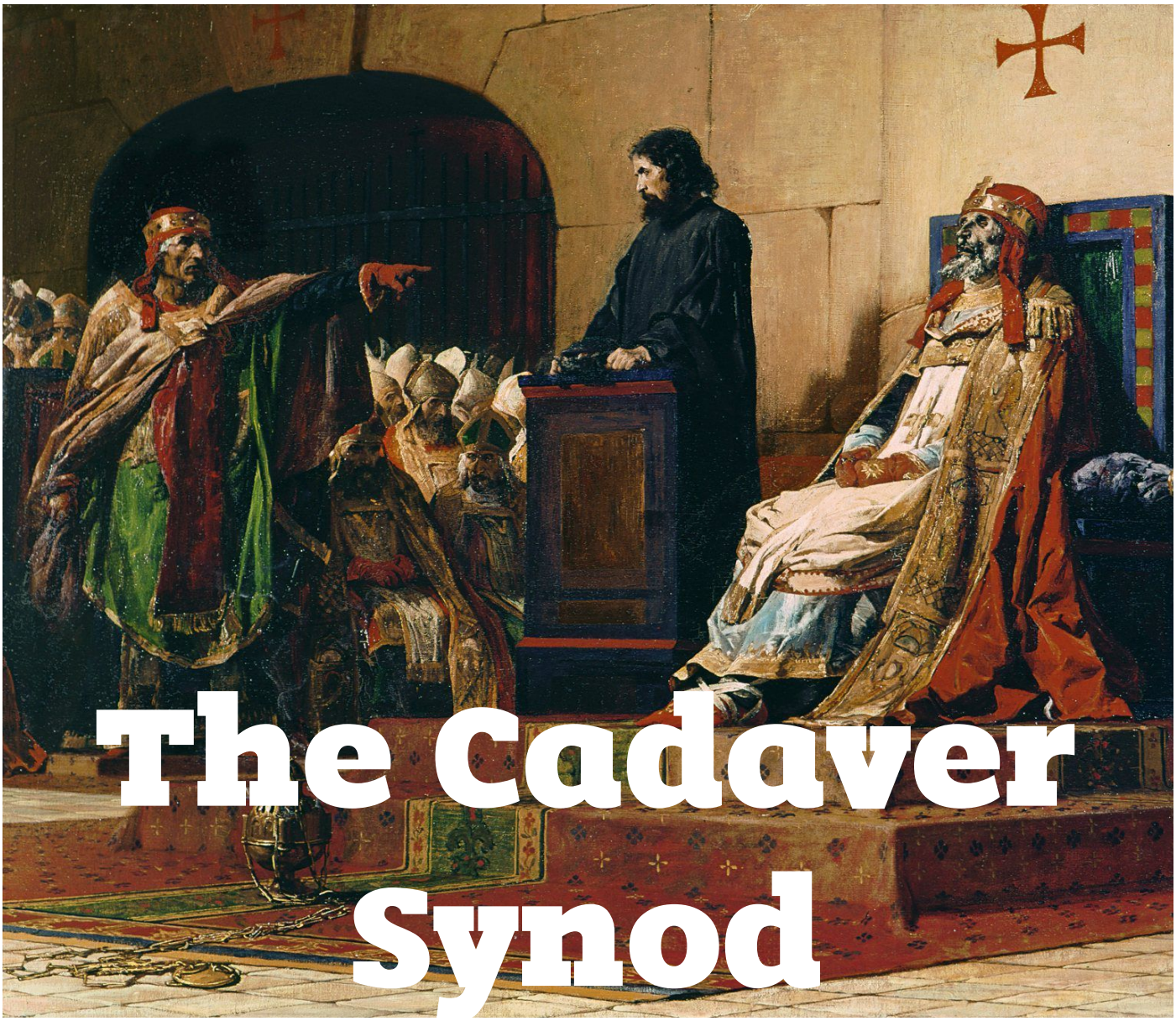
MEDIEVAL STUDIES MAGAZINE FROM MEDIEVALISTS.NET

The Medieval Magazine

Volume 2 Number 8

March 21, 2016



The Cadaver Synod

500-Year-Old Shipwreck Discovered

4

Prostitution in the Middle Ages

20

A Guide to Dover Castle

26

The Life and Death of King Erik IX of Sweden

The Medieval Magazine March 21, 2016

500-Year-Old Shipwreck Discovered off the Coast of Oman

Archaeologists believe this is the remains of one of the ships in the fleet of explorer Vasco de Gama

The Cadaver Synod: Low Point in the History of the Papacy

Why did one Pope put the corpse of another on trial in 897?

The Medieval Ladies of the Night

Daniele Cybulskie takes a look at prostitution in the Middle Ages.

A Guide to Dover Castle

Sandra Alvarez explores one of the great castles of England.

Table of Contents

THE MEDIEVAL MAGAZINE

Edited by: Peter Konieczny

Website: **www.medievalists.net**

This digital magazine is published each Monday.

Cover Photo: Jean-Paul Laurens, Le Pape Formose et Étienne VII ("Pope Formosus and Stephen VII"), 1870.

500-Year-Old Shipwreck discovered off the coast of Oman

The remains of 500-year-old ship have been found near an island belonging to Oman. It is believed to have been a ship belonging to Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, which sunk in 1503.

Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Culture and Blue Water Recoveries announced the discovery and archaeological excavation of a Portuguese East Indiaman. Details were published in the latest issue of the *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*.

The ship is believed to be the nau Esmeralda commanded by Vicente Sodré, who was the maternal uncle of Vasco da Gama. It sank in a storm in May 1503 near Al Hallaniyah island, which lies along the southern coast of Oman.

The wreck site was initially discovered by a Blue Water Recoveries team in 1998, on the 500th anniversary of Vasco da Gama's epic discovery of the direct sea route to India, but full-scale archaeological survey and excavation by the Oman government didn't begin until 2013. Since then two more excavations have been conducted in 2014 and 2015, with more than 2,800 artefacts being recovered. T

Key individual artefacts that helped in identification of the wreck site as Vicente Sodré's nau Esmeralda include:

- an important copper-alloy disc marked with the Portuguese royal coat of arms and an esfera armilar (armillary sphere), which was the personal emblem of King Dom Manuel I.

- a bronze bell with an inscription that suggests the date of the ship was 1498.

- gold cruzado coins minted in Lisbon between 1495 and 1501.

- an extraordinarily rare silver coin, called the Indio, that was commissioned by Dom Manuel in 1499 specifically for trade with India. The extreme rarity of the Indio (there is only one other known example in the world) is such that it has legendary status as the 'lost' or 'ghost' coin of Dom Manuel.

The bulk of the recovered artefacts were artillery and ordnance from the arsenal on board the ship. These included lead, iron and

Excavating the Wreck Site off the coast of Oman = photo courtesy Blue Water Recoveries

stone shot of various calibres, a large number of bronze breech chambers and several ancient firearms. Together they provide tangible proof of the military objectives of this fleet as ordered by Dom Manuel and brutally carried out by Vasco da Gama and his two uncles Vicente and Brás Sodré.

Archaeological Director Dave Parham of Bournemouth University commented "it is fascinating to work on a site that is involved in such early European maritime connections with the Indies. The armaments that the site has produced are already providing us with information about the martial nature of these voyages and the site has the potential to tell us much more about the men and ships that undertook these adventures and the peoples that they encountered".

The historical and archeological importance of the wreck site, based on future studies of the artefact assemblage, could be enormous. As one of the very early Ships of Discovery that pre-dates the nearest Iberian shipwreck in age by 30 to 50 years, the artefacts are expected to reveal new discoveries about how maritime trade and warfare was conducted in the Indian Ocean at the turn of this vital century.

"This project differs from the majority of maritime archaeology projects in that we set out to specifically find the wreck site of the Sodré ships, using a suvivor's and other historical accounts, because of their very early age and the potential they held for new discoveries. It is extremely gratifying therefore that this strategy has paid off with such interesting revelations even though we are still at a relatively early stage in the study of the artefact assemblage," said Project Director David L. Mearns.

Ibrahim Al Busaidi, Lecturer at the history section in Sultan Qaboos University

Discovery of a Possible Astrolabe

This copper-alloy disc, bearing the Royal coat of arms and the armillary sphere of Dom Manuel I is an important object although its precise identity & function is still unknown. It does have features suggesting it could be an astrolabe, or part thereof.

Gold Portugese Cruzado - photo courtesy Blue Water Recoveries

commented "The arrival of the Portuguese to India in 1498, led by Vasco da Gama is considered the beginning of a new era of communication between East and West at the beginning of modern times. This historical discovery documents this communication and confirms Oman's global stature and importance in the midst of the international competition between the various forces in the beginning of modern times. The artifacts that were found among the wreckage of the sunken ship of captain Vicente Sodré (1503) will provide the researchers and scholars, in the field of geographic explorations and the studies related to the Indian Ocean, a lot of historical information related to the nature of the Portuguese campaigns to the east and its goals, and the types of ships and weapons in addition to the economic aspects, such as currencies. Also it lends a lot of historical facts and supports the documentations on the Portuguese presence in the Middle East".

