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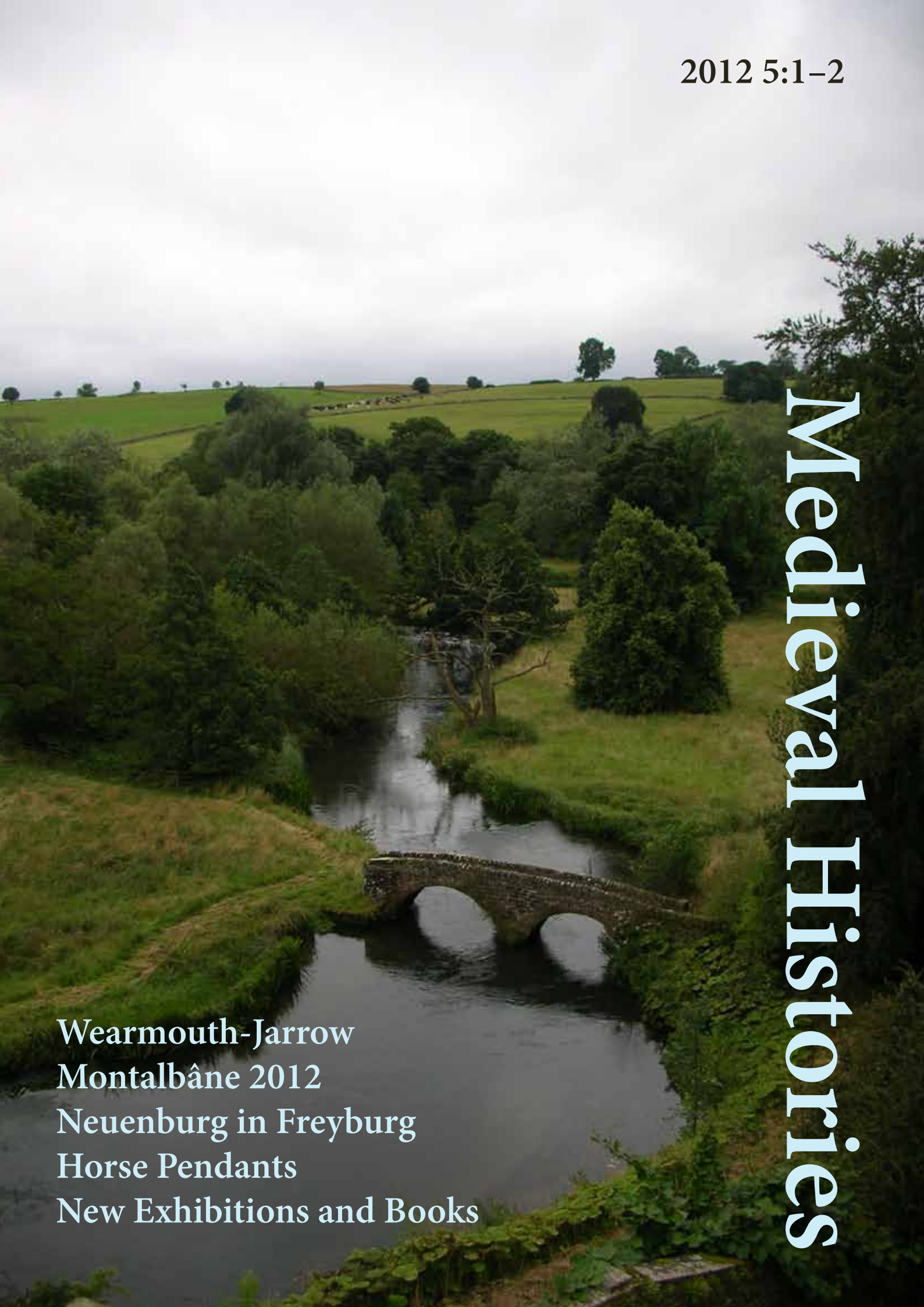

# Medieval Histories

Wearmouth-Jarrow
Montalbâne 2012
Neuenburg in Freyburg
Horse Pendants
New Exhibitions and Books

2012 5: 1–2

# Medieval Histories

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



*The matter of the application for World Heritage Status for the Twinned Monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow raises a number of important questions? Is there not a fundamental flaw in the heritage concept of UNESCO, which has to be adressed in the future? Since why should we safeguard architecture and other heritage sites, if not for the people who lived and worked there?*

Medieval Histories
News from the medieval world about anniversaries, exhibitions, books, films, music - and new research

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Northumbria 2009
© *Medieval Histories*

*Ruins of Jarrow Monastery © Wikipedia*

# Wearmouth-Jarrow

Wearmouth-Jarrow is the name of two very important monasteries in Northumberland. They were founded in 674 – 682 by Biscop Baducing aka Benedict Biscop, an Anglo-Saxon thegn, who in his youth travelled extensively to Gallia and Rome. On grants from the Northumbrian king Ecgfrith, he had built, what was later to become these twinned monasteries.

In those days, they were without doubt impressive. Roman in outlook, built of stone and embellished with coloured glass-windows and carved sculptures, the monastic compounds would have looked quite different from vernacular architecture at that time. Further they were the repositories of not only foreign artworks and a new form of music; they were also places for literacy, learning and science.

