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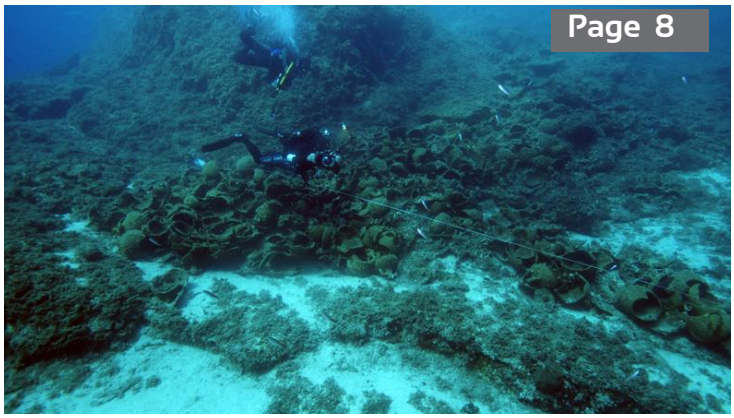

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Restoration reveals beautiful art at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem

By Saher Kawas, Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Mosaic from the Basilica of the Nativity - photo courtesy Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Bethlehem – for more than two years, one of the world's holiest churches has been undergoing restoration work. In this report, we would like to give a historical background about the wooden door and the mosaic covering the walls of the nave.

The wooden doors

From the humility door, heads of believers and visitors bow down in reverence to the child in the manger. Just in front of the door, we face tall wooden doors that separate the narthex and the nave, covered through the centuries by layers of dust and smoke coming up from oil lamps. Now, the restoration comes and reveals a corner worthy of contemplation and appreciation, which previously visitors used to overlook. The doors, which were built at the hands of two Armenian believers and then presented as a gift by the Armenian king Hethum I in 1227, were installed at the entrance of middle royal door. The doors were beautifully produced with crosses and other elements of ornamentation engraved on them, as well as inscriptions in Arabic and Armenian on the top part of them.

The Armenian inscription in English translation reads as follows:

"In the year 676, the door of the Holy Mother of God was accomplished by the efforts of Father Abraham and Father Arachel, at the time of the Armenian King Hithum the son of Constantine. May God have pity on the authors (of this work)."

While the Arabic inscription in English translation reads as follows:

"This door was completed with the help of Allah, may He be exalted, in the days of our lord, the sultan al-Malik al-Mu'azzam in the date of (the month of) Muharram the year 624 (= Dec.1226-Jan.1227)."

It may seem, from the inscription, that al-Mu'azzam initiated the construction of the doors but it is most certain that the project had nothing to do with him and he was mentioned merely because he was the ruler at the time of the construction.

Mosaics

After passing through the wooden doors, one arrives in the nave of the basilica. Looking up at the walls, people can see a set of mosaic works on the upper northern and southern walls that date back to the 12th century.

1) A set of 6 angels located between the windows with their face directed at the manger. Originally, there were 12 angels of which remained 7. Last March, a seventh angel was discovered behind a layer of plaster; restorers believe that it was covered for fear of destruction or falling-off. In 1169, the miniaturist Basilius Pictor created these works of art and his name appears on the third angel from the right on the northern wall.

The putting of the plaster of the 7th angel dates back to the 19th century where it was coated by a layer of ordinary paint. Mosaicists at that time relied on the Byzantine technique of creating their works; three layers can be seen:

– The preparatory layer which was a foundation of stone.

– The mortar layer which resembles glue in its consistency. Mosaicists used to draw a sketch in colors where each color corresponds to a different type of tesserae (Latin for cubes or dice) which are pieces of stone, glass or metal (gold or silver) that have been cut in triangular or square shapes.

– The layer of tesserae.
A very innovative technique of applying

The restoration work taking place at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem - photo courtesy Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

– The layer of tesserae.

A very innovative technique of applying tesserae in the upper walls of the nave was the tilting and setting gold and silver pieces at sharp angles. This procedure enhanced the reflection of light that is coming through the windows that separate the angels, and thus, increasing the amount of light that goes downward in the direction of visitors.

Over the centuries, many tesserae of the angel mosaics were lost. Therefore, restorers are filling in these lost parts with a layer that they engrave to give onlookers an idea of how they appeared before.

2) Mosaics in the middle part of the southern wall represent the names of Jesus's ancestors according to the Gospel of St Luke (ch3: 23-38) while the mosaics in the middle part of the northern wall represent the genealogy of Jesus according to the Gospel of St Matthew (ch1: 1-7). Today, only seven of the ancestors can be seen with their names written in Latin.

Moreover, the southern and northern walls contain texts in Greek and Latin surrounded by geometrical shapes separated by acanthus leaves, candlesticks and incense burners. These texts represent decisions of the Ecumenical and local synods.

More photos of the art work from the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

22 Ancient and Byzantine shipwrecks discovered in the Aegean Sea

An archaeological expedition has recorded 22 shipwrecks over 13 days in what may be the ancient shipwreck capital of the world.

Archaeologists survey the scatter of a Late Roman shipwreck, Photo by V. Mentogianis / University of Southampton

The findings in the Fourni archipelago in the Greek Islands bring to light ancient trade networks that once connected the entire Mediterranean.

"The concentration of ancient shipwrecks is unprecedented," says Peter Campbell, University of Southampton archaeologist and project co-director from the US based RPM Nautical Foundation. "The volume of shipwrecks in Fourni, an island that had no major cities or harbours, speaks to its role in navigation as well as the perils of sailing the eastern Aegean."

The wrecks date from the Archaic Period (700-480 BC) through the Late Medieval Period (16th century). Several date to the Classical (480-323 BC) and Hellenistic (323-31 BC) periods, but over half of the wrecks date to the Late Roman Period (circa 300-600 AD). The ships' cargos point to the importance of long distance trade between the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, Cyprus, the Levant,

Levant, and Egypt - in all these periods.

"What is astonishing is not only the number of the shipwrecks, but also the diversity of the cargos, some of which have been found for first time," says Greek director George Koutsouflakis. At least three of the sites have cargos that have not been found previously on shipwrecks.

Archaeologists mapped each wreck using photogrammetry to create 3D site plans. Representative artefacts were excavated and raised from each wreck site for scientific analysis. These artefacts are primarily amphoras, which were terracotta jars that carried bulk goods prior to the invention of wooden barrels. The finds are currently undergoing conservation at the Ephorate's laboratory in Athens and may go on displays in museums in the future.

