

The Medieval Magazine

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The Infamous Military Campaign of 1379



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The destruction of an English fleet led by Sir John Arundel in 1379 is reported by most chroniclers to be an unfortunate accident. However, if you read Thomas Walsingham's account then you get a far more horrific version of events.



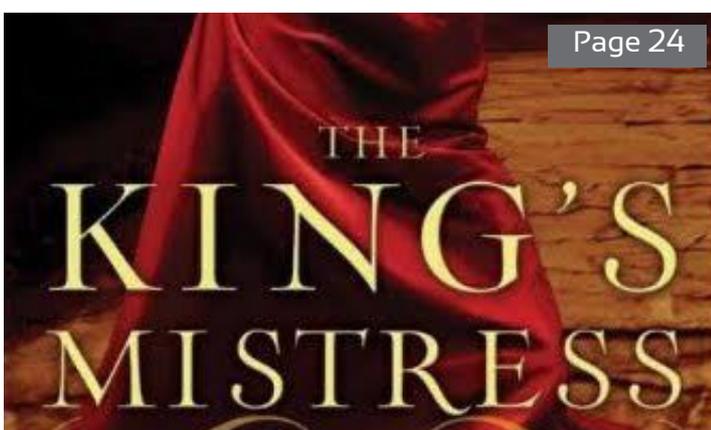
Agnès Sorel: Death of the Official Mistress of the King

On the life and death of the mistress of King Charles VII of France



Alice Perrers: The Story of a King's Mistress

What we now know about the infamous lover of King Edward III of England.



An Interview with Candace Robb

We talk with the novelist about her portrayal of Alice Perrers.

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Cover Photo: Detail of Alice Perrers from
Chaucer at the court of Edward III -
painting by Ford Madox Brown, done
around 1850



Medieval News

Timothy Graham wins medieval teaching award

By Aaron Hilf



University of New Mexico Professor Tim Graham teaching a workshop on "Understanding the Medieval Book" in 2014 - photo courtesy UNM

Timothy Graham, professor of history at The University of New Mexico, has been awarded the 2016 Award for Excellence in Teaching by the Medieval Academy of America Committee on Centers and Regional Associations (CARA).

Graham joined UNM's History Department in 2002 and is also the director of the Institute for Medieval Studies.

"I am honored that this award recognizes the importance of manuscript studies as a pedagogical field and the leading role we have achieved in this field here at UNM," said Graham.

The CARA Award for Excellence in Teaching Medieval Studies recognizes exceptional teachers who have contributed to the profession by inspiring undergraduate or graduate students or by creating innovative and influential textbooks or other materials for teaching medieval subjects. All of which Graham has done during his time at UNM.

"My colleagues and I have long admired and appreciated how Tim inspires, guides, and challenges his students, especially in the art of paleography," said Melissa Bokovoy, chair of UNM's History Department. "He is a truly dedicated teacher who has been recognized several times by the UNM community for his excellence in teaching and research and we are exceptionally fortunate to have him as a colleague."

In a press release, CARA praised Graham's ability "to teach both the rigors of manuscript methods, which require meticulous attention to detail, while also [being] able to share a passion for the subject and an abiding interest in the theories of how to think about texts... This award is in recognition of Prof. Graham's reach as a teacher in many different venues and his profound generosity, which has created a 'sense of community' that reaches far beyond his departmental and university setting."

Graham is an internationally recognized expert in medieval manuscript studies and co-authored *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*, a text that is now the most widely used resource in the field. As director of UNM's Institute for Medieval Studies, he organizes the University's acclaimed annual Medieval Spring Lecture Series and runs an intensive, biennial summer workshop called 'Paleography and Codicology: A Seminar on Medieval Manuscript Studies.'

The four-week summer seminar, which will take place again this year, is open to graduate students from across North America. Graham started it in 2006 as a way to provide training to students who might not have the chance to do similar work at their home institutions. Students from Yale University, City University of New York, the University of Washington, Arizona State University, and the University of Oregon, just to name a few, have traveled to UNM to study under Graham.

"My goal was to make UNM the major center for instruction in manuscript studies in the western U.S.," he said.

The seminars have been immensely successful, in part because typically it is difficult to get training in manuscript studies in the United States, according to Graham. He said few faculty have had the chance to work first hand with medieval materials, since doing so would require spending considerable time in a European library. Having been a researcher at the University of Cambridge, Graham had that opportunity.

Along with the recognition from the Medieval Academy of America, Graham will also receive a \$1,000 award which will be presented during the awards ceremony at the Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy in Boston.

Penn Libraries to Host Regional Collections of Digitized Medieval Manuscripts

By Sara Leavens

The **Penn Libraries** is proud to announce their role as online host and one of the leaders in a partnership that will create the country's largest regional collection of digitized medieval manuscripts. This role is made possible through a grant of almost \$500,000 awarded to Bibliotheca Philadelphiensis, a new project organized by the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL) and funded by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The project, involving a total of 15 partner institutions, and led by the Penn Libraries, the **Free Library of Philadelphia**, and **Lehigh University**, will complete the digitization and online presentation of virtually all of the region's medieval manuscripts – a total of almost 160,000 pages from more than 400 individual volumes. PACSCL first showcased the variety and depth of Philadelphia collections in a 2001 exhibition, "Leaves of Gold: Manuscript Illumination from Philadelphia Collections," at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**. The exhibition and its associated catalogue drew heavily upon the manuscripts to be digitized in this project and sparked a surge in scholarly interest in the Philadelphia collections.

The manuscripts in this project range from simple but functional texts intended for the students of science, philosophy, and religion to jewel-like works of art in the collections of such institutions as **Bryn Mawr College**, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Free Library of Philadelphia's Rosenbach Museum.

Bibliotheca Philadelphiensis' images and metadata will be hosted by the Penn Libraries' manuscript portal, OPenn (<http://openn.library.upenn.edu>). The images will be released into the public domain at high resolution and available for download (by the page, manuscript, or collection) with descriptive metadata.

"Penn Libraries is thrilled to be collaborating with the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries to create data on the Middle Ages for the twenty-first century from American collections," remarked William Noel, Director of the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at the Penn Libraries.

The Viking Coloring Book

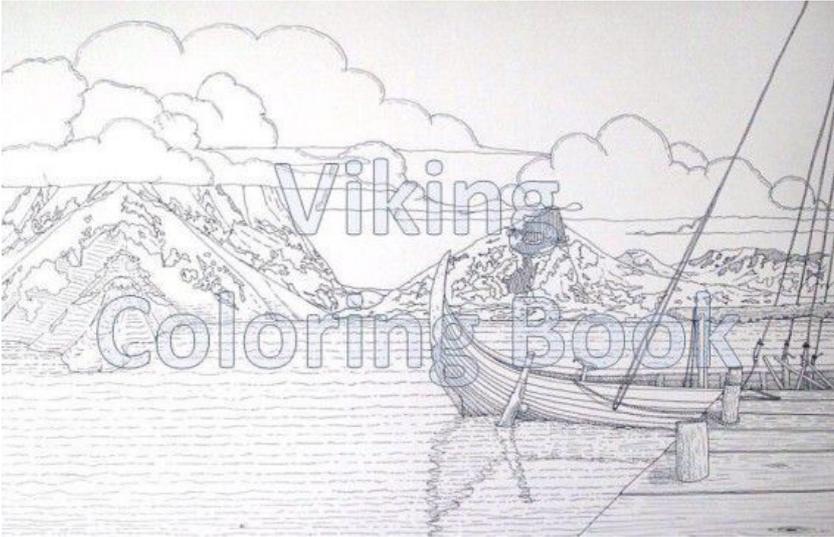


Image from the Viking Coloring Book project – courtesy Dayanna Knight

It took only three days for Dayanna Knight's idea of creating a Viking Coloring Book to reach its funding goal of \$3000 on Kickstarter.

Over 85 backers have so far contributed \$4,240 to the project, which aims to create a historically accurate images representations of artifacts, plants, places and scenes of early medieval everyday life in Scandinavia. The money being raised will help in the development of the book, with hopes that it will be published next year.

Knight, who has PhD in Archaeology from the University of Nottingham, told Medievalists.net, "I tried looking for a reasonable coloring book that showed more than just a shield wall in battle or well known interlace patterns. Although I'm an independent scholar I hold postgraduate degrees in medieval archaeology focusing specifically on the Norse settlement of the North Atlantic. Since I have had formal illustration training making one of my own coloring book seemed the next obvious step."

