The Medieval Magazine

Miniature of Christine de Pizan breaking up ground while Lady Reason clears away letters to prepare for the building of the City of Ladies. Additional 20698 f. 17 (Netherlands, S. (Bruges) (The British Library).
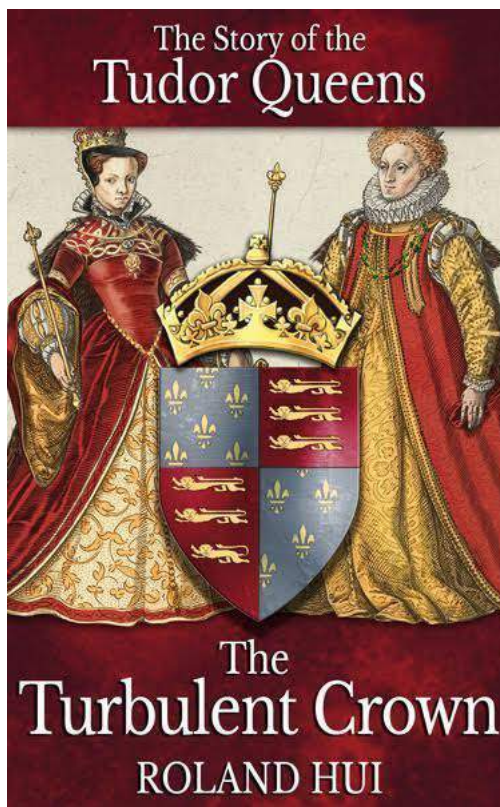
Philippa of Hainault &
Anne of Bohemia

Women of the Medici
Eleanor of Toledo

Travel Tips
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Regular Features

In Honour of Women

"We cannot live in a world that is interpreted for us by others. An interpreted world is not a hope. Part of the terror is to take back our own listening. To use our own voice. To see our own light."
 Hildegard von Bingen

Dear readers,

We'd like to dedicate this issue to women in recognition of International Women's Day on March 8th. It has become more important than ever to celebrate, and shine a light on, the contributions and achievements of women. Your editors, two women, feel deeply indebted to those who bravely paved the way before us.

What challenges did medieval and early modern women face and how did they surmount them? We hope to offer you a glimpse into their lives and legacies.

In this issue, we focus on medieval and early modern women. Jessica Brewer talks about the early medieval Anglo-Saxon queen Etheldreda, and Conor Byrne examines the late medieval queens Philippa of Hainault and Anne of Bohemia. We review Susan Signe Morrison's wonderful introductory book on medieval women, and examine the power of Tudor queenship in Roland Hui's *The Turbulent Crown*. In our features, we focus on women's impact on medieval architecture and objects including a look at lady chapels and spindle whorls.

We've also kept our finger on the pulse of news in medieval studies and included the line-up for an upcoming conference on Medieval Ethiopia, reviewed a new exhibit at the Museum of London, visited the Uffizi, and planned a few fantasy vacations.

Lastly, don't hesitate to give us a shout on Twitter **@Medievalists** with the hashtag: **#MedievalWomen.** Let's keep the conversation going.

Warmly,

Sandra & Dani

Sandra Alvarez

Sandra is the co-founder and editor of Medievalists.net, and The Medieval Magazine. Sandra has a Hon. B.A. from the University of Toronto in Medieval Studies, & a diploma in Human Resources from George Brown College. She is a content writer for a digital marketing agency & lives in London, England with her Jack Russell Terrier, Buffy. When she's not doing something medieval, she can be found with her nose in a book, attempting to learn 3 languages, & planning her next adventure. You can follow her on Twitter @mediaevalgirl or check out her blog Mediaevalgirl.com.

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Danielle earned her MA in Medieval Archaeology at the University of York in England. She is passionate about "the stuff" beyond the text of primary sources, & how modern people engage with medieval culture. When she's not visiting museums and historical sites, she's riding horses, reading about Vikings, or making loose leaf tea in a French Press. She currently lives in southern California and manages CuratoryStory.com. She is a contributor to Medievalists.net & editor at The Medieval Magazine. You can follow Dani on Twitter: @MissDaniTryn.

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Intercession and Motherhood: The Queenships of Philippa of Hainault and Anne of Bohemia
by Conor Byrne

Philippa of Hainault's Coronation, Jean Froissart, 15th century. (Wikipedia)

Philippa of Hainaut is shown seated under the canopy. 15th c. (Wikipedia)

A tract published in 1347 entitled 'The III Consideracions Right Necesserye to the Good Governaunce of a Prince' was of the opinion that a queen should 'have good and due regarde to suche thinge as toucheth the profyte and the honeure of hir lord and hir self.' The queen should obtain her husband's consent before she took in hand 'greet maters', for her primary duty was to 'bere reverence and oneure' to her husband 'at all tymes.' It can be argued that the fourteenth-century consorts Philippa of Hainault and Anne of Bohemia, wives to Edward III and Richard II respectively, were successful in heeding and responding to the expectation put forward in 'The III Consideracions.'

Philippa de Hainaut and her army, 15th c. (Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

Intercession and motherhood were central to this conceptualisation of what it meant to be a successful queen consort in late medieval England. The Game and Playe of the Chesse, William Caxton's 1474 translation of the thirteenth-century work authored by Jacobus de Cessolis, noted that the queen *'ought to be chaste, wyse, of honest peple / well manerd and not curious in nourisshynge of her children'* and in temperament, she should be *'tymerous and shamefast.'* To be a successful consort, then, was to be virtuous, chaste, polite and modest; she was responsible for providing heirs to safeguard the continuation of her husband's dynasty, and to prevent the outbreak of dynastic and political conflict that could accompany a disputed succession.

The turbulent circumstances of her husband's accession to the throne in 1327 presented a challenge to Edward III's consort, Philippa of Hainault, whom he married in 1328. Her forty-year tenure as consort, however, was undoubtedly a success according to contemporary expectations of the queen's responsibilities and duties, as outlined above.

While Queenship in England is concerned with the nine women that occupied the position of queen between 1308 and 1485, I am interested in asking broader questions related more specifically to the office, or institution, which these women occupied, and which is often neglected in favour of the personal details associated with each incumbent. In relation to Philippa, we need to question the situation in which English queenship found itself in by 1328. Philippa's predecessor and mother-in-law, the indomitable Isabella of France, had succeeded in her coup that culminated in Edward II's deposition, because of her striking conformity to contemporary understandings of the queen's role, which were clearly associated with gender expectations and the culture of honour in which queenship was embedded. This conformity ensured the support of Edward's political enemies and made possible his deposition. Whether or not he was ultimately murdered in 1327, as is traditionally argued, Isabella had demonstrated the possibilities available to a consort to exercise public power at a time when the queen's ability to do so was highly circumscribed, and when she chiefly did so through informal – or 'private' – means.

Philippa, therefore, did not necessarily find herself in a straightforward position when she became England's queen in 1328. The ambiguity of the situation facing her is perhaps most strikingly demonstrated by the fact that she was not crowned until the spring of 1330. This ritual, which legitimated the queen's position and celebrated the ruling dynasty, was usually scheduled to take place immediately after the royal wedding, but in Philippa's case it was delayed. The lack of clarity concerning Philippa's role, and

and more broadly speaking the institution of queenship, was further demonstrated in the fact that no-one was officially designated regent for the young king during his minority between February 1327 and November 1330. However, the role was effectively taken on by his mother and Philippa's predecessor, Isabella of France. Philippa, then, had more or less been relegated to the sidelines by her mother-in-law, because Isabella's actions arguably demonstrated her continuing wish to act, and to be seen, as queen. The delay in arranging Philippa's coronation, quite plausibly, was a result of Isabella's unwillingness to cede queenship to her.

It was not an auspicious start to Philippa's queenship, but her tenure, ending in 1369, was marked by notable successes that ultimately restored dignity – one could even, with caution, say normality – to the office of queenship. Early on, Philippa appears to have prioritised the role of intercessor, which was a shrewd political move on her behalf given the widespread discontent that had enveloped

England during the final years of Edward II's reign and the minority of Edward III as a result of unpopular political, financial and diplomatic policies. In the summer of 1331, a year after her coronation, the pope wrote to the queen thanking her for her conduct towards her mother-in-law, and beseeched her to restore 'the good fame' of Isabella, whose reputation had been somewhat tarnished during the regency. In her intercessory activities, there is evidence that Philippa exerted influence and was determined to redress perceived injustices. In 1350, she wrote to the chancellor requesting a commission of enquiry into the over-taxation of her tenants at Havering atte Bower, a property traditionally assigned to the queens of England. She also wrote to her attorney John de Edington instructing him to refrain from executing writs against those indebted to her, until she and her council had determined their ability to pay. In exercising influence in her household management, and in interceding for those who found themselves in a difficult situation – including her mother-in-law – Philippa

Philippa of Hainault (alchetron.com)

conformed to contemporary expectations of queenship and how the incumbent was expected to make use of her resources and influence associated with the office in a manner that redounded to the 'oneure' of her husband.

Indeed, so successful was Philippa perceived to be as an intercessor that it arguably became the role with which she was most associated during her lifetime and beyond. Most famously of all, in 1347 – the same year in which The III Consideracions was published – she was reported to have persuaded her husband to spare the lives of six principal burghers after the siege of Calais. Her intercessory activities occurred regularly and ranged from obtaining a pardon for an eleven-year-old girl convicted of robbery in York to requesting clemency for a pregnant woman condemned to be executed for theft. Ultimately, Philippa did not intercede as regularly as her mother-in-law, but it is nonetheless noteworthy that her perceived success as an intercessor earned her the admiration of her subjects. As

Thomas Walsingham confirmed, she was 'a most noble woman and most constant lover of the English.' At a time when foreign-born consorts could attract criticism for their entourages – Joan of Navarre as an example – it is striking that this was not the case for Philippa.

As effective as she was as an intercessor, it was ultimately in motherhood that Philippa enjoyed her greatest success. During her long marriage to Edward III, the queen gave birth to twelve children, and thus proved that she was receptive to the stipulation that the queen should seek to provide her husband with heirs 'with al her strengthe her right sorowful grevous herte.' Philippa's motherhood restored a measure of stability to the kingdom in the wake of her husband's complicated accession and the initial difficult circumstances in which she became his consort. There is, moreover, evidence that Edward appreciated his wife's fertility. Her churchings, which accompanied childbirth, were calculated to promote the fertility of the dynasty, and the featuring of the coats of arms of both

England and Hainault following the birth of their eldest son, Edward, in 1330, demonstrated that the paternal and maternal families were united in dynastic continuation.

Philippa's tenure as queen was not marked by a coup and a deposition, as her mother-in-law's was, but her forty years as consort ultimately permitted Philippa to formulate her own conception of queenship that served the dynastic and political needs of her husband, whose accession had been made possible by his father's deposition and possible death. In her activities as an intercessor and as a mother, Philippa's model of queenship was more traditional than that of her predecessor and conformed closely to contemporary ideals that were predicated on gender expectations and honour codes. Her successes account for her popularity among her subjects, while her close relationship with her husband enabled her to be influential in the informal avenues of power traditionally available to the consort. If her mother-in-law's actions had presented an ambiguous

situation for Philippa, then the successful model of queenship that she had developed undoubtedly required consideration by her successors. Intercession and motherhood similarly featured during the tenure of her successor, Anne of Bohemia, the first wife of her grandson Richard II.