Fourni is a collection of thirteen islands and islets located between the eastern Aegean islands of Samos and Icaria. The small islands never hosted large cities, instead their importance comes from their critical role as an anchorage and navigational point in the eastern Aegean. Fourni lies along a major east-west crossing route, as well as the primary north-south route that connected the Aegean to the Levant. This is the first underwater archaeological expedition to the islands. The project's success has come through working with local sponge divers, fishermen, and free divers together with technology and archaeological methods.

"The local response to the project has been incredible and it is through working with the community that we were able to exceed expectations," says Southampton's Peter Campbell. "Archaeology is about people; those in the past as well as those in the present. The highlight has been bringing the past back to life for people that are engaged with their history."

The expedition was a collaboration between the Greek Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities (EUA) and RPM Nautical Foundation (RPMNF), directed by George Koutsouflakis (EUA), Jeffrey Royal (RPMNF), and Peter Campbell (RPMNF/University of Southampton). Funding was provided by the Honor Frost Foundation, a UK charity that supports research in the eastern Mediterranean through an endowment from pioneer maritime archaeologist Honor Frost. Sponsors included Carrefour Ikaria, Eurobrokers, and the Municipality of Fourni Korseon.

The discovery adds 12 per cent to the total number of known ancient shipwrecks in Greece. The findings suggest a great quantity of the shipwrecks still await discovery in Fourni. "In a typical survey we locate four or five shipwrecks per season in the best cases," says George Koutsouflakis. "We expected a successful season, but no one was prepared for this. Shipwrecks were found literally everywhere."

For comparison, the United States recently created a national marine sanctuary in Lake Michigan to protect 39 known shipwrecks located in 875 square miles. Fourni now has 22 known shipwrecks in 17 square miles. The previous record in Greece for a season was 10 ancient wrecks discovered over 10 days during a 2008 survey in Chios.

Less than five per cent of Fourni's coastline has been explored for underwater cultural heritage. Local fishermen and sponge divers have reported many more leads that will be followed up in future seasons. The team plans to return next year.

New drought atlas maps 2,000 years of climate in Europe

The long history of severe droughts across Europe and the Mediterranean has largely been told through historical documents and ancient journals, each chronicling the impact in a geographically restricted area. Now, for the first time, an atlas based on scientific evidence provides the big picture, using tree rings to map the reach and severity of dry and wet periods across Europe, and parts of North Africa and the Middle East, year to year over the past 2,000 years.

Together with two previous drought atlases covering North America and Asia, the Old World Drought Atlas significantly adds to the historical picture of long-term climate variability over the Northern Hemisphere. In so doing, it should help climate scientists pinpoint causes of drought and extreme rainfall in the past, and identify patterns that could lead to better climate model projections for the future. A paper describing the new atlas, coauthored by scientists from 40 institutions, appeared last week in the journal *Science Advances*.

"The Old World Drought Atlas fills a major geographic gap in the data that's important to determine patterns of climate variability back in time," said Edward Cook, cofounder of the Tree Ring Lab at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and leader of all three drought-atlas projects. "That's important for understanding causes of megadroughts, and it's important for climate modelers to test hypotheses of climate forcing and change."

For example, if Europe had a wet year north of the Alps and a dry year to the south, that provides clues to circulation patterns and suggests influence from the North Atlantic Oscillation, one of the primary sources of climate variability affecting patterns in Europe. "You can't get that from one spot on a map," Cook said. "That's the differentiator between the atlas and all these wonderful historic records - the records don't give you the broad-scale patterns."

The new atlas could also improve understanding of climate phenomena like the Atlantic Multi-decadal Oscillation, a variation in North Atlantic sea-surface temperatures that hasn't been tracked long enough to tell if it is a transitory event, forced by human intervention in the climate system, or a natural long-term oscillation. By combining the Old World Drought Atlas with the Asia and North America atlases, climatologists and climate modelers may also discover other sources of internal climate variability that are leading to drought and wetness across the Northern Hemisphere, Cook said.

In the Science Advances paper, Cook and his coauthors compare results from the new atlas and its counterparts across three time spans: the generally warm Medieval Climate Anomaly (1000-1200); the Little Ice Age (1550-1750); and the modern period (1850-2012).

The atlases together show persistently drier-than-average conditions across north-central Europe over the past 1,000 years, and a history of megadroughts in the Northern Hemisphere that lasted longer during the Medieval Climate Anomaly than they did during the 20th century. But there is little understanding as to why, the authors write. Climate models have had difficulty reproducing megadroughts of the past, indicating something may be missing in their representation of the climate system, Cook said.

The drought atlases provide a much deeper understanding of natural climate processes than scientists have had to date, said Richard Seager, a coauthor of the paper and a climate modeler at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

"Climate variability tends to occur within patterns that span the globe, creating wet conditions somewhere and dry conditions somewhere else," said Seager. "By having tree ring-based hydroclimate reconstructions for three northern hemisphere continents, we can now easily see these patterns and identify the responsible modes of variability."

The hemispheric scale adds to the potential uses of what was already the gold standard of paleo-hydroclimate research, said Sloan Coats, a climate dynamicist at the University of Colorado who studies megadroughts using the atlases. "The fact that the drought atlases provide a nearly hemispheric view of hydroclimate variability provides an incredible amount of information that can be used to better understand what was happening in the atmosphere and ocean," Coats said.

In Europe and the Mediterranean, the new drought atlas expands scientists' understanding of climate conditions during historic famines.

For instance, an unusually cold winter and spring are often blamed for a 1740-1741 famine in Ireland. The Old World Drought Atlas points to another contributor: rainfall well below normal during the spring and summer of 1741, the authors write in the paper. The atlas shows how the drought spread across Ireland, England and Wales.

The atlas also tracks the reach of the great European famine of 1315-1317, when historical documents describe how excessive precipitation across much of the continent made growing food nearly impossible. The atlas tracks the hydroclimate across Europe and shows its yearly progressions from 1314 to 1317 in detail, including highlighting drier conditions in southern Italy, which largely escaped the crisis.