Those offering contributions will receive items ranging from bookmarks and postcards

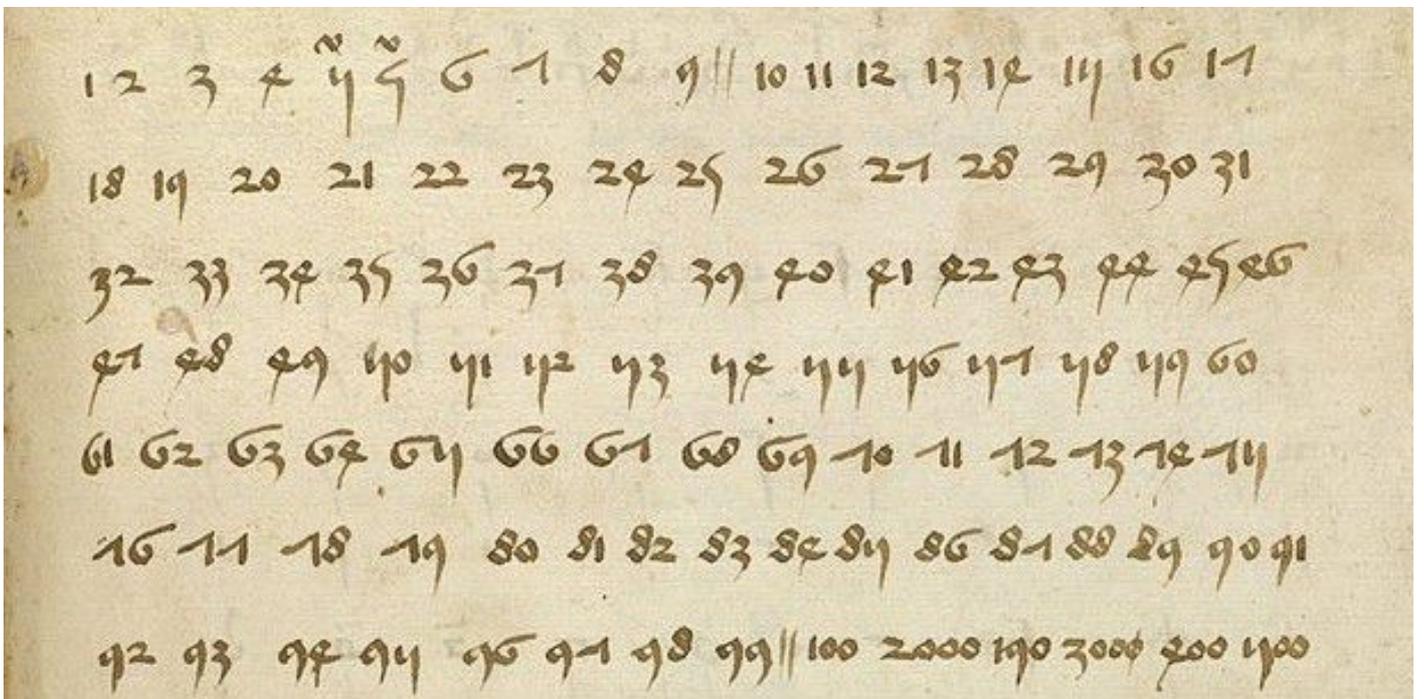
to copies of the coloring book as well as Dayana Knight's upcoming publication Viking Nations. For those who contribute \$500 to the project, they will also receive an original piece of art at least 11"x17" in the same style as the Viking Coloring Book.

The Kickstarter page was launched earlier this month, and only took three days to reach its goal. "I certainly wasn't expecting to have reached goal in three days but I take that as a good sign that everyone is interested in medieval material," says Knight. "

Beyond the monetary support, Knight has also received plenty of positive reactions to her project. "I've even only gotten a few comments that people will be needing to stock up on red crayons," she explains. "That one makes me chuckle as I know there will be more longhouses, byres and plants than will need a stocking up on red."

There is still over three weeks to contribute to the project. You can visit it at <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1382432732/the-viking-coloring-book>

Why learning numbers was so hard in medieval Europe



A German manuscript page teaching use of Arabic numerals – Ms.Thott.290.2°
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The Hindu-Arabic number system was invented in India around the year 500 AD, and during the Early Middle Ages spread throughout Arabic-speaking world. It reached into Western Europe by the end of the 10th century, and started getting more use in the 13th century. Most history books gloss over the introduction of numbers, but a recent article explains that “the uptake of the new numerals was slow, problematic, and spasmodic.”

In his article "Old-Fashioning versus Newfangled: Reading and Writing Numbers, 1200-1500," math historian John Crossley explains that even by the end of the Middle Ages many writers had a lot of difficulty understanding how numbers worked, and preferred using the older system of Roman numerals.

When one was using Roman numerals they would know that the various characters had a fixed amount. If they saw a V it would be five, X would be ten, and M that would mean one thousand. Crossley writes:

with minor exceptions, Roman numerals do not change their meanings when they change their place. On the other hand Hindu-Arabic numerals do change their meaning when they change their place. Consider this question, what does '3' mean? When we encounter 3 in 437 or in 3,145,872, it means two different things. It is not "just a 3!" In the first it means "thirty," in the second "three million." A more extreme example is provided by the occurrences of 3 in 1,234,537, where it has two different meanings! This illustrates the distinctive feature of the use of Hindu-Arabic in representing numbers: their place notation. This is independent of the form of the numerals 0,1,...9, since, on the one hand, other symbols could be used instead of these digits and, on the other, a different place notation could be used. Thus our system writes the numeral beginning with the largest number first: "123" means "one hundred and twenty three." Ironically, the smallest number comes first in written Arabic because the direction of Arabic writing is opposed to the Hindu orientation, which has been retained in the numerals.

This concept of place notation proved to be very difficult for medieval Europeans to understand, especially with how they traditionally calculated sums. Combined with the fact that the symbols for numbers were also brand new for Europeans, it is not surprising that the process of changing over to the new system was slow.

Crossley examined 1398 manuscripts created between the years 1200 and 1500 to see how much use of the Hindu-Arabic numerals, and found that throughout this period Roman numerals were still largely preferred. For the 13th century, only 7% of manuscripts had the new numbers, rising to 17% for the 14th century and 47% for the 15th century. He also found that in many instances where writers were mixing the two systems, sometimes within the same number – for example, one sometimes found M (for 1000) followed by Arabic numerals.

The impetus for changing to the Hindu-Arabic numbers in medieval Europe seems to have come from businessmen. Crossley writes:

There was also a clear distinction in the domains in which the two kinds of numerals were used. Roman numerals were used in academia where universities taught about abstract properties: square numbers, triangular numbers, etc. Hindu-Arabic numerals were used for the practical world of commerce. This occurred in special, so-called abacus schools where merchants and their employees were taught the new Hindu-Arabic numerals. Such schools were prevalent in Italy. Since they were intimately involved with sometimes quite complicated calculations, the commercial used ultimately led to the development of algebra. It was not until the sixteenth century that the two domains came together. At that time academia at last embraced the study of methods of calculation, in particular algebra, while retaining its theoretical concern with abstract properties of numbers.

The article "Old-fashioned versus newfangled: Reading and writing numbers, 1200-1500" appears in the journal *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, Third Series, Volume 10 (2013).

Five missing kings and queens – and where we might

By Charles West, Senior Lecturer in Medieval History at the University of Sheffield

As 2016 begins, the recent public interest in hunting for royal burials shows no sign of abating. Hardly has the dust begun to settle on Richard III's expensive new tomb in Leicester than work is starting on locating the resting place of another medieval monarch, Henry I (d. 1135), in Reading (like Richard III, Henry is also thought to be under a car park).

Meanwhile, the Church of England is stoutly refusing to allow DNA tests to be carried out on bones thought to be those of the "princes in the Tower" who disappeared in 1483, and who may be buried in Westminster Abbey.

With the honourable exception of Alfred the Great (d. 899), whose bones were – disappointingly for some – probably not found in recent Winchester excavations, this interest has tended to concentrate on the kings of England after 1066 at the expense of earlier kings, kings of British kingdoms other than England and queens. That is probably typical of the wider public consciousness of – and interest in – the Middle Ages, but it's not exactly representative of

the period. So here are five remarkable royal burials that present puzzles worthy of attention – and that might help add just a little bit of diversity, too.

1. Oswald of Northumbria (d. 642)

Oswald was a warlike leader of the northern kingdom of Northumbria, but adopted Christianity with all the zeal of the convert that he was. He so impressed the Irish missionary Aidan by his acts of charity that the latter seized his arm and exclaimed: "May this hand never perish!" Sure enough, it didn't, remaining uncorrupted after Oswald's death (or so the story goes).



A twelfth century painting of Oswald of Northumbria in Durham Cathedral.

But it wasn't just Oswald's hand that had a remarkable fate. Oswald was killed on the battlefield by pagan Mercians and the Welsh, and his head and limbs put on stakes. Some of these remains were later taken to the monastery of Bardney in Lincolnshire. When this fell under Viking rule in the tenth century, the West Saxon royal family mounted a raid to steal the royal remains and bring them back to English-controlled land. What happened next isn't entirely clear, but for the modern bone hunter the problem isn't a lack of evidence – it's too much of it. In the Middle Ages, five different establishments claimed to own Oswald's head, from Durham in England through to Hildesheim in Germany, whose magnificent head reliquary survives to this day.

2. Eadgyth (d. 946)

Until Oswald's bones are located, the oldest identified remains of any English – or British – royalty are those of a woman, Eadgyth, daughter of King Edward the Elder. And they're not even in England. Eadgyth's brother King Aethelstan sent her and her sister Eadgifu to Germany to allow Duke Otto of Saxony to take his pick of the two for marriage. Otto chose Eadgyth, and when he became emperor, she was anointed as his queen. She remained in Germany until her death in 946.