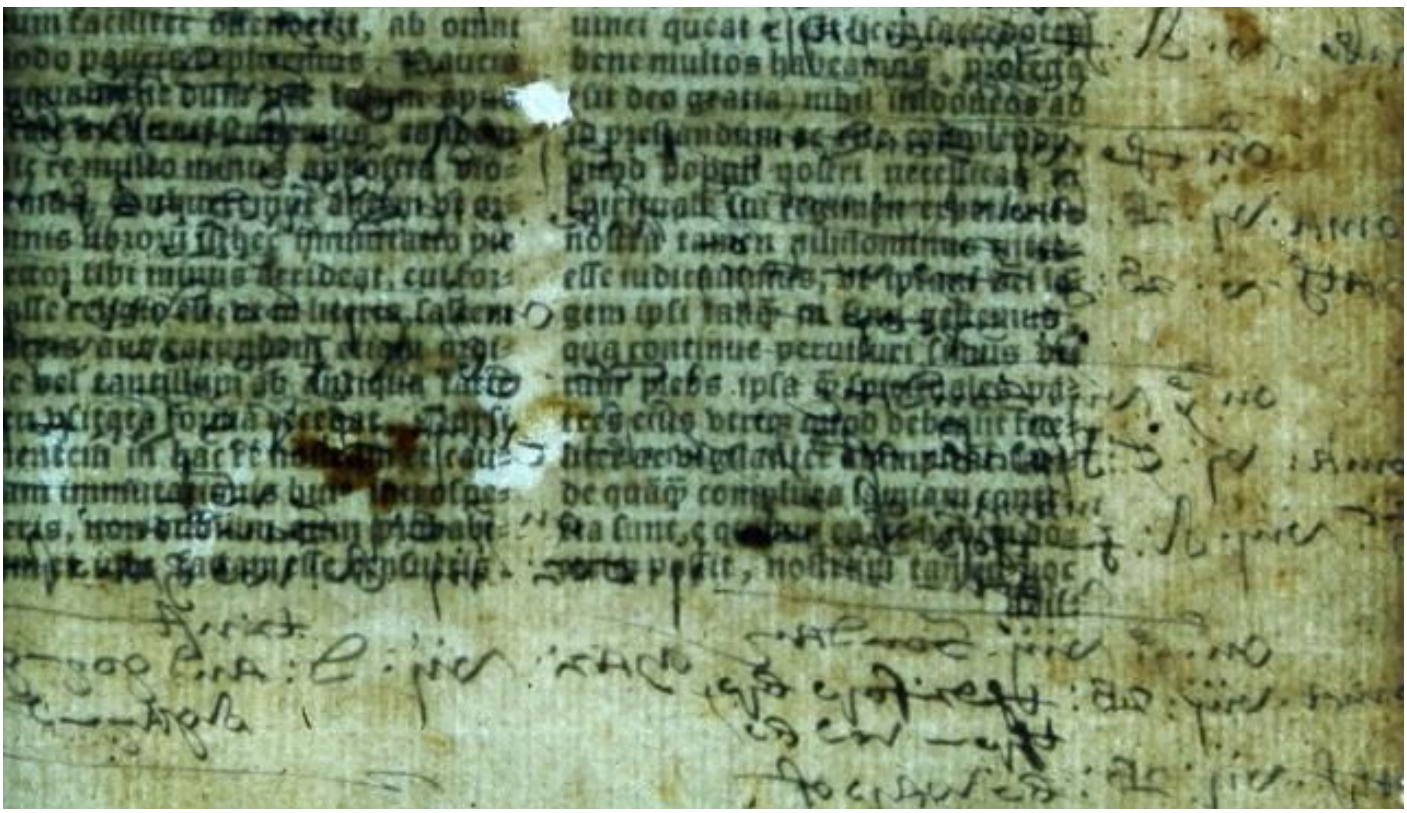
It was the efforts of several governmental agencies that made this project happen. These include Oman Royal Navy, Oman Royal Airforce, Oman Royal Police and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs along with the help of the local people at Al Halaniyah. Hassan Al Lawati the Adviser to the Minister For Heritage Affairs comments "This project is regarded as the first that is conducted in Oman and the region in underwater archaeology. Therefore, the Ministry has taken a proactive approach to ensure that the project will be efficiently conducted. This was done by involving the expertise in underwater archaeology and by working under international regulations such as the UNESCO convention of 2001. This project provided great opportunity in term of capacity building to the National team in all related aspects of underwater heritage site studies. We appreciate the joint efforts of the local and international entities and institutes that made this project a huge success"

Recovering the Ship's Bell

Learn more at **http://esmeraldashipwreck.com**

Historian uncovers secrets of the Reformation hidden in England's oldest printed Bible

Researchers have used complex image analysis to uncover annotations that were hidden for nearly 500 years between the pages of England’s oldest printed bible.



Hidden annotation are mixed with biblical text in a 1535 Latin Bible. Photo © Lambeth Palace Library

The annotations were discovered in England's first printed Bible, published in 1535 by Henry VIII's printer. It is one of just seven surviving copies, and is housed in Lambeth Palace Library, London. The secrets hidden in the Lambeth Library copy were revealed during research by Dr Eyal Poleg, a historian from Queen Mary University of London.

"We know virtually nothing about this unique Bible - whose preface was written by Henry himself - outside of the surviving copies. At first, the Lambeth copy first appeared completely 'clean'. But upon closer inspection I noticed that heavy paper had been pasted over blank parts of the book. The challenge was how to uncover the annotations without damaging the book" said Dr Poleg

Dr Poleg sought the assistance of Dr Graham Davis, a specialist in 3D X-ray imaging at QMUL's School of Dentistry. Using a light sheet, which was slid beneath the pages, they took two images in long exposure - one with the light sheet on and one with it off.

The first image showed all the annotations, scrambled with the printed text. The second picture showed only the printed text. Dr Davis then wrote a novel piece of software to subtract the second image from the first, leaving a clear picture of the annotations.

The annotations are copied from the famous 'Great Bible' of Thomas Cromwell, seen as the epitome of the English Reformation. Written between 1539 and 1549, they were covered and disguised with thick paper in 1600. They remained hidden until their discovery this year. According to Dr Poleg, their presence supports the idea that the Reformation was a gradual process rather than a single, transformative event.

"Until recently, it was widely assumed that the Reformation caused a complete break, a Rubicon moment when people stopped being Catholics and accepted Protestantism, rejected saints, and replaced Latin with English. This Bible is a unique witness to a time when the conservative Latin and the reformist English were used together, showing that the Reformation was a slow, complex, and gradual process."

The annotations were written during the most tumultuous years of Henry's reign. The period included the move away from the Church of Rome, The Act of Supremacy, the suppression of the monasteries, and the executions of Anne Boleyn, Thomas More, and John Fisher, as well as the Pilgrimage of Grace, which moved Henry to a more cautious approach.

Dr Poleg was also able to trace the subsequent life of the book, after the point at which Latin Bibles had definitively fallen out of use. On the back page he uncovered a hidden, handwritten transaction between two men: Mr William Cheffyn of Calais, and Mr James Elys Cutpurse of London. Cutpurse, in medieval English jargon, means pickpocket. The transaction states that Cutpurse promised to pay 20 shillings to Cheffyn, or would go to Marshalsea, a notorious prison in Southwark. In subsequent archival research, Dr Poleg found that Mr Cutpurse was hanged in Tybourn in July 1552.

"Beyond Mr Cutpurse's illustrious occupation, the fact that we know when he died is significant. It allows us to date and trace the journey of the book with remarkable accuracy - the transaction obviously couldn't have taken place after his death," said Dr Poleg.

He added: "The book is a unique witness to the course of Henry's Reformation. Printed in 1535 by the King's printer and with Henry's preface, within a few short years the situation had shifted dramatically. The Latin Bible was altered to accommodate reformist English, and the book became a testimony to the greyscale between English and Latin in that murky period between 1539 and 1549.

"Just three years later things were more certain. Monastic libraries were dissolved, and Latin liturgy was irrelevant. Our Bible found its way to lay hands, completing a remarkably swift descent in prominence from Royal text to recorder of thievery."

The Life and Death of King Erik IX of Sweden

The saint's legend speaks of a king who died a dramatic death in battle outside the church in Uppsala, Sweden, where he had just celebrated mass. But what can modern science tell us about his remains? A joint research project headed by Uppsala University now reveals more of the health condition of Saint Erik, what he looked like, where he lived and what the circumstances of his death were.

No contemporary sources mention Erik Jedvardsson, the Swedish king who was later sainted. The only account of his life is the saint's legend, in its preserved form written in the 1290's. Such legends are often unreliable. The Erik legend is, however, based on an older legend which has been lost, and this longer legend may have been much older.

The preserved legend says that Erik was chosen to be king, ruled fairly, was a devoted Christian, led a crusade against Finland, and supported the Church. He was killed in 1160, in his tenth year of rule, by a Danish claimant to the throne. His remains have rested in a reliquary since 1257.

A thorough analysis of the skeleton in the reliquary was conducted in 1946, but the availability of new methods of analysis motivated a new examination in 2014. On 23 April 2014, the reliquary was opened at a ceremony in Uppsala Cathedral. After this, researchers from several scientific disciplines set to work running tests on the remains in an attempt to learn more about the medieval king. Now, the first results of these examinations are made public.

