns and counties.

In some locations, such as Binham in Norfolk, Cottenham in Cambridgeshire, Shillington in Bedfordshire, and Great Amwell in Hertfordshire, catastrophic declines exceed 70 per cent.

Data was gathered from more than 2,000 one-metre square test-pits excavated by members of the public under professional archaeological supervision between 2005 and 2014 across the six counties of eastern England. These spanned 55 different rural settlements which are inhabited today (deserted medieval villages were deliberately excluded from the study). Of those 55 locations, 90 per cent recorded a decline in the number of test pits yielding two or more sherds.

Overall there was a decline of 45 per cent in pottery finds between the high medieval (early twelfth to early fourteenth centuries) and the late medieval period (late fourteenth

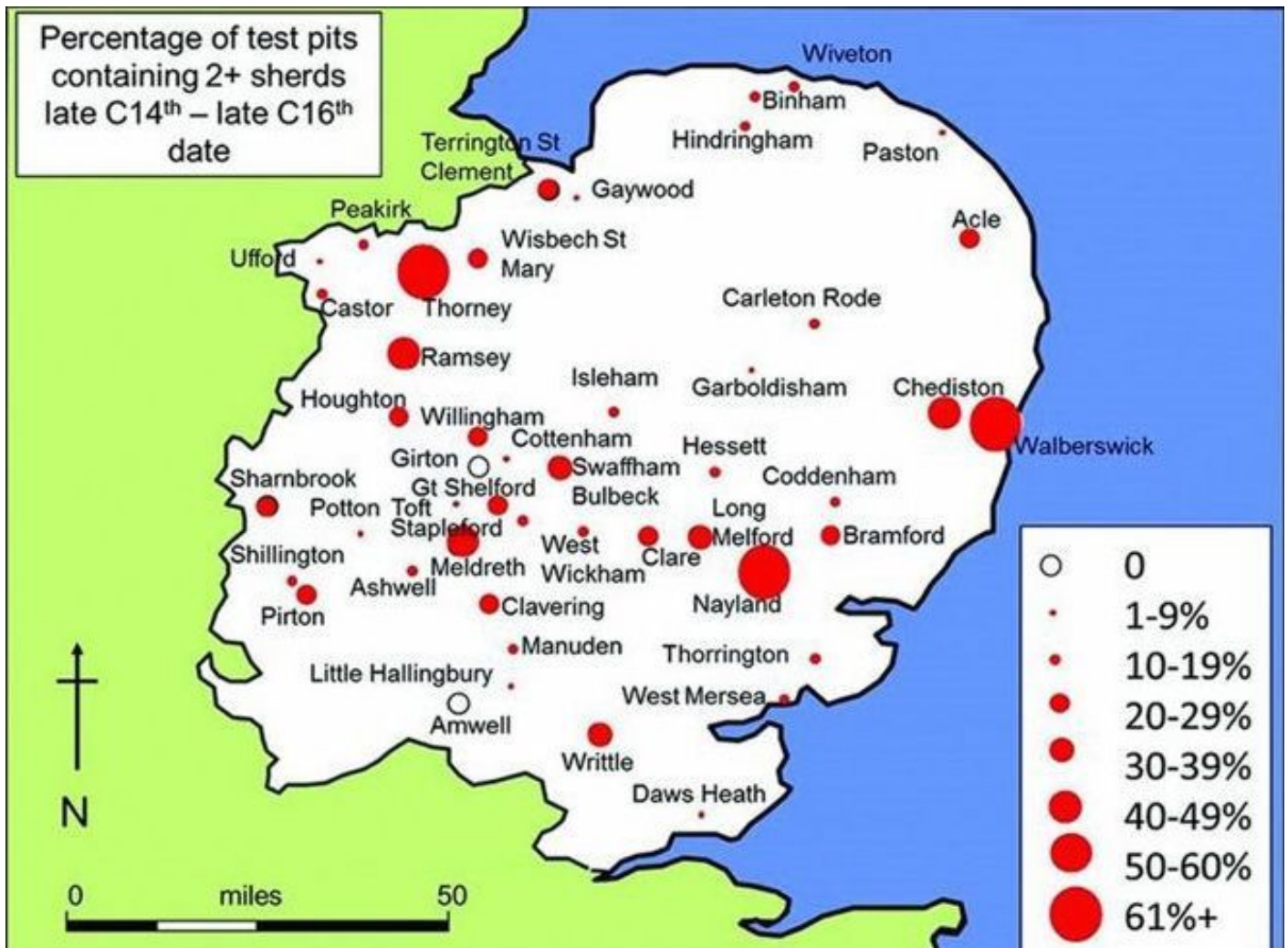


Image courtesy University of Lincoln

to late sixteenth centuries) across the area studied.

Professor Carenza Lewis, an archaeologist and Professor for the Public Understanding of Research in the School of History & Heritage at the University of Lincoln, said: "The true scale of devastation wrought by the Black Death in England during the 'calamitous' fourteenth century has been a topic of much debate among historians and archaeologists. Recent studies have led to mortality estimates being revised upwards but the discussion remains hampered by a lack of consistent, reliable and scalable population data for the period.

"This new research offers a novel solution to that evidential challenge, using finds of pottery – a highly durable indicator of human presence - as a proxy for population change in a manner that is both scalable and

replicable. It shows that pottery use fell by almost a half in eastern England in the centuries immediately after the Black Death. This supports the emerging consensus that the population of England remained somewhere between 35 and 55 per cent below its pre-Black Death level well into the sixteenth century.

"Just as significantly, this new research suggests there is an almost unlimited reservoir of new evidence capable of revealing change in settlement and demography still surviving beneath today's rural parishes, towns and villages – anyone could excavate, anywhere in the UK, Europe or even beyond, and discover how their community fared in the aftermath of the Black Death."

Archaeologists will be in demand in the UK, report finds

The United Kingdom is set to see a surge in major infrastructure projects with more than 40 planned across the country over the next 17 years. A new report from Historic England published this month has revealed there will not be enough trained archaeologists to deal with the exploratory excavations that must take place before any construction starts.

Three thousand people are currently employed in commercial archaeology in England. This will need to grow by a minimum of 25% over the next six years to meet demand. Existing routes for qualifications are unlikely to deliver enough people in the timescale, so Historic England is working with partners in the sector to put new approaches in place to meet demand.

Historic England will work with universities and others to promote field academies and vocational training. Major archaeological employers are working together to set up apprenticeships in key skills, and archaeological field schools to produce specifically trained graduates, especially as

excavators on digs. These schools will follow the model of the Crossrail and HS2 engineering academies.

Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive at Historic England said: "The pool of trained archaeologists can't grow fast enough to meet this upturn in demand without co-ordinated action from Historic England and partners in the heritage sector. We're addressing the issues found in our foresight report by putting creative, practical and achievable actions in place well ahead of time to fill the gap. Put simply, more spade work is needed, and this calls for us to think hard about how we can offer a new generation routes into the profession."

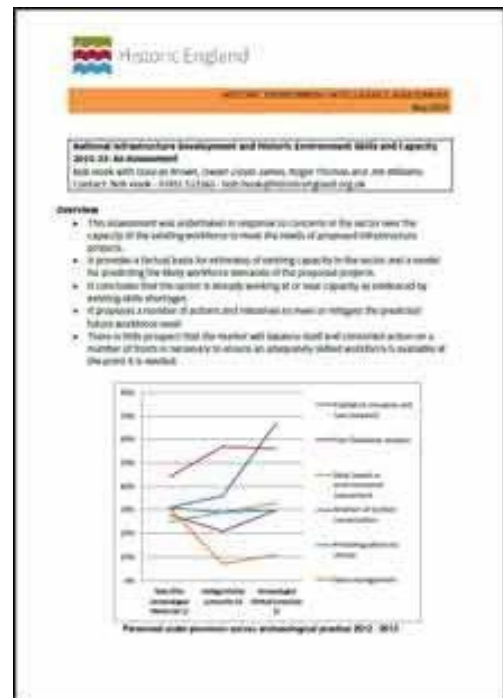


The planned infrastructure projects highlighted in the report cover roads, rail, local transport, aviation, ports, energy and communications including the A303/A30/A358 corridor; A14 upgrade in Cambridge, Hinckley Point and the Thames Tideway Tunnel. While most projects will be taking place up to 2021, housing development should provide employment for archaeologists up to at least 2030.