In 2008 her tomb in Magdeburg in Germany was opened and, although carbon dating failed, isotopic tests confirmed that the remains were indeed Eadgyth's. But what's

remains were indeed Eadgyth's. But what's puzzling is that not all of Eadgyth was actually in the lead casket: her hands and feet were nowhere to be found and most of the skull was missing. What happened to these? Experts at the time of the exhumation suggested that thieves had struck in search of holy relics – but Eadgyth wasn't generally considered a saint, so the mystery remains.

3. Harold II (d. 1066)

Everybody knows what happened to King Harold on the battlefield of Hastings in 1066 – but what happened afterwards? Confusion set in early. A contemporary text, *The Song of the Battle of Hastings*, says that he was buried on a cliff top; a later source claims he survived the battle and lived for many years as a hermit; but other texts – and most historians – suggest he was buried in Waltham Abbey, which he had endowed.

Predictably, there is now much talk of finding his tomb. But even if the tomb could be found, could we be sure that it was really Harold inside it? According to the 12th-century *Waltham chronicle*, Harold's face was injured beyond recognition by battlefield wounds – and the fallen king was identified for burial only by mysterious "secret marks" on his body known to his concubine, Edith Swanneck. Can we be quite sure that Edith could not have been mistaken?

4. Margaret (d.1093)

Margaret was another victim of the Norman conquest, but one whose life took a happier turn than Harold's. Descended from King Alfred the Great, she was brought up in exile in Hungary before marrying the Scottish king Malcom III. She was treated as a saint soon after her death and her chapel can still be seen in Edinburgh castle. A gospel book she owned also survives in London.

But what remains of Margaret herself is elsewhere. She was buried in Dunfermline

Abbey on her death, but later her head was removed and taken to Edinburgh as a relic and in the confusion of the Reformation it ended up in France, where it was lost in the revolution. Other parts of Margaret's body were transferred to Spain by Philip II. When Queen Victoria paid for the restoration of Margaret's tomb in Dumferline, it was probably therefore the restoration of a cenotaph.

However, in 1862, a Scottish Catholic bishop travelled to Spain to ask for the return of some of Margaret's remains. He duly secured a relic, which he brought with him back to Edinburgh where it stayed for a century. In 2008, this relic – apparently part of Margaret's shoulder – was ceremonially handed back to St Margaret's church in Dunfermline.

5. Llwelyn ap Gruffydd (d.1282)

Llwelyn was the last leader of an independent Wales and met his fate resisting English imperialism in the shape of Edward I. Hardly had he been killed than his head was cut off and sent to London (though this was less grisly than the treatment meted out to Llwelyn's former ally, the rebel baron Simon de Montfort, whose testicles were draped over his decapitated head). Llwelyn's head was stuck on a pike at the Tower of London, where it remained for more than a decade to impress onlookers.

What happened to the rest of Llwelyn isn't certain. He was probably buried at Cwmhir Abbey in central Wales. But the archbishop of Canterbury at the time wasn't entirely sure of this – and even wrote a letter to seek confirmation. The abbey is now in ruins, but no archaeological excavations have taken place to certify the last resting place of (most of) the last independent Welsh ruler.

This article was first posted in *The Conversation*

The Infamous Military Campaign of 1379

The destruction of an English fleet led by Sir John Arundel in 1379 is reported by most chroniclers to be an unfortunate accident. However, if you read what Thomas Walsingham has to say about what happened, you get a far more horrific version of events.

The basic facts of this story are agreed upon – in early December of 1379 the English organized a naval expedition in support of their ally the Duke of Brittany, who was being attacked by the French. Command of this expedition was given to John FitzAlan, 1st Baron Arundel, who had the title of Lord Marshal.

According to Jean Froissart, one of the most well-known chroniclers of the period, the fleet and its commander soon came to a bitter end:

All these knights drew to Hampton; and when they had wind, they entered into their ships and departed. The first day the wind was reasonable good for them, but against night the wind turned contrary to them, and whether they would or not, they were driven on the coast of Cornwall. The wind was so sore and strainable, that they could cast none anchor, nor also they dared not. In the morning the wind brought them into the Irish sea, and by the rage of the tempest three of their ships burst and went to wreck, wherein was Sir John Arundel, Sir Thomas Banaster and Sir Hugh Calverley, and a hundred men of arms, of the which eighty were drowned, and Sir John

Arundel their captain was there perished, which was great damage...

Froissart adds that some mariners saved themselves by holding onto the masts or wooden tables. Those ships that weren't wrecked managed to return back to Hampton, after which they reported about their misfortune to the king. Another chronicler, Adam Usk, simply notes the shipwrecks and adds that the accident was divine punishment against the English crown for having raised taxes on the people and clergy.

A far different account of this campaign emerges from the writing of Thomas Walsingham, a monk who lived at St Albans abbey. He wrote several works, including the *Chronica maiora*, which covers events from the years 1376 to 1422. A meticulous and opinionated historian, Walsingham was not shy to criticize people in power.

He begins his account of the campaign of 1379 by explaining that John Arundel and the English soldiers had travelled to the coast, hoping to set off for the continent, but the winds were not favourable for launching the ships (this was a common situation for ships



Fleet of Richard II, depicted in British Library Harley 1319 f. 18

the ships (this was a common situation for ships wanting to cross the English Channel during the Middle Ages). Therefore the commander decided to wait until the weather changed.

Walsingham continues the story:

In the meantime he made his way to a convent of nuns which was not far away. Entering this with his men, he asked the mother superior to allow his fellow knight, who were labourers in the king's service, to lodge in their monastery. The nun, weighed up in her mind the dangers which could arise from having such guests, and such a request utterly contravened their religious rule so with fitting respect and humility, she explained that many who had arrived with him were young men who could easily be induced to commit unforgiveable sin. This would not only bring dishonour and ill-repute upon the house, but peril and destruction to himself and his men, who on the one hand should avoid impugning the fortress of chastity, and on other should be endeavouring to shun every kind of sin.

The abbess pleaded with Arundel, trying to convince him that he and his men should find lodgings elsewhere.

However, he would not change his mind, and arrogantly commanded her to rise, swearing that he would not in any way be deflected from providing lodgings for his men in that place. He immediately ordered his men to enter the buildings, and to take occupation of the public and private rooms until the time for sailing arrived. These men, urged on by the spirit of the devil, it is believed, rushed into the cloisters of the convent, and, as is usual with so ill-disciplined a mob, they each began to burst into different rooms in which the maiden daughters of important men in the district were looked after in order that they might learn their letters. Most of these girls had already made the decision to take the vow of chastity. The knights, feeling no reverence for the place and abandoning any fear of God, assaulted these girls and violently raped them.

Widows and married women who were also staying at the nunnery were attacked too, while in the surrounding district other English soldiers attacked people and carried off their provisions. "But those outrages were few and insignificant," Walsingham ominously adds, "compared with those that followed."

Once they learned that the fleet would be setting out, the soldiers grabbed the women and girls from the nunnery and forced them onto their ships. They even found a young bride, who had just left a church after a marriage ceremony, and kidnapped her too. Walsingham continues:

Not content with those crimes, some of them went to the lengths of committing sacrilege. For after first hearing Mass – clearly without any reverence – before the priest could put away his chasuble, they approached the altar and very quickly seized the chalice from it, gleefully, as if it were plunder. They then ran to the ships, with the priest pursuing them in his sacred vestments, his alb, stole, and maniple, and demanding back the chalice, he threatened them with eternal punishment. When the priest received terrible mimicking threats about what would happen if he did not go back, he still refused to be silent. Instead, he summoned neighbouring priests, and processed to the very shore with burning candles, bells, books, and things which are required for the proclamation of such a sentence. There he demanded, on pain of excommunication, the restoration of the stolen property. When they did not see fit to comply with the demand, he publicly pronounced a terrible proclamation of excommunication against them, extinguishing the candle by tossing it into the sea.

As this was happening, Sir John Arundel ordered the men to embark and prepare to set out. The captain of the flagship, a sailor named Robert Rust, then spoke up saying that there would be bad weather coming, and

advised that they should not leave port. Arundel ignored the prediction, and the fleet moved out. Soon enough, the storm clouds appeared, and using the words of Virgil, Walsingham described how "all at once the winds churned up the sea, and huge waves surged high, and the ships were blown apart in the vast ocean."

The chronicler goes on to add more detail:

And, more terrible than death itself, men say, a vision or image of the devil appeared amongst them, which seemed visibly to threaten with destruction those who had embarked with John Arundel. It is not easy to describe the shouting, or the great sorrow, the lamentation and the floods of tears at that time amongst the women who had boarded the ships either through force or of their own volition, when the ships rose high into the sky as the winds and waves struck and then plunged again into the depths, when they saw no longer the likeness of death but death itself at hand, and did not doubt at all that they were shortly to suffer it.