The atlas may also help shed light on more recent phenomena, including a record 2006-2010 drought in the Levant that a recent Lamont study suggests may have helped spark the ongoing Syrian civil war.

The North America atlas, published in 2004, has been used by other researchers to suggest that a series of droughts starting around 900 years ago may have contributed to the eventual collapse of native cultures. Likewise, the Asia atlas, published in 2010, has led researchers to connect droughts, at least in part, to the fall of Cambodia's Angkor culture in the 1300s, and China's Ming dynasty in the 1600s.

The tree ring data used to create the new atlas included cores from both living trees and timbers found in ancient construction reaching back more than 2,000 years. They come from 106 regional tree ring chronologies, each with dozens to thousands of trees, and were contributed to the project by the International Tree Ring Data Bank and European tree-ring scientists.

The Fields of Britannia: Continuity and Change in the Late Roman and Early Medieval Landscape

New research from the University of Exeter has found that the Roman influence on our landscape extends beyond the legacy of our urban infrastructure to also shape the countryside and our rural surroundings.

The findings are outlined in a new book, ***The Fields of Britannia: Continuity and Change in the Late Roman and Early Medieval Landscape***, which has been written by leading researchers at the University.

The book explores the extent to which the landscape of Roman Britain continues to influence our modern day approaches to land management and explains that more of our countryside dates back to the Roman period than previously thought.

Co-written by Professor Stephen Rippon, Dr Chris Smart and Dr Ben Pears from the University's Archaeology Department, The Fields of Britannia is based on findings from The Fields of Britannia project which highlights the enduring legacy of Roman land practises.

Professor Rippon, Project Director, said: "Although it was well known that some of our towns and cities are built upon Roman foundations, before starting this research we had no idea that the same was true of our countryside.

"To ask, 'What did the Romans do for us' is a bit of a cliché, but across much of Britain they created the fields that our farmers still use today."

Funded jointly by the Leverhulme Trust and the University of Exeter, The Fields of Britannia project explores the relationship between Romano-British and medieval landscapes and draws on archaeological and palaeoenvironmental evidence from hundreds of excavations to investigate Roman field systems and land-use across Roman and early Medieval Britain.

Findings from the project will form an important and innovative contribution to the current debate over one of the major formative periods in British history: the nature of the transition from Roman Britain to medieval England.

The Fields of Britannia, published by Oxford University Press, is Professor Stephen Rippon's latest publication. Previous works have included *Beyond the Medieval Village: The Diversification of Landscape Character in Southern Britain* (2008), and *Making Sense of An Historic Landscape* (2012).

For more information, please visit the **The Fields of Britannia project website**.

How to defraud your lord on the medieval manor

In the 1260s, Robert Carpenter, a freehold farmer and former bailiff living on the Isle of Wight, wrote up a formulary – a collection of form letters and legal texts that would be useful for local administration. In the middle of these texts, however, he added detailed instructions on six ways you could commit fraud.

This work has been translated and analyzed by Martha Carlin in her article 'Cheating the Boss: Robert Carpenter's Embezzlement Instructions (1261×1268) and Employee Fraud in Medieval England'. Carpenter does not provide any introduction to these texts, nor does he give a hint on why he decided to include it in this work. Some scholars suggest he was bragging about his past exploits, others that he wrote it to warn his readers of ways they could be defrauded. Carlin adds another possibility – that it was "simply as a form of wry recollection or humour with which to entertain himself and his intimates."

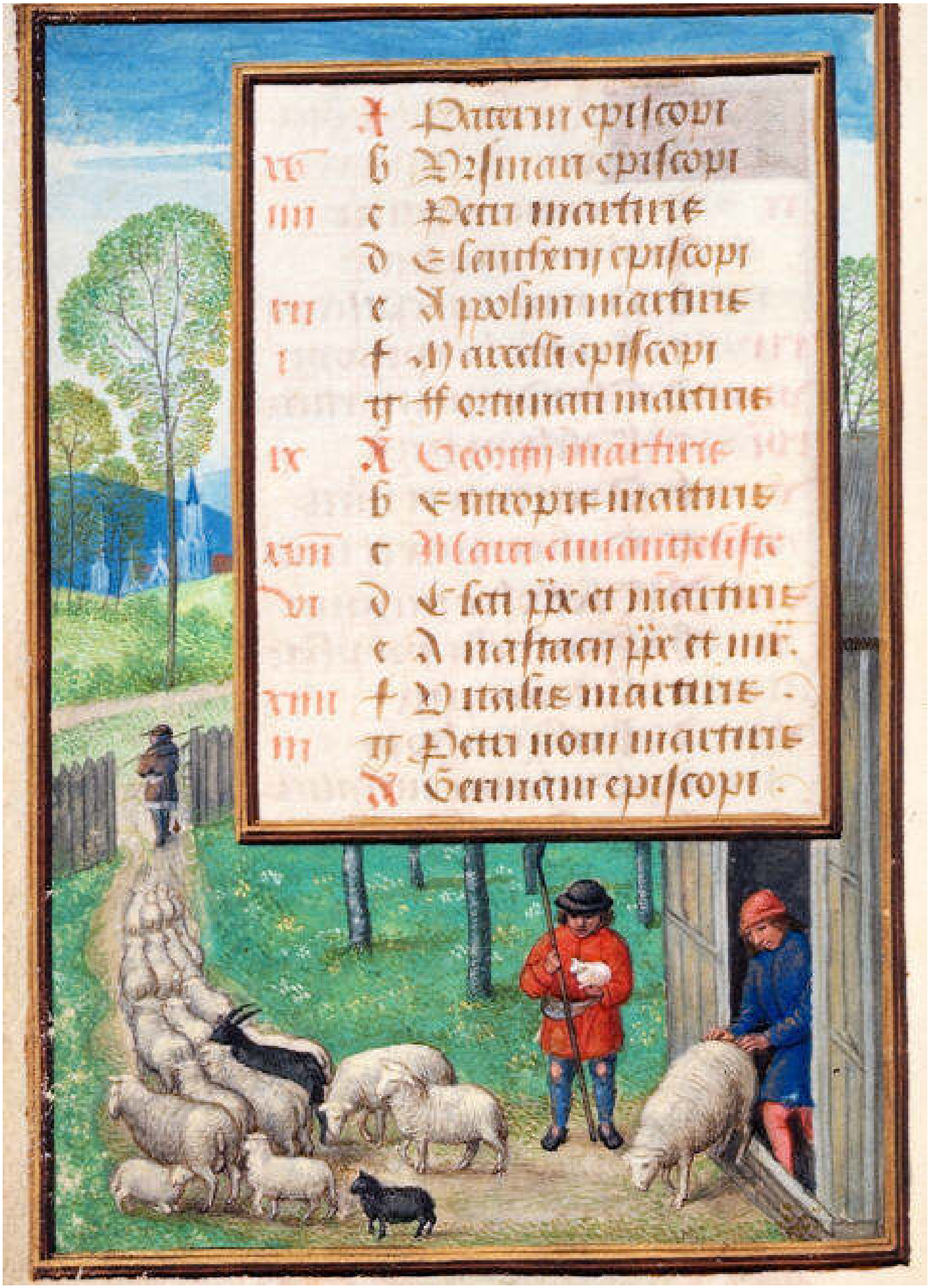
Carpenter's first fraud is a simple one – if you are a bailiff or reeve that managed a flock of sheep, you would know that not all breeding ewes would have lambs during a year. When reporting you the numbers you could misrepresent the totals, giving an example of how to get 12 lambs for yourself out of a flock of 150.

