

2012 3:2

Medieval Histories

News from around
Euphemia 1280 -1312
The Brother of Euphemia, Wizlaw
Courtly Culture in Scandinavia
Exhibitions & Books



Medieval Histories

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

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Photo (frontpage):

Idealised portrait of the husband
of Eufemia from the Cathedral of
Stavanger.
Source: Wikipedia



Krásna Hôrka © Jaro27

Krásna Hôrka Burning

In 1318 the village of Krásna Hôrka was sold to the Batisz family. They started to build the first castle on the limestone hilltop. First it was a medieval donjon. Later the present heavily fortified building was erected in the 16th century during the Turkish invasions. History tells of the owners, the Bebeks, as “thievish knights” who used to steal church bells and cast canons from them. (Up until now the castle had a magnificent collection of canons and other weaponry on show). Further the Bebeks were well-known forgers and their secret mint was hitherto on show in the upper or “old” castle. Later the Bebeks joined up with the Turks and fought the emperor. In 1567 the last Bebek died, and the imperial court administered the castle. In 1642 the castle was donated to one of its castellans, Matthias Andrassy, who embarked upon a rebuilding. The result was the so-called lower

castle, a small pleasant renaissance addition

The last extensive rebuilding of the castle was carried out in 1770s, where the majestic south-eastern bastion called Dobogó was turned into a chapel. In the 19th century, however, the family left to live elsewhere, and the castle was turned into a family museum. In 1945 the castle was expropriated and in 1948 declared a national

cultural property. Since 1996, the castle has been administered by the Slovak National Museum, as part of Museum Betliar. Although filled with a mix of diverse leftovers from former times, the castle has been considered well worth a visit due to its location and architecture.

However, yesterday, 10 March 2012, Krásna Hôrka Castle in Slovakia burnt down.





The river Alna of Oslo. Mariakirken, where Eufemia, her father and her husband were buried, was located at the outfall to the sea

Queen Euphemia of Norway 1280 - 1312

Nowadays it is fashionable to resurrect the likenesses of historical persons as well as get information from their old rattling bones.

The other day the skulls of the Norwegian King Håkon V (1270 – 1319) and his queen, Euphemia were carried across the town of Oslo in order to be subjected to a battery of research – including DNA extraction and strontium analysis. The hope is not only to get the likenesses recreated, but also to get information about their upbringing, their food, nutrition etc.

So far researchers have found that her skeleton was slight and that her teeth were not worn. She must

have been fed on refined food and sifted flour.

Euphemia was daughter of the Slavic prince, Witslaw of Rügen, who died in 1302. She was married in 1299 to prince Håkan, later king of Norway. It is presumed that the marriage-contract was concluded in 1298 at a Danish –Norwegian meeting of reconciliation. The wedding took place in Oslo in 1299 at the same time as her father in-law, the Norwegian king Erik II, died. On the first of November the royal couple were crowned. At this occasion the king threw a great party and donated privileges to the churches.

There exists a gilded mounting

to a drinking horn preserved in the National Museum of Copenhagen ornated with the weapons of the couple, that might stem from around this time. In the 14th century such drinking horns were no longer part of the traditional (“viking”) way of life, but probably more a fashionable symbol of a national romantic revival. However, she also owned other more “common” drinking vessels, like the two silver-bowls she were given by her father in his testament. According to yet another testament for Bjarne Erlingsson in Bjarkøy she owned a golden cup.

In 1302 the couple celebrated the engagement between their daughter Ingebjørg and the Swedish heir,

Erik Magnusson. At this event Euphemia's father, who was present, died. He was buried in the church of St. Mary as was later queen Euphemia and her husband. The church, now in ruins, played a pivotal role in the life of the royal couple. It was generously endowed in her testament. After her death – and as part of the endowment – the provost of the church was even by default called to be the future chancellor of Norway.

Her best claim to immortality, however, stems from her strong literary and cultural impact on Norwegian and Swedish life. The primary witness are the three so-called “Euphemia-visor”, epic versified romances of French and German origin translated into Swedish: “Herr Ivan Lejonriddaren”, “Hertig Fredrik af Normandie” and “Flores och Blancheflor”. Each poem has an addendum designating Euphemia as the commissioner and dating the poems respectively 1303, 1308 and 1312.

It is generally believed that the same person wrote the three poetical novels. Euphemia is thus credited with having introduced the fashionable aristocratic and courtly culture to a wider group of Norwegians and Swedes.