The panicked crews then rushed to lighten the burden of the ships, hoping that it would keep them afloat:

... first by throwing over utensils, those of little value first, then those that were more valuable, in the hope that by doing so their expectation of survival would be raised. However, when they realized that the situation was not less desperate but more so, they imputed the cause of their misfortune to the women themselves, and, in a frenzied state of mind, with the very hands with which previously they had amorously handled them, with the same arms with which they had lustfully fondled them, they now snatched them up and threw them into the sea; as many as sixty of the women, they say, were thrown overboard to be eaten by the fish and sea monsters.

The storm, however, did not pass, but continued on for some days and night, leaving the ships at the mercy of the waves. Eventually, someone on the flagship spotted land – it was a small island off the coast of Ireland, and Arundel ordered the sailors to take him to shore. When some of them objected, saying the the force of the storm would cause their ship to crash against the rocks, “Sir John was furious and rushed upon them, brutally killing some of them, it is said.”

The captain Robert Rust obeyed the command, although he told his crew to make their confessions, “For there is now no place left for us to escape to.” The ship sailed towards the island, knocking into rocks and sandbars as it aimed for the steep slopes by the shore. Although the ship was damaged and taking on water, it got close enough to the shore for the men to jump off. The captain and others were able to escape, but as Walsingham writes:

Finally Sir John Arundel himself also jumped, and reached the sand, but it seemed that he was too sure of his own safety; for, as if there was nothing to be afraid of, though standing on quick-sand, he began to shake the water from his clothing which had been soaked in the ship by the waves of the sea. When Robert Rust saw this, he thought about the dangers which Sir John had not yet escaped, and went down again on the sand. There grabbing hold of his hand he tried hard to pull him from his dangerous position; but in rashly concerning himself about another’s safety, he neglected his own and lost his life. For in fact while he was trying to pull Sir John with him, high waves of the rough sea at that moment were flowing in their own direction and as the waves came in further, they knocked them both down, and then when they ebbed they dragged them both into the deeper waters; and that was the end of them.

Walsingham adds that two knights were also killed trying to rescue the commander, as the seas slammed their bodies into the sharp

rocks. Others were also killed trying to escape the ship, and those who reached land were left soaked and in the cold, causing some to succumb to hyperthermia. It took three days for some Irish residents to spot the survivors and rescue them, and it was also then that the body of John Arundel floated back to shore. He was buried in an abbey in Ireland.

Walsingham goes on to note that twenty-five ships were lost in the storm, with the rest of the fleet landing back in England or in Ireland. He explains that some of the ships survived without any loss of life – they belonged to the more upright men of that campaign, who were not involved in the attacks on the people, and concludes that “it is pleasing to see in these events the evidence of divine punishment as well as the conspicuous mercy of God’s goodness.”

There are some readers who will question Walsingham’s account – it sounds almost too scripted to be true, with evil soldiers committing unspeakable acts, only to have God coming down to punish them. The chronicler himself is ready for the criticism, for he ends the account of the campaign of 1379 with these words:

But lest we should be judged to have dealt with those whose adversity or good fortune we have described, from dislike or favour, we have left it to our readers to put whatever construction they like on those accounts. We add what is certainly true, that we have avoided all taint of falsehood, bias, provocation, or incitement, but have at all times told the whole truth as we have learned it from those who were involved in all these events, and we have no right to disbelieve them.

The St. Albans Chronicle: The Cronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, has been edited and translated by John Taylor, Wendy Childs and Leslie Watkiss, and published in two volumes by Clarendon Press in 2011.

Agnès Sorel: Death of the Official Mistress of the King

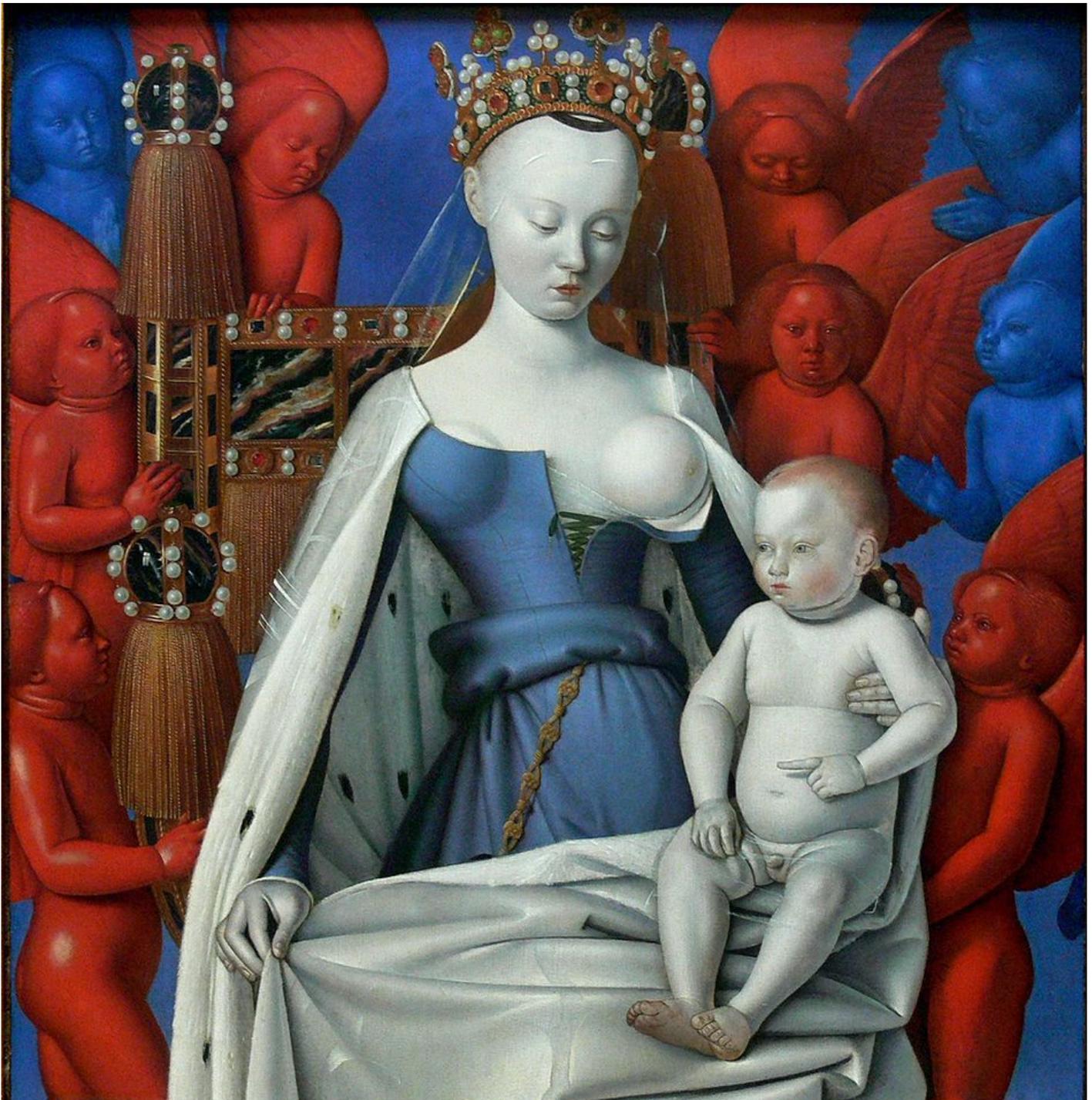
By Danièle Cybulskie

To say that sexuality in the Middle Ages was all about double-standards is a huge understatement. As with any culture in history, sex made things complex, and defied regulation with regularity. For most people, in the Middle Ages as now, being exposed as part of an extramarital affair would bring great embarrassment and shame – along with a certain celebrity or notoriety. But some people are born to break the rules, and one of those people was Agnès Sorel.

Agnès lived in France in the thick of the Hundred Years' War, and her position was as one of the ladies in waiting in the household of King Charles VII's brother-in-law. In 1444, Agnès met Charles, and their affair began. It was no secret: Charles doted on Agnès, giving her everything from money to land, and possibly "the first cut diamond". (Legend has it that Agnès started the diamond trend by wearing a – presumably uncut – diamond necklace in order to catch Charles' attention in the first place.) In return for Charles' generosity, Agnès was happy to be a very noticeable part of Charles' court, learning all she could about how it worked. When Charles needed funding for his war efforts, Agnès was there to help him sweet-talk his way into the wallets of the nobility. For her help and for love, Charles created the title of "Official Mistress" for her, a court position that came with all the niceties. From that point forward, "Official Mistress" was a job that had many applicants.

While many royal mistresses are forgotten, Agnès ensured that she would be remembered by starting fashion trends at court. Beyond just diamonds, she began to wear dresses that exposed one or both of her breasts in public. In one of my favourite moments of the *Museum Secrets* episode that features Agnès, a local politician describes her dresses matter-of-factly, saying, "She wore one of those famous lace dresses that allowed her to show off her magnificent bosom." Her bosom was apparently just so magnificent that it had to be preserved for posterity. A **portrait painted by Jean Fouquet** features Agnès as the Virgin Mary, breast exposed in the classic pose of being about to nurse the baby Jesus. Just imagine the reaction of the clergy.

