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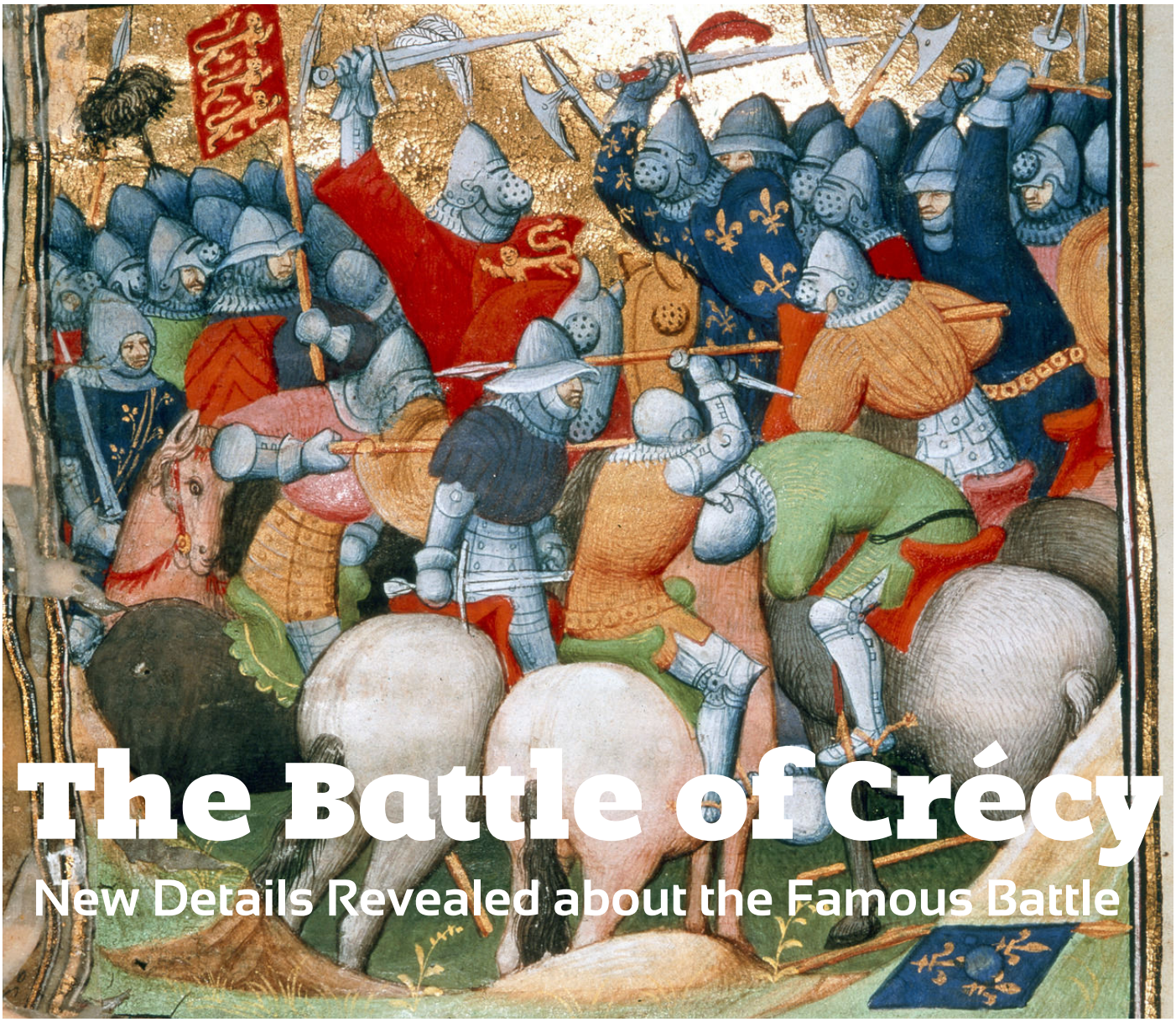

The Battle of Crécy

New Details Revealed about the Famous Battle

Scandinavian Runes

Fiery Joanna

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'The boldest and most remarkable feat ever performed by a woman'

It ranks as one of the most fascinating stories from the 14th century, one that chroniclers of that time relished in telling and historians have ever since recounted.


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Who Were The Celts? The British Museum Offers Answers with New Exhibition

The British Museum just opened its latest exhibit, Celts: Art and Identity last week, covering 2,500 years of Celtic history.

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Edited by:
Peter Konieczny and Sandra Alvarez

Website: **www.medievalists.net**

This digital magazine is published each Monday.

Cover Photo: The Battle of Crécy in the Grandes Chroniques de France, 15th century.

What's New in Scandinavian Rune Stones

Danielle Turner reports on the papers from the session The World of Images of the Scandinavian Rune Stones, which was part of the 105th Annual Conference of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study held earlier this year in Columbus, Ohio.

The Vik stone (U 288), Uppland, Sweden. 12th cent., Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; photographer: Robin Iversen.

Lise Gjedssø Bertelsen, Non Resident Research Fellow, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University started with her presentation, **Introduction to the World of Images of the Scandinavian Rune Stones**. She shows us that three styles emerged to form the bases of Late Viking Age (ca. 950 – 1135 AD) art: Mammen, Ringerike, and Urnes. These three styles can be found all over Scandinavia from this time. Mammen style increased in popularity following the raising of the rune stone of King Harald Bluetooth in Jelling, Denmark where as Ringerike style flourished under King Canute

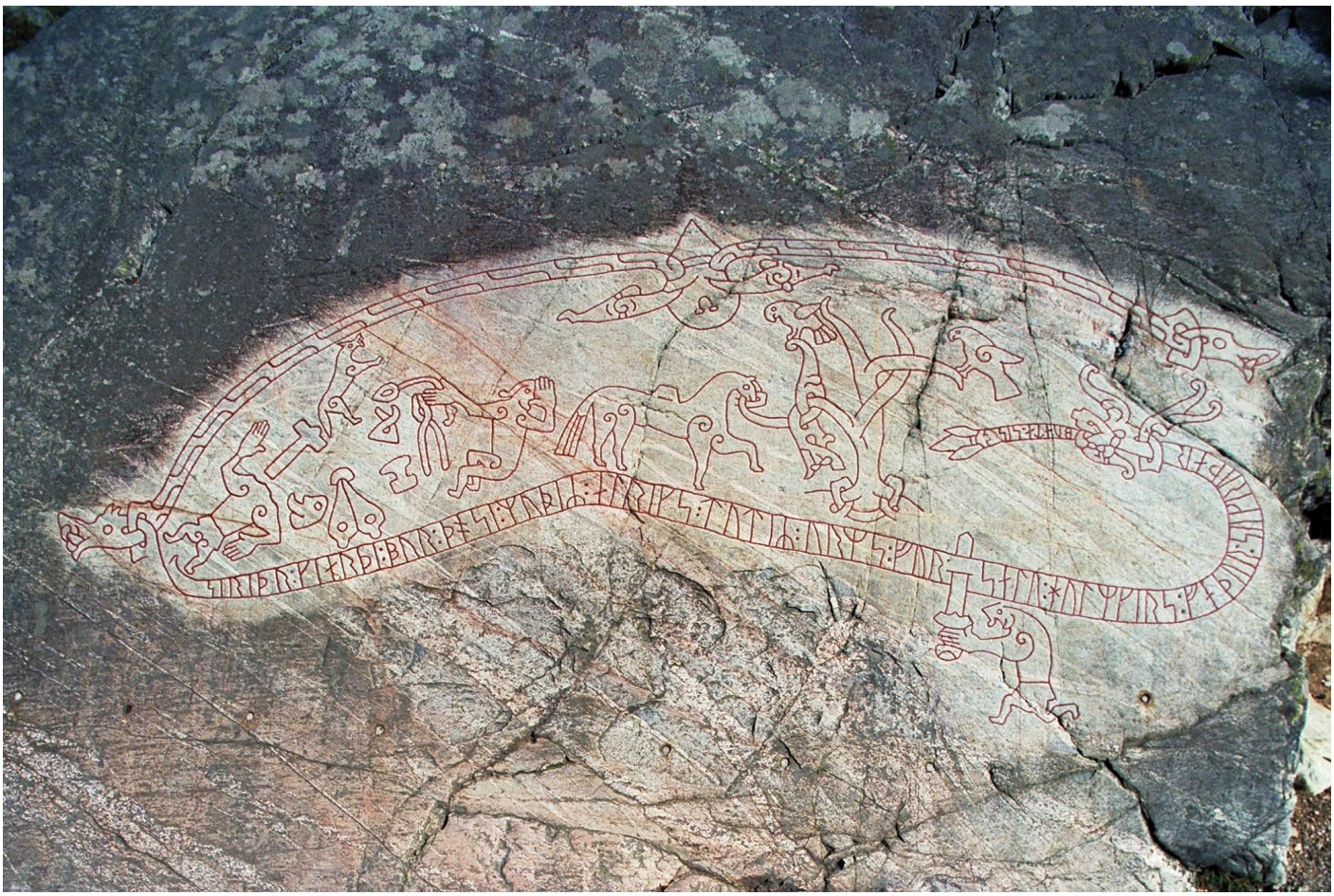
of Denmark, England, Norway and parts of Sweden. These styles shared similar motifs, most notably the cross of Christ, crucifix, triquetrae, quadrupeds, birds, ships, and masks.