Archaeological requirements became a condition of planning permission for new developments 25 years ago. The policy, which makes archaeology part of the planning and development process, greatly reduces the risks of disruption from unexpected discoveries. It also ensures that remarkable finds and what they reveal about our past are saved from destruction.

Kate Geary, Standards Development Manager at the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists said: "We welcome the publication of this report which provides an important analysis of the implications of the National Infrastructure Programme for the historic environment sector. We look forward to working with Historic England and sector partners to build on existing initiatives

to increase capacity and support the development of a skilled, accredited workforce in order to increase our understanding of the historic environment and maximise the benefits it brings to society."



You can read the report at Historic England website

Strathclyde study identifies descendants of medieval Scottish king

A DNA sample provided by a businessman has confirmed him as a descendant of a medieval king of Scotland.

DNA tests undertaken as part of a study led by the University of Strathclyde, proved that Archie Shaw Stewart is in the family line of King Robert III, who reigned from 1390 until his death in 1406. It has also led to the discovery of a distinct genetic marker for descendants of King Robert III.

Mr Shaw Stewart is directly descended from one of the king's sons, Sir John Stewart of Blackhall & Ardgowan. Sir John's great-grandfather Walter Stewart, was one of the commanders for King Robert I – also known as Robert the Bruce – at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 and went on to marry his daughter.

Mr Shaw Stewart was confirmed as a descendant and was also found to be a carrier of a distinct genetic marker which has not been found in descendants of Robert III's brothers. This is particularly significant as it means that anyone who carries this marker is also descended from Robert III.

The findings have been made as part of the Bannockburn Family History Project, which explores genetic connections between people living today and their ancestors who fought in the Battle. It is run by the Genealogical Studies Postgraduate Programme at Strathclyde's Centre for Lifelong Learning.

Graham Holton, Principal Tutor with the programme, said: "This is a fascinating discovery of a distinct marker for descendants of Robert III.

"The marker is not found in descendants of the king's brothers, showing that a mutation in the DNA occurred in either Robert III himself or one of his descendants. It is not yet known in which generation this took place but we are delighted to have been able to confirm Archie Shaw Stewart's place in medieval royal lineage, and acknowledge his contribution to furthering research into the branches of the Stewarts."

**16th century image of
King Robert III and his
wife Annabella
Drummond - National
Library of Scotland Adv.
MS.31.4.2, fol.11r.**



Mr Shaw Stewart, who runs Scottish electronics company Pan Controls, said: "This is wonderful to be able to discriminate with a high level of confidence between some branches of families by the ability to trace genetic mutations.

"My great uncle, Patrick Shaw Stewart, produced an extensive family tree over 100 years ago, extending back to Robert III. He would be very satisfied to see this part of it – Stewart - verified by new technology."

Donald Stewart, a retired mechanical engineering draughtsman from Lanark, who also carries the marker, said: "I turned to DNA

testing when my genealogy research ran out of documentation and I hit a brick wall. My brick wall was John Stewart, tenant farmer on the Duke of Argyll's estate at High Park, Kintyre, from 1710. This discovery, without doubt, confirms tradition and links my High Park family to King Robert III. It has been so worthwhile."

Initial findings from the Project were shown at the Battle of Bannockburn Family History Project Exhibition, held at the Bannockburn Visitor Centre in 2014. Further information on the Project can be seen at <http://www.strathgenealogy.org.uk>

Centuries Come to Life at Dumbarton Castle

The Rock of Ages returns for a second year in celebration of the 2016 Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design

More than 100 costumed performers will descend on Dumbarton Castle in Scotland this weekend (4th - 5th June) for The Rock of Ages. Now in its second year, this multi-period extravaganza – the only one of its kind on the west coast of Scotland - will bring ten centuries of Scottish history to life in a series of demonstrations and displays.

The Rock of Ages event will welcome a colourful cast of characters from Dumbarton's history, from the Norse King Olaf the White, to English Knight Sir Marmaduke Tweng. New for 2016, the event will also see a regiment of Roman soldiers, who guarded the nearby Antonine Wall nearly 2000 years ago.

For over 1,000 years, Dumbarton Castle has witnessed many social, technological and other changes. As one of the oldest strongholds in Scotland, the castle and the

volcanic rock it stands on have a long and varied history filled with Vikings, nobles and military campaigns.

Fran Caine, Assistant Events Manager for Historic Environment Scotland, said: "We're thrilled to be back at Pier Park for the second time with The Rock of Ages, which is once again shaping up to be a great family day out.

"As 2016 is Scotland's year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, we've got a new addition to the programme in the form of a fashion show. Our performers will be exploring the evolution of weaponry, technology, craft and clothing of the past 1,000 years at Dumbarton Castle and rock, bringing these to life for visitors. We'll have demonstrations from Vikings, Medieval and Renaissance figures, Covenanters, and new for this year the Antonine Guard.



As well as witnessing demonstrations from a range of performers, visitors will be able to follow a path through the living history camp, from the Romans who guarded the nearby Antonine wall in AD145 to the late medieval period when a rebellious earl attempted to take the castle, to the 20th century and the Second World War.

David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland Regional Director said, "Scotland's 2016 Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design is shining a spotlight on some of Scotland's greatest assets, as well as its unique hidden gems."

There will also be a craft and traditional skills area where visitors can get hands on with skills such as stone carving, with badge making and other crafts for younger audience

members. Conservation experts from Historic Environment Scotland will be on hand to explain how skills used as far back as the medieval period are still relevant today.

The Rock of Ages takes place at the Pier Park and Dumbarton Castle on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th June from 12pm to 4.30pm. Tickets are priced at £9.00 for adults, £7.00 for concessions, £5.00 for children (5-15 years old) and free to under 5s. This event is free for Historic Scotland Members.

**For more details about his event, please visit
<http://bestdaysever.co.uk/rockofages/>**

Why St Thomas Becket's elbow still matters in the 21st century

By Naomi Howell

A small piece of bone thought to belong to St Thomas Becket is, after centuries of exile in Hungary, returning to Canterbury Cathedral where the archbishop was murdered in 1170. Encased in a dazzling modern reliquary, the bone will be displayed in several Catholic and Protestant churches on its way to Canterbury. Venerating medieval saintly relics such as this may seem quite unusual in these days of the modern Anglican Church, and one might wonder why anyone today should care about an 850-year-old bone.

Almost from the day he was cut down in the cathedral by four knights acting on behalf of Henry II, the martyred Becket was the most famous saint in England. Canterbury became the most popular site of pilgrimage in the land, with untold numbers of pilgrims travelling to pray before the shrine of what Chaucer later called this "holy blissful martyr". What might have been a source of national humiliation – the murder of a

leading clergyman at the apparent behest of the monarch – became instead a source of national pride.

Saints Then

Though the medieval English Church was then part of Catholic Christendom, there was always a special pride (and profit) in homegrown saints. Among the most



venerated were St Alban, the first saint martyred on British soil, by the Romans in the 2nd or 3rd century AD; St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, buried in Durham Abbey; St Edward the Confessor, the Anglo-Saxon king whose shrine still dominates Westminster Abbey, and St Wulfstan, the last Anglo-Saxon bishop of Worcester before the Norman invasion. But in his standing as a saint and focus of pilgrimage, Becket was greater than any of these.

But this status provided no protection for his remains during the Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries, during which monasteries, abbeys, saintly shrines and holy relics were abolished, torn down or destroyed. The only survivors were the shrines of Edward the Confessor and the obscure St Wita in Whitchurch Canonorum, Dorset. While some saints' bodies were removed from their shrines and given anonymous burials within the church, as Thomas had rebelled against his king he was the target of particular wrath by Henry VIII's commissioners. The fate of his bones and relics remains mysterious, although contemporary reports claimed they were burned and scattered to the winds.

Saints today

Since the Reformation, the Anglican Church has maintained an ambiguous, ambivalent attitude toward traditional saints – celebrating their feast days, but declining to pray to them or grant them any special status. No saints have been added to the calendar. The veneration of saints' relics has always been viewed with considerable suspicion as something medieval, distinctly Catholic, superstitious, and not least, in poor taste.