Like Philippa, Anne's marriage was made in difficult circumstances, for it occurred in the context of schism within the Church.
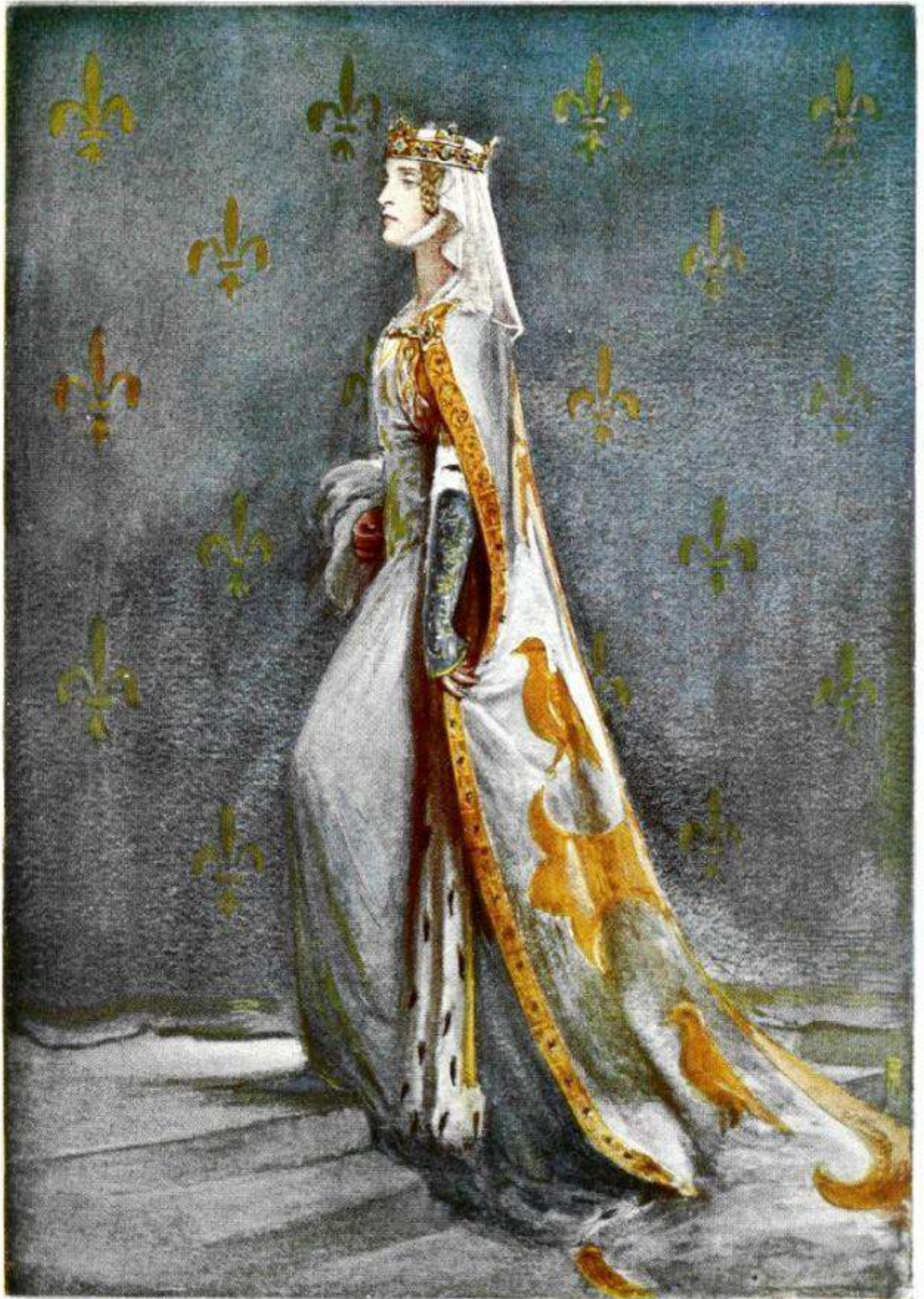

The Coronation of Anne of Bohemia and Richard II in the Liber Regalis (Wikipedia).

The marriage treaty promised a perpetual alliance between the English king and Anne's brother Wenceslaus of Bohemia, but it does not appear to have been popular among Richard's councillors. The chronicler Adam of Usk noted that Anne had been 'bought for a great price', and the lack of financial advantage caused resentment. Perhaps aware that her marriage was not viewed entirely positively by her new subjects, Anne soon became active in the sphere of intercession, and in this she sought to emulate her predecessor. In January 1382, the same month in which she married Richard and was crowned at Westminster Abbey, Anne met with the citizens of London and was presented with a bill soliciting her support for the city's liberties. They encouraged her to act as 'mediatrix' between them and the king. Given that the so-called Peasants' Revolt had destabilised the city less than one year earlier, it is unsurprising that the Londoners were desirous of maintaining peace in the capital. The queen, who was traditionally closely associated with mediation, was looked to in the hope of peace.

Unlike her predecessor, Anne was not required to contend with a domineering mother-in-law. This enabled her to establish a close relationship with her husband, who was a similar age, and it was reported that Richard 'rarely or never permitted Anne to be absent from his side'. This closeness meant that Anne could be effective in her intercessory activities which, as Philippa's queenship had established, tended to be influenced, at least on one level, by the closeness between king and queen. Her activities were both necessary and valued in view of the mounting troubles that Richard faced as his reign progressed. In 1388, Anne beseeched the Appellants – the nobles determined to impeach several of the king's favourites in a bid to restrain Richard's perceived tyrannous rule – to save the lives of the king's former tutor Sir Simon Burley and the justices. While her subjects may have appreciated her intercession, the queen's marriage remained unpopular. Unlike Philippa, Anne was criticised for maintaining a conspicuous foreign entourage, and the scandal involving one of the queen's

14th century Queen of Richard II - Anne of Bohemia - illustration by Percy Anderson for Costume Fanciful, Historical and Theatrical, 1906. (Wikipedia),

ladies, Agnes de Launcekrona, and the king's favourite Robert de Vere, dishonoured Anne. This apparent ineffectiveness in governing her household can be seen in the broader context of Anne's limited success as consort. Her marriage had not been made in auspicious circumstances and its unpopularity was exacerbated by her failure to provide a male heir.

Why Richard and Anne's marriage proved childless has been debated by historians. It has been suggested that the couple failed to consummate the marriage and lived chastely, but there is surviving evidence that testifies to Anne's desire to produce children. Kristen Geaman's research has indicated that Anne purchased items associated with fertility, and the queen also ventured on a pilgrimage to pray for a son. Tragically for the royal couple, Anne was destined to remain disappointed. Her death in 1394, at the age of twenty-eight, contributed to Richard's worsening position as king, and his deposition followed only five years later. It is tempting 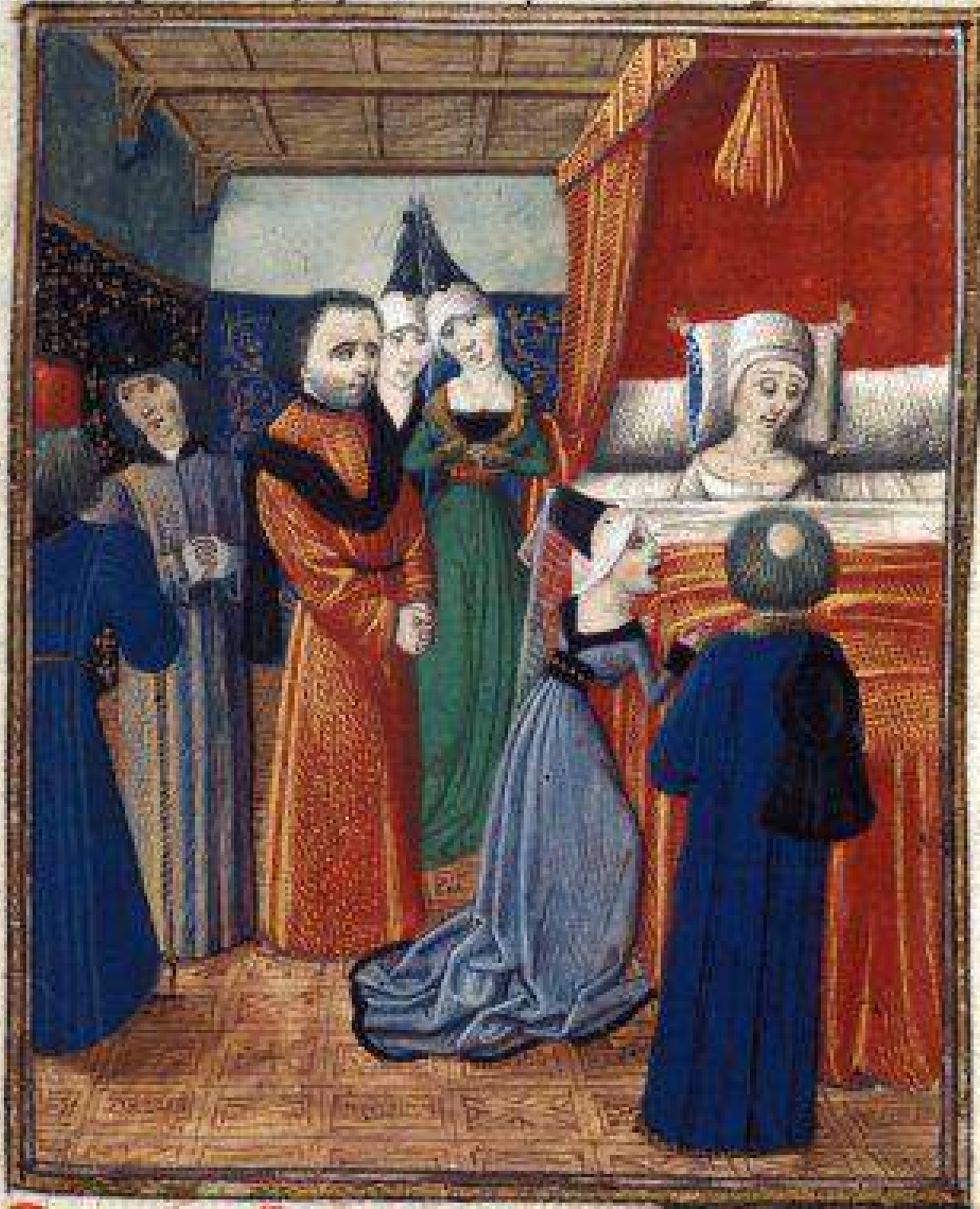to speculate as to what might have happened had there been children of the marriage, but the lack of heirs led to a crisis of the succession, which further contributed to questions about Richard's suitability to rule.

What is significant is that Anne herself does not appear to have been criticised for her childlessness, unlike other queens (Henry VIII's wives being obvious examples). Chroniclers were mixed in their views of Anne, but she was represented by one as the 'most gracious queen of England, even though she died childless' and she came to be perceived as a moderating influence on her unstable husband. Anne's piety and activities as an intercessor indicated her concern for her subjects' interests, similarly to Philippa of Hainault. Ultimately, Anne's death placed the institution of queenship in an ambiguous position, and it was left to her successor, Isabelle of France, to attempt to restore the office to its former glory.

Her youth and Richard's deposition ensured that this never materialised.

Death of Anne of Bohemia. Harley MS 4380. f.22 Jean Froissart, Chroniques, Vol. IV, part 2, Netherlands, S. (Bruges), c. 1470 and 1472, French. (British Library).

Detail of a miniature of the funeral of Anne of Bohemia, at the beginning of chapter 39. Royal 18 E II f. 227v., Netherlands, S. (Bruges) (The British Library).

Henry IV's accession in 1399 was made possible by contemporary criticisms of Richard's inability to rule, and the questionable legitimacy of his kingship was closely associated with his queens' shortcomings. While Anne enjoyed limited success, it is possible that, in her childlessness, she was more of a burden than a blessing to Richard.
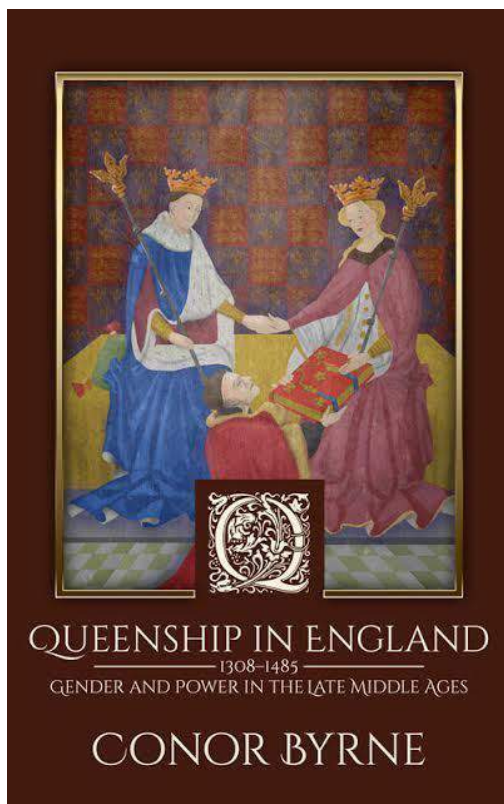
Contemporaries expected their queen to intercede on behalf of her subjects; clemency and mercy were highly prized virtues and

allowed the king to act graciously without appearing to lose his masculine authority. Motherhood was equally expected of the consort, for it enabled the continuation of the ruling dynasty and further legitimised the king's right to rule.

Philippa of Hainault and Anne of Bohemia were praised for their activities as intercessors, and both enjoyed success in this traditional queenly activity. However, while Philippa's fertility was celebrated by her husband and contributed to the stability of his regime, Anne's childlessness weakened her husband's claim to rule and at least indirectly contributed to his deposition five years after her death.

Buy This Book

Conor Byrne (Photo: Made Global Publishing)

Conor Byrne studied History at the University of Exeter. He is the author of Katherine Howard: A New History and Queenship in England, both published by MadeGlobal. Since 2012 he has run a historical blog and was formerly editor of Tudor Life Magazine. His research to date specialises in late medieval and early modern European history, with a focus on gender, sexuality and the monarchy.

Follow Conor On Facebook: **Conor Byrne Historian**

Talk the Talk
Old Italian
"Fáte Sángue"
To let, shed, spill blood

Florence. Easter, 1216. Young, fiery Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti attended a banquet and after a heated exchange, he stabbed one of the guests, Oddo Arrighi, in the arm. As punishment for this grave insult, he was forced to marry one of Arrighi's not-so-comely Amidei nieces. Buondelmonti changed his mind an arranged a marriage with a rival Donati girl. This mistake proved fatal: he was murdered on the Ponte Vecchio en route to his wedding by the angry Amidei. Fáte Sángue indeed!

The murder, of Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti. Giovanni Villani's Nuova Cronica in the Vatican Library (ms. Chigiano L VIII 296 - Biblioteca Vaticana).

Curious about Ge'ez & the medieval period in Ethiopia? Don't miss...