From these themes, Lise argues that the main content of the depictions were Christian. Pictures can quickly and easily communicate complex religious ideas when the creators, spectators, and commissioners share a similar frame of reference and religious ideology. She concludes that "a millennium ago the picture rune stones of Scandinavia glowed in bright colors for all seasons in the landscapes radiating their messages, first of all about the Christian salvation and resurrection."

More details about Dr. Bertelsen's study can be found in her recently published article, "**The Cross Motif on Late Viking Age Art Picture Runestones in Västergötland,**" in *Lund Archaeological Review* Vol. 20 (2014).

Kate Heslop, Assistant Professor and Undergraduate Advisor and University of California, Berkley, followed with her presentation on **Sigurd, a multimedia hero: visual narration in the Viking Age**. Kate studies runes related to the Norse legend of Sigurd, slayer of the dragon Fafnir which is recorded in eddic poetry, in the Codex Regius manuscript of the Poetic Edda (Gks 2365 4to, c. 1270), and written prose, in the Saga of the Völsungs.

She uses the example of the Ramsund rock engraving (Sö 101) of Mälar Valley in Södermanland, Sweden from the eleventh-century, which bears a close resemblance to the oral stories depicting Sigurd's dragon-slaying. This suggests that this story was well known from the East Norse region, albeit not preserved in contemporaneous texts from that area. The carving on this stone shows a



Ramsund rock engraving (Sö 101), Mälar Valley, Södermanland, Sweden. 11th cent., 4.7 x 1.8 m. Image courtesy of the Swedish National Heritage Board; photographer: Bengt A. Lundberg.

clear linear story.

Next, Kate examines the rune stone (Ardre Kyrka VIII) in Gotland, Sweden from the eighth to tenth-century. Contrary to the stone in Mälar Valley, this contrasts various moments from a range of mythic and heroic narratives, as opposed to telling a singular story. The engraved stone (Lärbro Stora Hammars I) in Gotland, Sweden from the eighth to tenth-century truly embodies a medieval Scandinavian picture stone of images but there is scholarly debate on if it does indeed tell Sigurd's story.

This stone has many reoccurring motifs such as riders, ships, women, and battles—common of engravings of this time and place—which propose that these images might be carved or left out at will. This pictures do not convey a sense of storytelling but have become a good subject for researchers looking through a Christian lens. From this we see a comparison between the dragon-slayer and the protector of Christianity.

Peter Pentz is a curator for the National Museum in Copenhagen, Denmark. His presentation, titled, **'Face-masks' – representing original masks or just faces?** explores the idea of depictions of faces in rune stones and artifacts to determine if these representations indeed just symbolize faces or if they also serve as masks.

Pentz argues that these face-masks are not related to the rise of Christianity, but instead are based in deep Viking tradition with depictions of birds, Odin and his ravens. He finds it curious that faces on rune stones oftentimes do not relate to the inscriptions but notes that especially on this type of stone, such as one in Århus, Denmark dating to the tenth-century and Släbro, Södermanland, Sweden from the early eleventh-century faces with braided beards are prominently featured.

There are only two written sources that survive which mention masks, one from an account of a Christmas feat in Byzantium that was interrupted by Goths wearing masks and banging on their shields and another instance in Njal's Saga with a man that was most likely Odin. One thing that is for certain is that instances of faces often offered a sort of protection over the item they were carved into. Face-masks engraved into churches that survived into the Christian and medieval period was still a signal in Norse culture that " I am protected" showing elements of an older societal belief. In the end, Pentz sees elements of both masks and faces in the materials he studied.

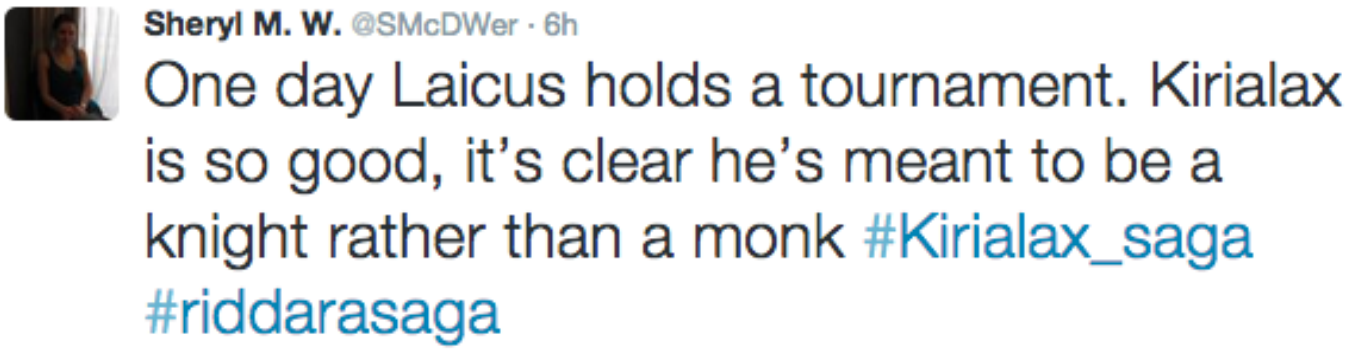
Danielle Turner is working towards her M. A. in medieval history from California State University, Fullerton. She has presented in past years at the Annual Conference of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, been internationally published in Denmark and the United States, and most recently will appear on the History Channel show Vikings as a historical consultant on Norse Gods and the Vikings attacks on Paris.

Click here to follow Danielle Turner on Academia.edu

Århus Mask rock engraving rune stone (DR66), Århus, Denmark. 10th cent., Image courtesy of CC-BY-SA-2.5; photographer Lars Zwemmer.

30 Sagas in 30 Days on Twitter

Many people might know about Njal's Saga and Egil's Saga, but the literary production from Iceland was quite diverse. This month, a scholar is using Twitter to tell the stories of thirty lesser known tales written by Icelanders.



Dr. Sheryl McDonald Werronen launched her #riddarasaga project on Twitter on September 1st, with each day tweeting the story of a saga from the chilvaric/romance genre of Icelandic sagas. By the end of the month she will have tweeted about 30 different stories that were written in late medieval Iceland.

McDonald Werronen explains that despite being at the far corner of the medieval European world, these writers produced "a great number of stories about knights and ladies, quests for brides and fame, magical objects and supernatural beings, with settings stretching from England and France to Syria and India – all of which are original Icelandic compositions from the 14th and 15th centuries."

She notes notes that while some scholars such as Alaric Hall, who supervised her PhD at the University of Leeds, have been working on translating Icelandic romances, these stories are still not widely known. "So I thought tweeting the romances would be a good way to quickly introduce lots more people to them and raise awareness of the genre, which has been neglected until quite recently by scholars of Old Norse literature," McDonald Werronen adds.

These include works such as Nítíða saga, a 14th century tale about a 'maiden-king' who rules France while having to fend off male suitors from far off lands like India.

McDonald Werronen explains, "I think they are just really fun, fascinating stories, full of adventure. But a lot of them also demonstrate that their authors were really learned, with access to a wide range of European texts, not just other European romances but encyclopedic literature as well. It shows that Iceland, though geographically isolated, was not culturally isolated. Geraldine Barnes has a really good discussion of this in her recent book ***The Bookish Riddarasögur: Writing Romance in Late Mediaeval Iceland*** (University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014), but there's still so much more work that can be done on these texts."

Southern Denmark, 2014), but there's still so much more work that can be done on these texts."

You can follow Sheryl McDonald Werronen on Twitter **@SMcDWer**

Click here to learn more about her #riddarasaga project

Manx Crosses

Manx National Heritage, the organisation responsible for protecting and promoting the Isle of Man's heritage and culture, has produced a 'Statement of Significance' on the Island's Medieval crosses and carved stones. This is part of a consultation and review to highlight their importance and to focus attention on developing a policy for their care and presentation.

