

2012 4:1

Medieval Histories

York - 800 Years Ago
The Jewish Trail in York
The Rylands Haggadah
Passion in Prague
Jewish Tombstones in Erfurt
Exhibitions & Books

Medieval Histories

News from the medieval world about
anniversaries, exhibitions,
books, films, music, travels
and new research

News: York - 800 years ago

The Ryland Haggadah

Passion in Prague

Tombstones in Erfurt

Medieval Exhibitions in Europe spring 2012

New books - in English, French and German

*In remembrance of the killings in Toulouse and in recognition of the fact that this year Pesach
and Easter nearly coincides, this issue of Medieval History is dedicated
to the memory of European atrocities of yesteryear*

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research

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Photo (frontpage):

The Jewish Cemetery in Prague
Spring 2012
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York - 800 years ago

Maundy Thursday the Queen of England visits York. After the service in the cathedral she will dispense the traditional Maundy Money to 172 elderly men and women, chosen because of the Christian service they have given to the Church and community. At the ceremony, which takes place annually, the sovereign hands to each recipient two small leather string purses. One, a red purse, contains – in ordinary coin-age – money in lieu of food and clothing; the other, a white purse, contains silver Maundy coins consisting of the same number of pence as the years of the sovereign's age. This tradition reaches back into the Middle Ages, when

the sovereign was expected to wash the feet of the poor. Although the washing of the feet has been dispensed with since the 18th century the tradition with handing out alms is still kept alive; albeit in this case in a very ritualized way.

At the same time the Queen will be opening the new Medieval Exhibition mounted at the Yorkshire Museum to celebrate the 800th year anniversary of the royal charter, which presented York with its independence from the crown. Gaining independence meant that York could regulate its own affairs, collect its own taxes and appoint a mayor.

Highlights will include the usual star objects: The York Helmet, the Middleham Jewel (shown above), the recently found sapphire ring and St William's Shrine. These treasures will be exhibited alongside iconic objects from York Minster, including their Chapter House Panels.

It will be the first time such a wide breadth of treasures from across the city will be brought together under one roof. The exhibition intends to bring 800 years of York's medieval heritage back to life and complement the return of York's Mystery Plays to the Museum Gardens. These iconic medieval plays will be performed throughout August 2012 in front of the ruins of St Mary's Abbey, just outside the museum. Along with the exhibition the plays are being mounted as part of the City of York Council's York 800 celebrations.



The Yorkshire Museum
www.yorkshireremuseum.org.uk

York 800
www.yorkfestivals.com

York Mystery Plays
www.yorkmysteryplays-2012.com/



Clifford's Tower, York, where the massacre of Jews took place on the 16th of March in 1190

However, one of the iconic incidents in the history of Medieval York, the massacre of the Jews in 1190, is not part of this history as it took place a couple of decades earlier, in 1190, when – following the ascension of Richard the Lionheart – a number of violent outbursts against Jews took place in various English towns.

In York, a particular violent incident was followed by most of the Jews seeking protection within the castle. However, when their fear became so great that they refused even the constable of the castle admittance, an attempt by royal authorities to regain access

deteriorated into a mob assault on the castle. Rather than fall into the hands of the mob, many of the Jews committed suicide and set the keep afire. The survivors emerged the following day, only to be massacred by the besiegers. As punishment for this terrible act, the king's Chancellor dismissed the sheriff and constable and imposed a heavy fine on York's citizens.

In the latter half of the thirteenth century, the keep was rebuilt in stone. It was given a quatrefoil plan, of which there is no other example in England. The keep later became known as Clifford's Tower after Roger de Clifford, who was hanged there in 1322.

The history of the Jewish community in York is a fascinating, if often overlooked, chapter in the city's long and colourful past. Whilst attention is usually focused on the tragic event at the site now called Clifford's Tower, there are stories to be told about the resiliency of the medieval Jewish

community and of commemoration and revival of Jewish life in the more recent past.

In January a group of researchers and students at the University of York unveiled a new trail through York complete with brochures, downloadable apps and a number of videos at YouTube.