"Medieval Ethiopia: A Colloquium" at Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto

Saturday 10 March 2017

4:30-6:00 pm Plenary Lecture: Columba Stewart, OSB (Hill Museum and Manuscript Library): "The Pioneering Work of the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML) and How Its Challenges and Mission Endure in the Digital Age"

Saturday 11 March 2017

9:15-9:30 am Opening remarks
9:30-10:30 am Wendy Belcher (Princeton University): "The Riches of the Ethiopian Archive: Lives, Literature, and Legends"
11:00 am-12:00 pm Gianfrancesco Lusini (University of Naples): "Monasticism in Medieval Ethiopia: Holy Men, Scribes and Scholars"
1:15-2:15 pm Samantha Kelly (Rutgers University): "The Ethiopians of Renaissance Europe"
2:15-3:15 pm Habtamu Tegegne (Rutgers University): "Ethiopia's Culture of Forgery, Problem of Document Deletion and Strategies of Preservation"
3:45-4:45 pm Roundtable: "Teaching Ge'ez"
4:45-5:45 pm Roundtable: "The Literature of Ethiopia, Medieval and Modern"
5:45-6:00 pm Closing remarks
6:00-7:00 pm Reception

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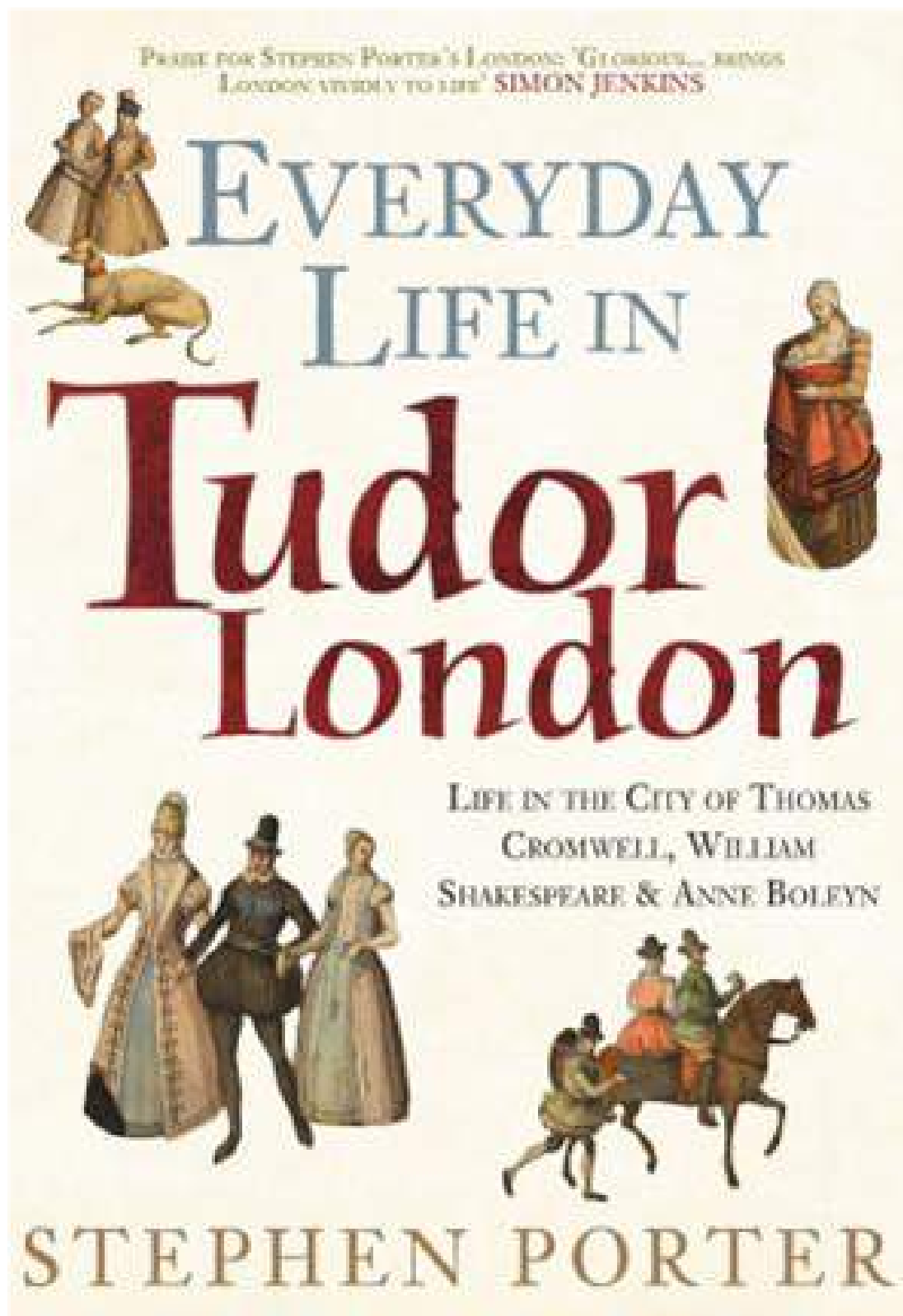The University of Saint Michael's College
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Everyday Life in Tudor London
By Stephen Porter

Tudor London was a vibrant capital city, the very hub of English cultural and political life. The thriving metropolis had a strong royal presence, at the long established Tower of London and Westminster, and later at the palaces of Whitehall, Bridewell and St James's, built by Henry VIII to host his glittering court. Anne Boleyn was assigned a house in the Strand, with gardens running down to the river, while Elizabeth I stayed occasionally at Somerset House.The great and the good gravitated to the city too: Erasmus lodged with Sir Thomas More and his family in Bucklesbury, off Cheapside; Sir Walter Raleigh wrote poetry in his study in Durham House, over looking the Thames and William Shakespeare lodged in Silver Street. Like today streets and areas grew up with their own distinct personality: Seven Dials was a notorious hive of criminals; Bankside and Shoreditch were the first theatre and entertainment districts where the Globe Theatre was built to sit alongside and bear-baiting rings. Londoners themselves, and the many immigrants who flocked from the continent, created a lively, raucous society in the streets, markets and the hundreds of inns and ale-houses.

Everyday Life in Tudor London is part of Amberley's hugely successful list of Tudor history titles. Fabulously illustrated with over 100 images, (many in colour) this topic is relevent to many popular London visitor attractions including Museum of London, Tower of London, and Hampton Court.

Everyday Life in Tudor London is available in Kindle, Kobo and iBook formats.

Stephen Porter is an acknowledged expert on London's history. His other books include **The Great Plague***,* **London: A History in Paintings & Illustrations***, &* **Pepys's London***. He is a Fellowof the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Historical Society. After twenty-five years living in the capital he now livesin Stratford-Upon-Avon.*

Everyday Life in Tudor London

'This is a powerful and busy city, carrying on a great trade with all countries. In the city are many people and many artisans, mostly goldsmiths and cloth-workers, also very beautiful women, but food is dear.' This impression of London was written by a German traveller, Gabriel Tetzel, in 1466. He was in the retinue of Leo of Rozmital, in Bohemia, together with a Bohemian squire known only as Schaseck, who summarised it more succinctly as a 'large and magnificent city'. The two men drew attention to the city's salient points: its size, populousness, bustle, overseas trade, the skilled artisans and beautiful women who lived there, and how expensive it was. Their impressions were broadly correct, for London held an unrivalled position within England as by far its largest and wealthiest city, the centre of government and the law, the focus of power and patronage, with a diverse economy and many overseas connections.

Leo's journey through the Rhineland to the cloth-making cities of the Low Countries and then to the coast at Calais had provided Schaseck and Tetzel with a context in which to judge London. Tetzel described Brussels as 'a great city' and Mechelen as *'fine, large and well-built'*, and he was especially fascinated by Ghent, which he found to be *'a powerful city … with a vast number of people living there'*. Schaseck was impressed by Bruges and wrote that it was *'a large and beautiful city rich in merchandise, for there is access to it by land and sea from all the countries of the Christian world'*. They did not visit Antwerp, which was then beginning to prosper and expand; it was the largest of the Flemish cities, with a population of 45,000, a little larger than Ghent and Brussels, and outstripping Bruges, which had 30,000 inhabitants. Antwerp was to be a significant trading connection for London in the coming century.

By the end of the fifteenth century London's population was roughly 50,000, within a national figure of 2.6 million. In the context of northern Europe it was much more populous than Cologne the largest city in the Holy Roman Empire, which was home to some

Everyday Life in Tudor London

30,000 people, although it was only a quarter of the size of Paris in terms of number of inhabitants. Paris was one of five European cities with a population of over 100,000, the others being Naples, Milan, Constantinople, which was recovering after its capture by the Ottomans fifty years earlier, and Venice, the greatest trading city of Renaissance Europe.

Other visitors were prompted by London's size, wealth and the range of its functions to give positive reactions to the city. The Parisian scholar Domenico Mancini spent several months in London in 1482–3, leaving in early July 1483.

A map of London by John Norden, 1593. This copy comes from the 1653 edition of Norden's Speculum Britainiæ (Mirror of Britain), re-issued after his death. (Wikipedia)

Everyday Life in Tudor London

He wrote an account of his stay at the request of his patron, Angelo Cato, archbishop of Vienne, and dated it 1 December 1483. Despite coming from a much larger city, Mancini was fascinated by London, which he described as 'the royal city and capital of the whole kingdom both in size and wealth' which was 'so famous throughout the world'. In 1497 Andreas Franciscius, a Venetian, commented on the advantages that the tidal flow of the Thames gave the city, which, he thought, had a position that was *so pleasant and delightful that it would be hard to find one more convenient and attractive'*. Around 1500 another Venetian, Andrea Trevisano, wrote that London was *'truly the metropolis of England' and that Londoners live comfortably, and, it appears to me, that there are not fewer inhabitants than at Florence or Rome'*. He, too, noted the significance of the tides, which gave London *'all the advantages to be desired in a maritime town',* with vessels of 100 tons able to reach the city.

Verses by a Scottish poet composed around the time of Trevisano's visit extolled this 'Sovereign of cities', which was *'the flour of Cities all'*, for its beauty, as *'semeliest in sight'*, wealth and trade, with merchauntis *full of substaunce and myght'*, and its river, which was busy with 'many a barge … many a ship'. A Also to be admired were the bridge, the Tower with its artillery, and the churches and their 'wele sowynyng' bells; while on its streets were the nobility and their *'most delectable lusty ladies bright'*, knights dressed in velvet gowns wearing chains of fine gold, and the clergy, *'famous prelatis in habitis clericall'*. Finally, he praised the city's 'pryncely governaunce', under its mayor, for *'No Lord of Parys, Venyce, or Floraunce In dignytie or honoure goeth to hym nye'*. A generation later John Major, or Mair, the author of the first authoritative history of Scotland, described it as *'the largest and the fairest in its situation'* of all the cities in the British Isles.

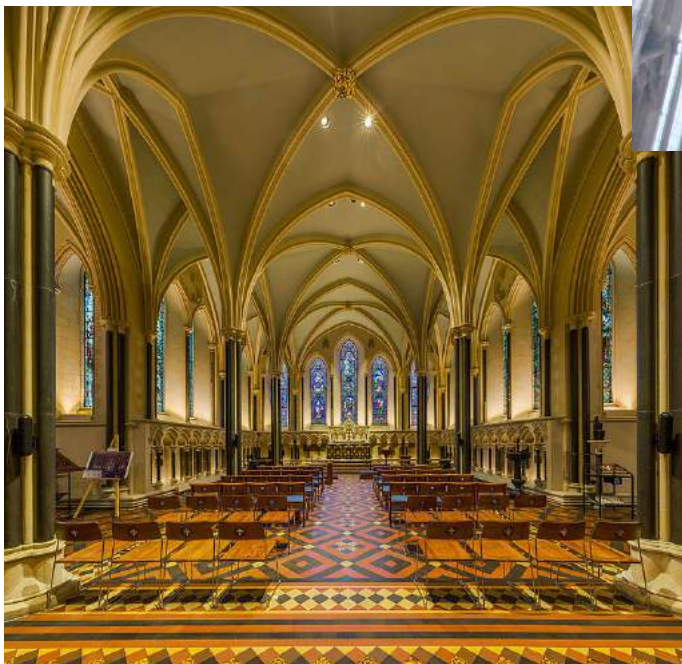Follow Amberley Publishing on Twitter: **@amberleybooks**