A Victorian photograph showing several 10th and 11th century crosses as they were once displayed in the open air at Braddan. - Photo courtesy Manx National Heritage

There are over 200 crosses and carved stones, and many of them are on display around the Island at the parish churches. Some of the stones are carved with letters of the Ogham, Latin and Runic alphabets, while others include personal and place names, Old and New Testament scenes and images from Scandinavian mythology.

The crosses range from simple grave-markers to intricately decorated memorials. They were carved during a pivotal period stretching from the Island's conversion to Christianity 1500 years ago to the reorganisation of the Church along European lines from the 12th and 13th centuries. They are protected Ancient Monuments under the terms of the Manx Museum and National Trust Act and attract significant international academic interest.

The Statement assesses and summarises the collection, its heritage value, cultural significance and explains relevance and connection to the modern day. The statement is summarised under four headings: Evidential Values, Historical Values, Aesthetic Values and Communal Values. It is the first time that the crosses have been studied and analysed in this way..

The Statement of Significance has been summarised in a 12 page booklet that has been circulated to relevant stakeholders and organisations including representatives from the Church and other heritage organisations to generate further feedback as part of the ongoing consultation process. These groups and individuals met at the Manx Museum earlier in the year to further review the statement.

Edmund Southworth, Director, Manx National Heritage, commented: "This is the first time that the crosses have been the subject of this kind of exercise, resulting in a statement of their importance from a number of perspectives rather than simply their historical interest. This statement also marks a point in time in terms of what we know, and value, about the crosses, and acknowledges that there is still more to do to realise their potential.

"The statement is an important study in helping us to consult with relevant groups and organisations to determine what is best for the crosses so that they can be preserved, understood and enjoyed by the Isle of Man's residents and visitors."

Waveney Jenkins, a warden at Kirk Andreas who attended the stakeholder meeting, added "The Manx Crosses and Carved Stones are one of the Isle of Man's truly great cultural and historic assets and I welcome Manx National Heritage's initiative in documenting their importance to the Isle of Man which will not only help us to understand and promote their importance but also to protect them for future generations to experience."

Click here to read the Statement of Significance Document.

The Cregneash Cross on a headstone in the churchyard at Cregneash. Photo by James Qualtrough from Douglas, Isle of Man / Wikimedia Commons

Rediscovering the Battle of Crécy

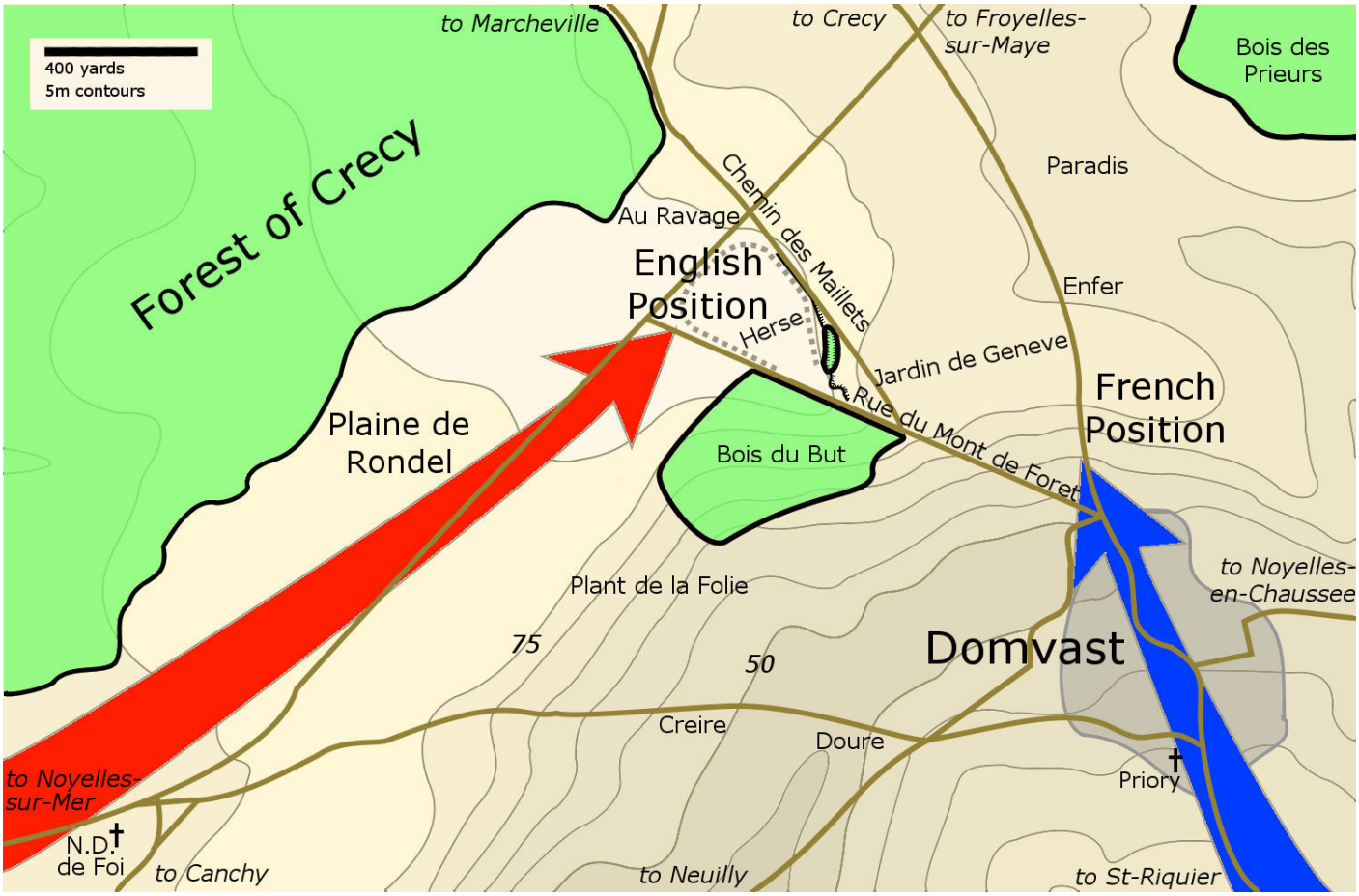
For over 250 years it has been believed that the Battle of Crécy, one of the most famous battles of the Middle Ages, was fought just north of the French town of Crécy-en-Ponthieu in Picardy. Now, a new book that contains the most intensive examination of sources about the battle to date, offers convincing evidence that the fourteenth-century battle instead took place 5.5 km to the south.

This is one of several fascinating new details revealed in The Battle of Crécy: A Casebook, edited by Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries, which is being released this week by Liverpool University Press. It contains 81 contemporary sources in facing-page translation (many published for the first time) that describe the battle, along with eight new essays that reconstruct the events of August 26, 1346.

The battle, fought between King Edward III of England and Philippe VI of France during the early stages of the Hundred Years War, involved tens of thousands of soldiers. It ended with a major English victory and the French army crippled. Historians have often pointed to it as being one the most important battles of the medieval period, noted especially for the use of the longbow within it.

Michael Livingston, an Associate Professor at The Citadel, penned the article "The Location of the Battle of Crécy," in which he examined the traditional site of the battle, just on the outskirts of the town of Crécy, and proposed a new location to the south - at the Forest of Crécy. "I can be 99% certain that the traditional site has no connection to the Battle of Crécy," he tells Medievalists.net, adding, "I can only be, say, 90% certain that my alternative location has a connection."

The traditional site of the battle dates back to at least 1757, placing the struggle on the northwest side of the town of Crécy-en-Ponthieu. The site became a popular tourist destination by the 19th century, and while some historians have raised doubts about the location, it has generally been accepted as where the conflict took place. Livingston writes, "one must admit that the traditional location makes for a dramatic scene. It is conveniently close to town — a positive situation for tourism and the market — yet