'The interdisciplinary research collaboration on the analysis of the skeletal remains of Saint Erik provides extensive information about his health condition (orthopaedists and radiologists), genealogy (aDNA analysis), diet (isotopanalys), and his death (forensic medicine)', says project leader Sabine Sten, professor of osteoarchaeology at Uppsala University.

The reliquary contains 23 bones, seemingly from the same individual. They are also accompanied by an unrelated shinbone. The radiocarbon values measured in the bones are consistent with a death in 1160. The osteological analysis shows that the bones belong to a man, 35-40 years old and 171 cm (5 feet 6 inches) tall.

The scull and crown of Saint Erik. Photo from April 2014 when the reliquary was opened at a ceremony in Uppsala Cathedral. Credit: Mikael Wallerstedt

Examinations of the bones using computer tomography at the University Hospital in Uppsala found no discernible medical conditions. DXA- and pQCT measurements conducted at the same hospital found that Erik did not suffer from osteoporosis, or brittleness of the bones. Quite the opposite, as he had a bone density about 25 percent above that of the average young adult of today. King Erik was well-nourished, powerfully built and lived a physically active life.

The isotope analysis points to a diet rich in freshwater fish, which indicates that the king obeyed the church rules on fasts, i.e. days or period when the consumption of meat was forbidden. Stable isotopes also imply that he did not spend his last decade in the expected Uppsala area but rather in the province of Västergötland further south. These conclusions should however be considered very preliminary, as there are as of yet very few other studies to compare the isotope values to.

The opening of the reliquary also saw DNA samples taken. It is hoped that these will produce results that will shed new light on questions of genealogy. This analysis has not yet been completed, and is expected to take another year. The researchers can, however, reveal that the samples have yielded DNA information.

The cranium in the reliquary is dented by one or two healed wounds that may have been due to weapons. The legends say that Erik led a crusade against Finland, which is thought to be a possible explanation of the injuries.

The saint's legend says that in the king's final battle, the enemy swarmed him, and when he fell to the ground they gave him wound after wound until he lay half dead. They then taunted him and finally cut off his head.

Computer tomography examination of a medieval king. Project leader Sabine Sten, professor of osteoarchaeology, Uppsala University. Credit: Adel Shalabi

The remaining bones have at least nine cuts inflicted in connection with death, seven of them on the legs. No wounds have been found on the ribs or the remaining arm bone, which probably means that the king wore a hauberk but had less protected legs. Both shin bones have cuts inflicted from the direction of the feet, indicating that the victim lay on his front.

A neck vertebra has been cut through, which could not have been done without removing the hauberk, i.e. not during battle. This confirms that there was an interlude, as described by the taunting in the legend, between battle and decapitation. At no point do the documented wounds gainsay the account of the fight given by the much later legend.

The research results will be published in an upcoming article in the scientific journal *Fornvännen*.

From Pulp to Fiction: Our Love Affair with Paper

By Tom Kirk

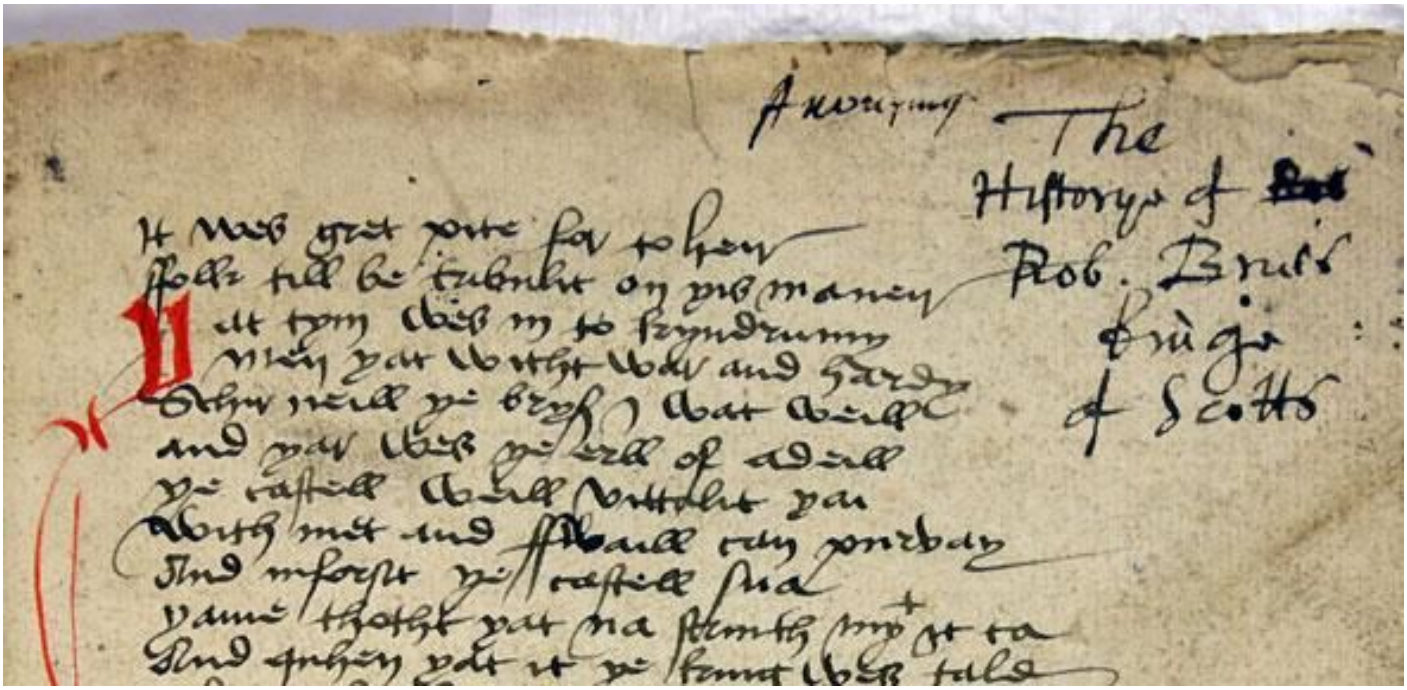
It may seem strange to describe paper as technology, but its arrival in England in about 1300 was a pivotal moment in cultural history. That story is being pieced together for the first time in a new project that also promises to reveal much about why some innovations succeed where others fail.

How's this for a measure of the pace of the tech revolution? Twenty years ago, you would have read this article only on paper; now it is also available on your tablet, smartphone or computer. The impact of digital media has become so pervasive that even remarking upon it feels trite. Where predictions that printed books and newspapers are dying once seemed far-fetched, the future now seems less certain.

If we do become a paperless society, we will be terminating a relationship with one of the most successful technologies of all time; one that has endured for 700 years in England, and much longer elsewhere. Our reliance on paper runs so deep that it seems strange to think of it as technology at all. Yet to a person living in 14th-century England, paper would have been an advanced new material. Most writing was on parchment (made from animal skin), and an alternative made of pulped rags represented a truly disruptive innovation.

"Paper was economical – not in the sense that it was cheap, but because it was lighter, more portable and enabled you to write more," explains Dr Orietta Da Rold from the University of Cambridge. "Its arrival had a huge impact. People could share ideas in a way that hadn't happened before. Paper became a pivotal technology for a subsequent explosion in the transmission of knowledge."

Da Rold is leading a project called Mapping Paper in Medieval England, the pilot phase of which was carried out last year. The aim is to understand how and why paper was adopted in England and eventually became a



Page from an edition of The Brus, produced in the early 15th century, and an example of an early manuscript on paper. Image Credit: St John's College Library, Cambridge

dominant technology – more so even than electronic media have today.

Its historical importance goes beyond paper's significance as a device for dissemination. Paper, Da Rold suggests, helped to precipitate the spread of literacy and literature. It could be used to teach and practice reading and writing, and it enabled the emergence of a reading public that consumed and shared the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, among others.

It is also a history that has never been fully explored. We know that England was slow to adopt paper, because paper-based manuscripts started to appear in archives only from about 1300 onwards, later than on the continent. How and why this happened, however, has never been properly studied.

In 2015, thanks to a Cambridge Humanities Research Grant, Da Rold and her team spent eight months trawling archives up and down the country in search of paper manuscripts written or based in England between the years 1300 and 1475, when William Caxton set up his first printing press. They found 5,841 manuscripts, of which 736 were paper.

"That's not the final number because some records don't state whether a manuscript is paper or not," Da Rold says. The information has, however, been enough to set up an electronic database – the most comprehensive of its kind – with ambitions to crowd-source more data in the future.

Working out how the use of paper spread across England means establishing where each of these manuscripts was based, which is easier said than done because both manuscripts and scribes moved. In some cases, the dialect used in the text suggests a possible point of origin, while other documents can be specifically 'localised', usually because they contain a direct reference to their source.

Da Rold has tentatively begun to plot this information onto a map of England. Refining it will be part of the project's next phase. Each sheet within a manuscript also bears a watermark – an emblem, such as an animal or a star. Tracking this watermark gives some clues as to where the paper was made, where it was used and the wider network of use.

Tentative patterns are already emerging. Some centres in the East of England, like Lincoln and Norwich, appear to have held significant stocks of paper that gradually spread westwards. "There are capillaries that go out across the country, but they don't go everywhere," Da Rold says.

Why this happened will be covered in a forthcoming book: *From Pulp to Fiction*.