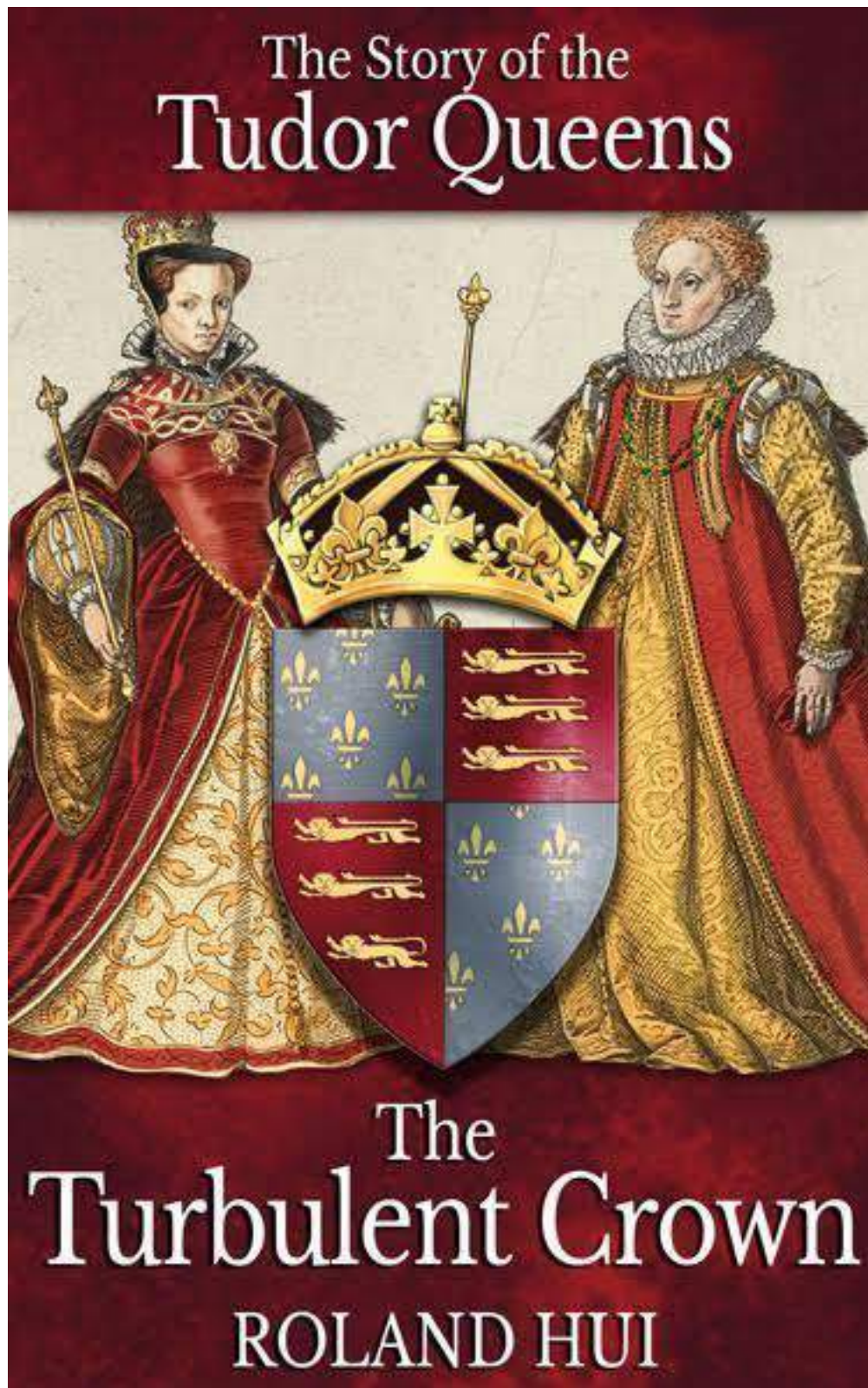Like Amberley Publishing on **Facebook**

Lady Chapel

A chapel dedicated to Mary, commonly called a Mary or Marian chapel. These were commonly attached or contained within a larger church, while modest churches have a side altar dedicated to the Virgin. The increased importance of Mary's roles of virgin and mother in the 12th and 13th centuries led to a growth in Marian cults and the worship of Mary as an alternate deity. Congregations began seeking a way to more directly worship her, thus leading to the development of Marian altars and lady chapels. England and France are particularly well-known for constructing large and elaborate lady chapels especially in the High Gothic period (13-15th centuries). These chapels were elaborately decorated with sculpture, carvings, and large windows. During the English Reformation and the French Revolution, this also made them prime targets for destructive activity. The lady chapel at Ely Cathedral (top right) is an example of this, but the window tracery has mostly survived. Other lady chapels include the 13th century lady chapel in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin (lower left), and the highly renovated Our Lady Cathedral in Bruges, containing Michaelangelo's "Madonna and Child" (lower right).

Book Tour

The Turbulent Crown: The Story of the Tudor Queens
By Roland Hui

In honour of International Women's Day on March 8th, we're pleased to share yet another book about strong women who made history. ***The Turbulent Crown: The Story of the Tudor Queens*** is author Roland Hui's contribution to the story of the powerful women behind the Tudor dynasty.

We're giving away a copy of this book! Want a chance to win it? **Subscribe to our free newsletter** and **send us an email by March 15th** answering this question: *What was the name of the jewel owned by Mary I, that was given to Elizabeth Taylor by Richard Burton?* (a simple one line response will suffice!)

Email: **sandra@medievalists.net**

Roland Hui shares with us ***10 Facts You Probably Didn't Know About the Tudors... Did you know that....***

1.) Actress Elizabeth Taylor owned a jewel belonging to Mary I? The late actress was given the pearl 'La Peregrina' by her then husband Richard Burton. The pearl can be seen in many portraits of Mary where she wears it suspended from a diamond brooch.

2.) Mary Queen of Scots had a thing for tall men? When she first laid eyes on her second husband Henry Stewart (later Lord Darnley), she gushed how he was 'the properest and best proportioned long man that she had ever seen.'

3.)Anne Boleyn and Lady Jane Grey narrowly avoided being burnt to death? At the trials of the two ladies, both were condemned to be burned or beheaded at the sovereign's pleasure. Mercifully, Henry VIII and Mary I allowed them the 'kinder' death of decapitation.

4.) Anne of Cleves, the fourth wife of Henry VIII hoped to be his sixth? After her successor Katheryn Howard was executed for adultery, Anne hoped that the King would remarry her. However, she received a definite 'no'. Bitterly, she would later grumble how Henry's new wife Katharine Parr was not as beautiful as herself.

5.) Jane Seymour, Henry VIII's third wife, hated French fashion? When she became Queen, her ladies were banned from wearing French styled clothes. Jane thought they were too racy. Instead, her maids-of-honour had to adopt more sedate English dress.

6.) Edward VI was very straitlaced even from a young age? When he was 8, he wrote to his stepmother, Queen Katharine Parr, asking her to warn his stepsister Princess Mary 'to attend no longer to foreign dances and merriments which do not become a Christian Princess.'

7.) Elizabeth I was competitive, to say the least? When she asked the Scottish ambassador who was taller – she or her cousin Mary Queen of Scots – and received the reply that it was Mary, Elizabeth remarked that Mary was too tall then and that she was the right height.

8.) Henry VIII might have had seven wives? His sixth Katharine Parr was nearly arrested for heresy, and even during their marriage, there were rumours that the King was attracted to Katherine Willoughby, the attractive young widow of the Duke of Suffolk.

9.) Henry VII was a big believer in astrology? He had horoscopes of his family done and the one for his wife Elizabeth of York predicted that she would live to 80. Unfortunately, she died at the age of 37, coincidentally on her birthday.

10.) Katherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first Queen, was destitute during her early years in England? After the death of her first husband Prince Arthur, she was neglected by both her father King Ferdinand of Spain and by her father-in-law Henry VII. Katherine was forced to sell her jewels to put food on her table. Relief came when King Henry died, and she married his son Henry VIII.

Etheldreda:
Queen, Abbess, Saint

by Jessica Brewer

Saint Etheldreda/ thelthryth/ Audrey (636 -679c.e.) was an East-Anglian princess who became the Queen of Northumbria and later the founder and abbess of a monastery at Ely in Cambridgeshire. These basic facts about her life are not particularly unique. Most royal women of the 7th century were expected to enter or at least found a monastic community. However unlike the hundreds of noble women who entered the church in Anglo-Saxon England, Etheldreda's shrine and Etheldreda herself became a major figure within the English religious landscape.
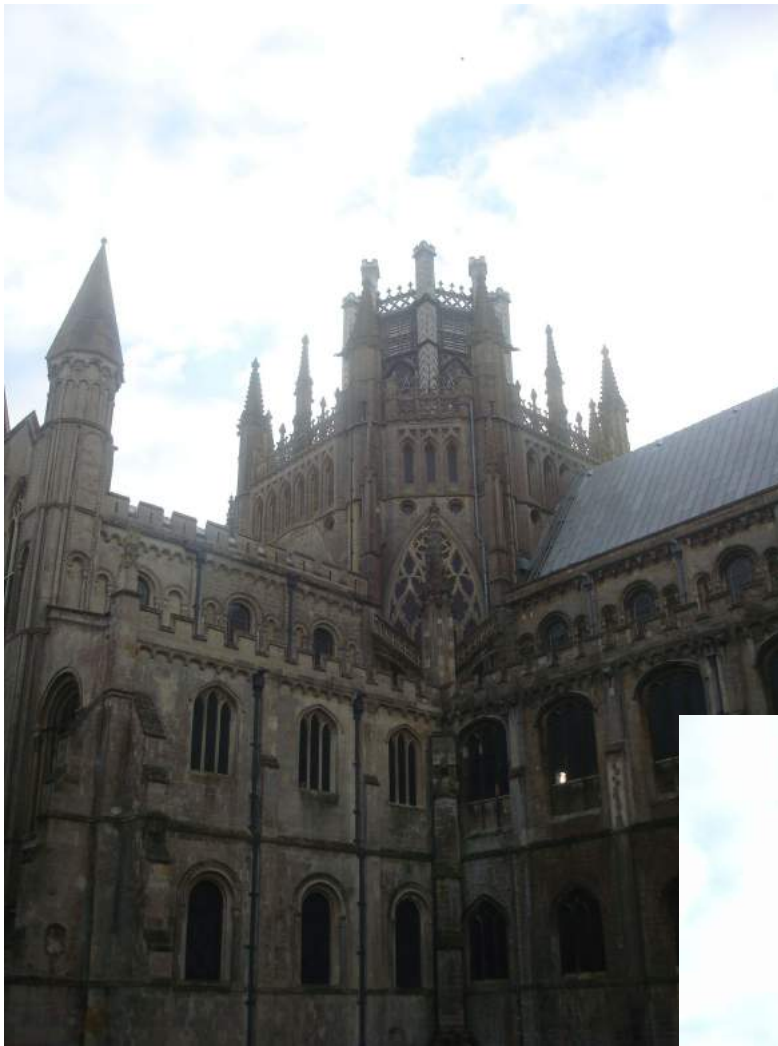
Her popularity as a saint began soon after her death, Bede relates a version of her life in his Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum about 60 years after her death and her cult remained a focal point of worship in England throughout the Middle Ages. From her cult's inception she was elevated to a status beyond that of a normal saint, she was regarded almost as an English equivalent of the Virgin Mary herself.

There is an abundance of medieval literature about Etheldreda in the form of saints' lives, or *Vitae*, but given the highly stylized na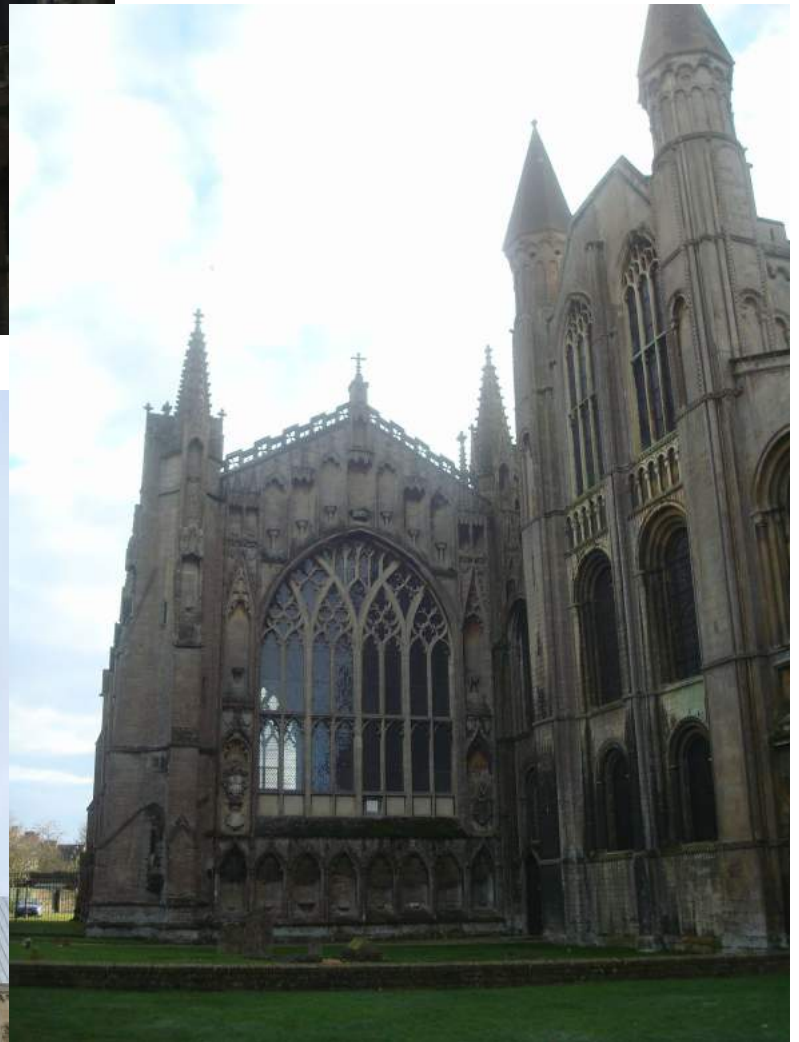rratives of the genre it is difficult to discern how closely the Etheldreda of these stories resembles the actual 7th century princess. While there is no reason to doubt the basic details of her life as recorded in the *Vitae*, her true character and behavior are lost to history.