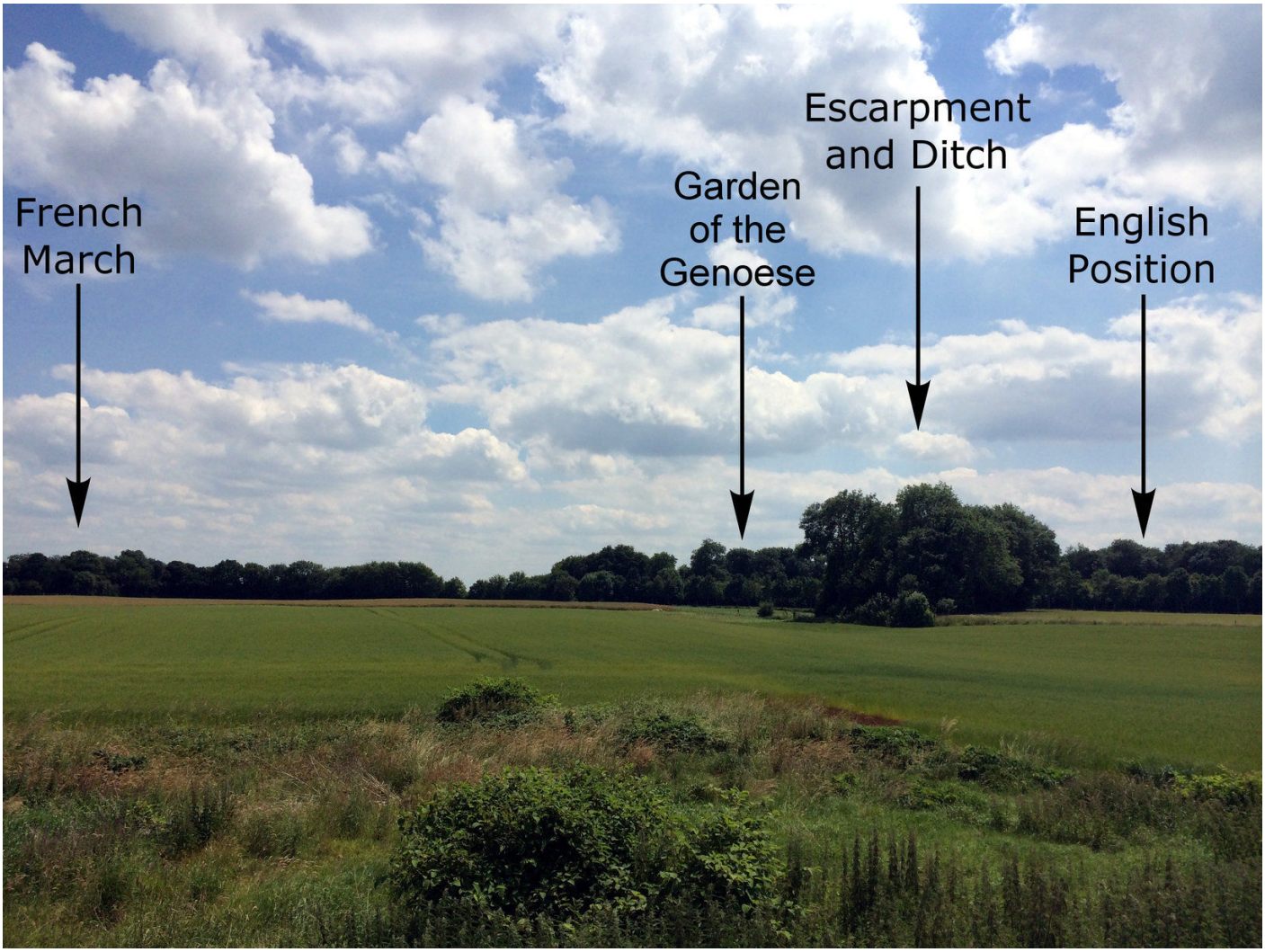
Proposed site of the Battle of Cre'cy, showing the English and French approaches to the battlefield and the site of the English wagenburg and defensive ditch upon the site of the Herse, superimposed upon the modern topography. Image courtesy Michael Livingston

its hilltop location also imbues it with a powerful presence. Looking out today from the supposed location of Edward III's windmill, one has a commanding view east and south, across the breadth of the approaching roads to Crécy — enough so, in fact, that it is hard to imagine how the French army could essentially stumble upon the English position, as several of our sources indicate."

Livingston's article notes numerous other problems with the site, including the fact that no archaeological evidence has been found that would indicate such large-scale fighting taking place there. Moreover, the natural terrain of this area, which includes "a tall, steep and almost sheer bank running the full two kilometres of the length of the valley," makes it a very odd place for the French to stage their attack on the English position. Livingston explains:

Philippe VI has a poor reputation in military annals, much of it due to his terrible defeat at Crécy. As we have seen, the traditional location, if true, only serves to blacken his reputation further: simply put, for him to send his forces on what had to be a serpentine charge into slaughter, Philippe — and every advisor in his service — would have had to be a moron.

Instead, the historian thoroughly examined the dozens of sources about the battle, none of which actually state that the English forces reached the town of Crécy. After analyzing the movements of the armies and the details given in various accounts, Livingston believes that "the sources instead point to a site that was en route to the town of Crécy, beside the Forest of Crécy south of that town, between it and Abbeville."



The proposed site of Battle of Crécy, looking southwest across the battlefield. Photo by Michael Livingston

He adds, "It makes strategic sense of the actions of both armies. It fits all the evidence on the ground and in the documents, even peculiarities like Froissart's designation of the event as the 'battle between La Braie and Crécy' and Knighton's reference to the field of 'Westglise'."

The Forest of Crécy still remains a prominent feature today, surrounded by wheat fields as it was back in the fourteenth century. In what he called an extraordinary and unforgettable experience, Livingston described how he and Kelly DeVries visited the new location:

"Kelly and I visited it together two summers ago, after I'd already convinced him on paper that I'd found the site. (We had both shared significant misgivings about the traditional site, so he was quite amenable to finding an alternative!) Still, I think we were both quite nervous when we parked the car and got out to examine the actual ground.

"We spent the next few hours walking the field and finding (among other discoveries) the massive ditch that seems to fit with what some of our sources say about the English position. We argued back and forth, each taking turns playing the devil's advocate. It was intense and exhausting and exhilarating in the way that the best research can be.

"Finally, late in the day, we were standing just the two of us in the field that is today called the Garden of the Genoese. There was nothing left to debate. Kelly turned to me and said, "Mike, you found it."

"It was a powerful moment of accomplishment, and a part of me truthfully wanted to jump for joy and pop some

champagne. But there was something else I was feeling, too. "Maybe," I replied. "But if I did, there are only two people in the world right now who know where many thousands of men lost their lives. And we're standing in the middle of it."

Other surprising details have emerged about the Battle of Crecy in this new book, including that several sources claimed that Edward the Black Prince, son of Edward III, was captured during the battle. In his article on the tactics of the battle, Kelly DeVries, a Professor at Loyola University Maryland, writes:

> *The most intricate and, perhaps incredible, story of the Black Prince's capture is that given by the Anonimo Romano. He tells of the young prince fighting very well, "the Prince of Wales had spurred his horse deep within the enemy lines, alone doing great slaughter." But soon a count, known only as Valentino — and unidentified outside of this chronicle — who "recognized him and saw his chance of hooking a large fish." He snuck up behind the Black Prince, embraced him and grabbed "the chains of his armor, [saying]: "You are my prisoner." He started to lead him off the field, but there encountered Charles, the count of Alençon, brother of King Philippe of France, who shouted at him: "Count Valentino, how dare you take as prisoner my cousin?" Then he rushed at Valentino and struck him with a mace and beat him with it until he died. The Prince of Wales then "spurred his horse and happily rejoined his men who had started to waver."*

Another source notes that after the battle was over, "King Edward of England asked the Prince of Wales, his son, if it was pleasing to him to enter and be in the battle, and if it was a good game. And the Prince silenced himself and was ashamed."

DeVries explains that this embarrassing episode from the battle was conveniently forgotten by pro-English chroniclers. Instead, writers such as Jean Froissart would offer accounts that lauded the heroism of the Black Prince, and how his father, when hearing that his son was in danger, refused to send help, saying: "Let the young man earn his spurs! This battle belongs to him and I don't want anything to detract from that."

DeVries was also able to make use of the sources to provide a more complete understanding of the role of the Genoese crossbowmen in the battle. While historians have long derided the Genoese for being soundly defeated by the English longbowmen, and then for being attacked by the French knights as they tried to retreat. However, Italian sources help to show that crossbowmen went into the battle woefully unprepared - the shields they carried to protect themselves were miles away with the baggage train when they marched towards the English lines. As a sudden rain shower made working with the crossbows difficult, the Genoese came face to face with the English longbowmen, using a weapon they had not encountered before. In the words of one Italian chronicler, "Every time the Genoese shot a bolt from their crossbow, that bolt would be answered by three arrows from their bows, which formed a cloud in the sky."

DeVries writes:

> *As the Genoese moved into position they were riddled by arrows. They could not withstand these or shoot back. Nor could they move aside to allow the cavalry to come through for their attack; for the longbowmen, when they saw the effect their bows were having, moved forward to pen the crossbowmen in between their two lines.*
>
> *Geoffrey le Baker describes the longbowmen as wings: "the archers were assigned their position so that they were not in the midst of the men-at-arms but on the sides of the king's army like supporting wings; thus they neither impeded their own*

men-at-arms nor attacked the enemy head-on, but instead struck like lightning into their flanks."

The French cavalry could do nothing but run into them.