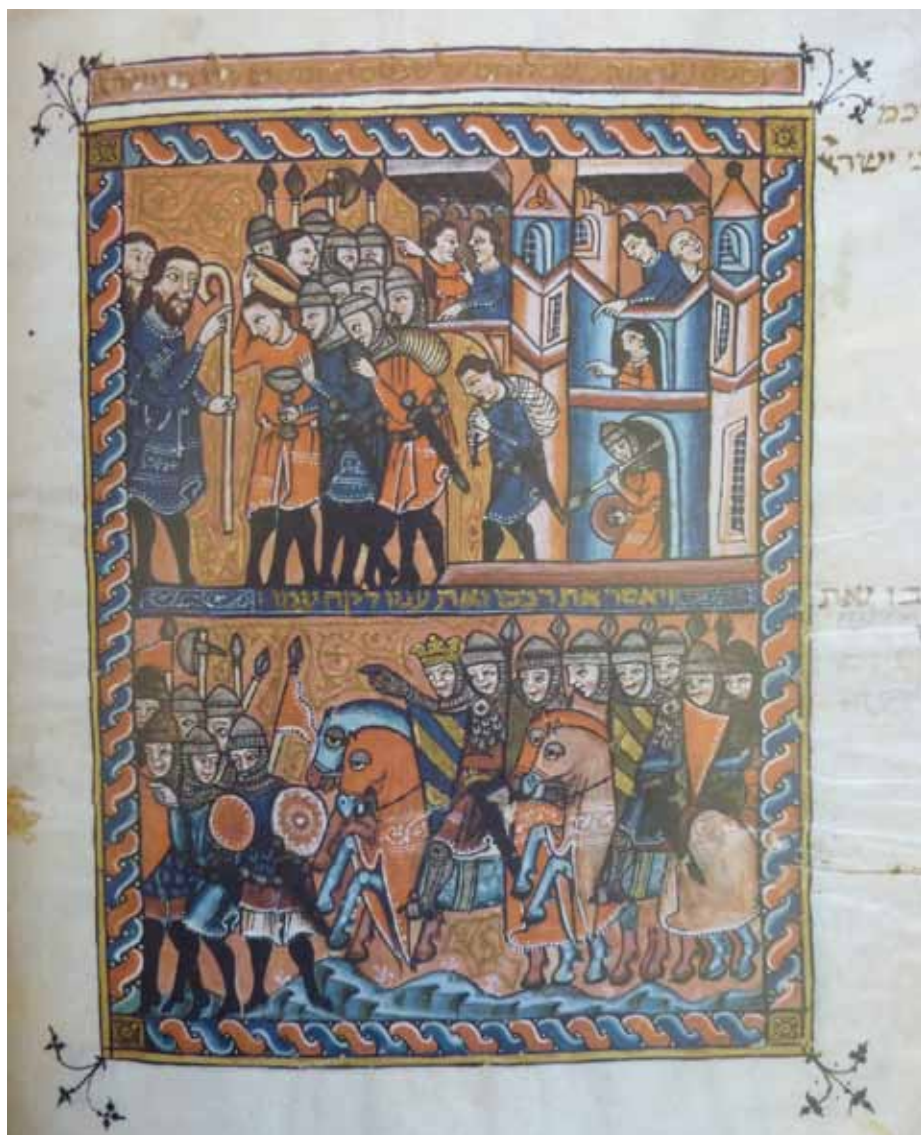
Along the trail it is possible to discover sites of synagogues, both ancient and more recent, "meet" prominent historical Jews such as Aaron of York and the unfortunate Benedict, explore the remains of a 12th century house and the place of the medieval Jewish burial ground

Finally the trail invites you to reflect on tragedy and remembrance at Clifford's Tower itself, where so many Jewish families tragically died on 16th March 1190.

York University also organised a conference in 2010 on the massacre in 1190. The proceedings will be published by Boydell & Brewer at the end of 2012.