The second fraud occurs when you go to sell lambskins – if you have 160 lambskins you would take 25 of the best lambskins and sell them for a penny each, then use that money to buy 50 lambskins for a half-penny each. After that you could replace the lambskins you took and deliver them to your lord, while keeping the other 25 for your own use.

The third fraud is "to make a sheepskin appear to be that of a ewe that died of murrain. As soon as it it flayed, let the skin be placed in hot water and then immediately dried, and it will become as if the ewe were dead of murrain." In this way, you would convince everyone that the animal was diseased and that's it flesh could not be eaten – meanwhile the flesh, which is really fine could be yours to eat or sell.

The fourth fraud involves two shepherds working together – as long as they both manage flocks with the same brand. They steal three sheep from one flock, which they can sell, but when it comes time for the flock to be counted, you would borrow the three sheep from the other flock. Later on, when both flocks are together on a common pasture, these three sheep would then naturally return to their own flock.

The fifth fraud was one to be directed against a shepherd – when the sheep are to be



A Book of Hours showing men moving sheep around a farm. British Library MS Egerton 1147

sheered, one will find that some of the wool is damaged or of poor quality. You would keep this substandard wool separate from the rest, and when it came time to measure the wool, you would have this portion used. This could allow you to blame the shepherd for not taking good care of his flock, and perhaps fine or punish him.

The final fraud involved cheese-making, which was done during the spring and summer. Carpenter writes:

First, on the day when they begin to make cheeses, let the milk be divided equally into eight parts, and let the eighth part be kept until the following day, and from the other parts let one cheese be made immediately. And the next day, let the milk be divided in the same manner, and one that day let two parts be taken from the milk, and let the first part, which was taken first, be poured into the other milk, from which the cheese is made immediately. And thus every day let the milk be renewed. And on the seventh day you will have eight portions of new milk and six portions from the previous day, and thus one the seventh day you will make two cheese of the same size as the others.

This last fraud is particularly ingenious, as the amount of milk you take each day will only make the size of cheese 1/8 smaller, which won't likely be noticed by your lord, and you do not risk your milk spoiling. At the end of each week you have enough milk to make an extra cheese, which you can eat or sell yourself.

Carlin notes that even in the Middle Ages there was employee fraud – various records show that rulers and lords were trying to make sure that their servants were not trying to embezzle their money or goods. The fifteenth-century writer Christine de Pisan explains in her book The Treasure of the City of Ladies that "there are some dishonest chambermaids who are given great responsibility because they know how to insinuate themselves into the great houses of the middle classes and of rich people by cleverly acting the part of good household managers. They get their position of buying the food and going to the butcher's, where they only too well "hit the fruit basket", which is a common expression meaning to claim that thing cost more than it really does and then keep the change."

Carlin concludes, "Robert Carpenter's embezzlement instructions do not tell us anything new about moral compromise in medieval England, but they do offer an unusual window onto the practical logistics of employee fraud, and they make it clear that, like employee fraud today, systematic pilfering by corrupt manorial officers and other workers could well have siphoned off a significant fraction of medieval manorial production."

Her article, 'Cheating the Boss: Robert Carpenter's Embezzlement Instructions (1261×1268) and Employee Fraud in Medieval England' appears in *Commercial Activity, Markets and Entrepreneurs in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Richard Britnell*, edited by Christian D. Liddy (Boydell, 2011). Martha Carlin is a Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she specializes in daily life in the Middle Ages. Her most recent book is E*nglish Society, 1200-1250: Lost Letters of Everyday Life*.

Isidore of Seville on...

De trimodo dicendi genere

What did Isidore of Seville, the 7th-century Archbishop of Seville and author of ***Etymologiae***, have to say about speaking? Here is an excerpt from his section Rhetoric and dialectic:

The three registers of speaking

1. One ought to speak of humble things softly, of dramatic matters emphatically, of varied matters moderately. Indeed, these are the familiar three registers of speaking: humble, middling, grandiloquent. Now when we say great things, they should be uttered grandly; when we speak of small things, delicately; when things of the middling sort, temperately.

2. For in small causes nothing should be spoken grandly or loftily, but one should speak in a simple and ordinary manner. But in greater causes, where we deal with God or human salvation, more magnificence and brilliance should be displayed.

3. Inmoderate causes, where nothing is treated in order to effect an action, but only that the audiencemay be pleased, one should speak with moderation, somewhere between the two. But even though someone may speak of great things, nevertheless he should not always teach grandly, but humbly, when he teaches; moderately, when he praises or chastises something; grandly, when he calls to conversion minds that are turned away. In the humble style adequate words should be used; in the middling, showy; in the grand, ardent.

The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville has been edited and translated by Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach and Oliver Berghof, and was published by Cambridge University Press in 2006

Click here to visit the Publisher's website for more details

Making the Medieval Relevant

By Sandra Alvarez

Is medieval studies still relevant? Can research into medieval topics help further and compliment research in the sciences and humanities? Medievalists came to Nottingham, England, to show how they are breaking boundaries.