Finally, reading through the sources helps to reveal the ferocity of the battle and what a profound impact it had on those who were there. One rhymed chronicle, written around the year 1350 by someone claiming to be an eyewitness - perhaps a Flemish soldier - described in vivid detail the fighting that was taking place:

On both sides, on this day,
There a great wealth lay on both sides.
Men hunted there all so bitterly;
No man wished to give way to the other;
Men split many a helmet,
so that the entire brain and blood
out of the head must fall.
Of the bitter battle we cannot describe,
For it was so horrible and so ghastly.
Eight helmets sprang from four.
Many bodies were struck down,
So that the intestines spilled out;
Men hewed off arms and legs
in the terrible chaos of battle.
Soldiers trampled many under foot,
Who nevermore rose again nor stood.

While the book ***The Battle of Crécy: A Casebook*** is being released this week, Livingston has already presented some of his findings at conferences to leading medieval military historians, and he says he has found his colleagues receptive to these new interpretations:

"I think the honest truth is that many of us secretly had issues with the traditional site, for instance, but no one really had anything better to provide as an alternative. Of course there have been a number of skeptics who are rightly wary of someone overturning our understanding of one of the most famous events in the Middle Ages, but the facts that Kelly and I and our team of scholars have assembled in the Casebook as a whole make a strong case in dismissing the traditional interpretation of the battle while positing a new one. People have been respectfully receptive to it when we reveal the simple facts of the case.

"And, frankly, on the question of the location it has helped a great deal that researchers have found that so many of our traditional assumptions about medieval sites -- like the location of Bosworth Field, to take a fairly recent and well-known example -- have been wrong. So now, when I tell people that the Battle of Agincourt has also almost certainly been put in the wrong place (a question I plan to attack soon), the response isn't shock but instead an openness to the possibility. I think that's really healthy for the field of study."

Livingston hopes that his research will prompt archaeologists to come to the site to see if material evidence of the battle can be found. "We need systematic surveys, and then, most certainly, we need a dig," he explains. "Just as one example, I think it's essential that we sort out the history of the ditch that we think the English used as part of their defensive stance. It's a truly significant trench. Was it all dug by the English that day? Or did they, as I suspect, only expand upon an existing feature in the landscape and the subsequent centuries have seen it being dug even deeper and wider as a rudimentary quarry or a source for soil? An experienced research team could fairly quickly tell us a lot about the age and history of this feature.

"And of course a simple metal detection survey should light up across swaths of the field if we have the right location. We should be able to measure out the necessary paces from the low ridgeline where the English archers once stood, for instance, and there we would find a line of arrowheads: the line where the first wave of the Genoese crossbowmen were slaughtered.

THE BATTLE OF CRÉCY

A Casebook

edited by

MICHAEL LIVINGSTON

and

KELLY DEVRIES

"So, yes, I very much hope that some archaeologists jump on the case and are able to quickly get support from the French authorities and the landowners. Whether it proves me right or wrong, I think we need to know."

The Battle of Crécy: A Casebook, edited by Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries, is being released this week by Liverpool University Press. **Click here to learn more about it from the publisher's website.**

Five Medieval Minutes with Steven Muhlberger

By Danièle Cybulskie

This week at Medievalists.net, we've been thinking a lot about The Hundred Years' War, so we thought we'd bring you five minutes with an expert on fourteenth-century chivalry and combat. Like so many things in the Late Middle Ages, The Hundred Years' War was deeply influenced by chivalric ideals, like personal honour and prowess on the battlefield. Professor Emeritus Steven Muhlberger, scholar and avid member of the Society for Creative Anachronism, has written many books on fourteenth century chivalry and combat, a full list of which can be found below. Here are five medieval minutes with Steven Muhlberger.

DC: How did you get interested in the fourteenth century and its culture of chivalry and deeds of arms?

SM: First, the entire Society for Creative Anachronism was based on re-creating a tournament, and when that was a lot of fun, continuing to do so. The founders of the SCA were influenced by a number of writers, in particular Jean Froissart, a 14th century historian who specifically wrote to promote chivalry as he understood it. So when I joined the SCA in my university years, I was already being influenced by the 14th century. I started to take a more scholarly interest in the 14th century and chivalry in the late 1990s. Again, Jean Froissart was my main influence. Froissart is an amazing writer. His book is full of vivid stories. Your readers can easily find some of them **on the web**.

DC: In your work, you've looked closely at how chivalric ideals like honour and valour affected medieval identities. How much did chivalry influence people's sense of self in the fourteenth century, both men and women?

SM: When people talk about chivalry today, they are often talking about relations between men and women. The classic example is, should men these days open doors for women, and if they don't is chivalry dead? A friend of mine once said, the difference between courtesy and chivalry is that chivalry involves killing people. Chivalry in the 14th century was a warrior's ideal.

Since most of society was run by warriors in the Middle Ages, the answer to your question is that chivalry was very important, but it affected men more directly than women. Even

Combat of the Thirty depicted in a 15th century manuscript

affected men more directly than women. Even men who were not of the upper class might imitate the manners of upper-class warriors. In earlier centuries, warriors who were armed servants had climbed up the social scale by inventing the idea of chivalry – which were the virtues and practical skills that a good soldier needed – and promoted it as an ideal that improved their standing. Women participated in this by being judges and observers of the efforts of those men. People acting out chivalry had a number of audiences that they played to and one of them was noble women.

DC: I think it's so important that you pointed out the interest of non-noble people in deeds of arms. While many (if not most) people think of formal deeds of arms as solely being the domain of the nobility, you've said in **Formal Combats in the Fourteenth Century** ***that "the popular enthusiasm for formal combats depicted in the movie A Knight's Tale is closer to the facts of the matter". What do you think drew people from all walks of life to love formal combats like tournaments?***

SM: The association between chivalry and ruling meant that activities associated with knights had a special prestige. Formal deeds of arms were an opportunity for one group of people to show off their skills – particularly their horsemanship – and for other people to appreciate how bold and daring they were. If you have ever seen a joust in person, you know how exciting it is just to watch. Today's tamer horse sports are exciting enough; 14th century horsemanship was even more impressive.

DC: Also in **Formal Combats in the Fourteenth Century** ***(I love this book, by the way), you mention war as a kind of "trial by battle writ large", citing Edward III's challenge to Philip VI to a trial by combat as an essential part of what became The Hundred Years' War. How much of an influence did chivalric ideals have*** on The Hundred Years' War? Did most of the

influence did chivalric ideals have on The Hundred Years' War? Did most of the commoners forming the infantry subscribe to these ideals?

SM: The influence of chivalry on different classes of people is an interesting question. One aspect of chivalry is that at least some of the time noble warriors on either side treat each other with respect. The common practice of capturing nobles and holding them for ransom moderated the effects of warfare on the high-ranking warriors. Ordinary soldiers could generally not expect that kind of good treatment. Nobles however in their dealings with each other very often played to the political public by advertising themselves as behaving in line with chivalric ideals.

One example from the 1340s: King Edward of England besieged the French town of Calais and built a fortification outside its walls to keep the French from relieving the garrison. The French king eventually showed up and challenged Edward to come out from his fortification and fight an open field of battle for possession of Calais. Edward refused to do that because he was very close to forcing Calais to surrender and he was safe in his fortified camp. We know that this was criticized by the French as being an unworthy way to fight. Edward was claiming to be King of France, and what kind of king could he be if he would not fight his rival when he had the opportunity? But as a practical strategy of warfare Edward was right to hold back and he took Calais.

DC: Speaking of French chivalric challenges, in Royal Jousts at the End of the Fourteenth Century, you look at jousts, especially the St. Inglevert jousts, as a way of building bridges between England and France during The Hundred Years' War. How might combat have brought nations together in friendship?

SM: A joust between people who were on opposite sides in a war could either intensify their hostility or moderate it. In the case of St. Inglevert the French champions began by wanting to challenge the English to a competition in which they could prove that despite serious defeats in the past the French were the best chivalric warriors (warriors on horseback). Politicians on both sides – and these were nobleman themselves — were looking for an opportunity to negotiate a peace treaty so the challenges were repackaged as a friendly competition between the French champions who proposed it and anybody from any country who wanted to show up. It turned into something of an Olympic competition in jousting. Since the skill they were exercising in this competition was a specifically noble style of warfare the joust ended up being a very friendly occasion, emphasizing what these nobles had in common despite the war. I don't know any Olympians myself but I'm sure they come back from the games with stories about how great the people in the other teams were. And I bet the Olympic Village has some great parties. St. Inglevert was a month of parties interspersed by very high level athletic competition.

DC: No wonder it was so well-chronicled! Given your expertise on formal combat and all things chivalric, I have to ask the most important question of all before you go. Who would win at a tournament: Lancelot or Gawain?