Da Rold has two main theories about why paper first came into use, both of which have much wider implications for understanding how any technology succeeds. First, it appears to have undergone a phase of cultural acceptance. This did not necessarily involve people using paper to write – it was just as common in late medieval England to use it to wrap up spices or jam – but the process established paper within the culture.

Second, paper was actively championed by specific groups of people who found it useful: lawyers, merchants, secretaries and anyone who needed to record financial transactions. Paper was easier for them to use than parchment. "It became convenient because people living at the time decided that it met their needs," Da Rold says.

Why England adopted paper so late remains unclear, but paper is thought to have emerged from China, then gradually spread westwards. England's position at the end of this paper trail meant that it took longer for the technology to arrive, and the medieval equivalent of a tech cluster to support its development and use may also have been lacking.

Certainly, after the first attempt at establishing an English paper mill, near Hertford, failed in 1507, paper was not produced domestically until the 17th century. This contrasts with, for example, Italy, where major centres like Fabriano emerged. These paper mills, however, drew on a network of supporting industries that helped to refine the production process. It may be that these vital clusters of ideas and expertise were what appeared faster overseas than in England, thereby determining the rate at which paper was adopted and diffused.

Importantly, the paper revolution failed to end the use of parchment overnight. Indeed, there seems to have been a prolonged period of hybridisation during which time those who wrote used paper and parchment (which had different and complementary properties) side by side.

This, Da Rold suggests, has implications not just for establishing how England became a paper-based culture, but also for understanding any process of technological acquisition. It also hints that paper should not, perhaps, be written off just yet. "The human mind is constantly preoccupied with what is new, and at the same time instinctively conservative," she reflects.

"History such as this shows that at moments of transition the most successful people are those who work with all technologies, and get the most out of everything. There is coexistence as well as friction, and sometimes there is no winner. That may explain why even though we now have iPads we are still taking notes and writing on paper."

Our thanks to the University of Cambridge for this article

The Cadaver Synod: Low Point in the History of the Papacy

By Peter Konieczny

For the year 897, the Annales Alamannici offers this account of what was going on in Rome:

> *And thereafter Stephan put Pope Formosus out of his tomb, and placed him in the Apostolic throne, and a deacon was delegated to answer for him, and his apostolic vestment was stripped off, and dragged across the basilica; and blood was flowing from his mouth, and he was thrown into the river.*

The event this chronicler is talking about is the notorious Cadaver Synod, when one Pope put on trial the corpse of one of his predecessors. Perhaps the lowest point in the history of the Papacy, the story of this trial is somewhat murky as it is strange. However, recent work by historians is starting to shed light on his this could have happened.

The accused in the Cadaver Synod was Pope Formosus, who occupied the Papal throne from 891 to 896. Before becoming Pope, Formosus had an eventful ecclesiastical career, serving as Bishop of Portus. He gained some success in converting the Bulgarians to Roman Catholicism, but this also made him some enemies within the Papal court - he was accused of plotting to become the Archbishop of Bulgaria, even seeking the Papacy too, and was excommunicated by a previous Pope. However, when that Pope died he was restored to his bishopric and later on was elected to become the new Papal leader.

Meanwhile, in the rest of western Europe the Carolingian Empire was near its end. Attacked in the north by the Vikings, and in the south by Muslim raiders, the once powerful state was failing. After seven years of inept rule, Emperor Charles the Fat was deposed, dying just a few weeks later. However, no strong ruler would take his place, with several men taking their share of the empire. The chronicler Regino of Prum expertly sums up the situation in the year 888, following the death of Charles the Fat.

Jean-Paul Laurens, Le Pape Formose et Étienne VII ("Pope Formosus and Stephen VII"), 1870.

> *After his death the kingdoms which had obeyed his authority, just as though a legitimate heir were lacking, dissolved into separate parts and, without waiting for a natural lord, each decided to create a king from its own guts. This was the cause of great wars; not because the Franks lacked leaders who by nobility, courage and wisdom were capable of ruling the kingdoms, but rather because the equality of descent, authority and power increased the discord among them; none so outshone the others that the rest deigned to submit to his rule. For Francia would have produced many leaders capable to controlling the government of the kingdom, had not fortune equipped them to destroy each other in the competition for power.*

While the various rivals clashed throughout Europe, they also got involved in Papal politics. Ever since the coronation of Charlemagne in the year 800, Popes were viewed as the only legitimate body that could officially name an Emperor. But, as Michael Edward Moore explains, "by the time of Formosus, the ability to anoint the emperors was proving to be a curse more than a blessing. Because of their ability to crown the emperor of the west, and their position at the center of the political and religious world, the popes were engulfed in the violent politics of this period of rapid change."

Pope Formosus would be enemies with Guy III of Spoleto, the Holy Roman Emperor, and according to one source he convinced Arnulf of Carinthia, King of East Francia, to

invade Italy and push Guy away from Rome. In exchange, the Pope crowned Arnulf the new Emperor at a ceremony in Rome on February 22, 896.

On April 4, 896, Formosus died and was buried in a Roman church. His immediate successor was Boniface VI, but he only last 15 days on the Papal throne before dying of gout. He would be replaced by Stephen VI, a longtime rival of Formosus.

As this was happening, Emperor Arnulf suffered a stroke and returned home north across the Alps. His health would never recover and he died on 8 December 899.

In January of 897, Pope Stephen VI ordered that the tomb of Formosus be opened up and his body exhumed. He wanted the former Pope put on trial, allegedly for supporting King Arnulf in becoming Emperor, and for coveting the Papacy years before. He was charged with breaking canon law, as well as of perjury, and of illegally serving as a bishop. Even if Formosus had been dead for several months, Stephen was eager to have his revenge on his corpse.

The decaying body was propped up onto a throne, and a trial was held with Pope Stephen acting as prosecutor. Meanwhile a young deacon was given the responsibility of defending Formosus, while a stunned audience watched the gross spectacle. According to various sources, Pope Stephen shouted at his dead predecessor, demanding he answer his charges. One chronicler, Liutprand of Cremona, noted that Stephen asked, "When you were bishop of Porto, why did you usurp the universal Roman See in such a spirit of ambition?"

The macabre and bizarre spectacle would soon reach its foregone conclusion - Formosus was found guilty. His body was stripped of its Papal vestments and three of his fingers were cut off from his right hand - those that he used to bless people. Finally, the body was tossed in the Tiber River, however the next day it was recovered by some monks and secretly buried in a monastery.

William Monroe, speaking last month at the Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America, offers another theory on why the Cadaver Trial took place. He believes that when Arnulf of Bavaria entered Italy he actually forced Formosus to crown him emperor. The fact that the Pope died just five weeks later hints it might not have a natural death. Some evidence suggests that in the months following his death, Formosus was being viewed as a martyr and saint by the Romans.

Meanwhile, the new Pope, Stephen VI, was a creature of Arnulf, according to Monroe. However, when Arnulf became sick and abandoned Italy, Stephen began to fear the wrath of Lambert, the son of Emperor Guy III of Spoleto. Therefore, he decided to put the body of Formosus on trial as a kind of peace offering. The act also nicely synced with his own hatred for his predecessor, hoping that it would prevent him from becoming a saint by having his bodily destroyed.

If that indeed was Stephen's plan, it would not save him. Within months Lambert had returned to Rome, and the Pope was imprisoned and strangled to death. A new synod was created, which destroyed the records relating to the Cadaver Synod, and proclaimed Lambert as emperor. Meanwhile, the remains of Formosus was returned for a proper reburial.

The terrible events of the Cadaver Synod seemed to have foreshadowed an era of decline within the Papacy. Throughout the tenth-century the Papal throne was fought for among local Roman elite families, who would bribe and kill each other. Several Popes would be murdered, others found themselves caught up in scandals. It would not be until the reforms of the mid-eleventh century the Papacy would regain some of its respectability and importance.

Sources:

William S. Monroe, "The Cadaver Synod and the End of the Carolingian Empire", Paper given at the *Medieval Academy of America Annual Meeting* on February 27, 2016

Michael Edward Moore, "The Attack on Pope Formosus Papal History in an Age of Resentment (875-897), *Ecclesia et Violentia: Violence Against the Church and Violence Within the Church*, eds. Michael E. Moore, Jacek Maciejewski and Radoslav Kotecki (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014)

Michael Edward Moore, "**The Body of Pope Formosus**," *Millenium: Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millenium C.E.* . Vol.9:1 (2012)

The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona, trans. By Paolo Squatriti (Catholic University Press of America, 2007)

The Medieval Ladies of the Night

By Danièle Cybulskie

The world's oldest profession was an undeniable part of medieval society, just as it is today. Thought to be both a terrible sin and a necessary evil all at once, prostitution was both tenuously accepted and completely unacceptable to the European community over the course of the Middle Ages. Let's take a brief look at the lives of the medieval ladies of the night.

Today, prostitution has the very specific definition of being about trading sex for money, and it's the money that makes the act objectionable. For medieval people, it was sex acts that were the problem, no matter whether or not money was exchanged (Karras, p.10). For this reason, it can take some detective work to find the professional sex workers in the records: an adulteress, or a priest's common-law wife might be charged with the same crimes as a prostitute.