The Jewish Trail in York
www.york.ac.uk/ipup/projects/york/traumatic-histories/jewish-trail.html

Conference 2010
york1190.blogspot.com/



Moses gathering his flock. The Ryland Haggadah © John Rylands University Library of Manchester

The Rylands Haggadah

From the calling of Moses to the crossing of the Red Sea, the drama of the ancient Israelites' exodus from Egypt is presented in The Rylands Haggadah.

The Haggadah is one of the central texts of Rabbinic Judaism. Its use on the first nights of Passover by Jews all over the world from Alaska to Zimbabwe continues a tradition reaching back into antiquity. The so-called Rylands Haggadah is a masterpiece from 14th century Catalanian Spain. During the last eight months it has been painstakingly conserved in order to preserve the pigment and

gold, which was starting to flake. Comprising 57 lavishly decorated vellum leaves, the treasure was acquired by Enriqueta Rylands in 1901, as part of the world famous Crawford collection of manuscripts. Normally it resides at the John Rylands University Library at Manchester University.

However, from March till September 2012 the precious "Rylands Haggadah" will be exhibited at the Metropolitan in New York. Each month, the Haggadah will be open to a different page, affording visitors the exceptional opportunity to follow the artist's telling of the

Exodus story. Works of art from the Museum's own collection, made for Christian use but depicting the saga of the Hebrew people, will suggest the larger, medieval context of biblical storytelling in which the Haggadah was created. This is the third in a series of installations focusing on one masterwork of Hebrew manuscript illumination from a national or international collection. The previous installations featured the Washington Haggadah and Lisbon's Hebrew Bible.

"This manuscript is one of the finest Haggadot in the world. It is important for its intrinsic beauty and for various textual details, but it is also a key source for the study of the illumination of Hebrew manuscripts in general. It shines a light on the tradition of Biblical illustration among the Jews of the Middle Ages and on the cross-fertilisation between Jewish and non-Jewish artists within the medium of manuscript illumination, said Rylands Collections and Research Support Manager John Hodgson recently to Manchester University News.

The installation in New York is made possible by The David Berg Foundation.

The Rylands Haggadah
Medieval Jewish Art in Context. The Metropolitan, New York March 27–September 30, 2012

Digitised edition of the Ryland Haggadah at www.chiccmanchester.wordpress.com/2012/01/04/rylands-haggadah-hebrew-ms-6/

Passion in Prague

One of the more evocative places in Prague is the Jewish churchyard and the Altneuschul, the oldest active synagogue in Europe. Built in gothic style in 1270 it was the scene of a terrible pogrom in 1389. That year was especially dangerous for the Jewish community as the Jewish Pesach (Passover) and the Christian Pasqua (Easter) coincided. Traditionally, this made mob violence more likely as Christians became enflamed by the hateful renderings of the Passion of Christ with the medieval tradition for virulent blaming of the Jews, while the Jews were busy organising their festivities; amongst those the baking of matzoh, which dough Christian myth claimed was mixed with the blood of Christian children.

As usual the Jews were forbidden to appear in public between Holy Thursday and Easter. However, the Jewish quarter in Prague was at this time (as later) crammed with people some of which were Christians and at some point on Holy Saturday a procession worked its way through the tiny allies carrying the host to a dying Christian. Somehow this became the proverbial spark when the Christians afterwards claimed that stones had been thrown at them, spilling the host on the ground.

Whatever the truth behind this, it ended in a terrible tragedy as some of the Jews were hauled into town in order to be punished. Come Easter Sunday Christians, not satisfied with this, swarmed into the Jewish quarter armed with stones, swords and axes. After the quarter was set ablaze, the Jews took refuge in the Altneuschul, where they started to “sanctify the name”



The Interior of the Altneuschul - the New Old Synagogue in Prague

(Kiddush ha-Shem) by killing first their children and afterwards themselves. Rather than submitting to a down-right massacre or forced baptisms this was the traditional way out since Roman persecutions.

The death toll has recently been calculated to be around 4 – 500, approximately half to two-thirds

of the Jews in Prague at that time.

And then the looting began. Unfortunately the king, who was highly dependent on the income from the taxation of the Jewish Community, afterwards ordered the amassed valuables delivered at the castle. One source claimed that values to the amount of five barrels of silver ended up in the cof-

fers of the king. Some even hinted at the king having been personally involved in the instigation.