SM: We only know what the storytellers give us, and it seems to me that they unreasonably favor Lancelot. Who would you like to lead your army? Gawain for sure.

To learn more about fourteenth-century chivalry and formal combats, check out Steven Muhlberger's many books on the subject (I recommend ***Formal Combats in the Fourteenth Century*** as a great starting place for Kindle readers). Volume four of the Deeds of Arms series, ***Will a Frenchman Fight?***, will be available shortly from Freelance Academy Press. In the meantime, check out his blog **Muhlberger's World History**.

Books by Steven Muhlberger

Books from Freelance Academy Press:

Deeds of Arms

Royal Jousts at the End of the Fourteenth Century

The Combat of the Thirty

Will a Frenchman Fight? (coming out this month)

Charny's Men at Arms: Questions Concerning the Joust, Tournament and War

Book from Witan Publishing:

Formal Combats in the Fourteenth Century

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The Battle of Neville's Cross as told in the Lanercost Chronicle

The year 1346 is remembered in England mostly for the Battle of Crecy, where King Edward III defeated the French forces in one of the most important battles of the Hundred Years War. That year also saw another major battle, this one fought on English soil.

Earlier in that year the French King Philip VI had asked his ally David II, King of Scotland, to invade England in hopes that it would stretch the English military. However, it was not until October of 1346 that the Scots invaded England, several weeks after the Battle of Crecy. David II believed that northern England would be defenceless, as Edward III was still in continental Europe, along with most of the English army. After crossing the Scottish-English border on October 7th, his force of 12,000 men began to plunder the area, including monasteries.

Meanwhile, William Zouche, the Archbishop of York, organized the remaining English forces in the north, and with Henry de Percy and Ralph de Neville, marched to confront the Scots near the town of Durham. The Battle of Neville's Cross was fought on October 16th, and one of the sources that narrated its events was the Lanercost Chronicle – written at Lanercost Priory, one of the sites plundered by the Scots. Our section begins with the author mocking King David II and his men:

On that day David, like another Nebuchadnezzar, caused the fringes of his standard to be made much larger, and declared himself repeatedly to be King of Scots without any hindrance. He ordered his breakfast to be made ready, and said that he would return to it when he had slain the English at the point of the sword. But soon afterwards, yea very soon after, all his servants had to hurry, allowing the food to fall into the fire. Thus David, prince of fools, wished to catch fish in front of the net, and thereby lost many and caught but few. Therefore he failed to carry out the plan he had laid, because, like Aman and Achitophel, that which he had prepared for us befel himself. So David, having reckoned up his forces, called the Scots to arms the folk that were eager for war and were about to be scattered ; and like Jabin against Joshua, he marshalled three great and strong columns to attack the English. He set Earl Patrick [of Dunbar] over the first division; but he, like an ignorant fellow, refused to lead the first line, demanding the third, more out of cowardice than eagerness. The Earl of Moray forthwith undertook his [Earl Patrick's] duty, and so held chief command in the first division of the army, and afterwards expired in the battle. With him were many of the valiant men of Scotland, such as the Earl of Stratherne, the Earl of Fife, John de Douglas, brother of William de Douglas, Sir Alexander de Ramsay, and many other powerful earls and barons, knights and esquires, all of one mind, raging madly with unbridled hatred against the English, pressing forward without pause, relying on their own strength, and, like Satan, bursting with over-weening pride, they all thought to reach the stars.

King David himself commanded the second division not, however that David of whom they sang in the dance that he had put ten thousand to flight in battle, but that David of whom they declared in public that his stench and ordure had defiled the altar. With him he took the Earl of Buchan, Malcolm Fleming, Sir

Battle of Neville's Cross from a 15th-century manuscript

to flight in battle, but that David of whom they declared in public that his stench and ordure had defiled the altar. With him he took the Earl of Buchan, Malcolm Fleming, Sir Alexander de Straghern (father and son without the holy spirit), the Earl of Menteith, and many others whom we do not know, and whom if we did know, it would be tedious to enumerate. In the third division was Earl Patrick, who should have been more appropriately named by his countrymen 'Non hic'. He was late in coming, but he did splendidly, standing all the time afar off, like another Peter ; but he would not wait to see the end of the business. In that battle he hurt no man, because he intended to take holy orders and to celebrate mass for the Scots who were killed, knowing how salutary it is to beseech the Lord for the peace of the departed. Nay, at that very time he was a priest, because he led the way in flight for others.
His colleague was Robert Stewart; if one was worth little the other was worth nothing. Overcome by cowardice, he broke his vow to God that he would never await the first blow in battle. He flies with the priest [Earl Patrick], and as a good cleric, will assist the mass to be celebrated by the other. These two, turning their backs, fought with great success, for they entered Scotland with their division and without a single wound; and so they led off the dance, leaving David to dance as he felt inclined.

About the third hour the English army attacked the Scots not far from Durham, the Earl of Angus being in the first division, a noble personage among all those of England, of high courage and remarkable probity, ever ready to fight with spirit for his country, whose good deeds no tongue would suffice to tell.

Sir Henry de Percy, like another Judas Maccabeus, the son of Mattathias, was a fine fighter. This knight, small of stature but

fighter. This knight, small of stature but sagacious, encouraged all men to take the field by putting himself in the forefront of the battle. Sir Rafe de Neville, an honest and valiant man, bold, wary and greatly to be feared, fought to such effect in the aforesaid battle that, as afterwards appeared, his blows left their marks upon the enemy. Nor was Sir Henry de Scrope behindhand, but had taken his post from the first in the front of the fight, pressing on the enemy.

In command of the second division was my lord the Archbishop of York, who, having assembled his men, blessed them all, which devout blessing, by God's grace, took good effect. There was also another bishop of the order of Minorite Friars, who, by way of benediction, commanded the English to fight manfully, always adding that, under the utmost penalty, no man should give quarter to the Scots; and when he attacked the enemy he gave them no indulgence of days from punishment or sin, but severe penance and good absolution with a certain cudgel. He had such power at that time that, with the aforesaid cudgel and without confession of any kind, he absolved the Scots from every lawful act.

In the third division Sir John de Mowbray, deriving his name a re, was abounding in grace and merit. His auspicious renown deserves to be published far and wide with ungrudging praise, for he and all his men behaved in such manner as should earn them honour for all time to come. Sir Thomas de Rokeby, like a noble leader, presented such a cup to the Scots that, once they had tasted it, they had no wish for another draught; and thus he was an example to all beholders of how to fight gallantly for the sacred cause of fatherland. John of Coupland dealt such blows among the enemy that it was said that those who felt the weight of his buffets were not fit to fight any longer.

Then with trumpets blaring, shields clashing, arrows flying, lances thrusting, wounded men yelling and troops shouting, the conflict ended about the hour of vespers, amid sundered armour, broken heads, and, oh how sad! many laid low on the field. The Scots were in full flight, our men slaying them. Praise be to the Most High! victory on that day was with the English. And thus, through the prayers of the blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Cuthbert, confessor of Christ, David and the flower of Scotland fell, by the just award of God, into the pit which they themselves had dug.

This battle, therefore, as aforesaid was fought between the English and the Scots, wherein but few Englishmen were killed, but nearly the whole of the army of Scotland was either captured or slain. For in that battle fell Robert Earl of Moray, Maurice Earl of Stratherne, together with the best of the army of Scotland. But David, so-called King of Scotland, was taken prisoner, together with the Earls of Fife, of Menteith, and of Wigtown, and Sir William of Douglas and, in addition, a great number of men-at- arms. Not long afterwards, the aforesaid David King of Scots was taken to London with many of the more distinguished captives and confined in prison, the Earl of Menteith being there drawn and hanged, quartered, and his limbs sent to various places in England and Scotland. But one of the aforesaid captives, to wit, my lord Malcolm Fleming, Earl of Wigtown, was not sent to London by reason of his infirmity, but, grievous to say ! was allowed to escape at Bothall through the treachery of his guardian, a certain esquire named Robert de la Vale, and thus returned to Scotland without having to pay ransom.

After the aforesaid battle of Durham, my lord Henry de Percy being ill, my lord of Angus and Ralph de Neville went to Scotland, received Roxburgh Castle on sure terms, patrolled the Marches of Scotland, exacting tribute from certain persons beyond the Scottish sea, received others to fealty, and returned to England, not without some losses to their army.