This past weekend the British Academy and the University of Nottingham held a two-day conference to discuss the future of medieval studies and how medievalists can stay relevant in a time when liberal arts and humanities departments are experiencing a record number of cuts to their programmes.

'Making the medieval relevant: Connecting early-career researchers studying 400-1500', was organized by Conor Kostick, who is currently the Marie Curie Research Fellow at the University of Nottingham. He brought together eight other prominent medieval scholars to consider the ways in which research into the medieval era can shed light upon 'big picture' humanities topics. A full-room of 40 people attended the conference, with many more watching online over its live-stream feed. Here are some of the highlights from the conference:

From Three Norfolk Manors to the Known World: a Personal Odyssey

In an impassioned keynote address, Professor Bruce Campbell of the University of Belfast urged medievalists to apply for post-doctoral fellowships, saying that it is, "terribly important for the future of medieval studies".

Campbell wants to debunk the notion that the academy is an elitist organization by highlighting the fact that it encourages scholars and the public to attend its open lectures, debates, and seminars. "Don't be intimidated. Every last one of us recognizes that you are the seed core of our subjects. We all recognise the struggle there is to get established academically. You will find us very encouraging."

Medieval studies has often been viewed as

Jennifer Edmond of Trinity College Dublin speaking at Making the medieval relevant: Connecting early-career researchers studying 400-1500

the preserve of a predominantly male enclave. Campbell, who also a Fellow of the British Academy, added that this organization is fighting to change that perception by increasing the number of female members and encouraging women's scholarship. "Women have made a strong scholarly contribution to medieval studies," said Campbell, "The academy is strenuously trying to break this down and constantly reminding us of the gender distribution of professors and fellows. Last year, we had more women than men welcomed. We're trying very hard to reflect the diversity in our society."

Campbell expressed his concern for the future of medieval studies as the number of medievalists appears to be dwindling, and government bodies increasingly pressure universities to prove the relevance of programmes like medieval history and philosophy. How do we as medievalists prove our "value" to the academic community, or to society at large? Medievalists are under the gun to to justify how their area of study furthers departmental ends or has social relevance. Campbell drove this point home saying, "Science should not be exclusive to scientists; we need to be rigorous in what we do. We need to push the government not to cut funding to the social sciences. We are lobbying very hard to say, not only should you not cut us, you should increase investment in our research."

Out of 42 research fellows per year, only 1-2 are medievalists, and between 2-5 medievalists are supported by the Academy. Although it is encouraging to see that medieval historians are being incorporated into the British Academy every year, Campbell believes it's not enough. Historians are feeling the bite of funding cuts and seeing their programmes slashed because they have been deemed irrelevant

by government officials and university administrators focused on immediate results, and return on investment. They lack the foresight to see greater relevance in the humanities over the long term.

Campbell wants to improve those odds. He went on to offer a glimpse into his academic journey and offered insight and tips to budding medievalists on how to tackle this problem and make themselves relevant in an environment that's hostile to the humanities.

Bruce Campbell's 9 Tips on How to Succeed as a Medievalists

1. Develop a broad vision of your subject, its relevance and significance
2. Think comparatively in time and space; think outside - we tend to be Anglo-centric in England and that's not good.
3. Capitalise on serendipity!
4. Collaborate with fellow medievalists, non-medievalists and non-historians - don't go it alone, broaden your tool kit.
5. Seek grant funding to grow your research. Try and take control of this - what you want to do, and where you want to go, don't let the institution dictate this for you.
6. Make the most of technology. We need to give the impression that we are not technologically inept, medievalists must embrace it (technology) and champion it.
7. Be proficient at working with numbers.
8. Polish your presentation skills
9. Convene conferences and join networks.

Medievalists are grappling with immense changes to the academic system while trying to compete for limited resources and research spaces. Campbell encouraged medieval historians to push harder for a piece of that cake, "The context in which we operate is changing. The cake will only go so far, and we want a bigger cake."

Making Connections: From One Research Question to the Next

Conor Kostick kicked off the second day of the conference talking to us about the part he played in a research project looking at mortality and major climatic events by using digital diagrams, medieval documentary records and dendrochronology. "Mortality" was a problematic term because it could cover many types of death so they had to narrow it down ir order to discern any significant patterns.

Kostick worked closely with Dr. Francis Ludlow, of the Yale Climate and Energy Institution to gather information. They looked at extreme weather associations with societal stress. Was there a co-occurrence with human famine and "bad years" for trees? Their research was able to determine that outbreaks of disease for humans coincided with difficult years for trees, however, this didn't appear to be the case in the Middle East. Kostick preferred to rely on two types of sources:

1.Eyewitness or contemporary with a reliable chronology

Conor Kostick of the University of Nottingham

2.. Eyewitness or contemporary but with some chronological uncertainty

It was important to work with reliable data, and then be able to present the information digitally.

How Does this Medieval Research Help: The Cross Disciplinary Angle

Kostick presented his findings at the Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo this past May and later received an email from someone in Nevada who was part of a team that studies ice cores. They contacted Kostick because their ice core data was telling a slightly different story from the Danish data. They wanted to collaborate and see if Kostick's research was able to resolve a dispute where there was a seven year gap in data between the Nevada and Denmark. It turns out that Kostick's data was able to help them. The collaborative work between the two was covered by media outlets from around the world, including in The Telegraph under the flashy title: **Did American Volcanoes Trigger the Fall of the Roman Empire**.

Kostick also stressed the importance of strong work relationships; saying, "If you find the right person, it makes a huge difference to your research." Kostick is very proud of these achievements, and of his work with Ludlow. It goes beyond being just intellectually compatible; it's about collaboration and sharing information to help each other succeed.

Bald's Eye salve: An Anglo-Saxon Antibiotic?

Earlier this year, Dr. Freya Harrison and a team of microbiologists at the University of Nottingham discovered that a 1,000 year old Anglo-Saxon onion and garlic recipe was able to treat MRSA (meticillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) infections, a.k.a. "superbugs".