Whether it was for breast-baring, living in sin, or having great influence over the king, Agnès was (unsurprisingly) hated by many, so it raised some eyebrows when, just after the premature birth of her fourth child of Charles' in 1450, Agnès died suddenly. The rumours were everything from illness to poison, but there was no conclusive cause of death until French historians, led by Phillipe Charlier (also featured on that same episode of *Museum Secrets*), exhumed Agnès' body in 2004. Charlier tested Agnès' remains for cause of death and noticed an abnormally high amount of mercury. While mercury was used as a cure for parasites, which Agnès did



Madonna Surrounded by Seraphim and Cherubim, by Jean Fouquet, with the model thought to be Agnès Sorel

indeed suffer from, Charlier found a suspiciously high amount of mercury in her hair, suggesting that she had ingested high quantities of mercury in the days before her death. **Agnès was murdered**, says Charlier. It seems very likely it was under the orders of the Dauphin (of Joan-of-Arc fame), Louis, who actively despised her, but we will never actually know for certain whodunit. (It could have been the butler.)

In the course of their investigation, Charlier's team used Agnès' skull to create a forensic reconstruction of her face, as they did recently with England's Richard III. Now, **we are able to gaze upon a possible replica of Agnès**, and contemplate the beauty, and the fatal impact, of France's first Official Mistress. (For more information on the forensic examination of Agnès' remains, you can find the (French) article in which Charlier outlines his discoveries **here**.)

Alice Perrers

The Story of a King's Mistress

At that same time there was a woman in England called Alice Perrers. She was a shameless, impudent harlot, and of low birth, for she was the daughter of a thatcher from the town of Henny, elevated by fortune. She was not attractive or beautiful, but knew how to compensate for these defects with the seductiveness of her voice. Blind fortune elevated this woman to such heights and promoted her to a greater intimacy with the king than was proper, since she had been the maidservant and mistress of a man of Lombardy, and accustomed to carry water on her own shoulders from the mill-stream for the everyday needs of that household. And while the queen was still alive, the king loved this woman more than he loved the queen.

This is how Thomas Walsingham, one of the most important chroniclers of the late 14th and early 15th centuries, introduces us to Alice Perrers. She is perhaps one of the most infamous individuals of medieval English history, at least if you only read Walsingham. She certainly had her detractors, but the many records from that time also reveal an ambitious and intelligent lady who gained great success.

Since the nineteenth-century historians have been coming up with various suggestions on who Alice was - perhaps the daughter of minor nobility, having a connection to Geoffrey Chaucer, or coming

from very humble origins as Walsingham believed - but recent work in the archives by historians Mark Ormrod and Laura Tompkins have given us new details about her early life. Alice, born around the year 1340, likely came from a London family named Salisbury who worked on goldsmiths. In 1342 this family took on Janyn Perrers as an apprentice - the man who would go to be Alice's first husband. This Janyn was likely born in London too, but had come from parents or grandparents who immigrated from the continent.



Chaucer at the court of Edward III - painting by Ford Madox Brown, done around 1850

As a member of a family of goldsmiths, Alice would have been a relatively wealthy Londoner. Tompkins explains, "Alice also probably received education at home and possibly also at an elementary or grammar school, which girls in the city are known to have attended. In particular, as well as basic tuition in English, French and numeracy, she undoubtedly became very experienced in the arts of business and moneylending associated with the world of the goldsmiths."

Meanwhile, Janyn would move on from becoming an apprentice to a full member of the Goldsmith's Company of London, and was doing well enough that he got noticed by the royal household. In 1359, the king issued him a writ of protection that would allow him and three of his workers to travel and do business anywhere in England under the king's 'protection and defence'. More importantly, the writ describes him as 'our beloved Janyn Perrer, our jeweller'. This and other evidence leads Tompkins to conclude that "at some stage Janyn did supply the royal court in his capacity as a goldsmith and jeweller, and so it is quite possible that he met and conversed with Edward III in person."

It would be about this time that Janyn was married to Alice - we know this because of records stemming from a complaint by a merchant that he had sold Alice some cloth in 1360, but never received payment for it from her or from her husband Janyn Perrers. One can also speculate that Alice may have also met the King while still married to Janyn, perhaps during one of his trips to bring products to the royal court.

It is not known how long Alice and Janyn were married, but thanks to Laura Tompkins' research, we now know that Janyn died sometime between 19 May 1361 and 18 May 1362. Records from the Goldsmiths' Company show that during that year there was a bequest from his estate of 60 shillings to the alms fund of St Dunstan, the patron saint of that company.

Details are scarce on what happened afterwards, but by 1364 Alice Perrers gave birth to a son - the illegitimate son of King Edward III. If they had not already met before, the King and Alice got to know each other while she served as a lady-in-waiting to Queen Philippa of Hainault. The affair was kept quiet, but even after the birth of their son, named John de Southeray, the relationship continued on and produced two more daughters.

Thomas Walsingham continues the story:

After Alice Perrer's love affair with the king began, she gained such a hold over him that he allowed important and weighty affairs of the realm to be decided on her advice. Once she had begun to make a fool of the king and perceived that he was enthralled in all matters, to support wrong causes, to appropriate possessions wrongfully wherever she could for her own uses and, if opposition was planned anywhere against her, she would immediately go to the king, and supported, justly or unjustly, by his protection, she would achieve what she desired. The English people had tolerated her for many years because they loved the king with all their heart and took care not to offend him... they tolerated it until she brought almost universal dishonour upon the king's reputation, unjustly disinherited some of the most powerful of Englishmen, and defiled virtually the whole kingdom of England with her disgraceful insolence.

The monk's complaining was in part due to the rapid wealth Alice was accumulating. While she did get many gifts and income from the king, Perrers was astute enough to make wise investments with her funds (akin to turning millions into billions in today's terms). At one point, she controlled over fifty-six manors surrounding London, only fifteen of which were gifts.

Walsingham, whose own monastery had land disputes with Perrers, was keen to report the worst about the mistress. For example:



ALICE FERRERS AT THE DEATHBED OF EDWARD III.

Alice Ferrers at the deathbed of Edward III. From *Cassell's History of England*, published c.1901

...Alice had over a long period of time kept in her company a man who was a brother in the Order of Preachers who displayed the appearance of a physician, and professed that skill; but he was an evil magician, dedicated to evildoing, and it was by his magical devices that Alice had enticed the king into an illicit love-affair with her, or to be truthful, into that 'madness'. For a lecherous youth sins, but a lecherous old man is insane. It was said, furthermore, that this brother had made wax effigies of the king and Alice, and that, as once that infamous magician Nectanebus king of Egypt had done, he used these with juices of magical herbs and his words of incantation to enable Alice to get whatever she wanted from the king. He had also devised rings that caused forgetfulness or remembrance, just as Moses had once done, so that as long as the king wore them he would never forget this harlot.

This also happened to be a period when the ageing king was governing an unhappy realm - people were upset over a lack of success in the wars against France, and what they saw as corruption within the royal government. While Alice Perrers was not the only one being faulted, she got her share of haters and attempts were made to remove her from the king's side. However, she used her contacts, power and wealth to quickly regain her position.

Her influence would carry on as long as Edward III lived, but as he lay on his deathbed in June 1377, Walsingham would describe a scene (perhaps mostly from his imagination),

Further Reading:

Bothwell, James "The management of position; Alice Perrers, Edward III, and the creation of a landed estates, 1362–1377," *Journal of Medieval History* 24:1 (1998)

Ormrod, W.M., "Who was Alice Perrers," *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2006)

Ormrod, W.M., "The Trials of Alice Perrers," *Speculum*, Vol. 83, No. 2 (2008)

Ormrod, W.M., *Edward III* (Yale University, 2011)

Tompkins, Laura, "Alice Perrers and the Goldsmiths' Mystery: New Evidence Concerning the Identity of the Mistress of Edward III", *English Historical Review*, Vol.130 No.547 (2015)

in which Alice would carry out one more outrage:

... when she perceived that the king stood on the threshold of death, she contemplated flight. However, before her departure, in order to show everyone clearly that she loved the king, not for himself, but for his possessions, she artfully removed from the royal hands the rings which the king wore on his fingers to display his royalty, lest anyone should doubt the truth of the old proverb that no mistress lacks the cunning required for theft. So, in this way bidding the king farewell, and by his deed rendering thanks to him for the benefits conferred on her, she took herself off.

Within a few months of Edward's death, Alice opponents were able to get her put on trial, condemned, stripped of all her property (which include 20,000 pearls) and forced into exile. For most people, this would have been the end, but Perrers was able to find a way to get pardoned and have most of her lands restored. She would spend the next twenty years involved in numerous property disputes, but she would remain a wealthy landowner up to the time of her death in the winter of 1400-1. The tale of Alice Perrers was an unusual one, with controversy and setbacks, but this person of "blind fortune" was anything but, for she was able to use her skill and smarts to remain at the top of medieval English society for nearly forty years.