Yet it seems the Church of England today is willing to accommodate saintly relics and the range of beliefs about them from Christians of various denominations. In 2002, a shoulder-blade purported to be St Alban's was returned to the saint's home cathedral having been housed for centuries in a German monastery. Durham Cathedral has invested millions in a new exhibition centre in which to display the relics of St Cuthbert, opening in July. In Wales, the shrine of St David was restored and rededicated in 2012

For some, respectful re-interment of British bodies – especially saintly ones – goes hand-in-hand with burying the hatchet with what



The martyrdom of St Thomas Becket turned him into a cause célèbre, much to the annoyance of the king. Book of Hours/British Library

went on during the Reformation. And it is perhaps this more secular age that has made this more possible than ever.

In a sermon delivered in 2010, the Dean of St Albans gave eloquent expression to the Church's evolving attitude toward relics:

Well, ultimately of course it doesn't matter; but I am still very glad and grateful [Alban's relic] is there. For Christians and for human beings in general bodies matter, and location matters. In the Incarnation God became flesh and blood to save us at a particular time and at a particular place... [M]ost of us will still cling on to some material link with the person that's gone – a photograph, a ring, a lock of hair, a memento that may be meaningless to someone who doesn't know, but which may open floodgates of loving memory to the person left behind.

There are no doubt some who fear that the return of Becket's bone to Canterbury will open the floodgates of medieval superstition. But the real significance of this event is not bound up with the theological

niceties of relic-worship, or even with Thomas Becket. The re-homing of relics (the technical term is "translation") is a way of making peace with the past, reintegrating estranged parts of our own history.

It also serves an important diplomatic function, just as it did in the Middle Ages. For the president of Hungary, whose government is often accused of looking east rather than west, the return of Becket's bone provides a means of affirming the value of European links. For the British establishment, on the verge of the EU referendum, this demonstration of European harmony and cooperation is equally significant.

Naomi Howell is an Associate Research Fellow in Medieval Studies, University of Exeter

This article was first published in The Conversation

Getting Crusaded: History and the Targets of Medieval Holy War



The study of the Crusades, that sequence of papally-sponsored holy wars against various enemies of the Church, has never been more exciting. These movements are part of the warp and weft of medieval history, and yet (rightly or wrongly) weigh heavily upon the modern and contemporary imagination. And yet, for all that, even the best-intentioned histories of the Crusades tend to be descendants of the same flattering tales told by supporters of the crusades since the Middle Ages, rooted solidly in a “Crusader’s-eye” version of these events. What happens when we consider these events from the perspective of the “crusaded” rather than the crusaders? How does listening to the targets of medieval holy war, on every shore of the Mediterranean, help us to understand this central aspect of European history?

Paul M. Cobb, Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at University of Pennsylvania, is a social and cultural historian of the pre-modern Islamic world. His areas of interest include the history of memory, historiography, Islamic relations with the West, and travel and exploration. He is, in particular, a recognized authority on the history of the medieval Levant and of the Crusades in their Islamic context. His newest book is *The Race for Paradise: An Islamic History of the Crusades* (Oxford 2013)

Medieval Advice for Pregnant Women and Their Friends

By Danièle Cybulskie

Of all the events in human life, pregnancy is perhaps the one most prone to superstition. From the moment a woman announces her pregnancy, she is bombarded with folk wisdom as to how to tell the sex of the child, how to make sure it's in perfect health, and how to ensure it will grow up to be a brilliant member of the community. Here are five pearls of wisdom from the fifteenth-century French collection of women's advice, *The Distaff Gospels* (as always, I saved my favourite for last).

1. How to tell if a woman is pregnant.

Nowadays, we use urine-based pregnancy tests. Turns out, medieval people did, too:

If you want to know if a woman is pregnant, you must ask her to pee in a basin and then put a latch or a key in it... leave this latch in the basin with the urine for three or four hours. Then throw the urine away and remove the latch. If you see the impression of the latch on the basin, be sure that the woman is pregnant. (pp.189-191)

Apparently, a latch works better than a key, but I have a feeling a key would have been a lot easier to sneak into a pregnancy test.



Detail from Wedding Procession from Model of Cappella degli Scrovegni (Padua) by Giotto di Bondone

2. How to tell the sex of the child: the more obvious way.

We still look at how women are carrying, as well as what they eat, to make guesses as to the sex of the child. For medieval people, this was coupled with something a bit less subtle:

When a pregnant woman carries her child more on her right side, and she likes eating venison and poultry, and enjoys hearing about tournaments and jousts, you should know for certain that she will have a son. (p.145)

Likewise, “when the woman carries on the left side and enjoys dances and music, she will have a girl” (p.145). Sounds to me like there were probably a whole lot of music-loving women repeatedly regaled with tournament stories while eating venison during their pregnancies.

3. How to tell the sex of the child: the more mysterious way.

For those medieval friends who enjoyed the more mystical way of tricking their friends into revealing the sex of their babies, there was this method:

...sprinkle salt on [the mother’s] head while she is sleeping, so gently that she is unaware of it. When she wakes, note what name she says first. If she says a man’s name, it will be a boy and if she says a woman’s name it will be a girl. (p.85)

Imagine the leading conversations the poor pregnant woman would have had in the morning while her friends stared awkwardly at her! It might have been better to use the more direct method: tell her you think she’s carrying a boy, and if she doesn’t blush, she’s having a girl (p.145). It’s as simple as that.

4. How to prevent birthmarks.

Everyone knows that pregnant women have cravings. Just make sure that whatever food you’re talking about is within easy reach:

God and reason forbid talking with any pregnant woman, or even any married woman of childbearing age, about any food which cannot immediately be obtained if needed, so that her baby will not have a mark on its body. (p.95)

Birthmarks may also be caused “if cherries, strawberries or red wine are thrown in the face of a pregnant woman” (p.95), so it’s probably a good idea not to try it, just in case.

5. How to draw a blade on a pregnant woman.

Forget about the fact that having a naked blade around a pregnant woman might be a little unnerving for her: it’s important to keep it sheathed because you may otherwise make her son a coward. There is a safe and simple way to manage it, however. Just bonk the pregnant woman on the head with your sword.

I warn you never to hold an unsheathed sword or any other sharp object in the presence of a pregnant woman unless you gently touch her head first with the flat blade of the sword so that she remains calm and that her son will be brave for the rest of his life. (p.93)

Remember, kids: it’s only okay to approach a pregnant lady with a drawn sword as long as you intend to tap it on the top of her head.

For more pregnancy tips, as well as advice on every other subject, check out The Distaff Gospels in this great new translation.

How young William Marshal was saved from being catapulted into a castle

William Marshal was called the “best knight that ever lived.” Born in 1147, he served four kings — Henry II, Richard the Lionheart, John, and Henry III — and rose in the ranks to become the Earl of Pembroke and one of the most powerful men in England. But all this might not have happened, if he wasn’t saved from being catapulted at his father’s castle when he was just four or five years old.

We know a great deal about William Marshal, not only from the usual chroniclers and letters from the period, but from a history of his own life, written at the request of William’s son around 1226. *The History of William Marshal* is greatly admired by historians for the fascinating view of knighthood and warfare during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. From 2002 to 2006 the Anglo-Norman Text Society produced an edition and English translation of this medieval biography (the three-volume work is hard to get a copy of, but well worth the read).

David Crouch, one of the leading scholars on William Marshal, explains that while this account generally portrays William as a hero, he also includes stories of embarrassing defeats and even times when William was

made of a fool of. The author, Crouch writes, “endeavoured to compile the fullest life possible of his difficult subject and constructed it deliberately as a chronological narrative to tell the story his patrons most desired: the story of an old man they had loved and who had earned their love, a man who had risen through devoted service and his political and military talents to the rule of a kingdom, and who, in ruling it, could claim to have saved from dispossession its royal dynasty.”

One of the first stories included in the *History of William Marshal* goes back to the reign of King Stephen (1135-1154), which war marred by a civil war with the Empress Matilda. William’s father, John Marshal



William Marshal at a joust unhorses Baldwin Guisnes. From the *Historia Major* of Matthew Paris

originally supported King Stephen and was a close advisor, but then after a few years switched sides. In 1152, Stephen was besieging John at Newbury Castle, when the two sides agreed on a truce. The English king demanded that John send him a hostage to secure his promise that he would surrender the castle, and nobleman sent his fourth son, William, to the enemy camp.

However, it soon became clear that Newbury Castle would not be surrendered. What would now become of the young boy? King Stephen could have him executed, and threats that would happen were sent to John. According to the History of William Marshal:

*Word came of this to his father,
but he said that he did not care
about the child, since he still had
the anvils and hammers
to produce even finer ones.*

This callous remark spurred the besiegers to bring William to outside the castle, where they prepared to execute him. As they did so the young boy, ignorant to what was happening asked to play with the Earl of Arundel's javelin. The King could not continue with the pretence of an execution, telling

William, "I'll spare you this torture, you can be sure you won't die here now."