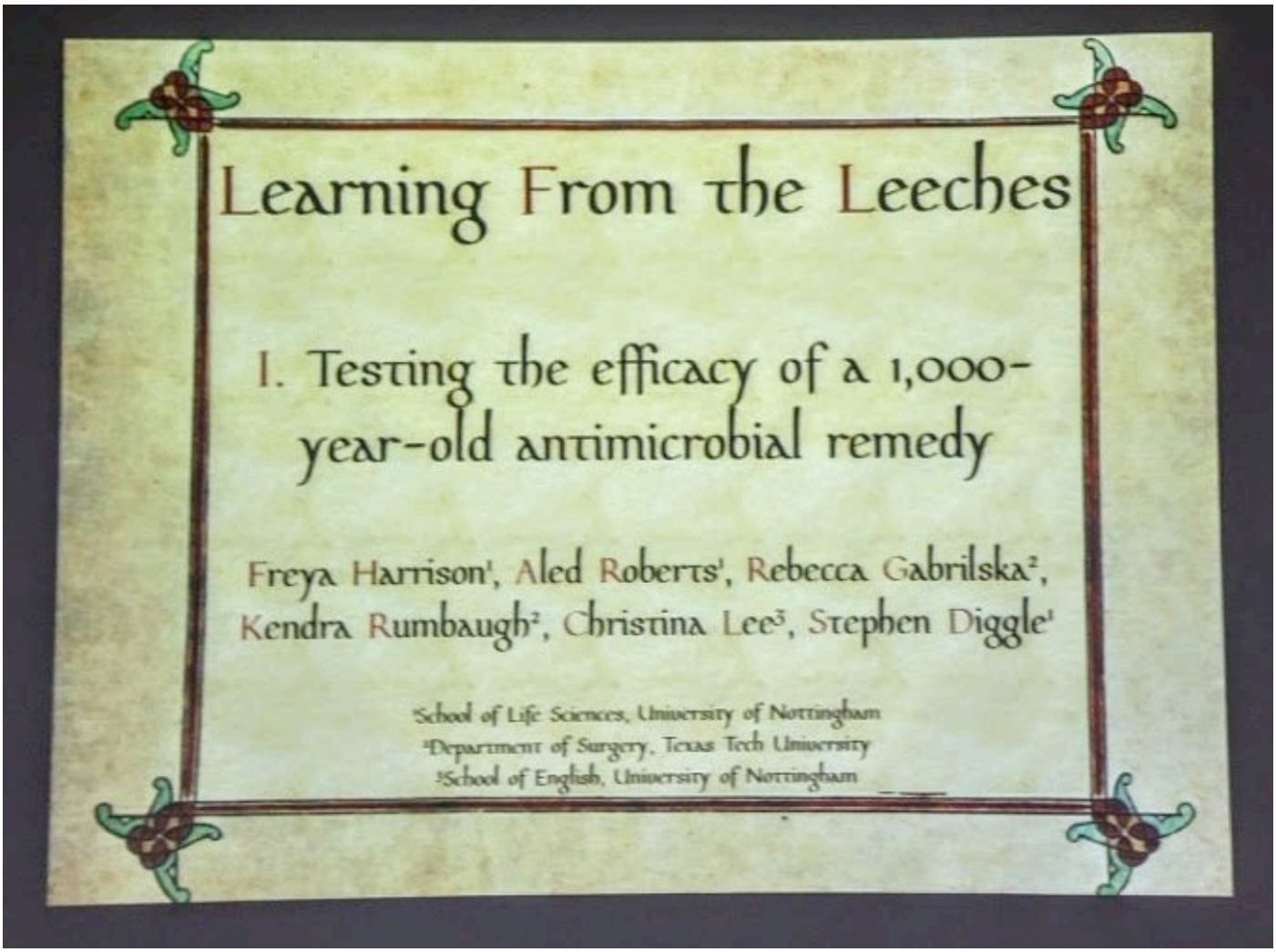
Medievalists.net @Medievalists · Nov 15

Using our expertise with historical evidence to open up new questions for biologists and scientists. #BAMMR

4 7

Harrison's work aimed to bring together people from different backgrounds to discuss infection and answers these questions: How did epidemics spread in the past? Did people develop effective treatments for infection before germ theory and the advent of modern antibiotics? Lastly, how did medieval people respond to disease? Harrison hopes to find some answer by studying European medical texts from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries.

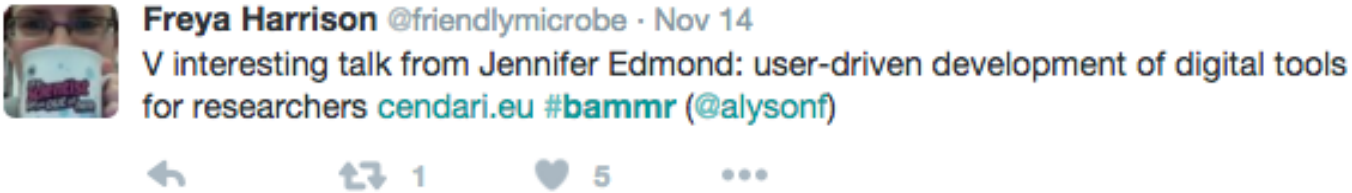
Using *Bald's Leechbook*, an Anglo-Saxon medical text written in Old English, Harrison and her team tried one of the recipes for an eye salve. The Leechbook describes a "wen" in your eye, which is most likely a sty from the eyelash follicle caused by bacteria. The salve for this infection was created in a laboratory at the University of Nottingham. Harrison followed the recipe precisely. "We were actually quite thunderstruck by what we saw" she said, noticing that the number of cells dropped from about a billion active cells to a few thousand cells, after the bacteria was treated with Bald's Eye Salve. This killed 99.9% of the germs. To be sure their experiment wasn't a one-off, they made the eye salve nine times and it has always yielded the same remarkable results. They took it one step further, and with collaboration from scientists at Texas Tech University, they tried the salve on chronic wound infections in mice. Bald's Eye Salve killed 90% of this bacteria in 4 hours. This is better than our current modern "last line"



antibiotic used to fight MRSA infections in hospitals.

The groundbreaking discovery generated a media storm across the globe and thrust Harrison and her colleagues into the spotlight. The marriage of a medieval text with modern microbiology appears to have made a 1,000 year old medical recipe that can kill the bacteria that it was intended to kill. However, Harrison's work is far from over. Now that the clamour has died down she is back in the lab studying these findings in depth to see why the recipe fell out of use and what outcomes arise from using different combinations of the listed ingredients.