The pogrom in Prague does not fall into the general pattern of European pogroms, neither the early ones connected with the crusades and perpetrated by Muslims as well as Christians or the later wave prompted by the Black Death. It was just one of those recurrent infamous events, which from time to time would blot the history of medieval Europe. But which it is especially important to remember in so far as people today can go and visit the actual place, where the horrendous killings took place.

Even today a special lament or elegy, *Et Kol ha-Tela'ah asher Mea'atnu*, composed by Rabbi Avigdor Kara after the killings, is read at Yom Kippur in Prague.

Another reason to remember this particular pogrom is a text, which was produced in the aftermath: The passion of the Jews in Prague, which has recently been the object of a meticulous study by the church historian Barbara Newman.

This curious text – the Passion – must be classified as a parody, although it in no way possesses the humorous aspects, which we connect with this genre. Nevertheless, it is still a parody in so far as it tells the story of the events in Prague with the Jews in the role of Jesus, but with the added twist, that the killing of them (as opposed to him) was totally righteous!

Source for the parody are texts from the bible, primarily the gospels of St. Mathew and St. John, from which lengthy passages are

The Passion of the Jews of Prague.

The Pogrom of 1389 and the Lessons of a Medieval Parody. Barbara Newman Church History, 2012 81: 1-26

Jewish Heritage in Prague

www.synagogue.cz

www.jewishmuseum.cz/

picked, and transformed. Over 90 biblical verses are cited, although often reversed or twisted. For instance the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane is reversed like this: While the actual saying (according to Matthew) is “Yet not as I will, but as you will”, the ringleader of the Christian mob exclaims that the outcome of the violence, will not be as the Jews “want, but as we will”.

According to Barbara Newman such twisting creates a literary space for the reader, who is constantly reminded of the radical nature of the “real” passion, which echoes the story about the passion of the Jews in Prague. On one hand there is the Passion in Prague about the Jews, who the mob believed “had it coming”, a bunch of mercenary rioters and the feckless magistrates. On the other hand there is the Passion of Christ.

Newman is of the opinion that this sounding board - the biblical passion - radically undermines the points, the author of the Prague Passion tried to make. She believes, that the anonymous author “saw the events in Prague as renewing the Savior’s vengeance against the Jews”. In Barbara Newman’s words, the formula

Rabbi Avigdor Kara’s Tomb at the Jewish Cemetery in Prague



for the parody, which he picked – the passion of Christ – created a “textual unconscious that, despite the author’s best efforts, allows the grace of irony and pity to seep through”.

Whether the anonymous author was conscious about this – which is not the opinion of Barbara Newman – is not easy to ascertain in so far as the Passion is currently unavailable apart from a translation into Czech. In her forthcoming book: “Medieval Crossover: Reading the secular against the Sacred”, we are promised a translation into English and the possibility of addressing these questions will become widely possible. Which is important. One reason is the curious fact, that one of the manuscripts containing the Passion from Prague, according to Barbara Newman, stems from the Cathedral and contains a number of anti-Hussite works.

It is well known that the early protestant reformer Jan Huss, 1369 – 1415, is presumed to have had friendly dealings with the Jews in Prague and especially the aforementioned Rabbi Avigdor Kara. And on the gravestone of Avigdor Kara – the oldest in the cemetery in Prague, his father is given the epithet of martyr. He was presumably killed in the massacre.

One wonders, whether the parody was more than just a parody on the Passion of Christ. Maybe it was an elegant parody on the hate-speech of the burghers in Prague around 1400. One might even wonder: Did Jan Huss or one of his friends write it? Presumably he was already studying at the University during the fateful Easter of 1389 and must have seen the happenings up close. And felt disgusted!



The Synagogue in Prague

Gentile Tales.