The reasons for which a medieval woman found herself working as a prostitute are as old as time: she was poor; she was an outcast; she was considered a bad candidate for marriage; she was lured into it; or she chose it for herself for myriad reasons. In an effort to keep women off the streets, some towns, like Coventry, required that single women become domestic servants, or that they room in the home of a respectable citizen (Karras, pp.19-20). But this didn't always work: women of the lower classes were continually vulnerable to financial pressures or rape by the men they worked for, or by predatory men in the community, as was the case with the gang rapes which occurred with some regularity in fifteenth-century Dijon (Rossiaud, pp.6-7). Once a community found out that a woman had been deflowered – this included adulteresses, priests' mistresses, rape victims, and commercial prostitutes – that woman was considered to have a bad reputation, and was pushed to the margins. No one was even supposed to vouch for her without risking prosecution (Karras, p.20). For a woman in that situation, the options were few, and when one "turn" could earn her the same money as "a half-day's work in the vineyard" (Rossiaud, p.20), she would have felt the pressure keenly.

Brothel scene, painted by Joachim Beukelaer and dated October 26, 1562. Image courtesy the Walters Art Museum

While the church desperately wanted to keep sex in the marriage bed (and for procreation only), communities accepted that people were going to have sex anyway, so they tried to turn this to their advantage. In Dijon, brothels were permitted in order to keep the "respectable", marriageable women of the community safe (Rossiaud, p.29); in Florence, they were opened by the city in order to entice men away from the perils of homosexuality, thereby encouraging men to marry and have children (Trexler, p.374); everywhere, brothels were intended to curb what were thought to be the natural but destructive sexual urges of young men. Married men and priests were not permitted to frequent the brothels, but it doesn't take much imagination to figure out that those rules were ignored whenever convenient, which was pretty much all the time.

In the absence of licensed brothels, cities had streetwalkers. In some places, including some towns in England, prostitutes were required to wear striped hoods to identify themselves; in other places, prostitutes were mainly restricted from wearing rich clothing, in order to keep beautiful clothes from tempting respectable women into sinning (Karras, p.33, 21). Those that did not follow the rule could be stripped of their hood, or their "upper garments" (Karras, p.15), which made any woman who strayed an easy target for greedy or malicious city officials. Although many cities tried to create red light districts in order to keep the prostitutes in one section of the city only, a quick glance at any city council's records reveals that this was never successful.

Another option for prostitutes was to work in the local bathhouses (yes, **medieval people bathed**). Many bathhouses offered rooms and food, making them the ideal place for a tryst. After all, bathing was a respectable activity, and one that already required nakedness. Jean Rossiaud goes so far as to say that "all the bathhouses were equipped with hiding places and several exits" (p.24) for patrons' convenience. The "stews", as they were called in England, were notorious for sexual liaisons – Southwark (the theatre and red light district in Shakespeare's day) was a particular hotspot – and although bylaw after bylaw was put into place to restrict their activities, no one ever actually managed it.

For prostitutes who wanted to leave that life, there were a couple of options. Sometimes, they could actually be married, once they reached the age at which every woman on the marriage market had already had sex (i. e. widows). After all, someone who worked in a brothel – especially one licensed by the city – might have very good connections indeed, not to mention secrets to use as leverage. Apparently, marriage was a common option for ex-prostitutes over age 30 in Southeastern France (Rossiaud, p.21). Alternatively, a woman could join a convent specifically for ex-prostitutes (a "Magdalen" house, named for Mary Magdalene), although this didn't always gain her the same prestige as other nuns enjoyed. In Florence, the Convertite was partially funded by working girls, and was looked down upon by women in the more respectable nunneries; it was also where women who were convicted of other sex crimes were held as punishment (Trexler, p.405). In Avignon, only ex-prostitutes who were younger than twenty-five and also beautiful would be admitted to the convent (Rossiaud, p.21), because we all know how essential exterior beauty is to salvation. Prostitutes who could not manage to find a husband or a convent might never be able to leave the profession fully. The odds were stacked against them.

In the Early Modern period, plagues and a new threat from the New World – syphilis – made brothels an increasingly unattractive option for cities, although prostitution itself never disappeared. Marginalized and yet ever-present members of the community, the medieval ladies of the night are a fascinating and elusive piece of a past that struggled to align what people were doing with what the society thought they were supposed to be doing. As a result, medieval prostitutes' lives can tell us a lot about the world they lived in.

For the essential book on medieval prostitution, have a look at Ruth Mazo Karras' ***Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England***. For Rossiaud's take on Southwestern France, check out ***Deviants and the Abandoned in French Society***, and for a look at Florence, check out Richard C. Trexler's ***Dependence in Context in Renaissance Florence***.

Danièle Cybulskie is a weekly columnist for Medievalists.net. You can follow her on Twitter @5minmedievalist

The medieval power struggles that helped forge today's universities

By Giles Gasper

As universities prepare for a new regime of regulation aimed at monitoring the **quality of their teaching**, they may find some comfort in the 900-year-old history of debates around autonomy, governance, who can award qualifications and even the relationships between students and their teachers. Who held power over universities and their pursuit of intellectual inquiry was hotly contested in the **Middle Ages**. Universities were beholden to popes and kings, but also, in some cases to students.

Medieval towns and cities could be rough places for their inhabitants – and relations between city and university populations were no exception. Turbulent and violent exchanges between "town" and "gown" were not uncommon.

Attempts to regulate such behaviour feature in early university legislation. Pope Gregory IX in **his instructions** to the University of Paris in 1231, for example, prohibited students from "carrying weapons in the city". The university was further prohibited from protecting those "who disturb peace and study".

Many such altercations were sparked off in drinking establishments, as two famous examples – one in Oxford and one in Paris – illustrate.

Riots and revenge

On February 10 1355, Walter de Springheuse, Roger de Chesterfield and their companions from Oxford University walked into the Swindlestock Tavern. A disagreement over the quality of the wine **resulted in an argument**. The university men angered by the **"stubborn and saucy language"** of the wine-seller, threw the wine and its container at his head. The wine-seller expressed his anger to his friends and family, who armed themselves with bows and

A teacher giving a lecture to his students - British Library MS Royal 10 D IV f. 1

arrows and shot at the scholars and the chancellor who arrived to calm the situation down.

The following day, hostilities recommenced with serious results: 20 inns or halls were ransacked and several scholars were wounded, some killed. As the chancellor set out for nearby Woodstock to see the king, the violence in town continued. More university halls were broken into, more scholars were killed and maimed. This was the **St Scholastica's day riot**.

About 150 years earlier, in 1200, the first recorded town/gown riot in Paris **had followed a similar pattern**. The servant of a German student was set upon in a tavern. His compatriots, in defending him, badly beat up the publican. In response, a large body of citizens assaulted a university hall and its students, some of whom were killed. This included the master of the servant whose mistreatment had provoked the whole episode. The masters appealed to the king, Philip IV Augustus, for justice.

In both cases, the aftermath was striking. In Paris, the king punished those citizens involved and required their leaders to acknowledge and respect the privileges of the scholars. In Oxford, the town was placed under interdict for a year, meaning no church services could be held, including burials. Substantial fines were to be paid to the university, and the townsfolk forced to make an annual penance of a mass and a monetary offering of 63 pennies, in perpetuity. This **lasted until 1825**.

Yet, the differences in the two cases are also instructive. The University of Paris in 1200 had limited institutional identity. No university officers or organisational structures are mentioned apart from the group of masters who appealed to the king. By 1355, Oxford was a far more complex organisation and one with considerable power at court.

Two models of governance emerge

Over time, medieval universities were gradually established as corporations, involving legal recognition of their status, their privileges (for example to grant degrees and regulate academic progress) and their governance.

The process of corporation developed in different ways in different places. Although the origins of the first universities are obscure, three commonly accepted as the oldest are Paris, Oxford and Bologna – all actively were teaching in the 12th century.

All also developed mythologies: Bologna of its foundation by the Emperor Theodosius (r. 379-395), Paris by Charlemagne, and Oxford by King Alfred. While Oxford and Paris became corporations of masters, grouping themselves together to protect their livelihoods, matters were slightly different in northern Italy.

In Paris, it was the papacy, as well as the king, who provided protection for the new corporation against the attempts to stifle it by the chancellor and bishop of Paris in the first decades of the 13th century. In Oxford, the chancellor was given privileges by the king which made him independent of the bishop of Lincoln (in whose diocese Oxford was in the Middle Ages) whose officer he was in theory. In Bologna, at least for studies in law, it was the students who combined to organise contacts with the masters.

As university education expanded and more institutions were founded from the end of the 13th century, the influence of these two models – master-led or student-led – continued to be felt.

Control of knowledge

At issue in all these cases was what university education was for, by whom it was best delivered and by whom it should be regulated. Control of the classroom, including oversight of the curriculum was a vital issue. How masters were appointed, and how their qualifications were examined and tested, were keenly debated.

Medieval universities were multi-faceted, and their reputations among contemporaries were as wide and diverse as their equivalents in the modern day. Divisions were common within universities. Different ways of organising learning and student experience evolved, too, including colleges, nations (groupings of students from similar regions), and faculties (Arts, Law, Medicine, Theology). All had competing jurisdictions.

The notion of corporation, however, held the medieval university together, offering a sense of identity, common purpose, and collaborative regulation of the delivery and definition of learning. The hard won nature of that corporate identity, and the strength of purpose it gave to students and masters alike is worth recalling in light of the many changes and challenges currently facing the higher education sector.