However, the King's supporters convinced him to have the boy put into a type of trebuchet, so he could be catapulted against the castle's walls. *The History of William Marshal* states:

*The child, too young to have much
understanding of events,
was led away towards the catapult.
When he saw the catapult's sling,
he took a step back,
and said, "Gracious me! What a swing!
It would be a good idea for me to have a
swing on it."
He went right up to the sling*

For a second time, Stephen decided he could not go through with it. He shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Anyone who could even allow him to die in such agony would certainly have a very cruel heart."

Then the scene plays out again a third time – here William was placed hanging over a siege machine and brought back to the castle. One of Stephen's men shouted to John Marshall, "Lord constable, show yourself. Here's your

lord's son; he's going to die now in great pain, because we're going to put him on that frame."

"Is that a promise?" John asked. When they replied yes, the father replied, "Right then, so he'll die, I swear! I'll tell you this: the only present he'll get is to be squashed to a pulp like a drum skin. This trick of yours won't get you anywhere, you're going to see him die right now."

With that he had his troops hurl down a large millstone at the besiegers. Little William, still hanging there asked what kind of toy this was. Again, this broke the will of King Stephen, who burst out laughing and said, "William, a toy like that would be no good at all for you. To do you any harm would be a great shame because you haven't done anything wrong. I shall spare you toys such as this, you'll never die at my hands."

After this third attempt, King Stephen took William back to his own tent and made sure he would not be harmed. The History of William Marshal adds that they even played a game, in which the boy collected flowers and they played 'knights' with them – somehow William always won. Eventually he was returned back to his father.

Historians have wondered about the episode, even questioning if it really happened (no other source but the History of William Marshal records it). Most have concluded that even if the story has some embellishments, in part because if it was based on tale told by William himself, it was for the most part true.

Other historians have focused on the actions of King Stephen, on whether or not he should have killed his hostage. Georges Duby writes "I am personally convinced that no one on either side believed that anyone would go all the way, to the point of execution." Meanwhile, another biographer of William Marshal, Sidney Painter, finds that this story shows why King Stephen wasn't considered a good king – he was too nice and unwilling to make the harsh, if unsavory decisions.

Luckily for William and us, the English boy grew up to become one of the most famous knights of the Middle Ages.

A new translation of The History of William Marshal by Nigel Bryant will be published by Boydell and Brewer later this year . For more details visit:

<https://boydellandbrewer.com/the-history-of-william-marshall-hb.html>

Medieval Magic Tricks

“Let us begin then with a positive view of medieval people, imagining them not as trembling in the face of a universe filled with occult and dangerous forces, but rather as men and women of a lively and playful spirit, fascinated by the inexhaustible riches of nature, whether they be visible or invisible, favourable to mankind or the reverse, serious, or simply light and amusing.” ~ Bruno Roy, in his article ‘The Household Encyclopedia as Magic Kit: Medieval Popular Interest in Pranks and Illusions’

The Middle Ages are thought to be an age of wizards and magic. Medieval stories are filled with men like Merlin or saints who could perform incredible deeds. However, even medieval people liked the simpler magical tricks – how to make an apple roll around by itself; a dead fish to jump out of the frying pan; turn a white rose into a red one; or have a candle where the flame could not be blown out.

A few books from the Middle Ages can tell us more about these magic tricks, such as the *Secretum philosophorum*, which was written by an anonymous author at the beginning of the fourteenth-century. At the beginning it explains “there are contained in it certain secrets which, by vulgar opinion, are impossible, but which philosophers consider to be necessary and secrets. Now, contained in this book are the secrets of all the arts.”

While the *Secretum philosophorum* might sound to be very mysterious, a modern reader might find it to be more a medieval version of *The Dangerous Book for Boys* – it contains all sorts of fun stuff, like how to make different colours of ink, riddles, and creating scientific experiments like how to make a soap bubble. The anonymous author even creates simple cyphers for to disguise a few words, so that his reader will have to figure it out.

The *Secretum philosophorum* even has a section where he talks about the senses can be deceived, and explains how to do a series of medieval magic tricks that the reader do for fun – a trick to show off for friends.



The Conjurer by Hieronymus Bosch

Here are a few of these medieval magic tricks:

To Give Water the Colour and Taste of Wine

The same can be done in another way, so that the water appears to be turned into wine, and this experiment is used by those conmen who wander about like pilgrims through the whole world; by this experiment many are convinced that God turns their water into wine. For, they take scraps of bread and put them in the wine which is called *vin râpé*, the wine which those sell wine use to colour the wines which have lost their colour. Now, when the scraps of bread have been well soaked in the said *vin râpé*, they dry them in the sun and carry them with them in their jewellery. And when they come to someone's house, they say that they eat nothing but bread and water, and they ask for the bread and water, and they break the bread into pieces and put some of the said scraps into the water. And straight away the water takes on the colour and flavour of wine, and so it is thought by many that this is a miracle.

To make a burning mirror

When you want to make a burning mirror, take an ordinary mirror and scrape off the lead from the concave side. Next, take some tin foil and fit it to the size of the mirror, and put it on the convex side of the mirror. But first rub the foil with quicksilver – very carefully, because if it is not carefully rubbed, when it is soaked with quicksilver it tends to tear easily. Having done this, fit it to the mirror. Then put this mirror into a box turning the concavity outwards. In it there will appear an image which is very ugly because of its very large size. Now, when you want to burn with it, hold the mirror against the rays of the sun and put something combustible between the mirror and the sun in the place where the first point appears from the reflection from the sun. And after a short time, you will see the combustible material catch on fire.

Deceptions of the sight

Now, the sight is often deceived because it cannot perceive something on account of its smallness, as is seen in the tricks of jugglers, for instance: Take a fine hair from a woman's head. Next, take an egg and empty it through a small hole, and then join the hair to the hole in the egg. Then the egg can be moved around your head by holding the other end of the hair in your hand. And no one will see the hair because of its smallness. And by the said hair you can hang the egg in your house and it will be thought by many to hang from nothing.

To free hands tied behind the back

And they do another trick, and they free their hands which are tied behind them, and this is how it is done. They take a little knife and they hide it in some corner of the house, under the straw. Next, when their hands have been tied behind them, they go to the place where the knife was hidden and they take it in one hand and cut the cord by which their hands were tied, and they stand close to the wall with their back turned to the wall, and they do this so that their trick cannot be discovered.

So that cooked meat may appear raw

Take the blood of some young animal and dry it in the sun, and make it into powder. Later, when the meat is cooked and hot, sprinkle onto it some of the said powder, and straight away that powder will liquefy into blood and the meat will appear raw.

So that cooked meat will appear to be full of worms

Take the string of a lyre and cut it into little pieces and keep them. Then, when you want to perform the deed, throw some of the said pieces onto the warm cooked meat, and they will move on the meat and they will look like wriggling worms. Wash the meat and it will not be spoiled at all, and do this with meat which has been made to appear raw.

On the appearance of a coin in a dish

Another experiment concerning sight. Take a dish and put a coin in it. Then move yourself away from the dish, so that you cannot see the coin in it. Next, let it be filled with clear water

and at the distance where earlier you could not see the coin before the water was poured in, now, after the water is poured in you will see it very well, which seems very marvellous

So that someone may appear to burn, but nothing is in fact generated except terror

When you want to frighten someone. Take some incense and crush it into a fine powder on a piece of marble. And take some of the said powder and hold it in the palm of your hand, and put a candle between your fingers, near the powder, and hurl your hand towards someone's face as if throwing something so that powder penetrates the candle flame, and his whole face will catch on fire and he will be thought to be burning, although the fire will not hurt him at all.

So that a cross turns by itself

Take a small oatplant and take its stalk, and make a small cross out of wax, and put the said stalk of the oatplant in the foot of the cross, exceeding the foot of the cross by half a finger so that the thicker part of the stalk is outside. Next, take a ball of wax and make whole right through it with the point of your pen. Then, moistening the point with saliva so that all of the hole can be filled with saliva, put the stalk of the oatplant which exceeds the foot of the cross into the said hole. And it will be thought by many that this is done by the magical art. Pretend that you know, by means of this experiment, whether someone is a virgin or not, so something else of that type, so that the trick is not discovered.