No doubt her inspiration stemmed from her upbringing in Northern Germany, where her brother, Witslaw III, was an acclaimed poet. 27 of his songs are preserved.

The anniversary has already produced a number of new findings in connection with the three romances. Amongst other the historian Bjørn Bandlien recently discovered some fragments of a German romance from app. 1300. Maybe they were part of a

manuscript brought to Norway by Euphemia at her marriage?

In the middle of the 19th century the tomb of the royal couple was identified in the ruins of the old church. In 1982 their remains were reburied inside the chapel of the old royal castle in Oslo, Akerhus.

Her death 700 years ago will be marked by a number of festivities. A street in the centre of Oslo has been renamed after her, and a book will be published in May. The book, which is edited by Bjørn Bandlien, promises to present the newest research on Euphemia and her life and times. Also a concert

with music by her brother is in the pipeline.

Read more:

Bandlien, Bjørn (ed) Dronning Eufemia. Oslos middelalderdronning. Oslo, Dreyers forlag 2012. In print.

In October a conference on the Eufemiavisorna and courtly culture will be held in Stockholm, see www.meldetid.su.se/eufemia2012/

*Idealised portrait of the husband of Eufemia’
from the Cathedral of Stavanger*



- And her Brother Wizlaw

Euphemia, Queen of Norway 1280 – 1312 are credited with a large cultural influence upon Norway and Sweden. Some of this inspiration was undoubtedly brought from her home in Rügen, where her older brother was a famous troubadour.

Originally Wizlaw III (1265 -1325) was not destined to govern the small principality of Rügen in Northern Germany after their father. However, shortly after he died in 1302 in Oslo, their brother Sambor died too and Wizlaw had to take over.

His was a complicated political landscape. Warring and feuding between the diverse princes, kings and Hanseatic cities along the Northern coast of Germany was widespread and financing this was in the best of times a challenge. As the years 1316 – 1322 were marked by a widespread and totally devastating climatic crisis – summers filled with torrents of rain and cold, long winters – hunger and escalating prices contributed to the enormous threats posed by his enemies in the rest of Pomerania. In a sense it all ended badly. Wizlaw had to pawn

and pledge huge tracts of land to rich burghers, who saw splendid opportunities to escalate their holdings in the countryside. The historian William Chester Jordan, has estimated that the prince pawned most of his land during the years 1316 – 17, never to be redeemed. In 1325 his son died and soon after he followed. With no heirs Rügen was taken over by his nephew, the Pomeranian duke.

In spite of his lack of financial acumen, Wizlaw is nevertheless remembered. He was simply one of the leading German figures in the literary and cultural tradition highlighted by the romantic traditions of the troubadours (or in German “Minnesänger”). Wizlaw’s compositions, 27 in all, were written in Platdeutsch (a German dialect), which was lingua franca around the Baltic at that time. Most of his songs are however preserved in the “Jenaer Liederhandschrift” in high German. In the manuscript there are notes preserved. It is highly likely that he worked as a composer as well as poet. He was renowned in his time and probably performed his own songs at some of the large gatherings at that time. The songs can be

divided into two genres – the so-called “Sprüche” and the songs. The first category had a moralistic tone and two of them even deplored the hunger and despair of the times – maybe allusions to the catastrophe in the years 1316 – 22. The songs had as usual themes like the pleasures of life, spring, courtly love and beauty.

Read more:

The songs of the minnesinger, Prince Wizlaw of Rügen: with modern transcriptions of his melodies and English translations of his verse. Wesley Thomas and Barbara Garvey Jackson
University of North Carolina Press, 1967.

The great Famine. Northern Europe in the Early Fourteenth Century.
William Chester Jordan
Princeton University Press
1996.

The Gleaners:

“The Gleaners” is the title of the famous painting by Millet and will presumably touch upon the ancient right for the poor to glean grain and grapes from the harvested fields and yards. An appropriate theme in a time of austerity. and part of characterising the times of Euphemia and Wizlaw. This year at the Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America in Saint Louis, William Chester Jordan will give a presentation, called “The Gleaners”. The presentation will take place on Saturday, March 24, 2012.