Giles Gasper is a Senior Lecturer in Medieval History, Durham University

This article was first published in The Conversation

A Guide to Dover Castle

By Sandra Alvarex

Finally, after nearly three years, and a few false starts, I made it out to see Dover Castle. If you happen to be visiting London, and want to see a few things outside the city, but within a reasonable distance, this is a great place to start. No need to stay the night, you can make a day of it with your family or friends and be home in time for dinner and a pint.

The castle sits on top of what was once an Iron Age hill fort well before the Romans arrived in 43 AD.. People lived in this vicinity 1,200 years before the castle existed. The castle is known as 'The key of England' as it has had a long, and important, military history. According to William the Conqueror's (1028-1087), Frankish chaplain, William of Poitiers (1020-1090), the first version of the castle was built entirely out of clay, which collapsed. The clay was then taken and used for the castle flooring. The stone behemoth we see now was built courtesy of King Henry II (1133-1189) in the 1180s. From 1217-1244, King Henry III (1207-1272), added more buildings to the inner bailey. The castle survived many wars, and was continuously garrisoned from 1066-1958. That's almost 900 years of military history!

Of course when you come to Dover you will want to visit the Great Hall and the inner castle on your visit. It's been colourfully redecorated to look as it did in the twelfth century, with a lot of a lot of effort put into recreating the king's bedchambers, guest quarters, dinning hall, and kitchens. But what's great about visiting Dover Castle is that you don't just pay to get into the castle itself, you have many other great sites within the walls to see as part of your ticket price.

The Roman Lighthouse

The Roman lighthouse was supposedly built when Dover was known as the Roman Britain port of Dubris. Two lighthouses were built in 50 AD. Only one survived in its original form, the other was built over in the eighteenth century. The Roman light house surviving on the grounds of Dover Castle was transformed into a bell tower in the Middle Ages for the Church of St. Mary-de-Castro, which sits right beside it. The Roman lighthouse is 24m (80 ft.) high.CLA.

View from Dover Castle of St. Mary-de-Castro and Roman Lighthouse.

A look down the medieval tunnels at Dover Castle.

The Church of St. Mary de Castro

The Church of St. Mary de Castro is a Saxon church, that dates to 1,000 AD, although the cemetery has yielded finds dating to the seventh century. There are hints that the church may have been built on top of an older structure, another church, or a Saxon fort. It has been rebuilt several times, starting in the twelfth century. In the thirteenth century, Henry III ordered further construction on the church. It was during his reign that saw the conversion of the Roman lighthouse into a bell tower connected to the church, with the first bells hung there in 1252. St. Mary-de-Castro was repainted in the fourteenth century but then fell into a period of neglect and was sealed off in the mid-sixteenth century. It was reopened and used a storage space until it became once again, too unsafe to use and it was left to sit until the nineteenth century. The Victorians, with their renewed interest and obsession with the Middle Ages, took to restoring the church in the late nineteenth century.

Kitchen in the Great Hall.

Medieval Tunnels

The castle has a network of medieval tunnels that were noteworthy for their pivotal role in the Siege of 1216-1217 against King John (1166-1216) during the First Baron's War (1215-1217). The castle held out agains the French forces , led by King Philip II of France (1165-1223) for ten months. There is no tour guide here, you go down yourself, but don't fear! it's big and rather open in places so it's not scary.

Wartime Tours

Although clearly not medieval, it's still well worth a visit to one of Dover's wartime tours beneath the castle. There are two tours, an Underground Hospital tour, that is 20 minutes long where you hear about the experience of an injured WWII pilot being brought to the hospital, and Operation Dynamo, that is about an hour, where you experience the wartime evacuation of Dunkirk. I did the hospital tour because I was short on time and it was good, if a bit rushed. Smells, sights and sounds, like flashing lights, story-telling, and an all-clear siren are part of the tour's attempt to bring WWII to life. If you're short on time and want to experience what the castle was used for during the war, the Hospital Tour is a safe bet. The guides are knowledgable and provided plenty of information about how a medieval castle was used for modern warfare. A word of warning - the lines for these tours build up quickly. Try and get these out of the way first, and the move onto the castle grounds because you may not be able to pop in for a tour in the late afternoon once the crowds grow.

Dover Castle: Decorated to look as it did in the twelfth century.

Travel Tips

Dover is a quick train ride from London St. Pancras station to Folkestone West station. At the time of this writing it takes a little over an hour because you have to change and take a bus for part of your journey. This is due to the collapse of the sea walls; the tracks are flooded and the repairs are looking to go on for another 8-10 months. It's still well worth the minor inconvenience to see this majestic castle by the sea. The transfer from train to bus is easy and seamless. The bus shuttles you to Dover Priory station where once you arrive, you're rewarded with a great view of Dover castle dominating the hillside.

It's a short walk to it, but be warned - wear comfortable shoes. The walk wends its way up a steep hill, and you will also do a lot of walking on the castle grounds. It's a massive site; Dover is the largest castle in England. There is a lot to see, above ground, and underground (wartime tours, and medieval tunnels!), and other buildings like the Roman lighthouse (Pharos) sitting directly beside the Saxon Church of St. Mary-de-Castro.

There is a restaurant and a cafe. The food wasn't great at the restaurant, it left a lot to be desired, and there wasn't a great selection at the cafe. Don't expect much. If you do get tired out, there is a little shuttle train-car that drives around the grounds that you can hop on to travel between sites.

One last tip, the castle is open 10:00-16:00. I arrived at noon leaving me with four hours to view the castle - for me, it wasn't enough. There is a lot to see and the grounds are vast so it's best to get there when it open and take it all in. Dover Castle is stunning, a delight, fun for all, and well worth visiting if you plan on making a trip over to England.

For more information on your visit, including ticket prices and admission times, please visit:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle/

v lva: Scandinavian Practitioner of Prophecy and Magical Medicine

By Susan Abernethy

During pagan times in Scandinavia, women were the chief practitioners of magical medicine. The Eddic poems reference many instances of incantations, usually chanted by females. These charms are not written down so we don't know if they were meant to cure particular ailments or restore good fortune in general. There were several categories of pagan priests, soothsayers or those who recited incantations, as well as a subordinate echelon of individuals who made a living practicing magic arts and powers. Among these individuals was a category called a v lva, a type of female seer who appears in poetry and prose.

The term v lva is translated as "prophetess" or "sibyl" and comes from the root word that means "magical staff". Many times in Norse literature these female prophets are depicted carrying a staff. In the sagas, the v lva travels from farm to farm, sometimes with an entourage answering questions about the future such as the outcome of the coming farm season or men's destinies. The v lva is greeted respectfully and a feast would be celebrated in her honor. Before replying to a specific question, the v lva would go into a trance or dream state and summon spirits, usually sitting on a stage. Her assistants would accompany her, singing chants and incantations. After the chants, she would pronounce her prophecies of good fortune and respond to questions.

One of the fullest accounts of this type of séance comes from the *The Saga of Eirik the Red* written in the late thirteenth century which recounts events in the settlement of Greenland in the beginning of the eleventh century. Although this account may have been fiction, the author seems to have knowledge of these events and processes.

The writer tells us there was a woman in Greenland, a v lva named orbjörg, who went from farm to farm in the winter to answer questions about the coming harvest

and men's fate and fortunes. The prior season had been particularly bad and men were especially anxious to know the outcome of the upcoming harvest. The greatest farmer in the area named órkell invited orbjörg into his home. A high seat was prepared for her and a cushion filled with hen feathers placed on the chair.

The *Saga* describes her appearance:

> *She was wearing a blue strapped cloak, all set with stones down to the hem; she had glass beads round her neck, and on her head a black lambskin hood with the lining of white catskin; and in her hand she had a staff with a knob on it, which was mounted with brass and had stones set in it round the base of the knob. She had a belt of touch-wood round her, and on it was a large skin pouch in which she kept her charms which she had to have for her magic. She had hairy calfskin shoes on her feet, and long shoelaces with big tin knobs on the ends; she had on her hands gloves of catskin, white inside, and hairy.*

She was given a special dish of porridge made of kid's milk and another dish made of hearts of all the living creatures available. When the feast was over and the tables removed, farmer órkell asked orbjörg how she liked his household and when would he know the answers to his questions. She said she would have the answers the next day and requested a female helper who could chant the Warlock-Song. There was a woman in the crowd who knew the chant and was persuaded to participate.

The next day orbjörg mounted the platform which women had surrounded in a ring. The séance began. The helper sang the chant beautifully and everyone commented on well it was sung. After the chant ended and the spirits were summoned, the v lva voiced her prophecies of good fortune and answered everyone's questions. She then departed for the next farm.