Other sources suggest that about 1000 Scottish men were killed in this battle, along with many captured. King David II himself was held prisoner in England for 11 years before he was ransomed for 100,000 marks. You can read the entire Lanercost Chronicle, which was translated by Sir Herbert Maxwell in 1913, on **Archive.org**

‘The boldest and most remarkable feat ever performed by a woman’: Fiery Joanna and the Siege of Hennebont

It ranks as one of the most fascinating stories from the 14th century, one that chroniclers of that time relished in telling and historians have ever since recounted. It was the defence of Hennebont in the year 1342 by Countess Joanna of Flanders, which would earn her the nickname Jeanne la Flamme (Fiery Joanna).

Fierry Joanna leads the charge – from La Bretagne ancienne, published in 1859

Perhaps the best account of this episode comes from The True Chronicles of Jean le Bel, which has recently been translated by Nigel Bryant. Jean le Bel was a Flemish writer that had been commissioned to compose a history of recent events. He wanted his work to be honest and impartial, and to include only events that "I have witnessed myself or have heard from those who have been present when I have not."

While historians have long known about Jean le Bel, his work became lost for centuries and was only rediscovered in the mid-19th century. His chronicle covers the years 1290 to 1360, and focuses on the situation between England and France during the early stages of the Hundred Years War. One large section covers the so-called War of the Breton Succession, a conflict that began when John III, Duke of Brittany, died on April 30, 1341. Since he had no children, his inheritance was in doubt and there were two claimants. One was his half-brother John of Montfort, and the other was niece Joan of Penthièvre, who was married to Charles of Blois.

It did not take long for the Kings of England and France to get involved in the dispute – even though there was a lull in the fighting of the Hundred Years War, they each wanted their own candidate to become the next ruler of Brittany, a very strategic duchy on the northwest coast of France. While the King of France supported Joan and Charles, the English sided with John of Montfort.

In the autumn of 1341 the Monfortian side took a blow when John of Montfort was captured by King Philip VI of France, despite having given him a promise of safe conduct. Charles of Blois then began preparing an army to invade and conquer Brittany, which he thought would be his soon. However, Joanna of Flanders, wife of John of Montfort, was not prepared to give up. She sent one of her trusted followers to sail to England and speak with King Edward III, asking him to send troops to help her defend Brittany.

While her message was being sent, the forces of Charles of Blois invaded the duchy and began to conquer its town. After capturing Rennes in May of 1342, he began marching on Hennebont, where Joanna was based. Jean le Bel continues the story:

> *When the valiant lady and her supporters heard that Lord Charles was coming to besiege them, they gave order for all their troops to arm and for the great bell to be rung to summon everyone to the city' defence. This was done without demur. And when Lord Charles and the French lords drew near and saw the city's strength they ordered their men to make camp in positions for a siege. Some of the young Genoese and Spanish fellows – French, too – went to skirmish at the the barriers; and there were a number of fierce clashes in which the Genoese, through their recklessness, lost more than they gained. When evening drew in everyone returned to quarters.*

The fighting would continue over the next couple days, with "the valiant countess, armed and riding a great charger from street to street, was cheering and summoning everyone to the city's defence, and commanding the women of the town, ladies and all, to take stones to the walls and fling them at the attackers, along with pots of quicklime."

After three days of fighting, Jean le Bel relates one of the most dramatic moments of the siege:

> *And now you shall hear of the boldest and the most remarkable feat ever performed by a woman. Know this: the valiant countess, who kept climbing the towers to see how the defence was progressing, saw that all the besiegers had left their quarters and gone forward to watch the assault. She conceived a fine plan. She remounted her charger, fully* armed as she was, and called

A 15th century depiction of Joanna of Flanders leading the attack from Hennebont

charger, fully armed as she was, and called upon some three hundred men-at-arms who were guarding a gate that wasn't under attack to mount with her; then she rode out with this company and charged boldly into the enemy camp, which was devoid of anyone but a few boys and servants. They killed them all and set fire to everything: soon the whole encampment was ablaze.

When the French lords saw their camp on fire and heard the shouting and commotion, the assault was abandoned as they rushed back in alarm, crying: "Treachery! Treachery!" The valiant countess, seeing them alerted and the besiegers streaming back from all sides, rallied her men and, realising there was no way back to the town without grave loss, rode off in another direction, straight to the castle of Brayt, some four leagues away.

While the defenders of Hennebont were happy over the victory, they did not know what had happened to Joanna. The French besiegers were no help either, as they shouted out: "Go on! Go find your countess! She's lost for sure: it'll be years before you see her again!"

The defenders had to only worry for five days:

Then the valiant countess, guessing her people would be alarmed and fearing for her, raised about five hundred troops well armed and clad and mounted, and rode from Brayt at midnight and came at the crack of dawn to one of the gates of Hennebont's castle and entered to a triumphant blast of trumpets and drums and other instruments.

The Count of Blois, frustrated over Joanna's victories and the many deaths on his own side, brought in twelve siege machines that could bombard the walls of Hennebont. Leaving to go besiege another town, Charles left Sir Herve of Leon in charge. Soon enough,

left Sir Herve of Leon in charge. Soon enough, the siege machines were wrecking the town and castle, and the defenders spirits began to waver. Among those inside Hennebont was Guy, Bishop of Leon and uncle to Sir Herve. The two had a parley and the nephew persuaded the Bishop to convince the other lords to give up before it was too late. Guy spoke to the other defenders, letting them know the terms of surrender.

Jean le Bel writes:

> *The countess immediately feared the worst, and begged them, on Our Lady's honour not to do anything rash, for she was confident that aid would arrive within three days. But the bishop was insistent and persuasive, filling the lords with alarm and dread. He carried on next morning, until they were all but convinced that they should yield; and Sir Herve was just on his way to the town to accept their surrender when the valiant countess, looking out to sea from the castle window, began to shout in jubilation, crying with all the strength she could summon: "I see the aid I've desired so long!"*
>
> *All the people in the city ran to the walls to see what she had seen; and there, as plain as could be, they beheld a vast fleet of vessels, great and small, heading for Hennebont.*

It was the English fleet, led by Sir Walter Mauny, who had arrived. King Edward III had agreed to come to the rescue of the Countess, but the fleet had been hampered by storms in the English channel, and had taken forty days to reach Brittany. Meanwhile, "Sir Herve was enraged; he called up the biggest engine they had and ordered a constant bombardment by day and night.

As the English disembarked, Joanna of Flanders held a feast in their honour, and afterwards Sir Walter Mauny proposed a plan to stop the attack from the siege machine:

> *So Sir Walter and all his company went armed at once, and slipped quietly through a gate, taking with them a body of three hundred archers who loosed such fine, dense volleys that they drove back the men who were guarding the engine. The men-at-arms then advanced and killed a good number, and toppled the great engine and smashed it to pieces before charging into the enemy camp and setting it ablaze.*

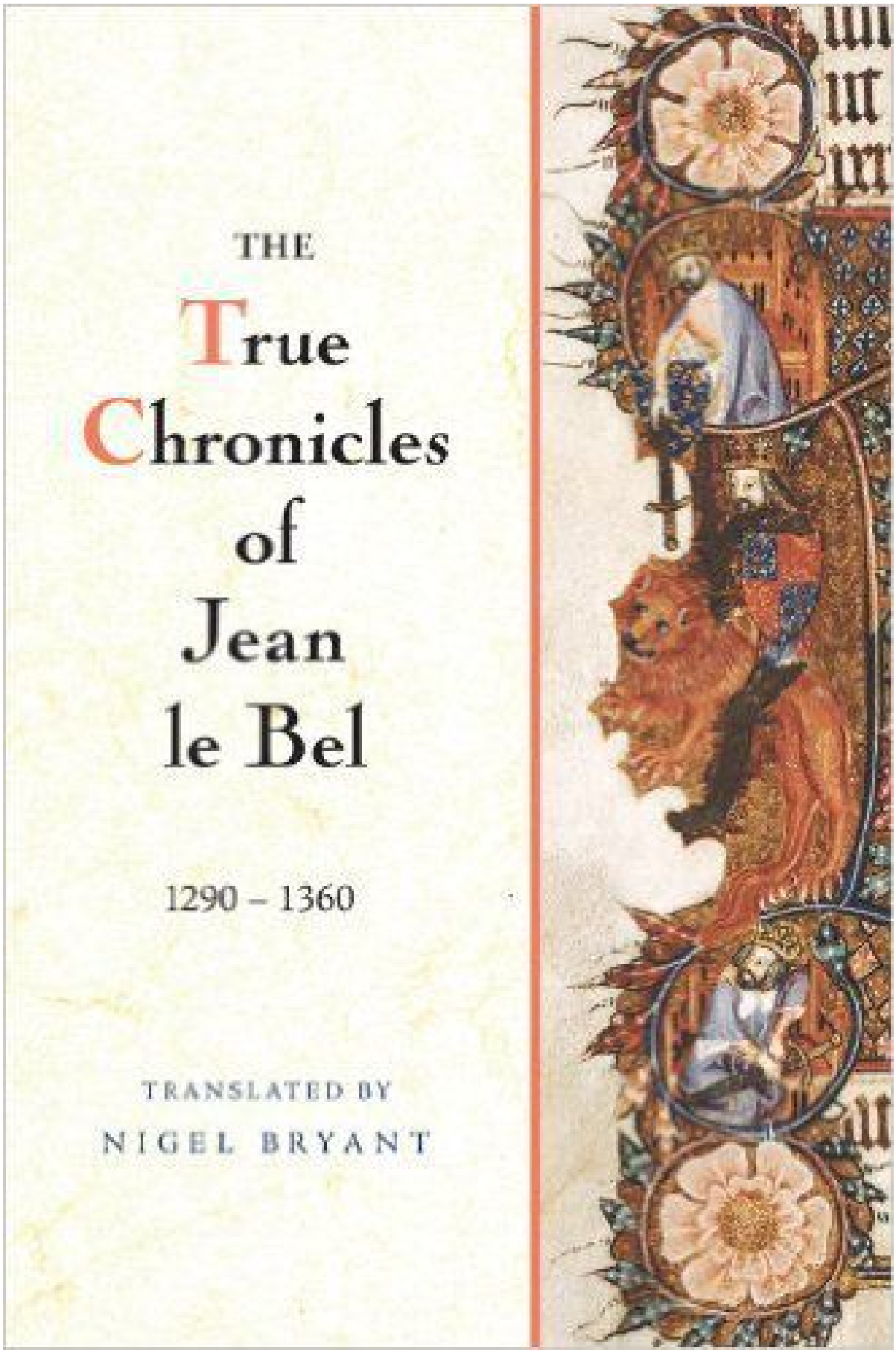
The fighting would continue on, drawing in more combatants from each side, but the English troops were able to get back behind the walls of Hennebont with their victory secure. Jean le Bel added that "anyone who saw the valiant countess then come down from the castle and kiss Sir Walter Mauny and his companions two or three times in turn, would have said she was a lady of noble spirit indeed."