Jenaer Liederhandschrift - www.urmel-dl.de/Projekte/JenaerLiederhandschrift.ht





Akershus in Oslo was partly built by Håkon V

Norse Literature

Six years ago the Norwegian Research Council decided to fund a large project on the “Translation, Transmission and Transformation of Old Norse Romantic Fiction and Scandinavian Vernacular Literacy 1200 – 1500” – or in less convoluted language: The Scandinavian rewriting and adaption of medieval literature from the rest of Europe: The French romances, the songs of the troubadours, religious texts etc.

From 1200 -1500 an impressive amount of European literature was translated into Norse – in Iceland and Norway. The translations, however, had more the character of rewritings than translations as such. In this way they became adapted to the already existing vernacular and partly oral tradition, which is best known from the Icelandic sagas, although it is in fact much more diverse. The main object of the project has been to focus on this adaptation process. Another object was to study the interplay between the oral traditions and performances and the growing literacy in the period.

Intermingled with this was a focus on the interplay between the growing Latin literacy and at the same time increased vernacular use of the Runic alphabet, e.g. in connection with the writings of letters and other small texts, as is famously documented from the excavations in Bergen at Bryggen.

Earlier on the European influence was considered destructive in terms of its influence upon what was considered “the national, home-grown Norse literature” (the sagas, the eddic poems etc.) Nowadays, however, it has been established how fluid and entwined the traditions actually were. For instance it is no longer fashionable to distinguish between the so-called Royal Sagas, which continued to be written until the middle of the 13th century and the recently introduced romantic sagas with their new and different code of honour: Courtly instead of Manly. Further, until the printing press established textual consistency, the idea of an authorised text of either a poem or a piece of historical writing was non-existent

creating a crucible for a huge cultural creativity.

A famous example of this is the so-called Hauksbók. Haukr Erlendsson and his assistants wrote it some time before 1334. The book contains versions, sometimes the only extant versions, of some old Icelandic texts as well as translations and reworkings of geographical, theological, mathematical and scientific texts as well as sermons.

The project, lead by Karl Gunnar Johansson and Terje Spurkland, has had a considerable impact. Foremost a large number of postgrads have discovered the importance of interdisciplinary philological and cultural studies. Secondly the research has contributed to internationalising the study of Norse medieval literature and locating it inside the international research milieu, claims the professors.

Contact:

www.hf.uio.no/iln/english/research/projects/



Håkonshallen built by Håkon Håkonsson in Bergen

Courtly Culture in Scandinavia

One of the puzzling things in the medieval history of Scandinavia is the difference historians have found between the cultural outlook at the courts of Norway, Denmark and Sweden. Why did the Norwegian court so manifestly catch on to the ideals of courtly culture, while the courts of Denmark and Sweden apparently lacked behind? This is the question raised by a Norwegian historian in a recent article.

According to Marlen Ferrer medieval courtliness has too often been reduced to a kind of literary fiction as witnessed by the popular courtly romances and their stories about courtly love. Instead “courtoisie” should be thought of as a kind of cultural capital encompassing eloquence, generosity, nobility and good manners as opposed to being vulgar, mean, ugly and base. As such it should be recognised as a specific culture inculcated at court in order to further peaceful coexistence at a time, when violence might quickly erupt.

Two explanations for the cultural adaptation of this new behavior or new culture has traditionally been given. One – by Jaeger – claims that the ideas were introduced by clerics, who increasingly were tied to the gradually more centralized courts of kings. Another explanation – by Duby – is that the widespread ideas of courtliness were the result of the gradual fusing of the culture of the crusader knights with those of the lesser gentry.

The idea brought forward by Marlen Ferrer is, that both explanations seems to be applicable in Scandinavia from the 11th to the 14th century; which helps to explain the apparent differences between the three countries, which historically were enmeshed in each other

In Norway courtliness seems to have caught on at an early time. Already in 1226 the Norwegian king, Håkon Håkonsson, commissioned a translation of “Tristams Saga” by a cleric, brother Robert. This was followed by a number of

other translations of the Arthurian tales as well as the work of Marie de France. It has been suggested that the Norwegian king initiated these translations to make his court adapt the prestigious chivalric ideals and ideology, which played such an important part in the other European courts. Further the court produced a unique source, the *Konungs Skuggsjá* – the Royal Shield - which is a dialogue between the king and his son, advocating the new, more “mild” behavior. As opposed to this none of the pan-European literature was translated into Danish or Swedish until much later.