To make invisible ink

There is another method of writing letters, that cannot be read without the use of fire, and this is how. Take sal ammoniac [ammonium chloride] and mix it with water and write what you want with it on paper. When it dries, nothing will appear to be there. Then make a dot with ink by the part where you have written that it may be a boundary to you [so you can see where the invisible writing is]. When you want to read it, then place the part of that is marked by the dot against the fire and when it is very well heated the letters will appear very well. And you may with this method very well send letters to someone secretly.

You can find more medieval magic tricks from the *Secretum philosophorum* in an English translation from these two articles:

Robert Goulding, 'Deceiving the Senses in the Thirteenth Century: Trickery and Illusion in the Secretum philosophorum' *Magic and the Classical Tradition*, edited by Charles Burnett and W.F. Ryan (London: Warburg Institute, 2006)

Mark Clarke, 'Writing recipes for non-specialists c.1300: the Anglo-Latin Secretum philosophorum, Glasgow MS Hunterian 110', *Sources and Serendipity: Testimonies of Artists' Practice*, edited by Erma Hermens and Joyce Townsend (London: Archetype Publications, 2009)

Medicine or Magic: Viking Age Health Care

What do we know about medical practices from Viking-Age Scandinavia? This topic is examined by Danielle Turner, a graduate student at California State University–Fullerton, who has been researching the Norse society. In a paper given earlier this month at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, she explains that like other proto-European societies, healing came from three sources - plants/herbs, surgery and magic.

Numerous sources, including sagas and medical treatises from Iceland, offer details about the use of herbs and plants to treat illnesses and injuries. These were a mixture of ancient lore, knowledge brought in from other countries, and local plant knowledge. One saga included episode where several badly wounded men were treated by a lady who boiled water, added garlic and other herbs to make a soup, which she then fed to the men. She did this to allow her to find out which wounds were still open by trying to smell the garlic coming from them.

Turner explains that “herbal cures were used for general ailments,” such as the use of celery - the vegetable was said to be good for stopping bleeding, and when crushed into juice and drank was able to calm down an angry or ill-tempered man.

There are also episodes in Icelandic literature where surgery is performed, with one major source being the saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, who was a physician of the thirteenth century. He was said to have traveled throughout Europe, learning about medicine, and may have even studied at the University of Salerno. Returning to Iceland, he was renowned as a doctor, and even

removed two kidney stones from a patient by surgery.

Turner also noted other examples of surgery in Viking-Age Scandinavia, including the removal of a deformity from a face, and that archaeologists have found surgical instruments from the period, including needles and forceps.

The final area of medicine was the use of magic, with several saga stories noting how it could be used to cause or cure injuries. For example, *Laxdæla saga* described a sword that leaves a wound that cannot be healed except by a stone the accompanies it. Meanwhile *Egil's Saga* contains an episode where the title character comes to the aid of Helga, daughter of a friend named Thorfinn, who became ill because of runes:

'We had some runes carved,' said Thorfinn. 'The son of a farmer who lives close by did it, and since she's been much worse. Do you know any remedy, Egil?'

Egil said, 'It might not do any harm if I try something.'

When Egil had eaten his fill he went to where the woman was lying and spoke to her. He ordered them to lift her out of bed and place cleansheets underneath her, and this was done. Then he examined the bed she had been lying in, and found a whalebone with runes carved on it. After reading the runes, Egil shaved them off and scraped them into the fire. He burned the whalebone and had her bedclothes aired. Then Egil spoke a verse:

*No man should carve runes
unless he can read them well;
many a man go astray
around those dark letters.
On the whalebone I saw
ten secret letters carved,
from them the linden tree
took her long harm.*

*Egil cut some runes and placed them under the
pillow of the bed where she was lying. She felt
as if she were waking from a deep sleep, and
she said she was well again, but still very weak.*

Follow Danielle Turner on
Academia.edu at:

[https://fullerton.
academia.edu/
DanielleTurner](https://fullerton.academia.edu/DanielleTurner)

The Cathedral and the Medieval City



Dr. Caroline Bruzelius gives the Plenary Address at the Sam Houston State University 2016 Medieval/Renaissance Conference, held on April 7-9, 2016

Jeanne de Valois, Queen of France and Duchess of Berri

By Susan Abernethy

Jeanne de Valois was the daughter, sister, and wife of kings. She was born with disabilities and suffered through a miserable marriage. In the end she became devoted to and died in a religious life, eventually becoming a saint.

Jeanne was known as Jeanne de France, Jeanne de Valois and Joan de France. She was born on April 23, 1464, the second daughter of King Louis XI, the Spider King and his second wife Charlotte of Savoy. While she was still an infant, a marriage was discussed between her and King Louis' second cousin, Louis, Duc d'Orleans who was a child of two at the time. The King was often away from court, administering the kingdom and he entrusted Jeanne and her older sister Anne to the care of François de Beaujeu, Seigneur de Lignière and his wife Anne de Culan for their education. The Seigneur and his wife had no children so they doted on Jeanne who suffered from a visibly hunched back. They taught the girls poetry, mathematics, genealogy, embroidery, painting and how to play the lute. Jeanne is described as having a dark and plain face and a short, deformed figure. The Seigneur would hide her behind his robes when the King was approaching them on a visit. The king would exclaim how ugly Jeanne was. As Jeanne became older, her deformities became more evident.

The tutors were deeply faithful Catholics and imparted a solid grounding in faith for their entire household. When Jeanne was very

young, King Louis asked his daughter to name the confessor she wanted assigned to her. The only name she knew was Friar Jean de La Fontaine, Guardian of the Franciscan community in Amboise. The king approved and La Fontaine became her confessor. Jeanne began to take great comfort in prayer and would spend many hours in the castle chapel. The Seigneur even had a path paved between the castle and the chapel to make the walk easier for Jeanne in poor weather. The Friar admitted Jeanne into the Third Order of the St. Francis. In 1471, King Louis required everyone in the kingdom to practice praying the "Hail Mary" in an effort to gain peace. Jeanne became fervently attached to this prayer. That same year, she wrote that the Virgin Mary gave her a prophecy that before she died, Jeanne would found a religious order in her honor.

Louis, Duc d'Orléans was the great-grandson of King Charles V and the son of Charles, Duc d'Orléans and had a claim to the French throne. When Louis was fourteen and considered of marriageable age and Jeanne was twelve, their marriage was discussed. The Duc was against the marriage and made this known to the king. King Louis threatened

A contemporary portrait of Jeanne de Valois



to make him a monk and hinted he could easily be killed in the guise of a monk's habit. The Duc finally resigned himself to the marriage but told his friends it would be a marriage in name only. Jeanne approved of the marriage but was under no illusions. She was devoted to the Duc but he paid no attention to her.

The couple's wedding celebration was performed on September 8, 1476 in Montrichard. During the ceremony the bridegroom supposedly said he would be better off dead than marrying Jeanne. After the wedding, King Louis intimidated the Duc and compelled him to visit and sleep with his wife several times a year. When the Duc once threatened to end the marriage early on, King

Louis put him in prison.

Jeanne's father died on August 30, 1483 and her mother died four months later. King Louis was succeeded by his son, now King Charles VIII. Charles was only thirteen so his sister Anne de Beaujeu became his regent and Jeanne joined the court at Amboise. Jeanne's husband Louis continually fought against Anne's regency in a conflict that was known as the "Mad War". He stayed away from Jeanne as much as possible. He fought in Italy and made some gains there. In 1488, Louis was taken prisoner by Charles' troops. While he was incarcerated, Jeanne managed his estates, especially Milan and Asti in Italy. Louis would be released in 1491 and he would join King Charles when he waged war

in Italy in 1494.

King Charles married Anne, the Duchess of Brittany in 1491. There had been many years of conflict between France and Brittany as the French kings tried to annex the Duchy into their domains. The marriage contract between Charles and Anne stipulated that if Charles died first and had no male heir to succeed him, his successor was to marry Anne of Brittany. This was meant to guarantee that the large and rich Duchy of Brittany stayed under French rule.

On April 7, 1498, King Charles was making his way to watch a tennis match through a low gallery at the castle of Amboise when he violently struck his head on the doorway. He managed to view the tennis match and even talk to his companions and wife. Suddenly he fell backwards, never to speak again. He died that evening. Jeanne's husband, Louis, Duc d'Orléans, was now King of France as Louis XII and she was his Queen. Less than three months later, Louis had applied to the Pope for an annulment of his marriage to Jeanne so he could marry Anne of Brittany, the former Queen.