Contemporary Anglo-Saxon sources rarely mention women. This dearth of information suggests that the chroniclers did not deem women as important or influential but that doesn't mean that they weren't. The few references to women that exist suggest that women were often influential in convincing their consorts to adopt Christianity and allude to access and control over wealth particularly land.

In these positions women had the power to create alliances with the Church and secular rulers. If land is currency the ability to bequeath land is power. The creation of a strong monastic community founded by Etheldreda at Ely helped to bolster the authority of Etheldreda's secular family in East Anglia who could in turn help financially support the fledgling monastic community. The ties between aristocrat families and monastic communities were forged primarily by women. This function seems to be the primary

Ely Cathedral, dedicated to Etheldreda, stands on the former abbey of Ely founded by her in 672. Its remarkable 11th century Romanesque architecture is crowned by its octagonal Lantern tower (left) and elaborate West Tower (below, left). The nave is one of the longest in England at 537 feet (164m). The 14th century Lady Chapel (below, right) was built in the English Gothic style, with large windows and elaborate carvings. Photos by D. Trynoski

Title Image: Saint Æthelthryth, 10th cen., The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, British Library

role for upper-class women in Anglo-Saxon England.

Bede writes that Etheldreda's sister thelburgh and her step-sister Sæthryth both became abbesses in Frankia thus establishing ties between their father King Anna and continental rulers. Like Etheldreda, thelburgh's body was exhumed some years after her death and was also found to be incorrupt. The inclusion of multiple saints within the family of King Anna (all of his children were eventually canonized), would have undoubtedly strengthened the bond between the Church and Anna's kingdom. The Church could use this connection to help develop a Christian stronghold on an island still in the process of conversion. The abbesses of royal blood were able to act as intermediaries in political negotiations and thus able to promote the political agendas of their families.

Written records about female saints and their cults is much greater than that of their secular lives and Etheldreda is no different. The literature espousing her saintliness far exceeds that of her life as princess and queen. In fact, more medieval *Vitae* exist about Etheldreda than any other English female saint.

According to the various *Vitae* she was the daughter of the East Anglian king Anna. Following the typical literary conventions of female sanctity, she desired to maintain her virginity and devote her life to Christ so much that she supposedly was able to maintain her virginity through two marriages. Her first husband was Tondbert a king of the South Gwyre in the Fens of East Anglia.

From him she received the Isle of Ely, where she would later found her monastery. When he died, she was married to Ecgfirth, the King of Northumbria, who unsuccessfully tried to consummate the marriage.

During her marriage to Ecgfirth, Etheldreda maintained a close friendship with Wilfrid the Bishop of York. It is documented that she gifted land to him to establish various religious houses including Hexham Abbey in Northumbria. Her patronage of Wilfrid turned him into a powerful ally within the Northumbrian court. In the scant records of Etheldreda's life it is known that Wilfrid served as her ally against her husband Ecgfirth when she wished to end the marriage to enter religious life.

Ecgfirth unsuccessfully tried to capture Etheldreda after she fled, but she managed to outmaneuver him. She and her nuns eventually arrived at Ely and there she founded the monastery where she ruled as abbess for the rest of her life. Her death in 679 was attributed to a tumor on her neck. The *Vitae* relate this as a means of penance for her vain indulgence in elaborate necklaces before entering the Church. She bore this burden with pride and even viewed the punishment as a sign of divine grace. After her death she was buried in the monastery's cemetery in a simple wooden coffin.

Her sanctity was confirmed sixteen years after her death during the abbacy of her biological sister, Sexburgh. Etheldreda's body was exhumed and found to be undecayed and incorrupt by her physcian Cynefrid. Incorruptibly of the flesh is one of the hallmarks of a saint and thus she was reburied in a Roman sarcophagus inside church and a shrine was later erected.

The monastery was sacked by the Danes in 870, however according to legend the Danes who tried to vandalize Etheldreda's shrine were struck down by God. After the destruction of the monastery, Etheldreda's cult fell into decline until it was revitalized in 970 when the monastery was refounded by King Edgar and Ethelwold, the bishop of Winchester as part of King Edgar's monastic reforms.

The revitalization of Etheldreda's cult in the late 10th century recreated her image as an English version of the Virgin Mary, a holy mother who metaphorically gave birth to a dynasty of religious women while maintaining her chastity. Etheldreda's cult continued to grow and attract devotees throughout the Middle Ages.

Etheldreda's cult continued to grow and attract devotees throughout the Middle Ages. During the reformation her cult was disbanded and her shrine and relics were destroyed and scattered to the wind, thus ending a 900 year tradition of worship. Though she may no longer have the same sway over the hearts and minds of the English as she once did, her life and sainthood provide a rare glimpse of the influence women had in Anglo-Saxon England.

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About the Author

Jessica Brewer received a B.A. in Medieval Studies and Classical Studies from Tulane University in 2006 and a M.A. in Medieval Archaeology from the University of York (UK) in 2010. Her main interests of study are gender and religion. In her spare time she practices ashtanga yoga and is an unapologetic cat lover.

The Church of St. Etheldreda, London, dating from the late 13th century. It was part of the palace of the Bishops of Ely (Ely House). It is one of two Roman Catholic churches in London due to its use by the Spanish ambassadors in the 17th century. Photo by D. Trynoski

Firenze Part I: The Uffizi

By Sandra Alvarez

Florence is a dream city for any historian. In the first of my four-part series on the magical city of Firenze, we go into the world famous art museum, the Uffizi Gallery.
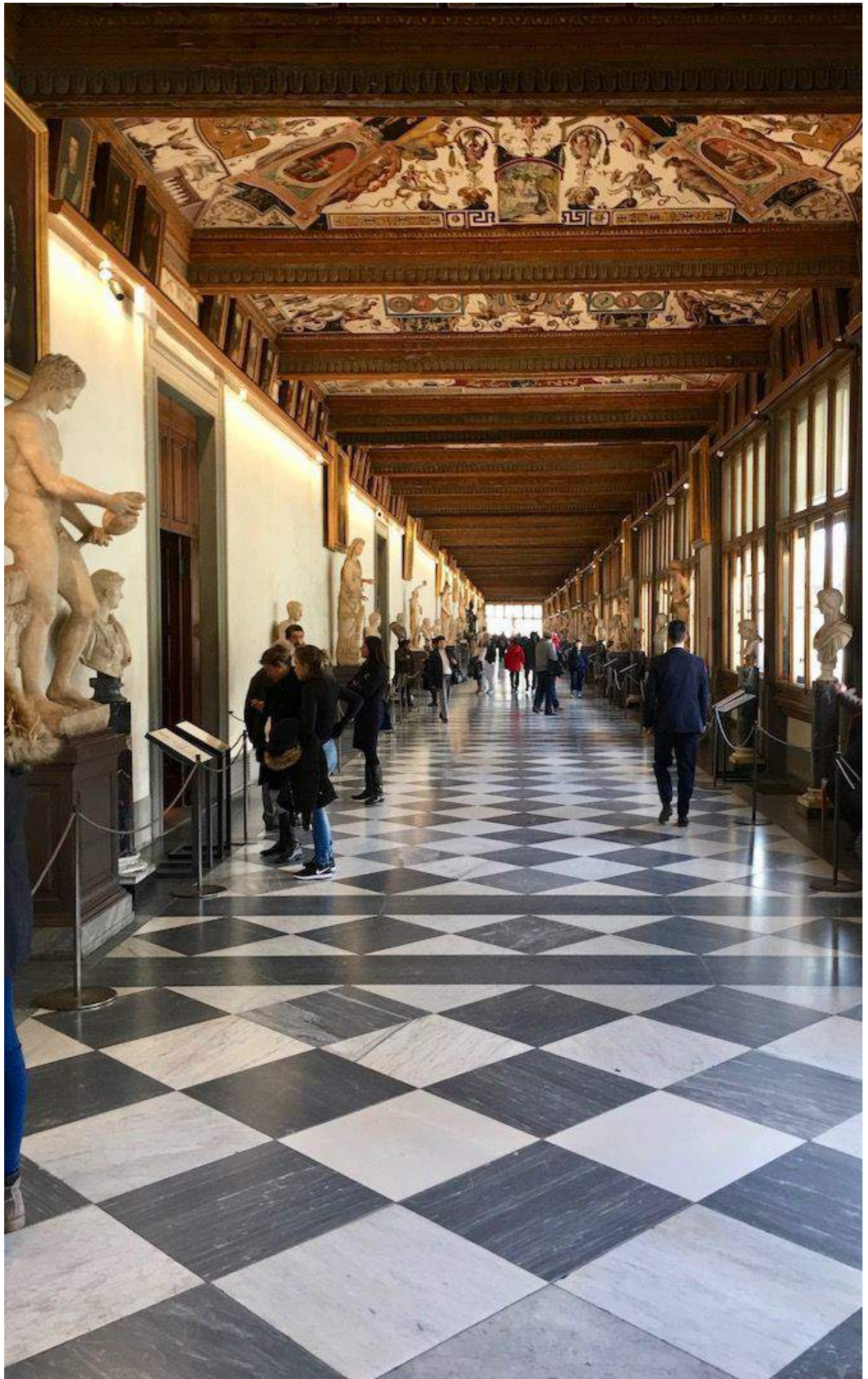

View from inside the Uffizi Gallery looking onto the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio and the Duomo's cupola. (Photo: Medievalists.net)

The Uffizi Gallery began construction in 1560, under the masterful eye of architect and painter, **Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574)**. It was commissioned by **Cosimo I de' Medici (1519-1574)** to house his magistrates and administrative offices, which is why it retains the name 'uffizi', Italian for 'offices'. Construction was completed in 1581 and the Medici family began to amass their vast collection of stunning art. The museum managed to continue after the demise of the Medici dynasty, thanks to the efforts of **Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici (1657-1743),** the last Medici. She bequeathed the Uffizi's contents to the Tuscan State in the *Patto di famiglia*, 'Family Pact', saving the museum for future generations to enjoy. The Uffizi opened to the public in 1765. **Above:** Sandro Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi, 1475*. This painting pays tribute to the Medici by inserting several of them throughout this famous biblical scene *(Photo: Medievalists.net)*.

The Gallery of Statues

The Uffizi is world famous for its stunning collection of Classical statues that date to the Roman Imperial Age. The Uffizi was once known as '*The Gallery of Statues*', because these pieces were the first to be displayed by the Medici family. when they began collecting art.

The East Corridor (the First corridor) housed the finest collection of these classical sculptures which were previously housed at various other Medici residences, such as Palazzo Pitti.

The statues were purchased by the family between the 16th and 18th centuries are are mostly Roman Imperial Age copies of Greek originals. The collection grew exponentially over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, filling two more corridors and totalling over 100 statues and 140 busts.

Although the statues, as we see them today, are displayed the exact same way they were 400 years ago, (the repeating pattern of a statue, followed by two busts, then another statue), there was extensive restoration and replacement undertaken by Renaissance and Baroque scukptures to preserve the collection.

Opposite page: The First Corridor of the Uffizi's *'Gallery of Statues'*. **Above:** a beautiful full statue of two young men standing at the corner end of the First Corridor. (*Photos: Medievalists.net*)

Travel

Italian Masters

In addition to amassing an astounding collection of classical statues, the Uffizi is renoun for containing the artwork of some of the greatest masters of the late Medieval period and the Italian Renaissance. **Right:** Giotto's *Ognissanti Maesta (1306-1310).* The portrayal of the Virgin enthroned, surrounded by angels and saints was a popular subject for late Medieval and early Renaissance painters.

Left: Duccio (1255-1319), often called the "Father of Western Art" is featured here in his *Rucellai Madonna 'Santa Maria Novella Maesta' (1285)*. Little is known about his early life other than that he was born in Siena and died there, and was instrumental in creating the Sienese and Trecento schools of painting. The piece was comissioned for the main altar of the church of Santa Maria Novella. (*Photos: Medievalists.net*)

Popular Pieces: Much like the Mona Lisa is a popular attraction in Paris's Louvre, there are several famous pieces housed in the Uffizi that always draw crowds, like the ones above admiring Botticelli's *La Primavera (1480)*. Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus (1483-1485)* (depicted on the following page) and the arresting portrait of the *Duke and Duchess of Urbino (1472-1475)* painted by Piero della Francesca (1415-1492) are always surrounded by hoardes of tourists. These are important pieces to see, just don't forget to look around these rooms at some of the other stunning works of art which often go unnoticed.