The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews
By Miri Rubin
University of Pennsylvania Press 2003

Beginning in Paris in the year 1290, Jews were accused of abusing Christ by desecrating the eucharist--the manifestation of Christ's body in the communion service. Over the next two centuries this tale of desecration spread throughout Europe and led to violent anti-Jewish activity in areas from Catalonia to Bohemia, where at times it produced regionwide massa

cres and “cleansings.” Drawing on sources ranging from religious tales and poems to Jews’ confessions made under torture, Miri Rubin has explored the frightening power of one of the most persistent anti-Jewish stories of the Middle Ages and the violence that it often bred. She investigates how these tales were commemorated in rituals, altarpieces, and legends and were enshrined in local traditions and presents a vivid picture of the mental world of medieval Europe and the culture of anti-Judaism. Beginners can start here!

Jewish Gravestones in Erfurt

More than twenty Jewish gravestones were recently discovered in the middle of Erfurt in Thüringen; the oldest dates back to 1259. It was erected as a memorial for “Mrs Dolze, daughter of Mr Asher”. The name Dolze or Dolce was a very common name at that time.

In total the city of Erfurt can muster 58 Jewish gravestones or fragments thereof, which is a remarkable heritage in so far as the Jewish graveyard was abandoned after the eviction of the Jews in 1453. Afterwards the sandstones were reused as building material, while the plot was reused as the building ground for a communal barn and grain depot.

The graveyard was rather large, as Jews from Arnstadt, Weimar and Gotha were using it as a burial site. Most of the burials were destroyed in the 15th century, but some intact graves may still be found east of the great warehouse. This plot

of land will not be excavated as a Jewish graveyard is considered a “House of Eternity” and supposed to be protected forever.

The burial stones are discovered at an opportune moment, as Erfurt is currently trying to get its medieval Jewish heritage listed as a UNESCO World Heritage. Although not nominated for the election in Paris this summer, Erfurt is working on gathering recognition for its unique heritage.

Part of this is the remarkable Old Jewish Synagogue, which stems from the 11th century. This makes it the oldest surviving synagogue building in Central Europe. In 2009 it was renovated and converted into a museum. On the ground floor a small but impressive exhibition tells the story of the building and the changes it underwent after the pogroms of 1349, when the building was sacked. Afterwards it was sold to a corn dealer, who used the build-



Wedding Ring from Erfurt

ing as a warehouse. Later it was turned into a restaurant and dance hall, which kept it from being destroyed by the Nazi regime. It took until 1992 before the history of the building was discovered.

However, the most impressive exhibition is in the basement, where a magnificent treasure is on display. The treasure was found quite by accident in 1998 hidden in a nearby medieval cellar. It dates from 1349 and has a total weight of about 28 kilograms. The largest part consists of 3141 silver coins and 14 silver ingots of various sizes. More important though are the 700 individual pieces of Gothic art made of Jewish Goldsmiths. The outstanding piece is a golden Jewish wedding ring from the early 14th century. But brooches, belt buckles, trimming for robes and dresses plus silver dishes and cups should also be mentioned.

On the first floor a number of impressive documents, amongst those the largest known medieval Torah, are exhibited.

The Synagogue in Erfurt



Not far from the old Synagogue lies the medieval ritual Bath, the Mikveh, which is another part of the Jewish Heritage in Erfurt. It can either be visited as part of a tour or seen through the window covering the ruins. Primarily, women, who went into hiding while menstruating or after having given birth to a child, used it for their ritual cleansing, before they were allowed to share the bed of their husbands. The Mikveh had to be fed with running water and was accordingly situated close to the river Gera.



The Erfurt treasure

Today the water level is generally much lower than in the Middle Ages, although this winter was an exception allowing for an experience of how it worked. The building was about 3 meters long and nearly a meter wide. In the North wall was a niche for a light, while access was from the West.

In 2010 a beautiful plaster-head of a young, beardless man wearing a crown of lilies, was found as part of a reused sandstone block under a thick layer of mortar. It dates back to the 12th century. Whether it was part of the original Mikveh is not known.

The animal brooch from the Erfurt treasure



Josel von Rosheim

Right now in the Erfurt Synagogue it is possible to see an exhibition about Josel von Rosheim. The exhibition, which tells about his life and actions on 18 boards, is the result of collaboration between French and German museums and institutions.