Writing about Alice Perrers: An Interview with Candace Robb

*The story of Alice Perrers has been a great inspiration for novelists, and several books have published which have featured her as the main character. The best known of these novels is **The King's Mistress**, which was written by Candace Robb under her pen name Emma Champion. We interviewed Candace about views on this historical figure and how she made Alice into a literary figure.*

1. What made you want to create a novel with Alice Perrers as your main character?

I once made the mistake of making light of Alice Perrers in several Owen Archer mysteries (*The Lady Chapel*, *The King's Bishop*). I'd plucked her out of Thomas Walsingham's fevered imagination. But when asked about her at readings, I couldn't explain to my satisfaction how it was possible that a woman from such a lowly background became so powerful, or whether she actually loved King Edward. I'd plucked her from the rack and slotted her in where she suited the plot, a mere convenience. What struck me when I began to dig more deeply was how long she stayed with King Edward even though she must have been aware of her many powerful enemies, must have realized she was likely to lose everything on his death. She'd come alive for me. I wanted to know her.

So I began to dig, and found that much of what was written about her was just a rehash of Walsingham's vitriol. To write *The King's Mistress*, I had to jettison all that and begin from scratch. It helped that just as I was trying to make sense of Walsingham's story of her origins the historian Mark Ormrod revealed that Perrers was her married name; no wonder none of the theories made sense. He posited that she was likely from a well-to-do family of merchants in London. I learned all I could about her and about the merchant families of London so that I could imagine what it might have been like for a woman of that background to find herself at the royal court.

2. Alice Perrers is certainly an interesting figure—in many of the contemporary sources reviled. How did you go about giving Alice a deeper character, one that the reader can relate to?

I put myself in her shoes and told the story from her point of view, beginning in her innocence, showing from the beginning the

"role" of young women as "vendibles" in the marriage market, whether of the merchant class or the nobility. Alice refers to herself as a "vendible" at the beginning of the first chapter; that was the most carefully chosen word in the book. I gave her motivations with which my readers could relate—her fierce love for her children and her steadfastness in love, especially for Edward.

3. We first interviewed you about this novel nearly six years ago, when it was just being released. Looking back at it now, would you make any changes to the story?

A Ph.D. candidate at St. Andrews completed a dissertation on Alice in 2013 that I want so badly to read. Once she's published it I'm sure I'll find much I'll wish I'd known!

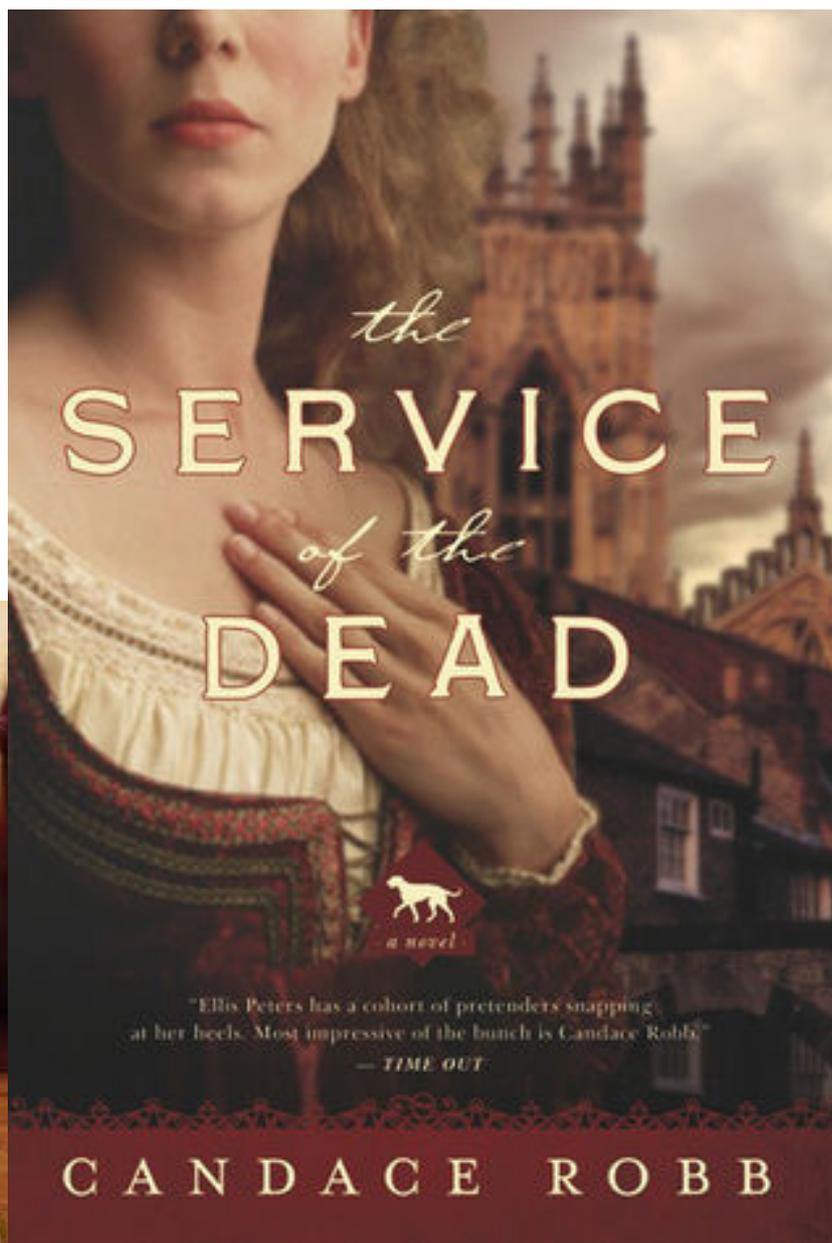
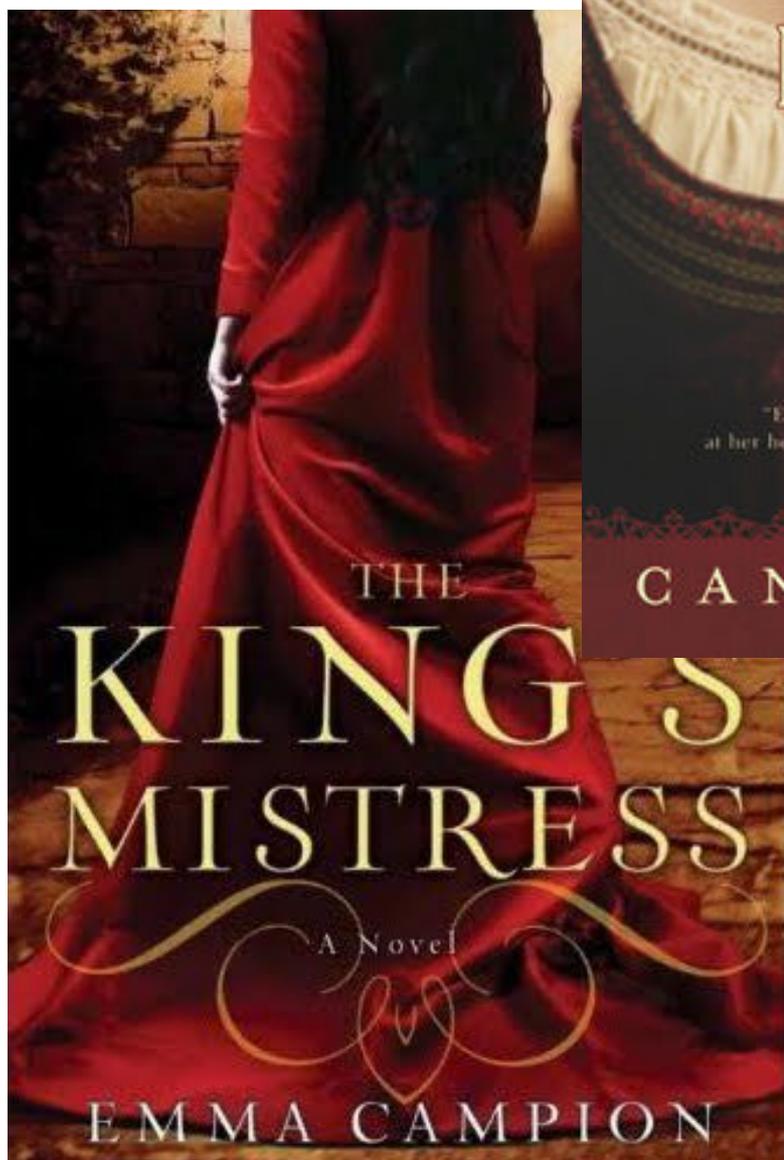
I regret that I didn't fight harder to retain some passages in which Alice and Edward gleefully plot her next acquisitions and she describes the intricacies of her financial transactions. My editors thought they made her too venal, but I thought they made her more complex, and added an interesting dimension to their relationship.

4. You have a new novel coming out in May - *The Service of the Dead* - which features a new character, Kate Clifford, a woman forged on the warring northern marches of fourteenth century England. Can you tell us more about it?