Two days later the French forces withdrew from Hennebont. The War of the Breton Succession would continue on for another 22 years, but when Charles of Blois was killed at the Battle of Auray in 1364, his wife's claim to the duchy collapsed.

However, by this time the life of Joanna of Flanders had taken a tragic turn. A few years after victory at Hennebont she developed a mental illness while in England and had to be confined to a castle. She would live on until 1374, hopefully with the knowledge that her son had won the Duchy.

The story of Joanna of Flanders, who gained the nickname of Jeanne la Flamme / Fiery Joanna for her actions at the siege of Hennebont, is just one of the many events recorded by Jean le Bel in his *True Chronicles*. This work has been called "one of the most remarkable pieces of literature of the fourteenth century," and offers readers vivid accounts of warfare and chivalry, including the Battle of Crecy and fighting on the Scottish frontier.

The True Chronicles of Jean le Bel, 1290-1360,



The True Chronicles of Jean le Bel, 1290-1360, has been translated by Nigel Bryant and is now available in a softcover edition from the Boydell Press

Click here to visit the publisher's page to learn more

Who Were The Celts? The British Museum Offers Answers with New Exhibition

"Celtic" is a term that is commonly attributed to the people of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, and the Isle of Man, but this wasn't always the case. It may come as a surprise to know that the term originated in Ancient Greece. The British Museum just opened its latest exhibit, ***Celts: Art and Identity*** this past Thursday, covering 2,500 years of Celtic history. The exhibit explores Celtic identity and how it eveolved from the time of the Ancient Greeks to the present through art, culture, daily life, religion and politics.

Curator Julia Farley provided a colourful and detailed retrospective about the origins of the Celts in her opening welcome talk. The name "Celt" was first recorded in 500 BC by the Ancient Greeks to describe people living in continental Europe, and on the fringes of the Ancient Rome. Called 'Celtoi', these distinctive groups were not part of the "civilized" Classical Mediterranean world. The term "Celt" encompassed many different types of people who didn't belong to a specific race or genetic group but shared a similar artistic style. This abstract art countered classical forms; swirling, magical, ambiguous art that had hidden animals and faces within its pieces. When the Romans arrived in 43 AD, they encountered a strange and war-like people whose art and differences persisted after long after Roman arrival. They introduced many changes but Roman Britain was very different from being Roman in Rome. There was a unique local stamp on dress and art. The Romans spent generations trying to assimilate these people but they were ultimately unsuccessful. After the Fall of the Roman Empire, many Celts still incorporated some styles of Roman dress, co-mingling with their own distinct fashions.

The Celts continued to develop their own identities and were soon converted to Christianity by missionaries from Ireland and Western Britain as early as the 5th century. Monasteries to the new religion flourished. The term "Celtic" was often used for these people to distinguish them from their Germanic Anglo-Saxon counterparts, however, what's interesting to note is that the Celts did not use that name to describe themselves. The term fell out of use after the Romans left and wasn't revived for a thousand years.

(L) Horned helmet. Bronze, glass, Found along the Thames river near Waterloo, London, England (200-100 BC). (R) Greek helmet, bronze. Olympia, South-Western Greece (460 BC). The British Museum. Photo by Medievalists.net

thousand years.

The rediscovery of a Celtic identity occurred during the Celtic revival that began in the Late Middle Ages. In the middle of the 1400s, with the advent of the printing press, people were able to tell local stories and reprint old texts, like Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* (The Gallic War), which was reprinted in 1469. People were interested in the past and could now access it more easily because printed texts were able to reach a much wider audience. By the the 15th century, the term "Celt" became broadly used to encompass these pre-Christian, non-Roman people, but specifically, those residing in Western Europe. The first mention of the Celts in Scotland or Ireland occurred in 1582 when *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (The History of Scotland) was printed by Scottish historian and Humanist, George Buchanan (1506 – 1582).

Nearly 200 years later, in the early 1700s the term begins to catch on to describe the distinctive linguistic traditions that we now know as "Celtic". Welsh linguist, Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709) noted the similarities between several languages in this region and dubbed them "Celtic". The name stuck and the term now encompasses the peoples of Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall, the Isle of Man,

Gundestrup Cauldron Silver Gundestrup, northern Denmark, 100 BC–AD 1 © The National Museum of Denmark. The British Museum. Photo by Medievalists.net

The Bell Shrine of St. Cuileáin. Iron, bronze, silver, enamel, niello (black inlay). Glankeen, Co. Tipperary, Ireland (600-1200 AD). The British Museum. Photo by Medievalists.net.

Brittany and Wales who shared pre-Roman origins. Celtic later became a politically charged word when it was used in contrast to "Englishness". The shared languages also forged stronger bonds between the groups in asserting their identities as "non-English". In the Victorian period, this Celtic identity became further romanticised with replicas of Celtic inspired jewellery, clothing and re-imagined literary histories.

The Exhibit: Telling a New Celtic Story

The British Museum examines this trajectory from Ancient Greek to modern day with a vast number of objects covering art, literature and daily life. It demonstrates that what we commonly refer to as "Celtic", was only constructed a scant 300 years ago and that the Celtic umbrella was much larger; encompassing a wide array of cultures and regions that we normally wouldn't peg as "Celtic". Objects like the Gundestrup cauldron, one of the more famous pieces in this collection, show the interconnectedness of the Celtic world across many different regions, thousands of miles apart. This piece was found in a peat bog in Denmark, and yet the style of the cauldron points to Bulgarian and Romanian connections. There are even hints of Asian influences in some of the animal motifs, alongside images of people wearing Celtic horns, torcs and battle gear. The exhibit illustrates that Celts were extremely talented and made beautiful items. They loved feasting, were incredible warriors and managed to foil Roman attempts to assimilate them by retaining their local identity through art and fashion. While there was some overlap, the Celts took what they liked and made it their own, a fusion of Roman and Celtic style seen in their jewellery, like the famed torcs (meaning 'to twist' in Latin) large, metal neck rings.

I enjoyed the chronological progression and the manner in which artefacts from Germany, Ireland, Spain, Italy and places as far as Denmark were neatly woven together to bring a different Celtic story to life. In addition to the visually stunning pieces, the exhibit neatly tied in when and how the shift from this more diverse view of Celtic people to our current view of a Celtic Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall and the Isle of Man came into being. It also showed how the modern Celtic identity has been appropriated by political movements and nationalistic organisations.

This exhibit altered my long standing assumptions of what it means to be Celtic; it showed me how far the Romans exerted their influence, taught me who they really were and about their legacy on the British Isles. It was a job well done, with much thought, insight and careful attention to detail behind every pane of glass.

Click here to visit the British Museum website to learn more about this exhibition

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