Louis cited four reasons for the annulment. The first was the degree of consanguinity, the usual excuse for royal divorce. He was the second cousin of King Louis XI, Jeanne's father. Next he claimed there was a spiritual relationship. Louis XI was Louis' godfather. Third, he claimed he married Jeanne under duress. And lastly, he claimed the marriage was never consummated. Jeanne maintained there were dispensations for the first two reasons and was insistent they had sexual intercourse. In the end, the sworn testimony of a consecrated king carried great weight with the Pope and the annulment was granted on the grounds of coercion.

The powerful Cardinal Roderigo Borgia had become Pope Alexander VI in 1492. He was more than willing to give Louis his annulment but there was a price to be paid. An ersatz

trial was convened before three papal commissioners and on December 18, 1498, the annulment decree document was handed to Louis at Chinon by Cesare Borgia, the Pope's natural son. Cesare wore cloth of gold and priceless jewels and was followed by a magnificent retinue. Louis made him Duke of Valentinois in the Dauphiné, gave him a pension of 20,000 gold crowns and promised him the hand of one of his relatives. Louis was now free to marry Anne of Brittany.

Louis immediately made Jeanne Duchess of Berri which included the domains of Châtillon-sur-Indre, Châteauneuf-sur-Loire and Pontoise as well as an income of 12,000 crowns. Jeanne would use this money to pursue good works. She retired to the town of Bourges and confided to her spiritual director Gabriel Maria her call to monastic life. With his blessing and the help of the hermit François de Paule, she began to work on founding the Order of the Virgin Mary, a new enclosed religious order dedicated to the Annunciation, and an independent branch of the Poor Clares. She wore the habit of the nuns which was a grey robe, the symbol of repentance, the white cloak of purity and the red scapulary, representing the blood of Christ. She ministered to the sick and the poor and performed pious works. The hospitals, churches and colleges shared in her beneficence.

In May of 1500, the first eleven postulants arrived in Bourges and became the nucleus of the Order. She wrote the Rule of Life for the Order herself and it was approved by Pope Alexander VI on February 12, 1502 and the following year construction began on the monastery. Jeanne and Gabriel Maria took vows to follow the Rule on Pentecost Sunday, 1504, effectively making themselves co-founders of the Order.

Due to repeated penances which she inflicted on herself, Jeanne's health suffered greatly. On January 10, 1505 she wrote her

**16th century portrait of
Portrait of Jeanne de
Valois by Jehan Perréal**



will. On the 22nd, she made her last visit to the convent and then fell ill. When she died on February 4, 1505, her body was found to be covered with bruises under a hair shirt and iron chains. She had five nails embedded in her chest. She paid homage all her life to the Virgin Mary and when she died, Pope Alexander granted ten thousand days indulgence to all who said the rosary of ten aves composed by Jeanne in honor of the ten virtues of Mary which she strived to imitate: chastity, prudence, humility, faith, obedience, devotion, poverty, patience, charity, and compassion.

Louis did not grant a funeral service for Jeanne, apparently not wanting to show

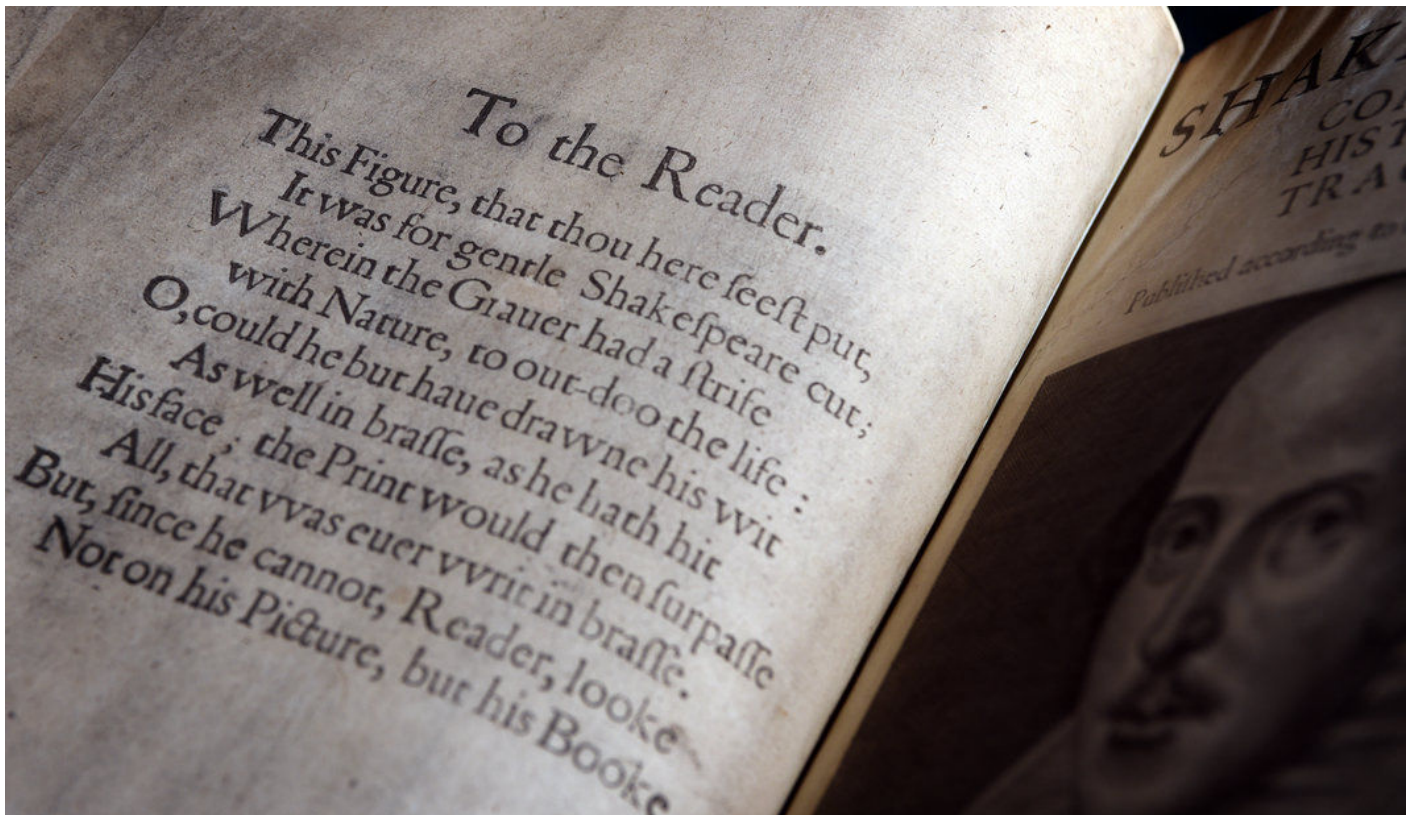
regret. She was buried in the chapel of the Annonciade monastery. Soon after her death, miracles and healings were attributed to her. In 1562, the Huguenots sacked Bourges, desecrated her grave and burned her body which had been found to be incorrupt. The opening of her beatification was started in 1632 and was granted in 1742 by Pope Benedict XIV. She was canonized on May 28, 1950. The nuns of the order of the Virgin Mary are still living according the Rule of the Order in monasteries in France, Belgium, Costa Rica and Poland and some of the sisters serve in Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Guatemala.

Susan Abernethy is the writer of *The Freelance History Writer*. You can follow her on Facebook and on Twitter: @SusanAbernethy2

Shakespeare In Ten Acts at the British Library

By Sandra Alvarez

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare (1564-1616). The British Library has honoured his contribution to English literature and the stage in a celebratory exhibition that runs until September 6th. British Library curators, Julian Harrison and Zoë Wilcox, have crafted an impressive exhibit that covers Shakespeare's importance in ten acts. From the first groundbreaking performance of Hamlet in 1600, to the the 1796 scandal of the Vortigern hoax, to the modern rendition of Twelfth Night, the exhibit spans four hundred years in the evolution of theatre, and the significant changes his plays inspired.