Can we use begin to use pre-modern medical texts as a database for new anti-microbial compounds? Can we solve modern medical dilemma's with medieval solutions? There is no definitive answer yet, but this project gives us hope that the potential is definitely there.



CENDARI: Integrating Medieval Digital Archives

Jennifer Edmond of Trinity College Dublin came to the conference to talk about CENDARI (Collaborative European Digital Archive Infrastructure), a consortium of fourteen partners in eight countries, and worth €6.5million. This collaborative archive infrastructure project is scheduled to wrap up its four-year run in January 2016 but is currently in talks with the European Commission to get funding for another four years.

Edmond explained the goal of the project was, "To pilot a research infrastructure leveraging analogue networks to integrate digital resources for historical research in a way that is easy to use/access and harmonised with researcher requirements."

CENDARI is not a library, and it is not a glorified version of Google; it has a different mission, but it assists scholars by creating intelligent, accessible searches. For example, for the name 'Albertus Magnus', it will detect different forms of the name, thereby making your search smarter.

Edmond pointed out that the European archives were unprepared for sharing data on a mass scale so it was important for the project to help make rich data easily accessible to scholars. CENDARI respects the analogue foundations of scholarship, Edmond stated, "You have to have the interaction with the original scholarship...think of this as something that enhances enquiry, and fills the gaps." In addition to filling a research void, the project hopes to raise awareness with libraries and archives about joining forces with digital research infrastructures.

Among the other participants at conference was Martin Pickard, speaking on 'Writing Successful Grant Proposals', Turi King on 'King Richard III: The Project and its Impact', Victoria Haywood on 'Medievalists and Horizon 2020', Daniel Curtis on "The ERC Project Coordinating for Life', and Christina Lee on 'Crossing Boundaries: Interdisciplinary Studies on Disease and Disability'. Check on Medievalists.net to read more reports from the conference.

The field has been plagued by the perception that medievalists are isolated and cliquey; conferences such as Making the Medieval

Relevant are trying to change that by highlighting the need for medievalists to come together, discuss strategies, work with scholars outside the field, and demonstrate that the discipline hasn't stagnated but evolved and is a valuable contributor of solution for current scholarly and non-academic issues.

E Hutchin-Bellur @DraHistoriadora · Nov 14

UK gov't invests least of GDP of any comparable economy in research into humanities & social sciences? Depressing & not surprising... #BAMMR

2

James L. Smith @ScrivenerSmith · Nov 14

I've had a great day at the #BAMMR conference today. Making the #Medieval relevant is a great topic, and everything has run very smoothly!

6

Erin Connelly @efconnelly · Nov 15

Many thanks to @conor_kostick @britishacademy @UniofNottingham and all speakers and participants of the excellent #bammr conf.

2 3

The Battle of Morgarten

On November 15, 1315, an Austrian army of at least a few thousand men marched along the shores of Lake Ägeri in central Switzerland. It was here that they were ambushed by over a thousand Swiss farmers.

Known as the Battle of Morgarten, the events of this day have been made into legend, and is considered one of the most important moments in the formation of the nation of Switzerland. For military historians, it also for noteworthy for being a fight where simple footsoldiers defeated an army of knights, the beginning of an era where cavalry would no longer dominate the medieval battlefield.

The Battle of Morgarten, which this week is marking its 700th anniversary, is also an event we know little about. As one historian notes, "Few details are known about the course of the battle. Primary sources are almost nonexistent; the chronicles offer mostly contradictory reports. Neither the exact location of the battle nor the number of combatants on either side is known."

The battle took place between Leopold I, Duke of Austria, and the men of the Old Swiss Confederacy – an alliance of the cantons of Schwyz, Uri and Unterwalden. It seems that the conflict was triggered by a border dispute between the Benedictine monastery of Einsiedeln and the canton of Schwyz. The monastery was raided the previous year, and had called upon the Duke to protect it.

In the words of the 14th century chronicler John of Winterthur, the Austrian Duke summoned his forces, and "the men of this army came together with one purpose, to utterly subdue and humiliate those peasants who were surrounded with mountains as with walls." Meanwhile, according to another chronicler, the jester of the Duke of Austria, on being asked what he thought of the invasion plan, replied, "You have all taken counsel how best to get into the country, but have given no explanation of how you are going to get out again!"

In her dissertation, *The Swiss Way of War*, Katherine Becker offers a detailed account of the events of the battle. She explains that people of Schwyz, led by Werner Stauffacher, and had prepared their defences and blocked off most of the routes into their territory so that the Austrian forces would need to come through the narrow pass of Morgarten.

Illustration from the Tschachtlanchronik depicting the Battle of Morgarten

On November 15th, the Duke and his forces left the city of Zug intending to attack the canton of Schwyz. One legend about the battle states that an Austrian knight, believing that his side was so superior to the Swiss peasants, actually shot an arrow to the enemy camp carrying a message saying that they would be marching through Morgarten and that the peasants should just flee.

Once scouts had reported that the Austrians were coming Werner Stauffacher ordered most of his soldiers to take cover along a wooded ridge and wait for the Duke to come along the narrow road by Lake Ägeri, where they soon found it blocked by a wall. Becker writes:

The entire vanguard was forced to halt, yet the center and rear of the army continued to move forward oblivious to the problem ahead. The result was that the entire Austrian army became locked in a bottleneck. Furious, that his march was halted, the Duke ordered the wall stormed—probably by dismounted knights, since his infantry were in the rear of the army. Just as the knights began climbing over the roadblock, a shower of boulders and tree-trunks came rolling down the slope on the knights' right flank. The dismounted knights ran for their lives, but as Winterthur tells us they were caught like "fish in a net and were slaughtered without any resistance." Eliminating the vanguard on the narrowest part of the pass, the attack of the forest cantons had cut down most of the aristocrats. The horses of those behind were thrown into confusion as their riders, knowing that they could not charge uphill, attempted to turn their mounts. The entire mass of knights was now pinned between two sheets of rock on the sides, and their own packed forces and a lake below them. They were thrown into panic. Then, suddenly, movement was spotted from above: a huge body of halberdiers in dense column began rolling out from the woods and down from the ridge. Swiss pelters went before them unleashing avalanches of rocks, while the powerful Swiss halberd column rammed into the Austrian flank slashing and thrusting. The moment is captured by the illustrator of Bendict Tschlachtlan's 1493 chronicle Die Schlacht am Morgarten.