Marlen Ferrer suggests that the prevalent courtly literature in Norway in the 13th century was the result of a conscious royal policy, destined to increase the king’s authority though it’s application of a religiously motivated ethos. As opposed to this, the tradition in Denmark was much more diverse, while that of Sweden was hardly existing until courtliness was introduced by Queen Euphemia in 1302 – 12 through the translations

into Swedish of the so-called “Euphemia visorna”.

Several reasons why Denmark caught on so late may be suggested. For instance it seems plausible that one reason was the prevalent use of the German language at the Danish court. The songs and the Romances has simply been enjoyed in this language. However, there exists a tradition of ballads in Danish, which might be dated to the 14th century and which is part of the international literary tradition. These ballads and verses cannot be univocally tied to the court of the Danish king. Instead they seem to be celebrating the courtly life at the manors of the nobility. This ties, according to Marlen Ferrar, in with the fact that the Danish Kingdom was actually falling gradually apart between 1223 and 1325. Not until 1350 does it make sense to talk about a strong Danish state.

Courtly culture and traditions did set their mark upon life in medieval Denmark. This however was not linked to the royal court as in Norway, where the local nobility was economically much more dependent upon the existence of a strong state and royal office.

The article is interesting as a kind

Read more:

Ferrar, Marlen: State Formation and Courtly Culture in the Scandinavian Kingdoms in the High Middle Ages. In: Scandinavian Journal of History 2012, 37:1, 1 - 22

Ferrer, Marlen: Emotions in motion. Emotional diversity in 13th century Spanish and Norse society. Doktoravhandling, Universitetet i Oslo, 2008

Jaeger, Stephen: The Origins of Courtliness – Civilizing

Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939 – 1210. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press 1985

Duby, Georges: The Three Orders: feudal Society Imagined. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1980. (French: 1978)

Sverre Bagge: From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom. State Formation in Norway, c. 900-1350. Copenhagen, Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010

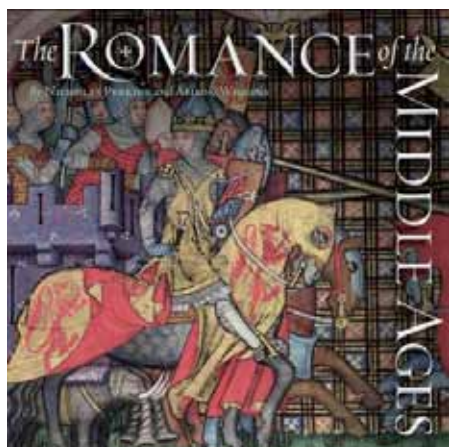
of well-argued piece of micro-history. However, one question is not put forward: Might the different outplays simply have to do with the different inclinations and orientations of the major personalities performing their roles as kings (or queens)?

Håkon Håkonsson was born in a war-torn society plagued by armed gangs and warlords, and died the undisputed ruler of a large and internationally respected kingdom. At his court, chivalric romances and Biblical stories were translated

into the old Norse language, while Håkon presided over several large-scale construction projects in stone, which was a novelty in Norway at that time. (The great hall, which he had built at his palace in Bergen (Håkonshallen) can still be seen today.)

As opposed to this Denmark after 1241 suffered from a series of civil wars and internecine strifes, escalating into a de facto devolvement of the kingdom after 1326, when the country was governed by a series of German counts, to which the country was literally pawned.

The Romance of the Middle Ages



The exhibition showcases the Bodleian's outstanding collection of manuscripts and early printed books containing medieval romance. They range from lavishly illustrated volumes about King Arthur to fragments only saved by chance. The exhibition highlights works by great figures of English medieval literature such as Geoffrey Chaucer and the anonymous Gawain-Poet. The colourful exhi-

bition looks at how its compelling stories have inspired writers and artists across the centuries up until now. Curator and editor of catalogue is Nicholas Perkins.

The Romance of the Middle Ages

28 January – 13 May 2012
Bodleian Library, Oxford

Catch it while you can!