I am excited about the Kate Clifford mysteries. My work on Alice Perrers and Joan of Kent, particularly my frustrations with their limited choices, inspired Kate Clifford: she has Alice's background and business savvy, and Joan's strong will. But her skill with weaponry is all her own. I worked hard to create a background for her that makes such skill plausible in the world in which she lives. I'm exploring how a young widow of the merchant class might retain her independence and thrive in late medieval York, how she can ride the political winds and use them to her advantage. I'm

York, how she can ride the political winds and use them to her advantage. I'm having fun with women's various roles in a cityscape, from brothel owners to Beguines. Plenty strong men in the cast as well. I set it in York in 1399 because I've yearned to bring Owen Archer into the political tensions of that year

as Henry of Lancaster and King Richard II faced off, and the ensuing turmoil of the early years of Henry's reign, in which York played a dramatic part. But Owen would be too old to be a viable sleuth by then. So I started fresh with a new sleuth. I'm writing book 2 now, *A Bloodied Angel*.



You can learn more about Candace Robb's books on her website:

www.emmacampion.com

The Perils of Polygamy in 15th century Cairo

Under medieval Islamic law, a man could marry up to four women. However, if accounts from 15th century Egypt are indicative, it would be rare for such an arrangement to work out for all parties.

Aliya Saidi, Assistant Director of the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies at the American University of Beirut, discussed this issue in her recent article 'Marriage and Mental Illness in the Mamluk Period'. She was able to make use of a 15th century biographical dictionary by Shams al-Din al-Sakhawi, a scholar living in Cairo. He compiled biographies of 13,000 of his contemporaries, including over a thousand women. His works often included much about their private lives – so much so that Saidi notes it “reads almost like a gossip column of Mamluk society.”

Saidi finds that polygamous marriages were very rare among the women listed in the biographical dictionary, occurring in only fifteen cases. Moreover, al-Sakhawi notes that in nearly all the cases if a man tried to take a second wife, he would soon face strong opposition from his first wife. Usually, they either forced their husbands to divorce the new wife immediately or got a divorce themselves. If this did not happen, the result could be that the woman would suffer from mental illness.

Even the mere suspicion of having a second wife could lead to troubles. Saidi explains how one couple in Cairo, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Abnasi had been in a stable and uneventful marriage for many years, until “she began to imagine and to have delusions that he had married another woman without her knowledge. Sakhawi expressed his own conviction that 'Abd al-Rahman was innocent of his wife's accusations. But because she had

become delusional, she was unable to believe 'Abd al-Rahman's innocence. As a result of her fears, her behaviour towards 'Abd al-Rahman changed completely. Her conduct became extremely vulgar, something which caused 'Abd al-Rahman a lot of harm. As a result, the rest of their married life was full of turmoil. Because 'Abd al-Rahman was apparently unable to put his wife's suspicions to rest, the couple divorced and remarried each other several times. The pattern of divorce and remarriage continued until her death.”

Even being the second woman involved in these situations could lead to mental breakdowns. Al-Sakhawi points to another case in Cairo where a man named Muhammad took advantage of the fact that his first wife had left the city for a few days and secretly married another woman named Aisha. Saidi explains what happened next:

But Aisha was unable to cope with her secretly polygamous marriage. After her brief marriage to Muhammad ended, presumably in divorce, Aisha remained unmarried. But eventually, she became melancholic, and as a result, she was placed in a mental hospital for a few days...Whether she was guilty about marrying Muhammad behind his wife's back, or she had hoped her marriage to Muhammad would last longer, or even she had expected that Muhammad would divorce his other wife for her sake is not clear. In any case, the circumstances of Aisha's marriage to Muhammad and their subsequent divorce seem to have sent her into a deep depression. After her stay in hospital was over, Aisha returned

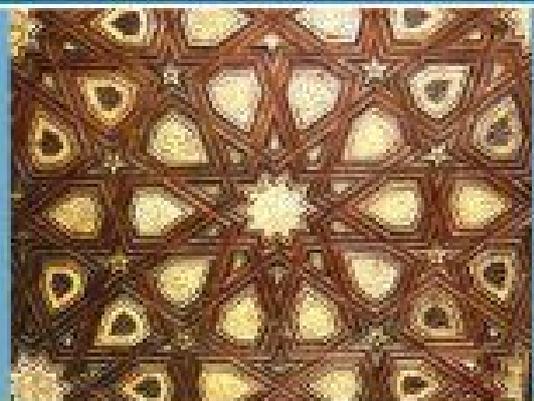
After her stay in hospital was over, Aisha returned to her family: her maternal aunt took her home, where she died shortly afterwards.

Saidi notes that while divorce and remarriage were common and normal practice in Mamluk society, polygamous marriages were not. "The fact that Sakhawi clearly linked mental illness with polygamy shows that polygamy was considered scandalous," she concludes. "Women therefore did their best to ensure that their husbands remained monogamous. However, when their efforts failed, some of them suffered from a mental breakdown as a result."

The article 'Marriage and Mental Illness in the Mamluk Period' appears in *Toward a Cultural History of the Mamluk Era*, which was published in 2010 by the Orient-Institut Beirut. It contains 18 articles in English and Arabic that cover a wide range of topics related to Mamluk society, including religious and cultural interactions, as well as artistic and scientific efforts that were taking place in Egypt and Syria between the 13th and 16th centuries.

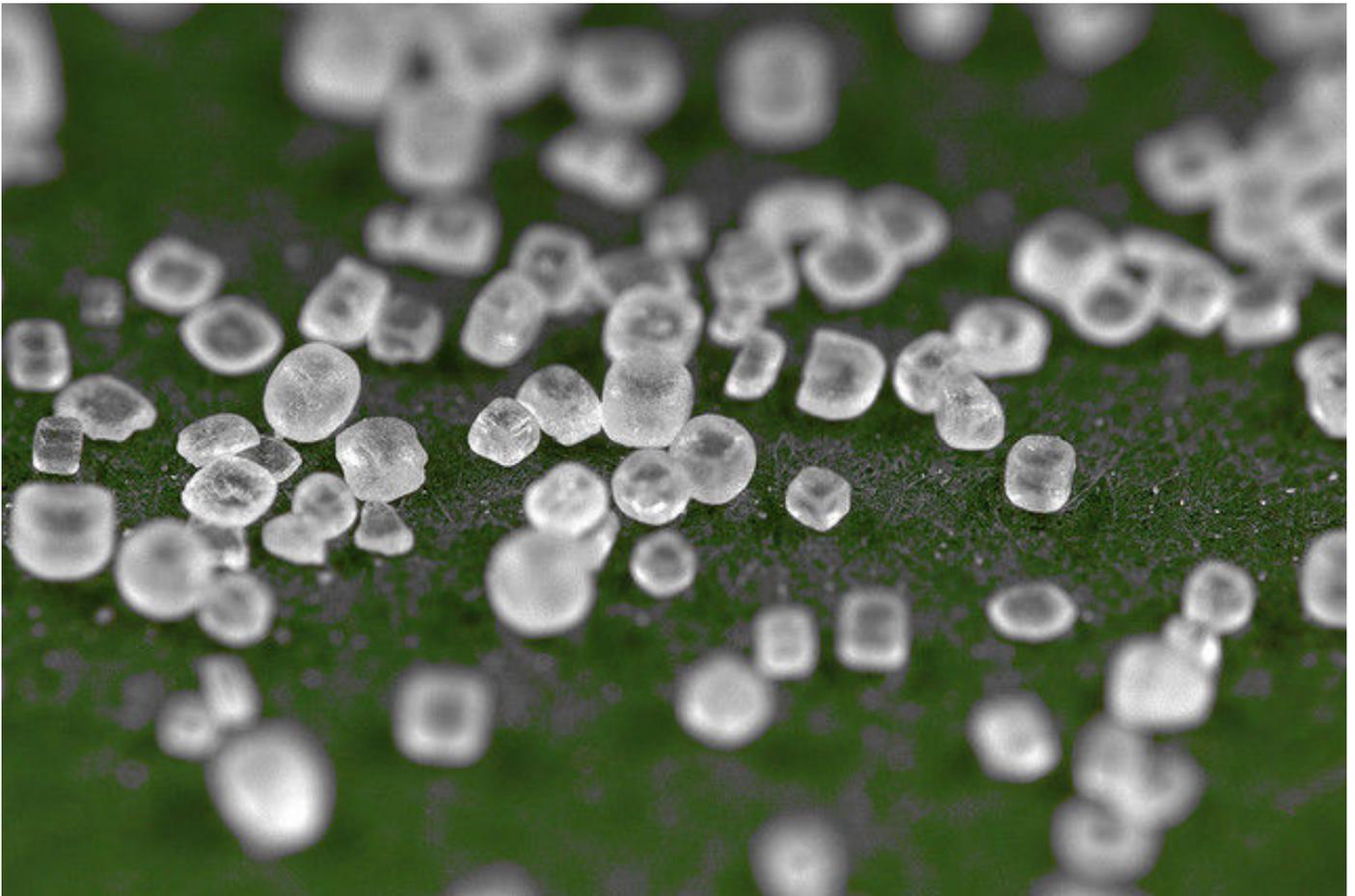
Towards a Cultural History of the Mamluk Era

edited by Mahmoud Haddad,
Annam Heinemann, John L. Maloy,
and Souad Sim



Using Salt in the Middle Ages

By Danièle Cybulskie



Salt Crystals - Photo by Kevin Dooley / Flickr

Being a Canadian in the throes of winter, it's hard not to contemplate the value of salt, both for roads and for comfort food. Salt was an integral part of medieval life: not only is some salt a necessary part of a human diet, but it's also essential for preserving food such as meat, seafood, and dairy products in the absence of refrigeration. Though salt wasn't always cheap or easy for everyone to get their hands on, it was ever present in the medieval world.