Josel von Rosheim (1476 – 1554) was born at Haguenau, where his family had fled in 1476. He worked as Rabbi and judge as well as merchant and moneylender. In 1507 he was for the first time ap-

pointed spokesman for his fellow Jews, first in Elsass and later for the whole of Germany. In 1514 he was charged with having taken part in the desecration of hosts, but he succeeded in his defence and was acquitted. After this he moved to Rossheim, where he lived the rest of his life.

Although he was constantly harassed, he succeeded in a number of situations to prevent the expulsion of Jews from their hometowns and in 1520 he got the Emperor, Karl V, to issue a general decree protecting the Jews in the Holy Roman Empire. During the Peasant war in 1525 he convinced the army to spare the city of Rossheim. In 1530 he won a dispute with the converted Jew, Antonius





Romanesque sculpture of a Jew holding a purse, sitting on the rooftop of the church in Rosheim

Alte Synagoge in Erfurt
 Waagegasse 8
 99084 Erfurt
www.alte-synagoge.erfurt.de

Mikveh in Erfurt
 Only guided tours, contact
www.alte-synagoge.erfurt.de

Josel von Rosheim
 Exhibition in Alte Synagoge
 12. 03 - 29. 04. 2012

**The Historical Writings
 of Joseph of Rosheim.**
 Leader of Jewry in Early
 Modern Germany. Edited
 with an Introduction, Com-
 mentary, and Translations
 by Chava Fraenkel-Gold-
 schmidt, Naomi Schen-
 dowich and Adam Shear.
 Studies in Jewish history and
 Culture vol 12. Brill 2006

Margaritha, at the diet in Regens-
 burg in front of the emperor,
 defending his cause and his faith.
 Due to the growing anti-semitism
 of Martin Luther and his fellow
 protestant, he leaned more and
 more towards the catholic side,
 financing the wars of the emperor.

Joseph of Rosheim left histori-
 cal writings that are available in a
 critical edition published with an
 English translation by Brill.

The principal part of the book is
 devoted to a Hebrew manuscript
 – a chronicle – left by Josel von
 Rosheim, in which he describes
 incidents from the history of his
 life and that of the Jews in his day

and age. Josel von Rosheim writes
 with extreme terseness, often in
 cryptic language. The edition is
 accordingly heavily annotated and
 accompanied by prefaces, back-
 ground information and a com-
 mentary.

The prefaces provide important
 information about the blood libels
 and the expulsions, the debate con-
 cerning Solomon Molcho's mes-
 sianic ideas, and the influence Josel
 von Rosheim exerted at the court
 of Emperor Charles V.

Particularly valuable for the study
 of Christian-Jewish relations in the
 Reformation period are two other
 documents printed in the edition.

The “Letter of Consolation”
 is a long epistle that Josel von
 Rosheim wrote to the Jews of
 Hesse in 1541, advising them on
 how to cope with the harsh de-
 crees enacted against them and
 discussing the attitudes of some
 leading Refor-mers towards the
 Jews.

Also included in the book is his
 Letter to Strasbourg City Council
 of July 1543, which contains his
 response to Martin Luther's anti-
 Jewish tracts.

The afterword discusses some of
 the most recent research into Josel
 von Rosheim's activities and writ-
 ings.

Catch it while you can!

Medieval Exhibitions in Europe 2012



Franciskus

Light out of Assisi
Paderborn, Germany
09. 12. 2011 – 06. 05. 2012



Splendours of the Middle Ages.