Medieval Exhibitions in Europe 2012



Sv. Anežka Česká

Saint Agnes of Bohemia

25. 11. 2011 - 25. 03. 2012

St. Agnes Convent and Gallery , Prag, Czekia



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



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



Schatz für die Ewigkeit

Manuscripts from 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

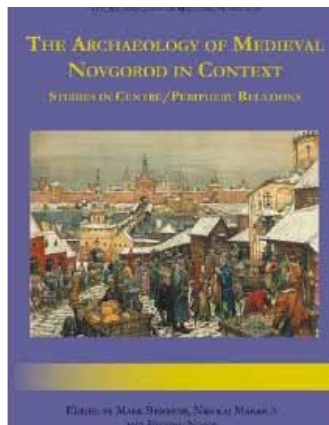
The international Gothic in Florence from 1375 to 1440

19. 06 2012 – 04. 11 2012

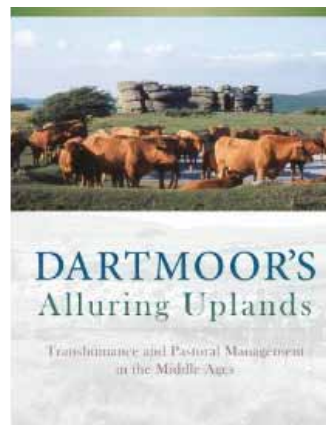
Galleria degli Uffizi, Firenze, Italia

March 2012

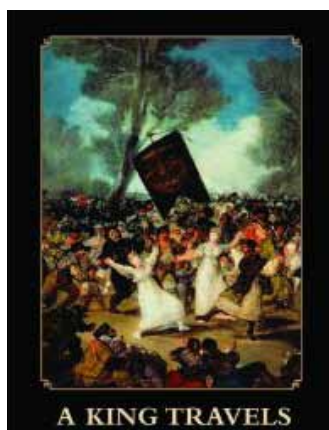
New Books - in English



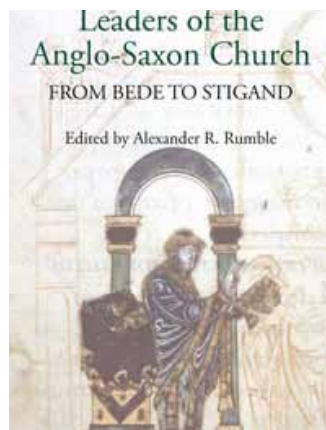
The Archaeology of Medieval Novgorod in Context
Studies in Centre/Periphery Relations
Mark Brisbane, Nikolaj Makarov and Evgenie Nosov (Editors)
Oxbow Books 2012



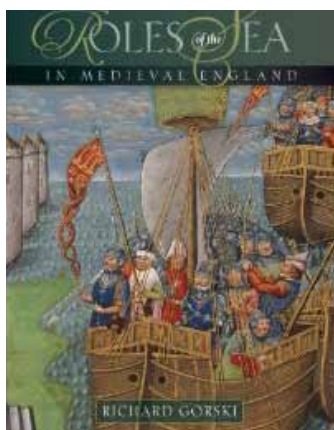
Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands
Transhumance and Pastoral Management in the Middle Ages
Harold Fox, Matthew Tompkins and Christopher Dyer University of Exeter Press 2012



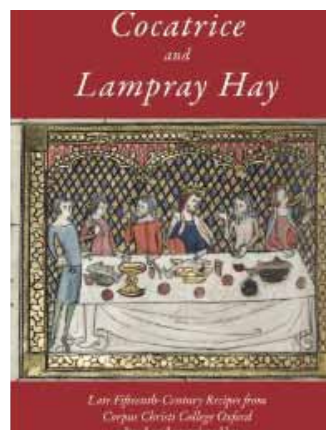
A King Travels
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Teofilo F. Ruiz Princeton University Press 2012



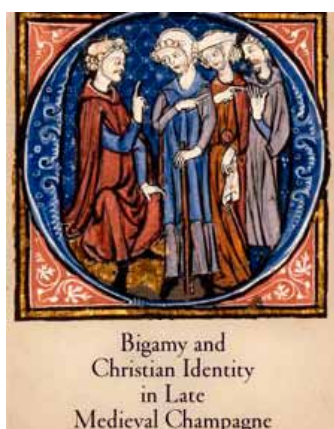
Leaders of the Anglo-Saxon Church
From Bede to Stigand
Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies
Alexander R. Rumble
Boydell Press 2012



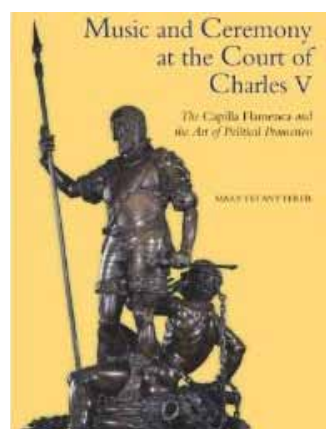
Roles of the Sea in Medieval England
Richard Gorski (Editor)
Boydell Press 2012