Above: *Portrait of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino (1472-1475)* by Piero della Francesca. **Below:** Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus (1483-1485)*

Tribuna

You shouldn't leave the Uffizi without taking a moment to see this spectacular room. The Tribuna was completed between 1581-1586; commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici (1541-1587). It was built to impress guests and it certainly does! The walls are decorated with velvet and precious stones, and paintings by the Old Masters. **Top:** Panorama of the Tribuna. **Top left:** the famous statue of *Arrotino, 'the Blade-Sharpener*' a 1st century copy of the Hellentistic original. **Bottom left:** Look up! admire the 6,000 shells that cover the dome of the Tribuna. (*Photos: Medievalists.net*)

Travel Tips

To plan your next visit
to the Uffizi, please visit:
www.uffizi.it

Follow the Uffizi on
Twitter:
@uffizigalleries

Follow the Uffizi on
Instagram:
uffizigalleries

Like the Uffizi on
Facebook:
@GalleriaUffiziFirenze

**Piazzale degli Uffizi, 6,
50122 Firenze, Italy**

Tips

I visited the Uffizi in February, during low season, so I didn't encounter the infamous 5 hour line ups that visitors are subjected to in the summer months. I would still advise buying tickets online beforehand and getting there early. I arrived at 10am, and had a very short wait to get inside. As always, take comfortable shoes. There is a cafe and a nice terrace (weather permitting) where you can take in some lovely views of Palazzo Vecchio next door. Photos are permitted without flash. The Uffizi is a large museum so expect to be there for several hours, pace yourself and enjoy!

Above: *Madonna dell ' Umilità (1415)* by Masolino (1383-1447). (*Photo: Medievalists.net*)

Londinium Tunnel: The Archaeology of Crossrail Now Open at the Museum of London!

By Sandra Alvarez

Medieval skull found in Charterhouse Square and Farringdon. Some of the remains tested positive for *Yersinia Pestis* (The Black Death). *(Photo: Medievalists.net)*

The Crossrail exhibit has finally opened at the Museum of London, Docklands. Artefacts unearthed by archaeologists during the building of the Crossrail Project give us a glimpse into the lives of Londoners from Roman to Victorian times. Until September 3rd, you can catch over 8,000 years of London's history under one roof.

Top left: Visitors looking at post-Roman artefacts. **Top right:** Interactive display for children to demonstrate where the train is in relation to the differing archaeological layers. **Bottom:** Incredible statistics about the building of the Crossrail. *(Photos: Medievalists.net)*

200 archaeologists, 100km of railway, and 42km of tunnel, the Crossrail Project is a massive undertaking showcasing the lives of Londoners with over 10,000 artefacts, and spanning 8,000 years. Archaeological excavation began in 2009, and wrapped up in 2016, with the Elizabeth Line is set to open in 2018.

Roman London

Archaeologists found eight burials in the spot of a former Roman cemetery, with three of the group decapitated not far from the site of a charnel pit.

Among the Roman pieces, tools, coins, hairpins, bracelets, and military items were found.

Above: Roman shoe fragments. Over 50 pairs of leather shoes were found belonging to adults and children.

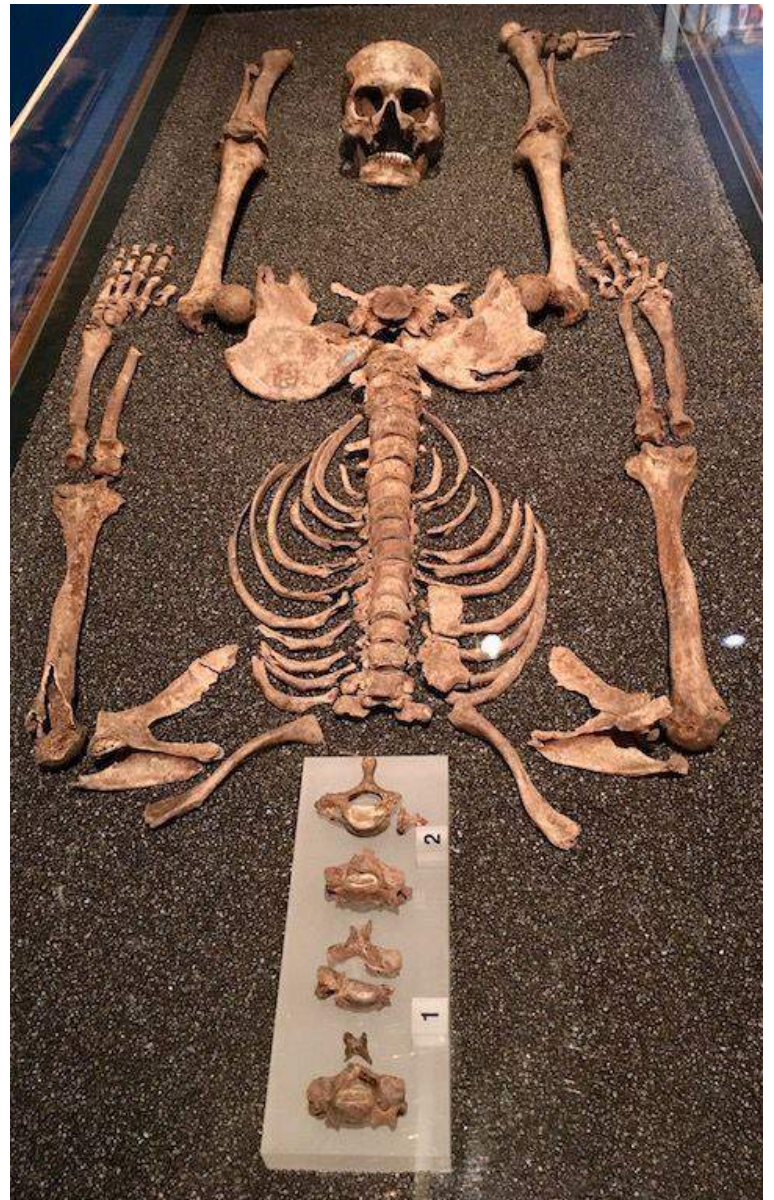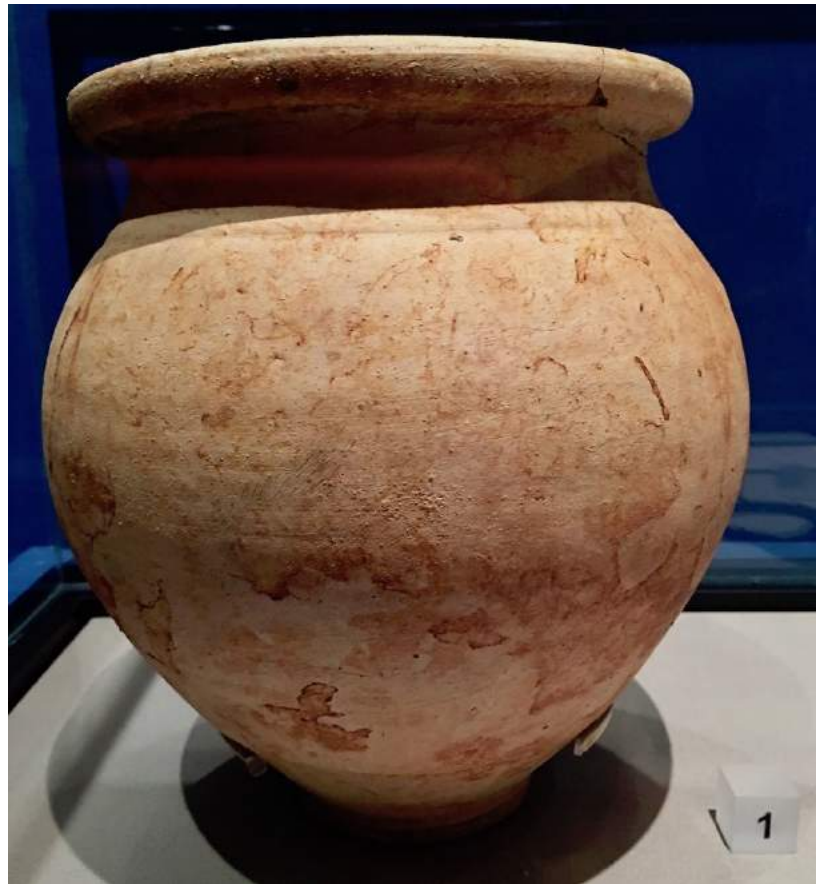**Opposite page, top:** Roman cremation urn (100-160 AD) found in a sewer tunnel.

Opposite page, bottom: Roman skeleton, female, age 26-35, (140-60 AD) found in Liverpool Street. (*Photos: Medievalists.net*)

Medieval CharterHouse

Excavations at Farringdon station revealed a ditch that belonged to a former medieval charterhouse. The charterhouse was founded in 1371 but was suppressed and demolished in 1538 during **Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries**. In 1611, some of the remaining fragments were used for a school that is still in operation in Hertfordshire.

The Charterhouse burials date to the time of **the Black Death**, 1348-1349. Archaeologists found several layers of individuals there, with the first layer containing plague burials. The 25 skeletons appear to have been part of an emergency plague pit that may have held anywhere between 2,000 to 20,000 bodies. Using biochemical research, tooth samples were taken from certain skeletons and checked for *Yersinia Pestis* - the plague pathogen. Scientists also examined nitrogen levels to learn about diet and stress levels in London vs rural environments during this pivotal period.

Bones, Bones, everywhere!

Top left: Roman skulls, three of which were believed to be decapitations.

Top right: Medieval skeleton, male, age 26-35 found as part of the first phase of the **Black Death** burials. This individual tested positive for *Yersinia Pestis,* and it was the likely cause of death.

Bottom left: 17th c. skeleton, male, age 18-25, found in a mass grave in New Churchyard. One of five individuals (out of 20) who tested positive for *Yersinia Pestis*, indicating he may have succumbed to the **Great Plague of 1665** that decimated London from May to September that year. (*Photos: Medievalists.net*)

Left: Medieval ice skates made from animal bones. Shoes from the late medieval and early modern period are displayed here to demonstrate the changes in fashion between the 15th and 16th centuries. Late Medieval fashion favoured a pointed shoe, while Early Modern styles show a shift to a rounded style in the 16th century. (*Photo: Medievalists.net*)

Early Modern Discovery

Archeologists uncovered the first early modern burial ground at the New Churchyard, which closed in 1739. During the excavation, over 3,300 burials were discovered. One grave contained 42 individuals (potentially more) and dated to the **Great Plague of 1665** with several remains testing positive for the *Yersinia Pestis* pathogen. This discovery is important because it is the first plague DNA definitively identified from the 17th century.

The Crossrail Project was the largest archaeology endeavour in London's history. The findings unearthed during the seven year dig provide important clues about how Londoners lived, ate, played, and died, hundreds, even thousands of years ago.

To plan your next visit to this exciting **FREE** exhibit, please visit: **www.museumoflondon.org.uk.** Don't forget to check out **#TunnelArchaeology** on Twitter for the latest news, and follow the Museum of London on Twitter: **@museumoflondon**

Art/ifact Spotlight

Spindle Whorls & Loom Weights

Spinning thread is a process which leaves archaeological evidence in almost every settlement site around the world. Drop spindle shafts, spindle weights, and loom weights take a similar form in various cultures and are especially recognizable in medieval depictions. Textile production in the Middle Ages was a long process and spinning is a time-consuming step in that process. The presence of spindles and spindle whorls in medieval art points to a propensity to idly spin in one's spare time the same way we occupy our spare minutes with smart phones.

In the Middle Ages, the wooden drop spindle was the tool of choice for spinning. Weights were often added to change the thickness of the thread produced. Medieval spindle weights and loom weights (which look like stone doughnuts, not so yum!) are a tangible connection to medieval women and the hours of hand-crafted thread they produced.

Right: *Tenture de la vie seigneuriale: La Lecture, Pays-Bas du Sud, c.1500. Image by the Musée du Moyen Age, Paris.* **Upper left:** *Interpretation of Anglo-Saxon loom with weights. Photo by D. Trynoski* **Lower left:** *Lead spindle whorl, 1100-1500, recovered near Leicester, England. Image courtesy of the Portable Antiquities Scheme.*

Landmark project aims to build relations between metal detectorists & heritage sector

New report outlines extent of metal detecting in Scotland for the first time

A project encouraging closer collaboration between Scotland's metal detecting community and the heritage sector has just published the first ever report to outline the extent and character of metal detecting in Scotland.

'Collaborative metal detecting in Scotland' is a project initiated and funded by the Treasure Trove Unit (TTU) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES). The TTU are the first port of call when detectorists uncover new material, and work to preserve significant historic objects for the benefit of the nation by providing a pathway for allocation to museum collections across Scotland. They also investigate and assess objects.

The TTU's Dr Natasha Ferguson, who heads up the project, said:

"Humans have inhabited Scotland for thousands of years, with each generation leaving behind little pieces of evidence of its existence, just waiting to be discovered. It's no surprise then that exciting artefacts are continually being discovered, sometimes by chance and sometimes deliberate exploration. Every significant object found contributes to our understanding of the nation's history in its own way."

"The metal detecting community in Scotland finds and reports hundreds/ of objects every year to the Treasure Trove Unit – some of which are of national or even international importance. However, even with the best intentions some artefacts can be damaged, or sensitive archaeology disturbed. We want to ensure artefacts discovered through recreational activities like metal detecting are recovered carefully and a detailed find spot recorded so important archaeological information is not lost.

"The intention of the project is primarily to raise awareness of best practice when metal detecting, and to ensure the appropriate support and guidance is available to detectorists. The enthusiasm and expertise of the metal detecting community makes a significant contribution to Scotland's heritage sector, and we want to help to maximise its potential. By working together we can create a system that ensures the best result for everyone."