John of Winterthur describes the halberd as a very effective weapon: "Also the Swiss have in their hands death weapons, which have been called in popular speech 'Helnbarten,' and are very frightful. These slice like a razor and slash into pieces such strongly armed opponents." With it they were able to launch a devastating attack against the Austrians.

John of Winterthur offers this vivid picture:

It was not a battle, but a mere butchery of Duke Leopold's men; for the mountainfolk slew them like sheep in the shambles; no quarter was given, they cut down all without distinction. So great was the fierceness of the Confederates that scores of the Austrian foot-soldiery, when they saw the bravest knights falling helplessly, threw themselves in panic into the lake, preferring to drown rather than to be hewn about by the dreadful weapons of their enemies.

Estimates for the number of dead among the Austrians go as high as 1500 dead, and the rest were forced to flee. John of Winterthur, who was a schoolboy at the time, remembers how that very night he saw the retreating Duke, stating that "he seemed to be half-dead from extreme sorrow."

The immediate effect of the battle was to rally the other Swiss cantons to the side of the confederacy. Becker explains that:

... politically speaking, Morgarten was a watershed moment. Three little democratically governed peasant communities—Schwyz, Uri and Unterwalden—in the heart of Switzerland's central valleys, had demanded independence from foreign governors, establishing it by defeating their imperial army. These "inner" or Forest Cantons laid the foundation for the

Confederate militia system when they signed the Bundesbrief of 1291, and renewed it in 1314, swearing oaths of loyalty for mutual protection against any aggressor. With this agreement they created the original Confederacy. In 1315 the "Oath Brothers" were put to the test and their united effort succeeded against a powerful enemy—an Austrian Habsburg army. Their success won the confidence of other Swiss communities, several of which had fought against them at Morgarten. Among these new members to the alliance were the "outer" cantons of Zu rich, Zug, Glarus, Luzern, Zu rich, Fribourg, Graubu nden, Bern, and others, which either joined or, in the case of Graubu nden, allied with the Confederates after Morgarten.

Despite the importance of the battle to Swiss history, we know little else about it. Earlier this year archaeologists found 14th century artefacts in the Morgarten area, which might be from the battle. They include two knives, a knife scabbard, two arrows from a crossbow or bow, and a dozen coins that date from the the year 1275 to the early 14th century – c**lick here to read more**. Meanwhile, in an article just published in ***The Holocene,*** researchers examined the history of the water level of Lake Ägeri and found that it had receded between 2 and 3 metres since the time of the Battle of Morgaten. However, this has not helped them to identify the site of the battle, as they could not find a location which would be by the lake and also close enough to steep slopes.

You can also learn more about the battle from **Medieval Histories** and find out about events commemorating the event at **Morgarten2015**.

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How to Tell if Your 12th-Century Lover is Just Not That Into You

By Danièle Cybulskie

In the twelfth century, courtly love was all the rage with the French nobility. To participate in this trendiest of trends, though, you actually needed to know the rules. Enter Andreas Capellanus, author of ***The Art of Courtly Love***, a book heavily based on Ovid, but with the definite thumbprint of its author. Although he is a capellanus ("chaplain"), Andreas is as interested in the ins and outs of love and sex as any editor at Cosmopolitan, and is full of scandalous tales (like that time he barely stopped himself from having sex with a beautiful nun) and helpful advice. There is so much about this book that is worthy of mention, but for today, here are five ways to know if your courtly lover is just not that into you anymore (all quotations are from John Jay Parry's translation).

1. She avoids you.

Andreas says, "If you see that your loved one is missing all sorts of opportunities to meet you or is putting false obstacles in your path, you cannot hope long to enjoy her love" (p.157). If she's missing your feast because she has to wash her hair, chances are she's just not that into you.

2. He asks for too many gifts.

When it comes to gifts, Andreas has many firm rules. It's okay to accept some (specific) gifts from your lover, but you should only accept money if you are in urgent need. Otherwise, you're not a true lover. Gifts, Andreas says, are a good

14th century depiction of Frau Minne, the personification of courtly love

You can follow Danièle Cybulskie on Twitter **@5MinMedievalist**

test, because although someone who asks for gifts "may pretend that he is in love … he is a long way from having the affection of a lover; what he wants is not to love, but to enjoy the wealth of somebody else" (p.159). Beware twelfth-century gold-diggers at all costs.

3. She spends too much time on personal grooming.

This is a tricky one, says Andreas, because she could be prettying herself up for you: "If you find that she is paying more attention to the care of her person than she had been doing, either her love for you is growing or she is interested in the love of someone else" (p.158). Don't jump to conclusions. If you want to find out for sure, just use "the greatest care and subtlety" (p.158) and pretend to be in love with someone else for a while. If she's jealous, you're good.

4. She tries to hide from your messenger.

This is the twelfth-century version of using call display, and it's a solid sign that your love affair is doomed, according to Andreas. He says, "if she tries to hide from your faithful messenger, there is no doubt that she has turned you adrift in the mighty waves and that her love for you is only feigned" (p.157). (Now you know how to answer you friends when they ask you about that girl who won't return your calls.) Andreas says that if she's not sending you messages, or if her messenger "is becoming a stranger to you" (p.158), it's pretty much over.

5. She's unenthusiastic in the bedroom.

Andreas doesn't shy away from talking about sex, but he uses the code word "solace" for propriety's sake (no one can accuse him of being smutty). When it comes to solace with your lady, pay close attention. For example, "if you find her, for no reason at all, growing half-hearted about giving you the usual solaces, you may see that her faith is wavering" (p. 157); likewise, "if you find her less ready than usual to grant or to seek solaces, you may know that your love will not last much longer" (p.157). Ladies need good solace, too, so if she's not seeking solace with you, she may be seeking solace with somebody else. This may hurt to hear, but "if at the very moment of delight when she is offering you her sweet solaces the act is more wearisome to her than usual, or if you see that your solaces bore her, you need not doubt that she has no love for you" (p.158). Trust Andreas: the key to a good relationship is solace, so if the solace is boring, the relationship is probably already over.

When it comes to relationship advice, who better to trust than a twelfth-century churchman? For more helpful advice on love and solace, check out the rest of ***The Art of Courtly Love***.

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