Cocatrice and Lampray Hay
Late Fifteenth-Century Recipes from Corpus Christi College Oxford
Constance Hieatt
Prospect Books 2012



Bigamy and Christian Identity in Late Medieval Champagne
The Middle Ages Series
Sara McDougall
University of Pennsylvania Press 2012



Music and Ceremony at the Court of Charles V
The Capilla Flamenca and the Art of Political Promotion Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music
Mary Tiffany Ferer
Boydell Press 2012

March 2012

New Books - in French and German

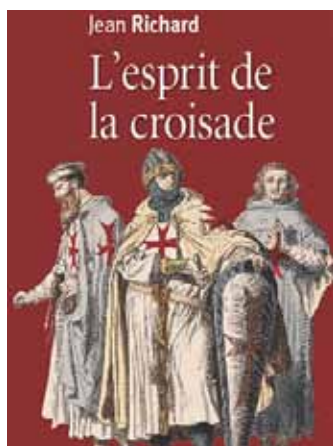


La naissance du capitalisme au Moyen

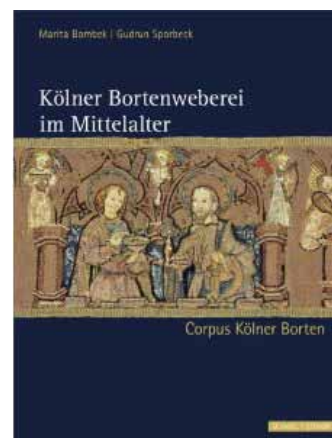
Age: Changeurs, usuriers et grands financiers
Jacques Heers
Librairie Académique
Perrin 2012



**Geistliche Spiele im
Mittelalter und in
der Frühen Neuzeit:**
Von der liturgischen
Feier zum Schauspiel.
Eine Einführung
Ursula Schulze
Schmidt (Erich), Berlin
2012



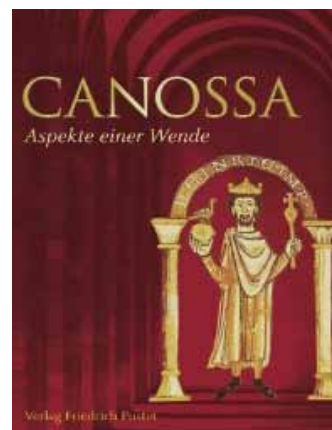
L'esprit de la croisade
Jean Richard
CNRS 2012



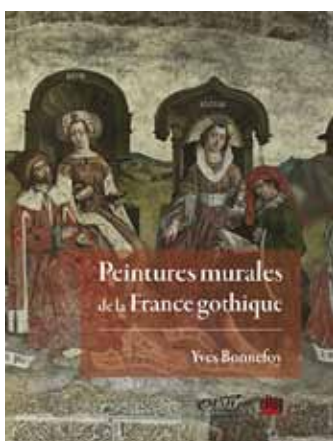
**Kölner Bortenwe-
berei im Mittelalter:**
Corpus Kölner Borten
von Marita Bombek,
Gudrun Sporbeck und
Thomas Blisniewski
Schnell & Steiner (2012)



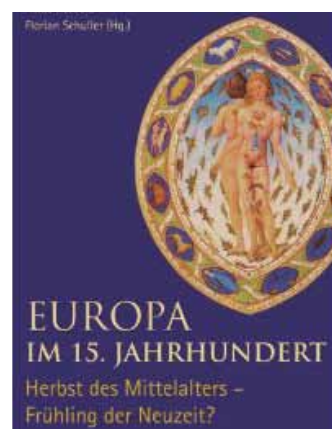
**Jeanne d'Arc : Biog-
raphie historique**
Olivier Hanne
Bernard Giovanangeli
Editeur 2012



**Canossa: Aspekte
einer Wende**
Wolfgang Hasberg Edi-
tor), Hermann-Josef Sc-
heidgen (Editor) Pustet,
Regensburg 2012



**Peintures Murales de
la France Gothique**
Yves Bonnefoy et Pierre
Devinoy (Photographies)
Ellug 2012



**Europa im 15. Jahr-
hundert:**
Herbst des Mittelalters -
Frühling der Neuzeit?
Klaus Herbers (Editor),
Florian Schuller (Editor)
Pustet, Regensburg; 2012