Further Reading:

Jacqueline Simpson, ***Everyday Life in the Viking Age*** (Hippocrene Books, 2007)

Kirsten Wolf, ***Viking Age: Everyday Life During the Extraordinary Era of the Norsemen*** (Sterling, 2013)

The Viking Answer Lady: Women and Magic in the Sagas: Siedr and Spa

Susan Abernethy is the writer of The Freelance History Writer and a contributor to Saints, Sisters, and Sluts. You can also follow Susan on Twitter @SusanAbernethy2

Interview

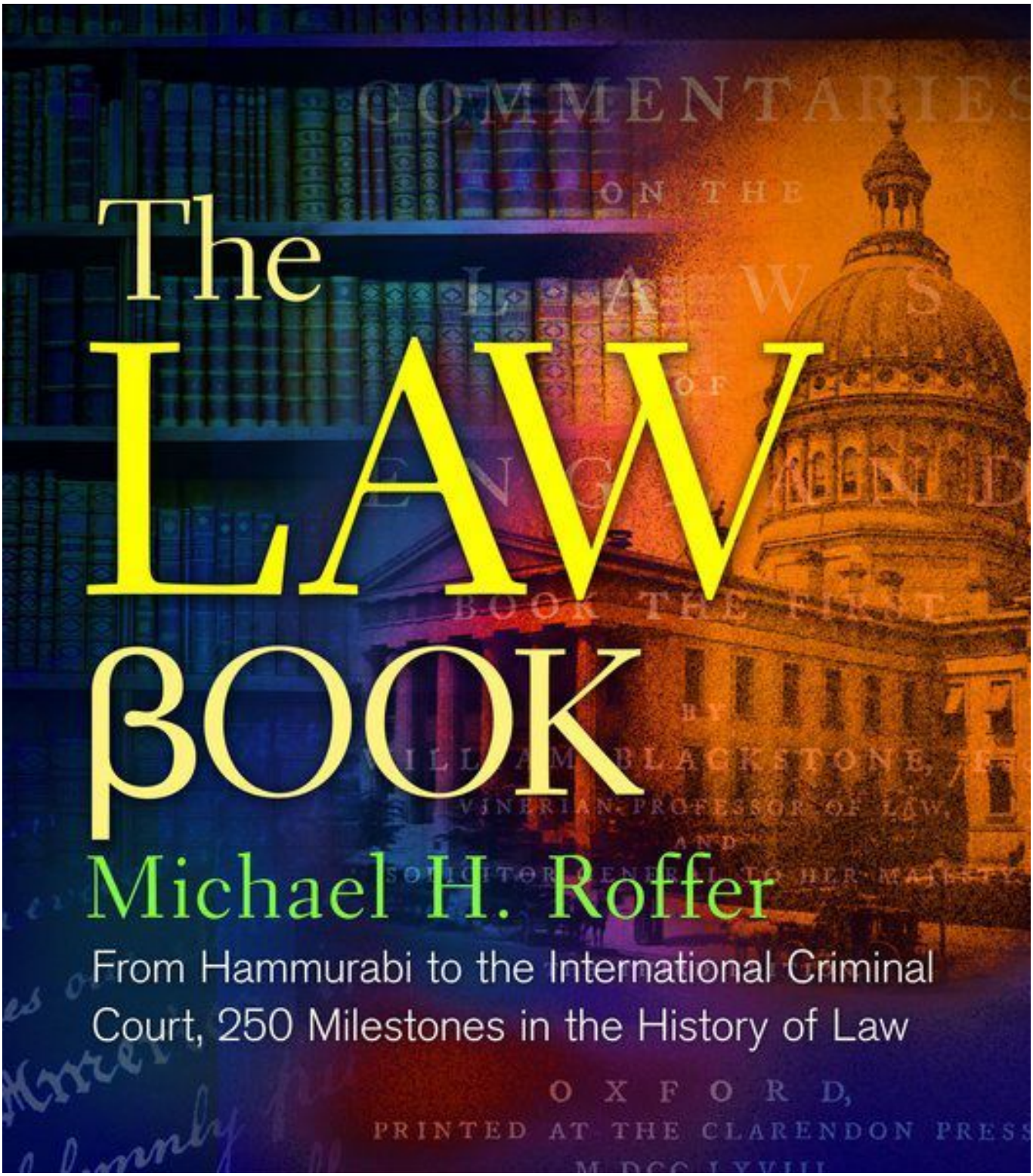
Michael H. Roffer, author of The Law Book

The Law Book: From Hammurabi to the International Criminal Court, 250 Milestones in the History of Law, by Michael H. Roffer, explores 250 of the most fundamental, far-reaching, and often-controversial cases, laws, and trials that have profoundly changed our world—for good or bad. It covers such diverse topics as the Code of Hammurabi, the Ten Commandments, the Trial of Socrates, the Bill of Rights, women's suffrage, the insanity defense, and more. Roffer takes us around the globe to ancient Rome and medieval England before transporting us forward to contemporary accounts that tackle everything from civil rights, surrogacy, and assisted suicide to the 2000 U.S. presidential election, Google Books, and the fight for marriage equality.

Michael Roffer is the Associate Librarian for Reader Services and Professor of Legal Research at New York Law School. We interviewed him to learn more about this new book.

I think many people see the law as something that is constantly changing, with new regulations being changed or created at a very fast pace. Why do you think it is important to look at how law has evolved throughout history?

It's certainly true that the law is marked by constant change, but a lot of that change can and should be viewed not merely as change but as growth. In the introduction to The Law Book, I refer specifically to law's two competing principals, stability and change: law provides stability in a changing world and a world in flux changes the law to maintain stability. Slavery was permitted and then outlawed; the death penalty



was barred and then reinstated; books were banned and then constitutionally protected. Although dramatic changes like these may sometimes seem inconsistent, they actually embody legal scholar Roscoe Pound's aphorism that "the law must be stable, and yet it cannot stand still." And so the law does not stand still; it is always adapting and evolving. By reviewing its evolution and understanding the past we're able to adapt and develop laws most suitable for the context in which society finds itself at any given moment. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. famously wrote that "the life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience." Learning from our prior experiences affords us the opportunity to effect positive changes in accordance with cultural, political and moral norms.

When putting together your 250 milestones in the history of law, what was the kind of criteria that you factored when making this list?

In writing *The Law Book*, one of my greatest challenges was narrowing the field of potential milestones to be included. Ultimately, my goal was to select those that had effected an important and fundamental change or gave rise to a new structure or path on the legal landscape. I tried to address issues that have visible connections and relevance to people's lives and experiences with the hope of engaging readers' intellectual and historical curiosity and perhaps inspiring further exploration, discussion and research. As the introduction to *The Law Book* notes, "the law surrounds us . . . , touch[ing] every aspect of our lives and even our death." This overarching message coincidentally parallels the "Why Law Matters" theme adopted by the American Association of Law Schools' new President, Kellye Testy, in an interview she provided prior to the association's annual meeting in January. Testy, who is also Dean of the University of Washington Law School, explained that she wanted to help people understand the various dimensions of law rather than thinking about it very narrowly. It's not just about dispute resolution, she said; it's "the very fabric of our society." My selection of milestones reflected a similar purpose. You may also notice that the milestones I wrote about take many forms—cases, statutes, books, people, trials, decisions, articles, and even events. I did not want to focus only on formally established doctrine or principles but rather on some of the law's more catalyzing influences.

One final point: These are not necessarily *the* 250 milestones of legal history. I certainly recognize that reasonable minds can—will—disagree on the importance of specific legal developments and their place in legal history.

Your book includes more than a dozen milestones from the Middle Ages - what do you think was the most significant?

That's a difficult question to answer, partly because the entries cut across several cultures—Roman; Chinese; Muslim; Anglo-Saxon; French; English; and Spanish. If I had to identify one, I would probably select the 1481 entry on Littleton's *Tenures*, the first true legal textbook. Its significance doesn't lie in any particular legal doctrine that it put forth or in the impact its substantive content had but rather in what it meant for the actual development of law from that point forward. Coming soon after the debut of the printing press and thereby benefitting from the large-scale dissemination it made possible, Littleton's work laid the foundation for the study and application of law on a much grander scale. Significantly, Littleton brought to what would become a burgeoning world of law publishing narrative and exposition rather than mere compilation of primary materials. Littleton actually established the model that future scholars emulated as they created their own treatises, providing comprehensive and authoritative exposition of legal doctrine. In some respects, it operated as a type of meta-text by supplying organization and meaning, paving the way for law to propagate. Thus, it ultimately impacted the entirety of law and how it would come to be learned, understood, and practiced.

Finally, do you think this book represents what might be called a positive look at the development of civilization? Has all these developments contributed to a better society, or do you take a more neutral view to how law has impacted us?

My view, and I hope the book expresses this, is definitely a positive one with respect to the law's influence on the development of civilization. I think one has to recognize that any given law or legally determined outcome almost always involves trade-offs. But at the end of the day, I think most thoughtful individuals would acknowledge that, generally speaking, society's laws help to yield a better society. History has illustrated the self-correcting nature of legal systems—laws that cease to reflect the mores or ethos of a given society or culture ultimately don't survive. The process through which the change comes about, of course, is neither swift nor easy, but it does come about over time. But I also think it's the case that even those laws that experience correction had their genesis as a reflection of the societal aspiration to policies or outcomes that the relevant (or majority) groups believed to be necessary or appropriate for the protection of the particular subject. Despite significant continuing debate over the rightness or wrongness of many current laws or legal doctrines, I'm inclined to view the law's trajectory over the centuries as reflecting by and large an expansion of individual rights and a retrenchment of injustice and inequality, even if imperfect.