Shakespeare's First Folio 1623 - British Library Photo by Clare Kendall

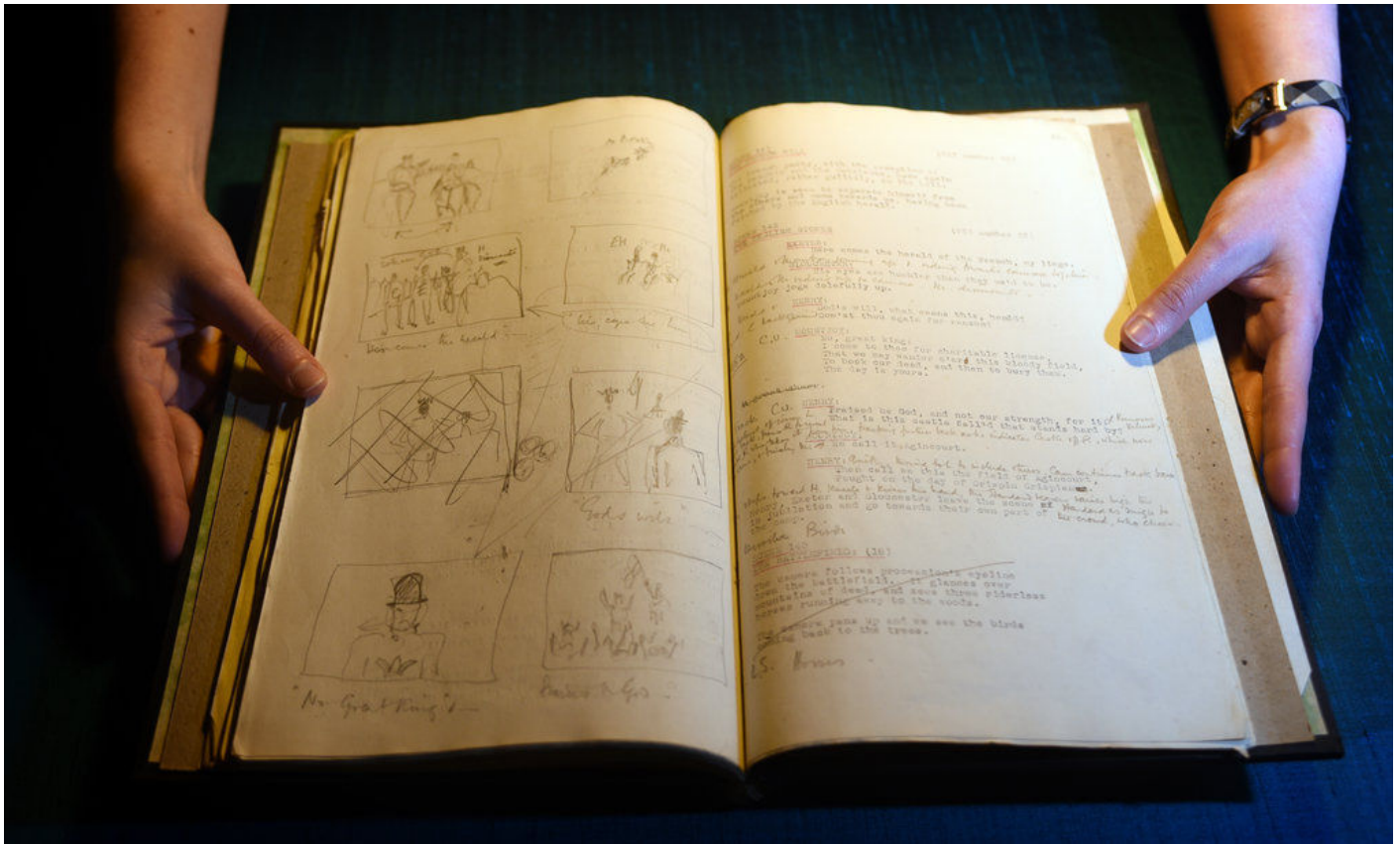
Shakespeare, called the 'upstart crow' by contemporary dramatist Robert Greene (1558-1592), acted and wrote thirty-eight plays during his lifetime. He was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon 1564, but his writing career didn't take off until his late twenties.

In addition to being an English literary giant, Shakespeare has been credited with making theatre respectable. Prior to Shakespeare's time, theatre was considered a bawdy, and disreputable pastime. Shakespeare's skill caught the eye of the nobility, and eventually Queen Elizabeth I, casting theatre-going in a new light. While theatre retained elements of its past salaciousness, it was elevated to an art and brought prominence and career opportunities to fledgling actors.

The Exhibit

Each area brings Shakespeare's world and legacy to life. The collection houses an incredible number of books, manuscripts, plays, and articles of clothing. There are over 200 unique items on display, including playhouse box office receipts, theatre property deeds, mortgage deeds, scripts and letters.

In addition to these rare items, the exhibit examines Shakespeare's influence in a section of works translated into different languages. From Mongolian to Polish, it demonstrated how Shakespeare's popularity and reach was truly global. It also looks at adaptations of his stories, such as Romeo and Juliet's modern counterpart, *West Side Story*.



Laurence Olivier's shooting script for *Henry V* in 1943 - British Library photo by Clare Kendall

The exhibit touches on Shakespeare's impact on gender roles and race in theatre culture. On December 8, 1660, a young Margaret Hughes (1630-1719) took the stage in the role of Desdemona in *Othello*. She was the first ever professional female actor to take the stage. Prior to this, women's roles were played by men and they were banned from performing because it was considered an inappropriate place for a woman. From this pivotal moment in history, the exhibit traces the rise of actresses throughout seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Another enjoyable piece to Shakespeare in Ten Acts was the focus on Ira Aldridge (1807-1867) and Paul Robeson (1898-1976). In 1825, American-born Aldridge was the first black actor to play Othello. He moved to England and had a long career on stage, but he was still viewed as a curiosity and not paid as much as fellow white actors. He travelled all over the world and performed Shakespeare's plays in places such as Russia and Germany.

The exhibit showcases among many items, one of Aldridge's German playbills. Another featured African-American actor, was Paul Robeson. He was the second black actor to play the role of Othello after Aldridge. He also moved to London to launch an acting career on stage. He was immensely popular and politically motivated to give a voice to other black actors. His contribution to theatre is immense.

Must-See Pieces

Difficult as it was to choose, there are several stand out pieces that should not be missed. The sole surviving script written in Shakespeare's hand from the 'Booke of Sir Thomas Moore'. The first folio and the earliest printed edition of Hamlet (1603). A human skull inscribed with poetry given by Victor Hugo (1802-1885) to French actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) on display in the Hamlet section of the exhibit. Bernhardt used this skull in her famous performance as Hamlet in 1899. Vivian Leigh's (1913-1967) stunning gown from her 1955 performance as Lady Macbeth.

Interactive features

The exhibit does an excellent job of meshing interactive features from film snippets, to listening stations to Shakespeare on film. One small, but nice addition, is a tablet where you can listen to different recordings of actors giving Hamlet's most famous soliloquy, To Be or not To Be, over the course of the past one hundred years. Kenneth Branagh (1988), David Tennant (2013), Samuel West (2002), Daniel Day Lewis (1989), Simon Russel Beale (2000), Lawrence Olivier (1949), and Herbert Beerbohm Tree (1906) to name but a few, are featured here.

Conclusion

Coming off the success of last year's tremendous Magna Carta exhibit, the British Library has outdone itself again and produced another historical masterpiece. Not only is this a foray into Shakespeare's life and times, but a show that encourages visitors to think about Shakespeare's contribution and influence to theatre history and global appeal over the past four hundred years. It's a must-see, spectacular exhibit for anyone visiting London before September 6th.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.bl.uk/events/shakespeare-in-ten-acts>

Book Excerpt

A Year in the Life of Medieval England

By Toni Mount

Amberley Publishing, 2016

ISBN: 9781445652399

The medieval era is often associated with dynastic struggles, gruesome wars and the formidable influence of the Church. But what about the everyday experience of the royal subjects and common people? Here, alongside the coronations, diplomatic dealings and key battles, can be found the fabric of medieval life as it was really lived, in its folk songs, recipes and local gossip. With a diverse range of entries – one for each day of the year – historian Toni Mount provides an almanac for lovers of all things medieval.