The report is the first of its kind to be attempted in Scotland. It was conducted by GUARD Archaeology Ltd, using online questionnaires and one-to-one interviews with

A heraldic mount from Ayrshire. Image provided by Historic Environment Scotland

detectorists and heritage professionals to find out the extent of metal detecting in Scotland, the different ways it takes place across the country, as well as to ask those involved for their views on how the process of find reporting works.

The assessment took the form of a set of research questions agreed by a Reference Group appointed for this assessment; this group consisted of representatives from the heritage profession and the metal detecting community. The individuals who provided data and information for the assessment included: TTU, members of The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO Scotland), other Planning Authority Archaeological Advisors, Museum representatives, the Forestry Commission Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland, National Council for Metal Detecting and several metal detecting clubs and individuals representing Scotland and northern England.

The data gathering took place from December 2015 to March 2016. A total of 198 responses (32 main research responses, 166 online responses) were received through a combination of face to face discussion, telephone discussion, email, metal detecting Dig visits and through an online version of the research questions.

The report found that there are approximately 521 'hobbyist' metal detectorists in Scotland, 87% of whom are male, with a predominant age range between 45 and 55 years old. The areas with the highest recorded activity of metal detecting in Scotland were Perth and Kinross, Fife, Dumfries and Galloway, and the Scottish Borders.

Kevin Munro, Senior Designations Officer for Historic Environment Scotland, said: "Anecdotally, we seem to be seeing an increase in the numbers of people participating in metal detecting in Scotland – perhaps due to a number of high profile finds by detectorists in Britain in the past decade. We know that detectorists have a great interest in history, and we hope that the project will help us to ensure that they are aware of the appropriate processes for reporting finds when they are discovered.

"The report also highlighted that there are some issues of trust between detectorists and heritage professionals, and occasionally a mutual misunderstanding of either groups' aims. Identifying these challenges is the first step towards tackling them, and generating a positive environment for working together in a constructive, collaborative manner.

"So the aim of the project is to bring these groups together in order to generate closer collaboration, to iron out the current underlying issues, and to try to improve and encourage best practice. It's very encouraging to see that there is an appetite amongst all parties to improve engagement and to increase collaboration – which can only be to the benefit of our understanding of Scotland's past in the long run."

Other findings from the report were that only 55.4% of detectorists use GPS devices to accurately record find-spots, that the average length of participation in the hobby is nine years, and that metal detecting group outings are a preferred means of pursuing the hobby – with an average of between 20 and 40 attendees at each organised 'dig'.

The conclusions of the study pointed out the the destructive nature of both archaeology and metal detecting and the difference in method, attention to detail, and scientific recording. The conclusions also point out the risks related to sudden changes in environment and exposure, especially for metal objects. Section 11 reads,

"One group is doing this in a controlled, measured, professional and responsible way and the other is taking part in recreational activity (Ferguson 2013b) and therefore operating on a less controlled, object focussed, non-professional and less responsible way... When such an item is recovered during an archaeological excavation a conservator would be involved at the earliest possible opportunity."

"...The question of archaeological context is also overlooked in the recovery of an artefact through hobbyist metal detecting...When such an item is recovered during an archaeological excavation a conservator would be involved at the earliest possible opportunity. The question of archaeological context is also overlooked in the recovery of an artefact through hobbyist metal detecting..."

"...Metal detecting is recovering and analysing material culture from past human activity, the very definition of archaeology itself. It is certainly the case that metal detecting, through its inherent selective prospection, recovers many metal artefacts, highlighting sites in some cases that would otherwise not be found. And yet there is no requirement for the professional accreditation, transparency, prior notice, methodologies, reporting and archiving etc. that [Heritage Practitioners or Heritage Professionals] are bound to supply in undertaking similar work."

The recommendations are more positive, encouraging professional archaeological agencies to seke out partnerships with hobby groups. Several university programs include metal detecting in their archaeology degree programmes, and the report praises this inclusion.

This survey marks an important step in developing data collection and recording practices. The case studies represent a spectrum of survey types and heritage management issues and provide insight on how to identify, record, and manage historic sites and objects.

Follow Historic Environment Scotland on Twitter @HistEnvScot or Instagram @historicscotland for news of Scotland's historic sites.

Queen of the Castle:
Best Medieval Holiday Homes on the Market
by Dani Trynoski

It started with couchsurfing, and now it extends to some of the most luxurious homes on the planet. The business of home shares, holiday rentals, and private booking is rapidly growing and providing travelers with a diverse array of self-catering accommodation options. Sites like Air BnB, HomeAway, and VRBO have become the eBay of lodging, with prices set by a market place of private sellers and buyers. If you've drooled over the castles for sale shared on Medievalists.net, here's your chance to rent your very own medieval building. Treat yourself or your partner and set up for a night, a week, or a month as queen of your very own castle!

We've selected some of the most interesting (and most prestigious!) options on the market. Take a look, pick up your jaw off the floor, and start shopping airfare…

Medievalists.net does not directly endorse the websites, booking services, or homeowners represented here.

Llanthony Secunda Manor, Wales
http://medievalaccommodation.com/
12th century Abbey, aquired by Henry VIII during the Dissolution, sold in 1557 into private ownership. Current owner is restoring using historically accurate constriction methods and materials. 15th-19th century building. Average weekly price: £ 2,050.00, 7 bedrooms, sleeps up to 16

Le Mas La Tour, France
http://www.mas-la-tour.com/
16th century tower with 18th century farmhouse in the countryside near historic cities of Uzès, Avignon, Arles, and Nimes. Average weekly price: €3000 for both buildings, 8 bedrooms, sleeps up to 17

Duns Castle, Scotland
https://www.homeaway.com/
vacation-rental/p6935591
Castle with 1200 acre estate. Portions of the castle and surrounding buildings date from 14th century. Property rental includes trails, falconry, archery, and more outdoor activities.
Average weekly rate: £17,700, 12 bedrooms, sleeps up to 23

La Rectoria, Spain
https://www.airbnb.com/
rooms/13103709?s=DZR-Ds-G
Modest apartment in medieval castle less than 30 minutes from Cardona in the mountains of Catalunya.
Average weekly rate: €180, 1 bedroom, sleeps 2

Listed Grade II Medieval Manor House, England

https://www.homeaway.com/vacation-rental/p828367

15th century manor house in the green English countryside. Included in 16th century records of the Hadzor estate with ties to Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII, and the Earl of Warwick.
Average weekly rate: £965. 3-4 bedrooms, sleeps 6-8

La Torre de Oto, Spain

https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/12634162?s=DZR-Ds-G

Medieval tower with spectacular views of the Pyrenees in Aragon. 15th century manor converted into luxury accommodations perched between the medieval town and riverside bluffs.

Average weekly rate: €1200, 2 bedrooms, sleeps 5

Retreat near Barcelona

https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/11091275?s=DZR-Ds-G

Get away from the big city hustle and bustle with yoga and more at this handsome tower in the Catalunya countryside.

Average weekly rate: €1000, 1 bedroom, sleeps up to 3

Castrum of Serravalle, Italy

https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/1761697?wl_source=list&wl_id=111333868&role=public

Medieval fortress in the historical center of Vittorio Veneto with fully equipped kitchen. Italian charm and history to boot!

Average weekly rate: €1200, 2 bedrooms, sleeps up to 4

Medieval Dovecote, France
https://www.airbnb.com/
rooms/399389?s=nAs2SHP9
Charming, cozy, and lovely 15th century
dovecote with spiral staircase tucked
into the building's cylindrical
construction. Its conical roof is rebuilt
with exposed timbers visible from the
ground floor.
Average weekly rate: €1150, 2
bedrooms, sleeps up to 3

**Beautiful Castle & Cottage,
France**
https://www.airbnb.com/
rooms/10322984?s=yztcbbjr
Fortified manor house with tower
and adjacent cottage. Portions of
the castle date from the 9th and
13th centuries. Gorgeous beams,
gardens, & a pool too!
Average weekly rate: €3200,
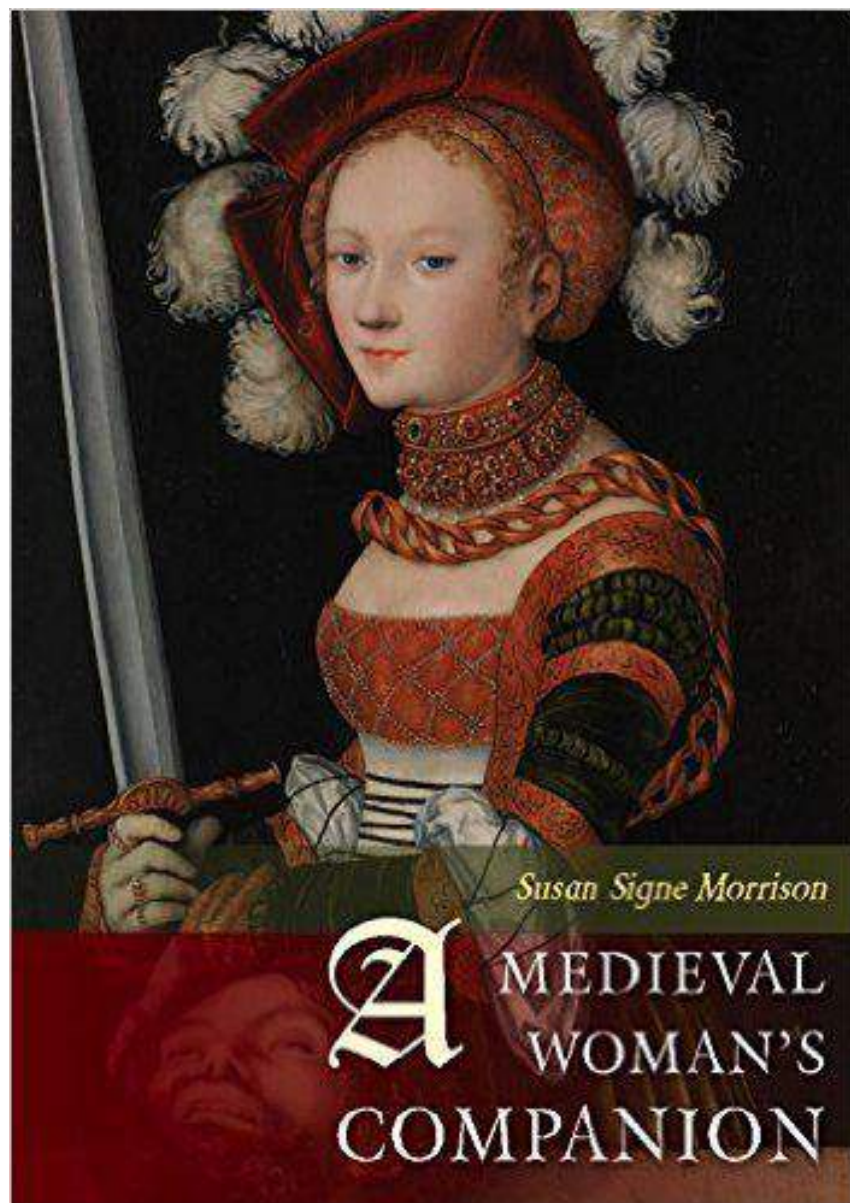7 bedrooms, sleeps up to 16

A Medieval Woman's Companion
By Susan Signe Morrison

Review by Sandra Alvarez

*In honour of International Women's Day, we're featuring **A Medieval Woman's Companion** by Susan Signe Morrison*

This book is intended for high school and university students as an introduction to medieval women. While this is not a book for seasoned medieval scholars, (as the content featured here will not be new) it *is* an excellent book for readers who want a good starting point on their journey into women's studies, feminism, and gender during the Middle Ages. Morrison states the purpose of how the book is to be used from the get-go,

"***A Medieval Woman's Companion*** *introduces readers to medieval history, medieval women's lives,Catholic beliefs, and the art and literature of the Middle Ages. The volume is intended for a general audience and to help students in high school and college to become familiar with a vast array of aspects affecting medieval women's lives"*

The book takes aim at many of the mainstream myths perpetuated about the lives of medieval women, such as, the idea that they lived horrible oppressed lives, and had little to no agency, or the notion that all medieval women were illiterate.

"We need to read medieval lives from a medieval perspective. A non-medieval perspective might suggest women were merely oppressed. The more one learns and knows about medieval culture and history, the more we can see ways that women carved out for themselves spaces of dynamic freedom" (p.209)

Morrison does her best to debunk these claims by providing over 200 pages of examples, from the Early Middle Ages to the beginning of the Early Modern period. She touches on lesser known women, such as Gudrun Osvifsdottir, Iceland's first anchoress, and Teresa de Cartegena, the first Spanish feminist, fitting them in alongside popular figures such as Hildegard von Bingen, and Joan of Arc.

The book is broken into neat, bite sized sections, with titles such as *'Pioneers'*, *'Fearless Females*, and *'Non-Conformists'*. At the end of each chapter, Morrison provides references and web links for further study, making it easy for students to engage with the material and learn more. In the chapter on Christina of Markyate, she entices the reader continue reading by providing a link to 'digitally flip through' a psalter once owned the saint. Morrison also takes the time **to point out what page the reader can turn to, to see an image of St. Christina.** The book bridges the link between standard texts and the medieval digital world. Morrison also has a website and blog that she encourages readers to use alongside this book: **www. amedievalwomanscompanion.com**

A Medieval Woman's Companion touches on women's contributions to the development of language (Emma of Normandy), to medicine (Trota of Salerno), music (Hildegard von Bingen), and literature (Christine de Pizan).