We thank Michael Roffer for answering our questions. You can learn more about his work, ***The Law Book***, by visiting its Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/TheLawBook/

Book Excerpt

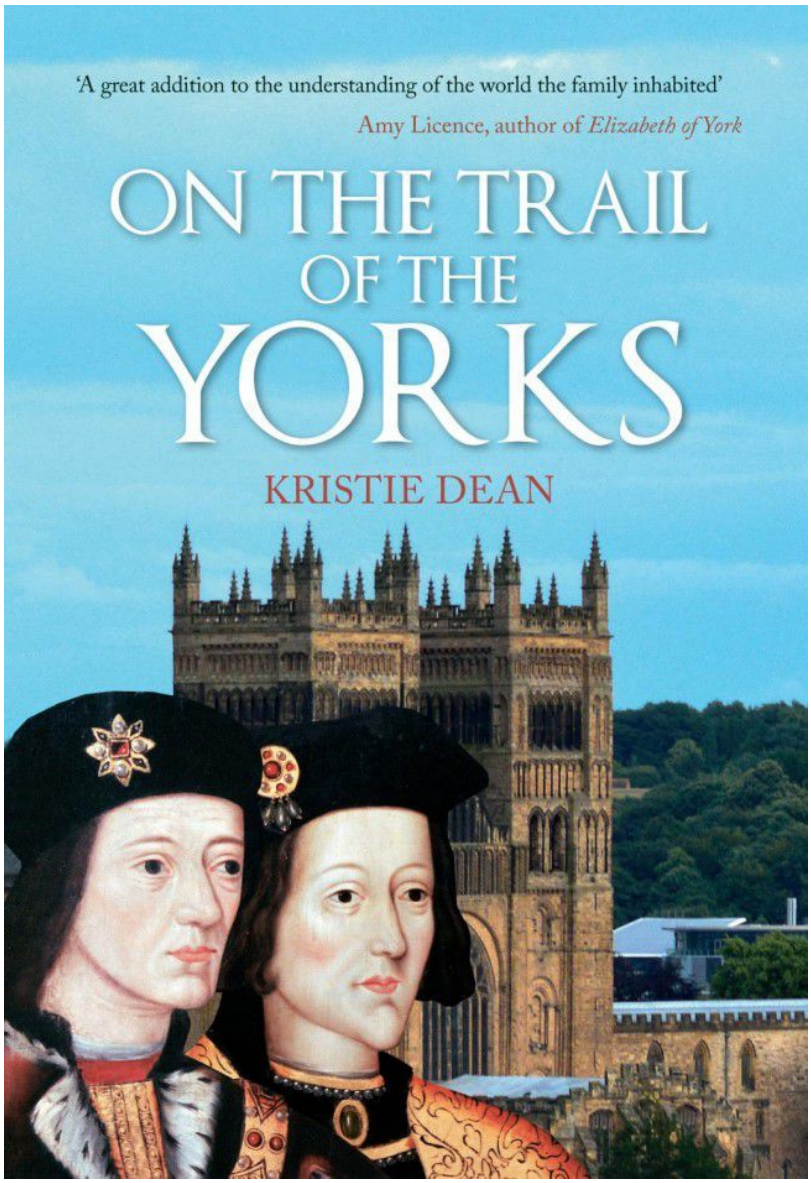
On the Trail of the Yorks

By Kristie Dean

Amberley Publishing, 2016
ISBN: 9781445647135

Richard III is probably the House of York's best-known figure, but the other members of the family are just as intriguing as the king who fell on Bosworth Field. These include his father, the Duke of York, who held a claim to the throne that would eventually topple a king; his older brother Edward IV, a warrior cast in the mould of a true Plantagenet; and the resilient Yorkist queen Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter Elizabeth of York, the latter of whom would eventually unite the family with their longstanding rivals, the Lancastrians, and become the mother of the most infamous dynasty in English history, the Tudors.

This book explores the places associated with members of this fascinating family and discovers their stories through the locations they visited and inhabited. It reveals the lives of the Yorks by exploring the cathedrals, castles, battlefields and manor houses that shaped their history. Featuring locations such as Fotheringhay, Baynard's Castle, Durham Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster, among many others, this book brings each site to life, giving a gripping account of its heritage as well as accurate information for the visitor. Extensive descriptions and an array of illustrations and photographs recreate these poignant and sometimes controversial locations, immersing the reader in the ancient and intriguing world of the Yorks.



Read an Excerpt:

Anne, Duchess of Exeter

Anne was the elder sister of Edward IV, George and Richard III. She was probably born at Fotheringhay in 1439. In 1446, she married Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter. The couple had one child, also named Anne. It must have been difficult for the duchess to be married to Exeter once he chose to align himself with the Lancastrians against her father and brothers.

After Exeter's attainder in 1461, Anne received grants of lands from her brother, including much of the Exeter inheritance. She also retained custody of her daughter, the heiress to the Exeter fortune. She betrothed her daughter first to George Neville, the son of John Neville, but the match was later replaced by one with the son of the queen, Thomas Grey.

Anne later divorced Exeter and married Thomas St Leger. Her first daughter, Anne, had died, and when she and St Leger had a daughter they also named her Anne. Soon after her daughter's birth, Anne died and was buried at St George's Chapel at Windsor.

Dartington Hall, Devon

Constructed on a low rise overlooking the River Dart, there has been a residence here since at least the twelfth century. The lands passed to the Crown, and Richard II granted the area to his half-brother, John de Holland, who is credited with much of the building of the immense structure. He envisioned a set of buildings laid out in a large double quadrangle. Later, the home came to Henry Holland, and was eventually granted to Anne by Edward IV on account of 'the true and deep affection which the aforesaid Anne, our sister, has and bears towards us'.

The earliest part of the structure was the old hall, located at the north-east corner of the quadrangle, which dates from the early fourteenth century. The west side of the court contained the buildings built by Holland, including a new hall and kitchen. The hall was to lie between the two quadrangles. According to Anthony Emery, the courtyard was immense at 265 feet by 164 feet and was never spanned by any range.
Dartington Hall was described by a visitor in the nineteenth century:

Dartington Hall is one of the most picturesque and charming seats in Devon; noble ruins, a fine old mansion, ancient outbuildings, surrounded by quaintly-terraced and beautifully-kept gardens, and lying in the midst of a richly-wooded, undulating park, almost within sound of the murmur of the rushing Dart.

Following Anne's death, the home passed through a series of hands until it came to rest with the Champernowne family. It remained with this family until the twentieth century. By the time the Elmhirst family took ownership in 1925, it had fallen into a severe state of ruin. They restored the home, including the Great Hall with its massive fireplace and ornate hammer-beam roof.

Visiting Dartington Hall Today

Not only can you visit the hall, you can also spend the night in one of its chambers. For those who want to spend a day here, the visitor centre offers a map of the grounds. The estate contains a cinema and gardens, along with a chance to visit some of the medieval sections. Once you have explored the grounds, a wide range of dining choices is available. Parking is on-site. For more information, visit the website at **https://www.dartington.org/visit/.**

Tales from Sacchetti

The Bean in the Ear

We bring you another tale 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.

By the excellent method of throwing him upon the ground, Maestro Gabbadeo rids a peasant of a bean which had got into his ear.

Here is another story of the art of healing. In the district of Prato there lived a peasant, a stout, strong man named Atticciato. As he was threshing beans one clay in the month of July, one flew into his ear; and he tried to get it out with his thick finger, but the more he endeavoured to take hold of it the further did he push it in. At last he was obliged to have recourse to the physician Gabbadeo, who, when he beheld him, said:

"This requires a remedy of which, although it will hurt you, you must not be afraid."

The man replied, "Do what you like, provided the bean comes out."

So the Maestro, who was tall and strong, made pretense of looking first into one ear and then into the other; then, biding his time, he struck out and gave the man such a heavy blow upon that side of his head where the bean was not, that he fell to the ground upon the ear wherein i was, and with the blow and the shock of the fall the bean dropped out of his ear. The peasant, having had such a knock, lamented both because of the blow and the fall, and the bean he remembered not at all.

Maestro Gabbadeo said: "Let me see the ear," and greatly bewailing himself, the man allowed it to him, and he saw that the bean had come out.

Beans - photo by INRA, Jean Weber / Wikimedia Commons

The peasant complained then of the blow he had received, but Maestro Gabbadeo said:

"Oh, you fool! Don't you not know that when something enters into the sheath of a knife you do turn it upside down and knock it until the thing comes out?

Thus was I obliged to do unto you, but I had to strike you upon the other side in order that the ear which held the bean should hit the ground and so force the bean out. Other physicians would have kept plasters upon you for a month, and all your harvest-money would have been wasted on them. Go now, and seek to do what good you can, and when you have occasion, then send me a couple of capons."

The peasant was comforted, because he had feared being forced to pay very heavily in addition to the blow he had received, and he said: "I have no capons, but if you disdain them not I can
send you a couple of young geese."

"Then send me the geese, and my blessing go with you," answered Gabbadeo; "and if it should happen that someone in your village suffers from any ill, relate your own experience and send them to me."

The peasant promised to do so, and he departed, greatly bewailing himself because, in order to cure him of the bean, he had had such a blow that for many days he could do go threshing. When he was cured of the pain he carried the young geese to Maestro Gabbadeo, who acquired much fame in ail that neighbourhood on account of this affair, which was a new experiment and never tried before.

And Atticciato remained his very good friend; for the proverb says truly: "Beat the countryman and he becomes your friend."

Visit the Medievalists.net Cafe Press page

Dozens of products available, including:

Go to http://www.cafepress.com/medievalistsnet