The abbey of San Vincenzo al Volturno in the time of Charlemagne.
22. 01. 2012 – 04. 11 2012
Venafro, Molise, Italia



The Romance of the Middle Ages

28. 01. 2012 - 13. 05. 2012
Bodleian Library , Oxford, England



Goldene Pracht

Medieval treasures in Westfalen.
26. 02. 2012 – 28. 05. 2012
Domkammer zur Münster, Münster, Deutschland



Gaston Fébus (1331-1391) Prince Soleil

18. 03. 2012 - 17. 06. 2012
Musée du château de Pau, Les Pyrenees, France



Ottomania. The Turkish world through Western Eyes

07. 03. 2012 - 07. 05 2012
Rijksmuseum Philips Wing, Amsterdam, Holland



Flemish Miniatures

27. 03. 2012 – 01. 07. 2012

Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, France



Cluny 1120

The Abbey and the Church at Cluny in 1120

28. 03. 2012 – 02. 07. 2012

Musée national du Moyen Age, Paris, France



Très Riches Heures de Duc de Berry

04. 04. 2012 – 25.06. 2012

Le Louvre, Paris, France



Verbündet, verfeindet, verschwägert.

Bayern und Österreich.

19. 04. 2012 – 06. 11. 2012-03-11

Burg Burghausen, Altötting, Deutschland

Kloster Ranshofen, Stadt Braunau, Österreich

Schloss Mattighofen, Braunau, Österreich



Schats für die Ewigkeit

Manuscripts infrom the time of Heinrich II in the Cathedral of Bamberg

14. 05. 2012 – 11. 08. 2012

Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, Bamberg, Deutschland



Der Frühe Dürer

24. 05. 2012- 02. 09. 2012

Germanisches National Museum, Nürnberg, Deutschland



Golden Flashes

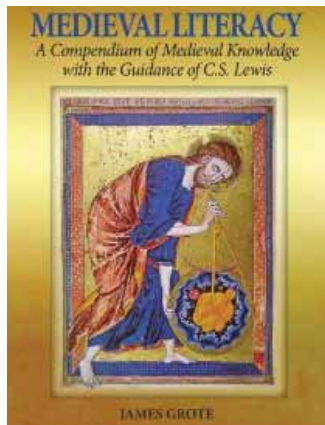
The international Gothic in Florence from 1375 to 1440

19. 06 2012 – 04. 11 2012

Galleria degli Uffizi, Firenze, Italia

April 2012

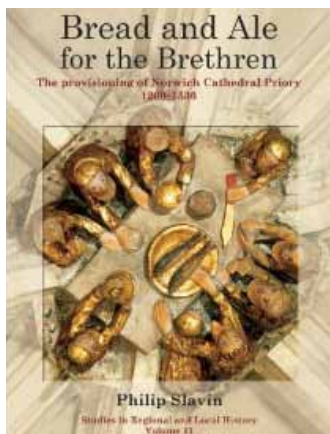
New Books - in English



Medieval Literacy
A Compendium of Medieval Knowledge with the Guidance of C. S. Lewis
Jim Grote
Fons Vitae 2012



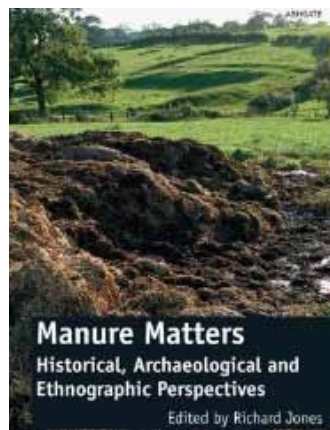
Pope Alexander III
Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West
Peter D. Clarke and Anne J. Duggan
Ashgate 2012



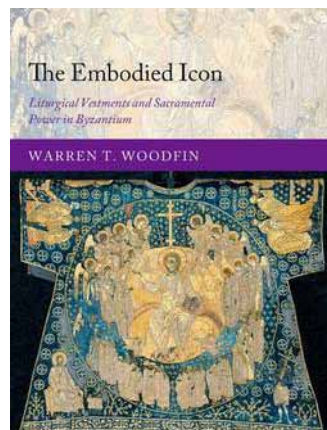
Bread and Ale for the Brethren
The Provisioning of Norwich Cathedral Priory, 1260-1536 (Studies in Regional and Local History)
Philip Slavin
University of Hertfordshire Press 2012