She also discusses how to approach medieval texts with a view to modern concepts of freedom and agency, saying, *"Why would anyone put up with the oppression caused by husbands or fathers? If we 'think medievally', women and their actions can be understood in the time they lived in, not judged by us now. It is not neccessary to agree with every view expressed by writers and thinkers. Rather, consider how a tenth-century Saxon girl would have read Hrotsvit's plays…"* she continues, *"Self determination for a medieval woman might, at times, differ from the agency of a post-medieval woman. That is, it may not seem like 'freedom' to permit oneself to be walled up into a cell next to a church as an achorite (religious hermit), but for medieval people, such a spiritual guide would be considered a woman of action and power, worthy of great respect."* (p.13)

The final section of the book discusses intersectionality, gender studies, and the future of the study of medieval women with insights into historical texts and modern feminist theory under writers such as Gayle Rubin, Judith Butler, Kate Millet, Joanna Russ and Ann DuCille. While this book doesn't delve deeply into these issues, and is more of a 'beginner's guide to…', Morrison does a superb job of making medieval women accessible to mainstream audiences, and tying in traditional and digital sources.

Susan Signe Morrison is a professor of English at Texas State University and focuses her work on gender studies in the Middle Ages and Anglo-Saxon Comparative literature. She is the author of **Grendel's Mother: The Saga of the Wyrd-Wife.**

Follow Susan on Twitter:
@medievalwomen

For more information about Susan's work, please visit: **www. susansignemorrison.com**

Leprosy and Plague in St Giles in the Fields
By Rebecca Rideal

By Gianreali (cropped from Leprosy bell. *(Wikimedia Commons)*

Historian Rebecca Rideal brings together Early Modern and Medieval London history in her in-depth look at leprosy.

Confession: I am not a medievalist. My research mainly focuses on early modern London (plague and the Restoration specifically), but please bear with me…

In a curious quirk of history, the epicentre of the Great Plague of 1665 was also the location of London's primary medieval leprosy hospital.

To the likes of Samuel Pepys, Nell Gwynn and Charles II, St Giles in the Fields was London's largest outer parishes. Close to the capital's burgeoning playhouses, it was a dirty, disorganised and poverty-stricken suburb of ramshackle tenements (just under 2000 households in total) and narrow streets, containing inns, brothels, butchers, watchmakers, booksellers, beltmakers, justices of the peace and nobility. Cosmopolitan and heavily populated, at its centre was the parish church of St Giles in the Fields, rebuilt in the late 1620s/early 1630s upon the site of the medieval original. For Pepys and his contemporaries, it was a place that became synonymous with plague and the deaths of tens of thousands of Londoners. Yet, turn the clock back five and a half centuries and the area was associated with a very different (although no less devastating) affliction.

In 1118, London and its peripheries would have been as alien to Samuel Pepys as his London would be to us today. For a start, England operated under an entirely different branch of Christianity: Catholicism. The population of London was just 18,000, the original Westminster Abbey was only fifty years old, London Bridge was made of wood, not stone, and there were still over two hundred years to go until the first official case of plague in England. Most significantly, for our story at least, in the early twelfth century, the space that the London parish of St Giles in the Fields would later occupy was a green expanse of open fields and fresh air, well outside the capital. The only sign of habitation came from a newly-built hospital or 'leprosarium', that provided sanctuary for 'lepra' sufferers, away from the populous of London. Named St Giles, after the patron saint of the sick, it was one of the earliest such hospitals in England and records suggest it was founded by Henry I's queen, Matilda.

At the time of the hospital's foundation, the word 'lepra' (from the Latin 'scaly') was a catch-all term used to describe those suffering from a range of debilitating skin conditions, such as eczema, psoriasis, skin cancer, and what we now understand to be leprosy, or Hansen's disease

(after G H Armauer Hansen, the man to identify the leprosy bacterium in 1873). Unlike pre-modern plague, leprosy was (and is) not actually very contagious. It is believed to spread via repeated close contact with the mouth or nose droplets of an infected person. Once contracted, the symptoms of leprosy can take many years to develop and include(d): disfiguring skin sores, nerve damage to the arms, legs and other extremities, collapsed nose, lesions, damaged voice and blindness (not to mention the unknowable impact such an affliction would have on a person's mental wellbeing). A chronic rather than a terminal illness, complications owing to damaged limbs, infections, etc., could prove fatal.

Leprosy had had a presence in England since at least the fourth century. But it was during a period of significant population growth across Western Europe, from around 1100 to 1400, that it became an endemic feature of life. There is evidence to suggest that this increase might be connected to the greater movement of people during the Crusades. Whatever the cause, sufferers came from all walks of life– for every Robert the Bruce and Bishop of London, there was a city merchant and travelling pauper. Although the scale of the disease is hard to gauge, the Benedictine monk, Matthew Paris, estimated that there were 19,000

Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora. (13th century)*

leprosariums across Europe by 1200, with 100 in England. Modern research by Carole Rawcliffe has placed the number at 300 (at least) between 1100 and 1350. Crucially, despite the construction of leprosy-specific hospitals, for most of the medieval period, leprosy was not thought to be a disease that could be 'caught'.

As well as being one of the earliest in England, St Giles was also the first leprosarium associated with London. The capital would grow to have several more: St James (for unmarried women) and Les Loke being two notable examples. What all of these institutes had in common was geography. In keeping with accepted traditions, they were located just outside the city, on major travel routes. St Giles was positioned on the main throughway to London from the west. It sat on eight acres of crown land and consisted of an oratory, offices, and a chapel, with farmland containing pigs, oxen, horse, and cows. The hospital's fourteen or so patients were cared for by monks and initially sustained by charitable donations from the London parish of Queenhithe.

Closely linked to the crown, in 1299, Edward I ordered that the hospital be placed under the jurisdiction of the Order of Saint Lazarus, a decision that provoked a number of complaints about the way the hospital was administered. Nevertheless, as London developed and the hospital became more established, two officials were appointed by the mayor and aldermen of London to manage revenue and the responsibility for funding the hospital was extended to all London citizens. At its peak, rent gathered by London for the hospital of St Giles totalled £80 per year. Yet it wasn't just money the citizens of London provided, during the reign of Edward III it was stipulated that St Giles patients must be drawn from the City of London. It was only if there were not enough sufferers within the capital, that the hospital could open its doors to take patients from the County of Middlesex.

Up until the 1970s and 1980s, it was almost taken as given that

suffering from leprosy during medieval times were feared and shunned from society, with their affliction being directly linked to sin. Those within leprosariums were believed to have had minimal physical contact with the outside world and those outside the hospitals were thought to be feared – images from the time show leprosy sufferers carrying bells seemingly in an effort to warn healthy people that they were approaching. The monk, Matthew Paris, wrote how those living outside leprosariums were forbidden from entering public spaces such as inns and churches and were not allowed to eat with, bathe with or even walk close to, healthy persons. Indeed, Edward I issued an edict in 1346 expelling leprosy sufferers from city limits.

More recently, work by historians such as Elma Brenner, Timothy Miller, Rachel Smith-Savage and Carole Rawcliffe, has painted a more nuanced picture of medieval leprosy. Far from being ostracised, their research has revealed that those afflicted with the disease were often the objects of profound sympathy and substantial charity, because they

were thought to have been specially selected by God for salvation. Through their terrific suffering, it was believed that those with leprosy endured purgatory on earth and would, therefore, go straight to heaven. As such, hospitals centred on spiritual as well as physical care – along with prayer and worship patients could venture outdoors and participate in gardening and the like.

What's more, Rawcliffe has argued that the location of leprosariums had little to do with unique isolation (general hospitals were also positioned outside the city proper).

Rather, leprosariums were positioned outside towns and cities as landmarks; physical manifestations of civic wealth, religious devotion, and human charity. As Miller and Smith-Savage state, historians have long: '…misrepresent[ed] medieval Christianity's response to leprosy as an attempt to punish the victims of the disease rather than to assist them in their suffering'. Brenner goes further to contend that charitable donations were

given to 'support lepers in a religious vocation' but that the prayers of those suffering from leprosy were seen to hold greater religious currency and could be 'particularly efficacious in bringing about the donor's salvation'. One of the many examples of this is Roger, the Archbishop of York, who gave three hundred marks of silver to be distributed 'among the lepers, the blind, the lame, the dumb, and the rest of the necessitous, and in the repair of churches and bridges, for the salvation of his soul'. It was only in the fourteenth century that attitudes to leprosy changed.

And this is where we come full circle. The arrival of the Black Death in 1348, and its undeniably contagious nature, led to a fear – for the first time – that leprosy might also spread through miasma (the Galenic idea of 'bad air'). The unparalleled scale of death wrought by plague had a huge impact on attitudes towards leprosy and disease more generally. Fortunately, leprosy began to die off during the fourteenth century, the cause of which is still debated. By the

Reformation it had all but vanished in England. Many former leprosariums morphed into more general hospitals for the sick or were sold off following the dissolution of the monasteries. St Giles was no exception: its buildings (excepting the church) were given to John Dudley, Lord Lisle (later Duke of Northumberland) by Henry VIII. In 1542, a burial ground was annexed to the church which was followed by the appointment, in 1547, of the first parish rector. As London swelled, the village of St Giles grew in tandem and became the parish of St Giles in the Fields.

Christ healing a leper who holds a rattle (fol. 470v)

By 1665, it had transformed into an overcrowded London suburb, notorious for its poverty and crime, and the burial place of over three thousand plague victims.

Writing about 'Epidemic infection' in 1665, one Richard Braithwaite (who was born in 1588, 29 years after the last case of leprosy in London) demonstrated the close link between leprosy and plague in public imagination, when he compared the practice of writing 'Lord Have Mercy' on the doors of plague victims to: 'That as the Leper in the Old Law was to proclaim his dangerous Infection, by crying out, "I am unclean, I am unclean…"'

Rebecca Rideal is an author and historian. Her latest book, **1666: Plague, War, and Hellfire,** examines the Great Fire of London.

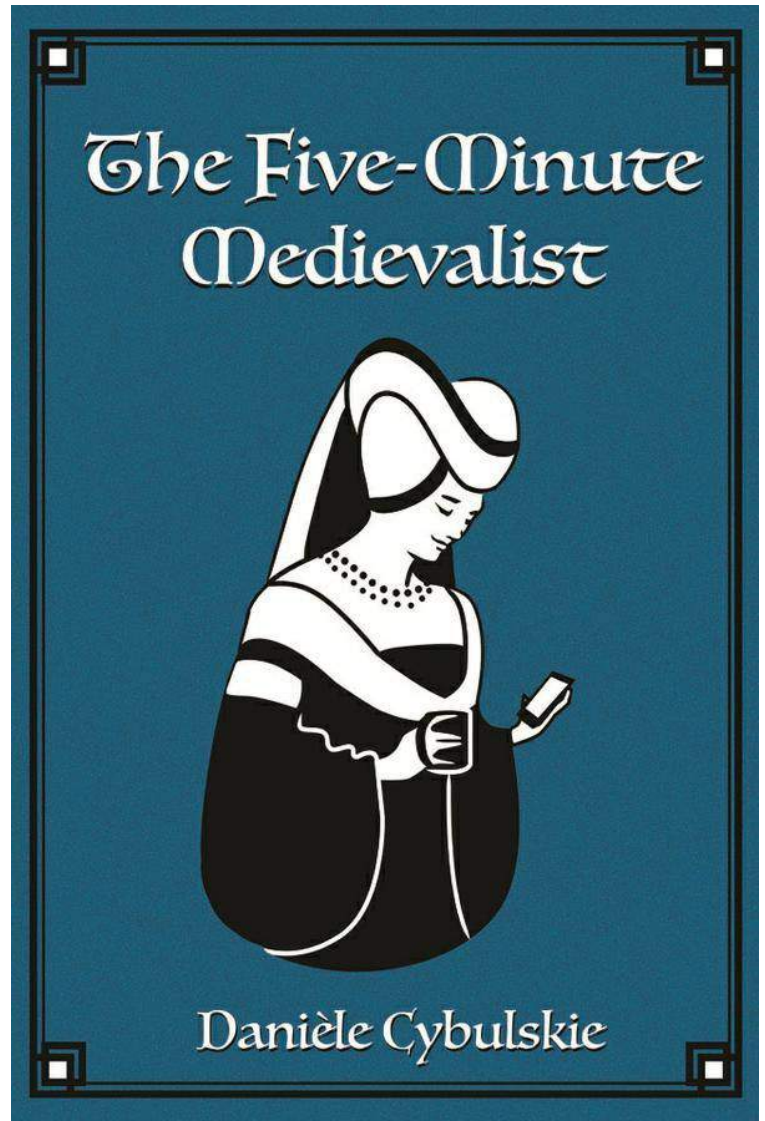Follow Rebecca Rideal on Twitter: **@rebeccarideal**

Late fifteenth century painting of a leper shaking a rattle or bell to announce his presence.

The Five-Minute Medievalist

By Danièle Cybulskie

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