A detailed picture is gathered from original sources such as chronicles, manor court rolls, coroners' rolls and the records of city councils. We learn not only of the royals and nobles of official history but also the quarrels of a miscellany of characters, including William and Christopher of York, Nalle Kittewritte who stole her neighbours' washing, and Margery from Hereford who was murdered by an Oxford student. The world in which they laboured, loved and lived is vividly reimagined, one day at a time.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF MEDIEVAL ENGLAND



TONI MOUNT

June 1st – Summer's Arrival

With summer's arrival, it was the season of cuckoos and roses. A merry song has survived the centuries. This piece is meant to be sung in a round by four singers, each singing the same melody one after the other, each starting when the previous singer reaches

the end of the first line. While this is happening, two lower voices repeat the words 'sing cuccu'. It is lively and meant to be danced to – correctly called 'a carol'. Instructions on how to perform the song were given. It comes from a volume of mid-thirteenth-century manuscripts from

from Reading Abbey (British Library, Harley MS.978, f.12v). Below are the original Middle English words followed by the modern version.

*Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu!
Groweþ sed and bloweþ med
And springþ þe wde nu,
Sing cuccu!*

*Awe bleteþ after lomb,
Lhouþ after calue cu.
Bulluc sterteþ, bucke uerteþ,
Murie sing cuccu!
Cuccu, cuccu, wel singes þu cuccu;
Ne swik þu nauer nu.*

*Sing cuccu nu. Sing cuccu.
Sing cuccu. Sing cuccu nu!*

Modern version:

*Summer has come in,
Loudly sing, Cuckoo!
The seed grows and the meadow blooms
And the wood springs anew,
Sing, Cuckoo!*

*The ewe bleats after the lamb,
The cow lows after the calf.
The bullock stirs, the stag farts,
Merrily sing, Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo, well you sing, cuckoo;
Don't you ever stop now.*

*Sing cuckoo now. Sing, Cuckoo.
Sing Cuckoo. Sing cuckoo now!*

June 2nd – Edible Roses

Here is a fourteenth-century recipe to make use of all those beautifully scented rose petals:

*For to make Rosee. Tak the flowris of Rosys
and wasch hem wel in water and after bray
hem wel in a mortar and then tak Almondys
and temper hem and seth hem and after tak*

*flesch of capons or of hennys and hac yt smale
and than bray hem wel in a mortar and than
do yt in the Rosee so that the flesch acord wyth
the mylk and so that the mete be charchaunt
and after do yt to the fyre to boyle and do therto
sugur and safroun that yt be wel ycolowrd and
rosy of levys and of the forseide flowrys and
serve yt forth.*

~ S. Pegg, *The Forme of Cury*

As with most medieval recipes, no amounts of ingredients are given but as the rose petals cook down to almost nothing, you can be generous with them – red ones keep their colour best. Wash the flowers and crush them in a mortar. Take almonds, pound them and boil them in a pan of water to make 'almond milk'. You can use this just like cows' milk to make and thicken the sauce. Take chicken meat, chop it, grind it in the mortar and add it to the milk with the roses and mix well. Put the pan back on the heat until the chicken is cooked and the sauce thickens – take 15 to 20 minutes according to how much you are making. Add sugar to taste and saffron to flavour and colour the rosee. As an option, a little rosewater can be added to increase the flowery taste. Garnish with rose leaves and petals and serve.

June 3rd – Abelard the Heretic

The French scholar and lover of Heloise, Peter Abelard, was tried and found guilty of heresy on this day in 1140. He died two years later on 21 April.

June 4th – Corpus Christi

The earliest possible date for the feast of Corpus Christi is 21 May and the latest is on 24 June, with the Sunday celebrations three days later; in 2015, the feast falls on 4 June and in 2016 it will be on 26 May. The feast of Corpus Christi (Latin for 'Body of Christ') celebrates the tradition and belief in the body and blood of Jesus Christ and his real presence in the Eucharist. The feast is celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity

Sunday and sixty days after Easter, so it is another moveable feast. The feast day didn't exist officially until Pope Urban IV instituted the Solemnity of Corpus Christi on the Thursday after Pentecost in 1264. In medieval times, across many towns in England and Europe, the festival of Corpus Christi saw the performance of cycles of mystery plays. These plays, often staged by local guilds, told the Bible story from the Creation to the Last Judgement.

an egg and lay to thine eyes when thou goest to bed. For a running nose. Take the juice of mint and the juice of rue, tempered together, and put it in thy nostrils oft, and it will much amend and cast out the filth of the brain whence it cometh.

W. R. Dawson, *A Leechbook of the Fifteenth Century*

June 5th – Hayfever Remedy

In the month of June, every day a draught of water is good to drink fasting. Ale and meat in moderate measure eat and drink and eat lettuce and sage.

W. R. Dawson, *A Leechbook of the Fifteenth Century*

For sufferers of that summer blight, hayfever, these remedies were supposed to help: For eyes that be red and running. Take the red cabbage leaf and anoint it with the white of

To learn more about *A Year in the Life of Medieval England*, by Toni Mount, please visit the Amberley Publishing website at:

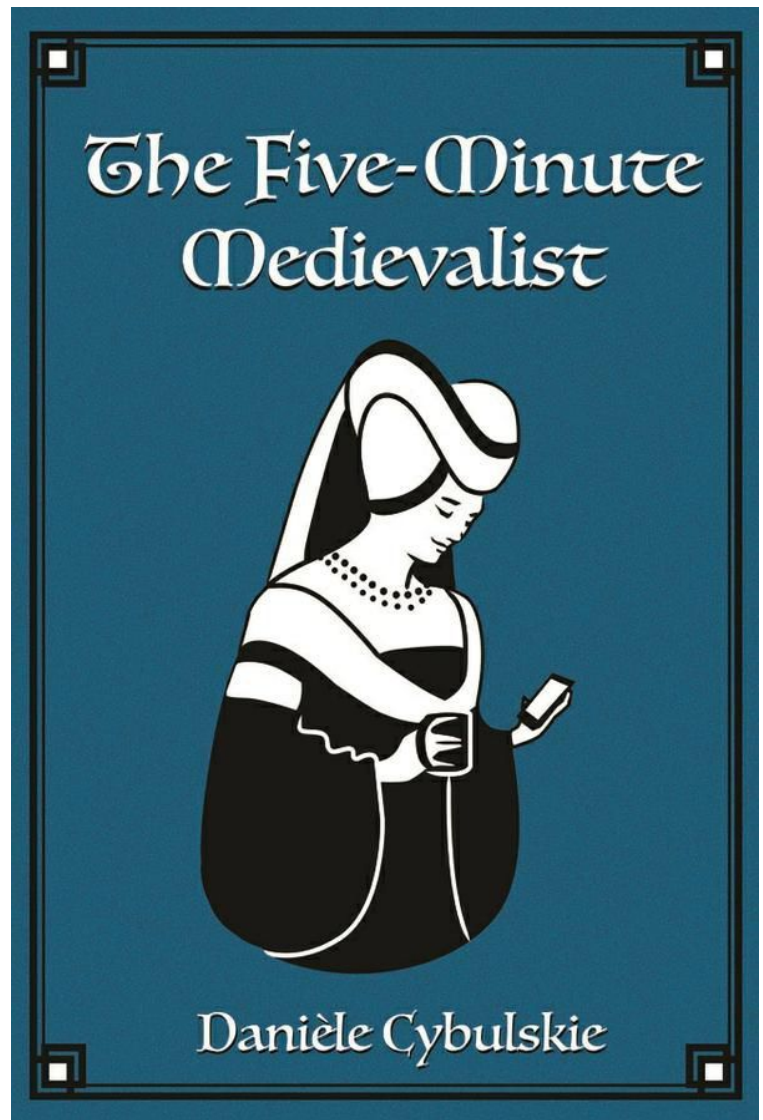
<https://www.amberley-books.com/a-year-in-the-life-of-medieval-england.html>

The Five-Minute Medievalist

By Danièle Cybulskie

Funny, informative, and down-to-earth, this ebook features thirteen of the most popular articles from Medievalist.net's Five-Minute Medievalist, Danièle Cybulskie. Readers will learn about everything from the Templars, to popular movie myths, to love and lust advice from a 12th-century priest. Exclusive content includes two never-before-published articles on quirky medieval words we still use every day, and the surprising sexual secrets of the Middle Ages. Unlock the mysteries of the medieval world, five minutes at a time.

"From crusading and warfare to medieval pies and sex tips, The Five-Minute Medievalist is a witty and very informative guide to the very best bits of the Middle Ages." - Dan Jones, historian and BBC presenter



You can buy the ebook for \$3.99 - for Amazon go to <http://amzn.to/1YfqwBz> - for Kobo go to <https://store.kobobooks.com/en-us/ebook/the-five-minute-medievalist>

You can also buy it through Danièle's website at <http://www.danielecybulskie.com/>