The amount of salt needed varied from place to place, and from purpose to purpose. Naturally, salting food for long-term storage took a lot more salt than just that used for everyday cooking. In *Food and Feast in Medieval England*, P.W. Hammond writes, "In the thirteenth century the Bishop of Winchester kept 160 quarters at one of his manors" (p.63). If we go by the estimates in *Changing Values in Medieval Scotland* (p.96), that would be roughly equivalent to 1, 310 litres. That's a lot of salt, but it seems they used it: another bishop, the Bishop of Worcester, apparently "used 1lb of salt for every 10lbs of butter or cheese" (Hammond, p.68). Meals at the bishop's house must have been delicious.

For an island nation like England, salt wasn't too hard to come by in a lot of regions. In *Food and Drink in Anglo-Saxon England*, Debby Banham points to many salt processing sites (most of them coastal) recorded in the *Domesday Book*, and asserts that these sites "were valuable, frequently changing hands in their own right, rather than as mere adjuncts to estates, and attracting the attention of the wealthiest landowners" (p.40). Given the large quantities of salt needed for curing and eating, salt production would have been lucrative, indeed. Medieval salt was collected "from the evaporation of brine (from natural salty springs) or seawater. None of it was mined" (Hammond, p.110). As you can imagine, this process would involve getting some dirt in the salt, "so it was frequently purified by merchants before sale, or by households before use, by redissolving, filtering and evaporating it again" (Hammond, p.111). Naturally, the closer to the table, the better the salt: no one wanted dirt in the salt dish, but a little dirt in a pickle barrel wasn't as big a deal. Unethical salt merchants could – and did – add bulk to their product by deliberately mixing in sand (Hammond, p.89). Unfortunately, people who lived inland would need to buy or barter for salt, hopefully getting more salt than sand in the trade.

As I've mentioned elsewhere, because not everyone found salt easy to come by, it was used as a marker of social status. Important people sat "above the salt", with easy access to the salt cellar at feasts, while unimportant people sat below the salt. Salt cellars could be very elaborate, like the sixteenth-century one at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, shaped like a ship (with a tiny Tristan and Isolde onboard). In *Medieval Life* Roberta Gilchrist writes, "Examples of pewter salts excavated from London have flat, hexagonal lids with handles cast in the shape of a dog" (p.125). Since dogs were a frequent symbol of loyalty, especially marital fidelity, Gilchrist suggests that "canine symbolism would have been particularly fitting for wedding gifts" (p.126). Among these salt-themed wedding gifts may also have been ornate spoons (Gilchrist, p. 125), which just goes to show that if there's anything newlyweds love, it's fancy dishes.

Even monks were not immune to the temptation of adding salt to what could easily have been pretty bland food, depending on the day and the order. In fact, it was important enough for monks to figure out a way to gesture for the salt during times in which they were not permitted to speak (having taken a vow of silence, for example). As Banham notes, "[salt's] presence on monastic tables is attested by the Indicia sign: 'When you want salt, then shake your hand with your three fingers together, as if you were salting something'" (p.40). (Just for interest's sake, this is not the same as the **ASL sign for salt**.)

Whether you love salt on your eggs, popcorn, or sidewalk, salt continues to be hugely important in modern life (maligned though it is now), as it was in medieval life. For more on medieval food, check out *Food and Feast in Medieval England* or *Food and Drink in Anglo-Saxon England*, or have a look at some handy recipes over at **Gode Cookery**.

Tales from Sacchetti: How a blacksmith removes a tooth

We are starting a new series in the magazine, offering tales from a work called *Novelle* by Franco Sacchetti. Sacchetti was a 14th-century Italian novelist and poet, who spent most of his life in Florence. He wrote various works, but is most remembered for the about 300 short stories he made. It is difficult to know which tales are real and which parts are fictitious, but often they are very funny and offer a look at the daily lives of medieval people that we rarely see.

Alessandro di Ser Lamberto causes a friend's tooth to be drawn in a new manner by Ciarpa, the blacksmith of Pian di Mugnone.

There was in the city of Florence, and still living at the present time, a pleasant citizen named Alessandro di Ser Lamberto who was both a singer and a player of various instruments; moreover, he was acquainted with many diverting and fantastic men, because he very willingly

frequented their company. It chanced that one of his friends was lamenting greatly on account of a tooth which caused him much pain and frequently hurt him so badly that he was in despair to whom Alessandro, having in mind a certain fantastic fellow, a blacksmith of Pian di

Mugnone, named Ciarpa, said, "Why don't you have that tooth pulled out?"

"Gladly would I do so," replied the other, "but I have too great a fear of the pincers."

Said Alessandro: "I will take thee to a friend of mine, who is my neighbour in the country, who will not touch you either with pincers or with his hands."

"Oh, Alessandro," cried his friend, "I pray you do this; if you will help me I will be your slave for evermore."

"Then come tomorrow and stay with me," answered Alessandro, "and we will go to him, for he is a blacksmith in Pian di Mugnone, by name Ciarpa."

Thus they were agreed; wherefore on the following morning, when they were both arrived at Alessandro's house, they immediately went to visit Ciarpa, whom they found in his workshop making a ploughshare. When they had greeted him, Alessandro, who knew how to make Ciarpa understand his nonsense, began to explain concerning his companion's tooth, that it was loose and that willingly he would have it pulled out, but that he did not wish to have it touched either with pincers or with hands, if that were possible. Said Ciarpa, "Let me see it," and as he touched it with his finger the other gave a loud cry.

Feeling that the tooth was loose, Ciarpa said, "Leave it to me, and I will draw it for you without using either pincers or hands."

To which the other replied, "Do, for Heaven's sake!"

Without quitting his workshop Ciarpa sent his apprentice for a piece of waxed thread, such as is used for sewing shoes, and when it was brought he said to the man, "Double this thread and make a running knot at the end, and do place it gently round your tooth."

With much difficulty the man did so, and when he had done it Ciarpa said, "Give me the other end in my hand." and he fastened it to a large nail that was in the stock of the anvil; then he said, "Draw tight the knot that is round the tooth," and the man drew it tight. Having done this, Ciarpa said to him, "Now stay quiet, for I must say some prayers and then the tooth will immediately fall out of your mouth."

He began to move his lips as though he were praying, and meanwhile he had nothing less than the ploughshare in the furnace; and when he had given it time to become red-hot, he plucked it out and rushed at the other with it, pulling the while a face like Satan, and crying:

"Tooth, will come out? Mouth, open!"

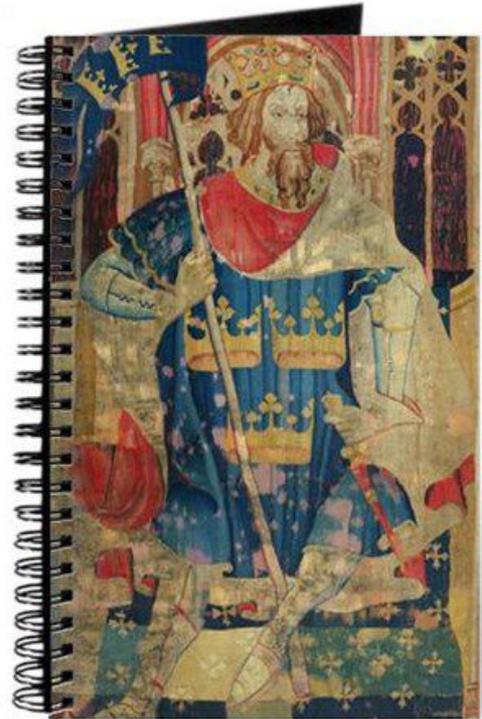
And he made as though he would hit him in the face. The man whose tooth was tied to the thread, moved by the greatest fear, suddenly drew back and took to flight, so that his tooth remained fastened to the stock of the anvil. The man was full of astonishment; he sought in his mouth for the tooth, and, not finding it, he declared that of a certainty this was the finest and newest operation that had ever been seen, and that he had suffered nothing whatever save from the fear of the ploughshare, and that he had not felt the tooth come out. Alessandro laughed, and turning to his friend, he said, "Did you ever think that this man could draw teeth so well?"

As soon as the friend had found his wits again, he replied, "I was afraid of a pair of pincers and this man has treated me with a ploughshare; but however it may be, I am rid of a great pain."

And to reward the blacksmith, he gave him and Alessandro an excellent dinner upon the following Sunday.

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