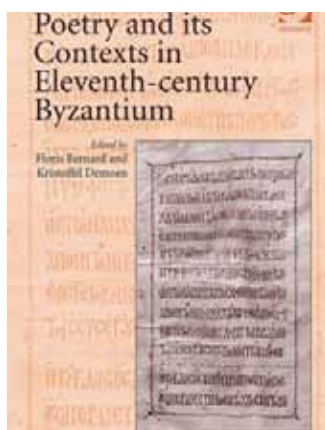
The Franks Casket
Objects in Focus
Leslie Webster
British Museum 2012



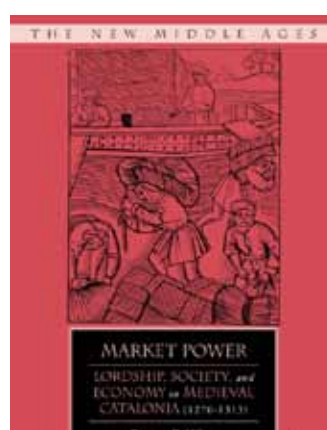
Manure Matters
Richard Jones
Ashgate 2012



The Embodied Icon
Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium (Oxford Studies in Byzantium)
Warren T. Woodfin
Oxford University Press 2012



Poetry and its Contexts
in Eleventh-century Byzantium
Floris Bernard and Kristoffel Demoen
Ashgate 2012



Market Power.
Lordship, Society, and Economy in Medieval Catalonia (1276-1313)
The New Middle Ages
Gregory B. Milton
Palgrave Macmillan 2012

April 2012

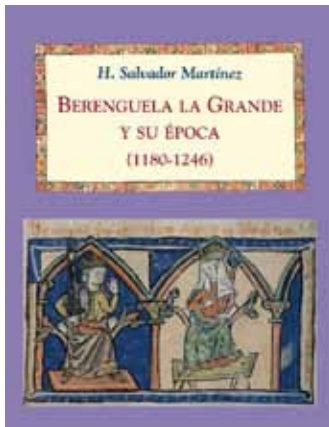
New Books - in Spanish and German



Historia del arte medieval
Juan V. Garcia Marsilla
Universidad De Valencia
2012



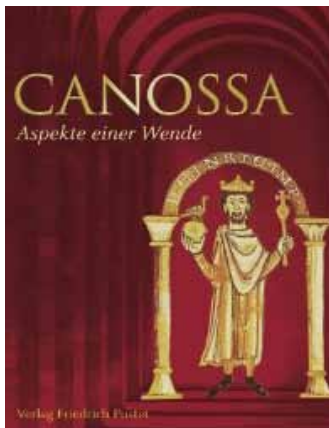
Verbündet - Verfeindet - Verschwägert
Bayern und Österreich
1-2
Theiss 2012



Berenguela la Grande y su época (1180-1246)
H. Salvador Martínez
Santamarta
Ediciones Polifemo;
Edición 2012



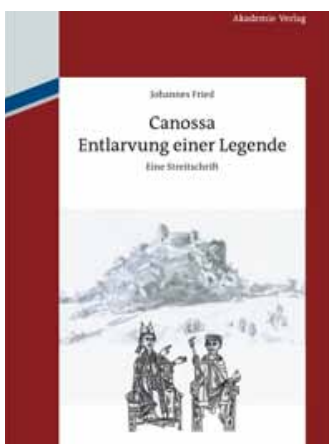
Königliche Stiftungen des Mittelalters im historischen Wandel
Quedlinburg und Speyer, Königsfelden, Wiener Neustadt und Andernach
Claudia Modellmög
Oldenbourg Akademieverlag 2012



Canossa
Aspekte einer Wende
Wolfgang Hasberg (Editor), Hermann-Josef Scheidgen (Editor) Pustet, Regensburg 2012



Geistliche als Kreuzfahrer
Der Klerus im Konflikt zwischen Orient und Okzident 1095-1221
Thomas Haas
Universitätsverlag Winter 2012



Canossa: Entlarvung einer Legende
Eine Streitschrift
Johannes Fried
Oldenbourg Akademieverlag 2012



Gräber im Kirchenraum
Archäologisch-historisches Forum
Jörg Jarnut, Martin Kroker, Stephan Müller, Matthias Wemhoff (Eds)
Fink (Wilhelm) 2012