Today we know them best, because these institutions fostered the venerable Bede in their midst. And indeed, it is an evocative experience to walk around the sites and enter (the remains) of the churches, which were once part of this magnificent ecclesiastical institution. Nevertheless, the places are in their own right significant in so far as they are representa-

*The dilemma: No protection without respect.*
*No respect - and no funding - without income, jobs and growth.*


*Ezra, Cassiodorus - and perhaps Bede Codex Amiatanus - Wikipedia*

tives of some of the very early bridgeheads of Christendom in an otherwise pagan setting.

Some years ago a group of people got together in order to lobby for getting the twinned monastery declared World Heritage. One reason was obviously their great love of the place and a recognition of its historical and intellectual ramifications. Another reason was the genuine wish to create a reason for tourists to visit the local community and create some jobs.

What followed was a huge collaborative effort, countless meetings and much reflection. And not least a huge investment. Last year this resulted in nearly 750 pages of well-written texts and photos arguing for World Heritage Status for the twinned monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow in Northumberland. In 2011 these reports were officially handed over to UNESCO, which then submitted the matter to a more detailed review in order to reach a formal decision this summer. In September 2011 archaeologists accordingly visited the site and went through it with something, which must have been akin to an early medieval comb made out of antlerbone.

However, recently this report was placed on the internet with a very damning conclusion: "ICOMOS recommends that the Twin Monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow, United Kingdom, should not be inscribed on the World Heritage List."

Apparently this came to the notice of the committee without prior notice. As of today this has resulted in a formal withdrawal of the application for this year; carefully worded phrasing, though, seems to indicate that the committee wishes to either lodge a complaint or alternatively work to amend the application.

## Bede in his Scriptorium

To get an inscription on the World Heritage List is indeed no easy matter. Any site aspiring to the status has to exhibit an Outstanding Universal Value compared to other sites of the same character; and it must be able to demonstrate integrity and authenticity. Further it must be able to demonstrate the ability to be managed properly and finally there must be guarantees in place that a buffer zone is protected properly. First of all, though, it has to be a "site" or "property" – in short a piece of architecture or nature of outstanding value, which signifies a specific part of our common heritage, but in a unique way; that is: cannot be found elsewhere and in a better condition.

However, the ICOMOS review of the Wearmouth-Jarrow bid reveals exactly how complicated it is to persuasively present such a case.

On one hand there is no doubt that the site is important in so far as it is the place where the venerable Bede lived and died, while writing his huge output of theo-

logical, historical and scientific treatises. To visit his grave in the Cathedral in Durham must for any seasoned medieval tourist be accompanied by a trip to the two churches lying at the mouth of two busy rivers, the Tyne and the Wear. No doubt about that. And yes, people do go there to try and experience what it must have been like to live the life of a Benedictine monk in this very recently converted landscape, probably still full of pagan people and places.

On the other hand: in themselves the archaeological remains are not unique. In that sense the ICOMOS review is correct. To get a feeling for early Anglo-Saxon church-buildings, one has to sample a number of other places like Hexham, Ripon, Brixworth etc.; and some of them might even – as the ICOMOS review claims – be better situated, when better excavated, to tell the story in a better way.

Nevertheless, no place is quite as well illustrated, thanks to the illuminative historical writing of the old sage.

This is exactly the hum of the matter. It says in the conclusion of the review from ICOMOS, that the

*"proposed Outstanding Universal Value as a tangible manifestation of an exceptional centre of intellectual endeavour in the early Middle Ages, uniquely documented in the writing of the Venerable Bede, could not be justified in the context of the World heritage Convention. ICOMOS considers that it has not been demonstrated how the intellectual legacy of the Venerable Bede is related to the physical remains of the property and that the justification provided centred exclusively on the historic importance of the Venerable Bede and the association between the person and the location. ICOMOS in this context would like to recall that the World Heritage Convention is a property or side-based convention without a mandate for the commemoration of the world's most outstanding persons."*

In short, and rather less convoluted, the convention (or its caretakers: the archaeologists) does not give room for celebrating a place, because it is uniquely associated with a person of world renown. The site has foremost to be incomparably a unique architectural or archaeological edifice.

That may be! But is this right? Should we really allow for this very limited and sterile understanding of what heritage is? Or should we begin to acknowledge that people do not primarily visit historical places in order to inspect the architecture, the building materials or the exquisite art inherent in a place. Do people for instance go to Hampton Court to look at the architecture? Or do they go there to meet the ghosts of Henry the VIII, Anne Boleyn and Cromwell?

What we know for a fact is, that the great majority of people


*The original dedication stone in St Paul's, Jarrow, dated the 23rd of April 685, the oldest surviving in an English church. It is located above the entrance to the chancel, the oldest surviving part of the church. © Wearmouth-Jarrow.*
*The inscription reads:*

| | |
|---|---|
| DEDICATIO BASILICAE<br>SCI PAUL VIIII KL MAI<br>ANNO XV EFRIDI REG<br>CEOLFRIDI ABB EIUSDEM<br>Q ECCLES DO AVCTORE<br>CONDITORIS ANNO IIII | The dedication of the basilica of St. Paul on the 9th day before the Kalens of May in the 15th year of King Ecgfrith and in the fourth year of Abbot Ceolfrith founder, by God's guidance, of the same church. |

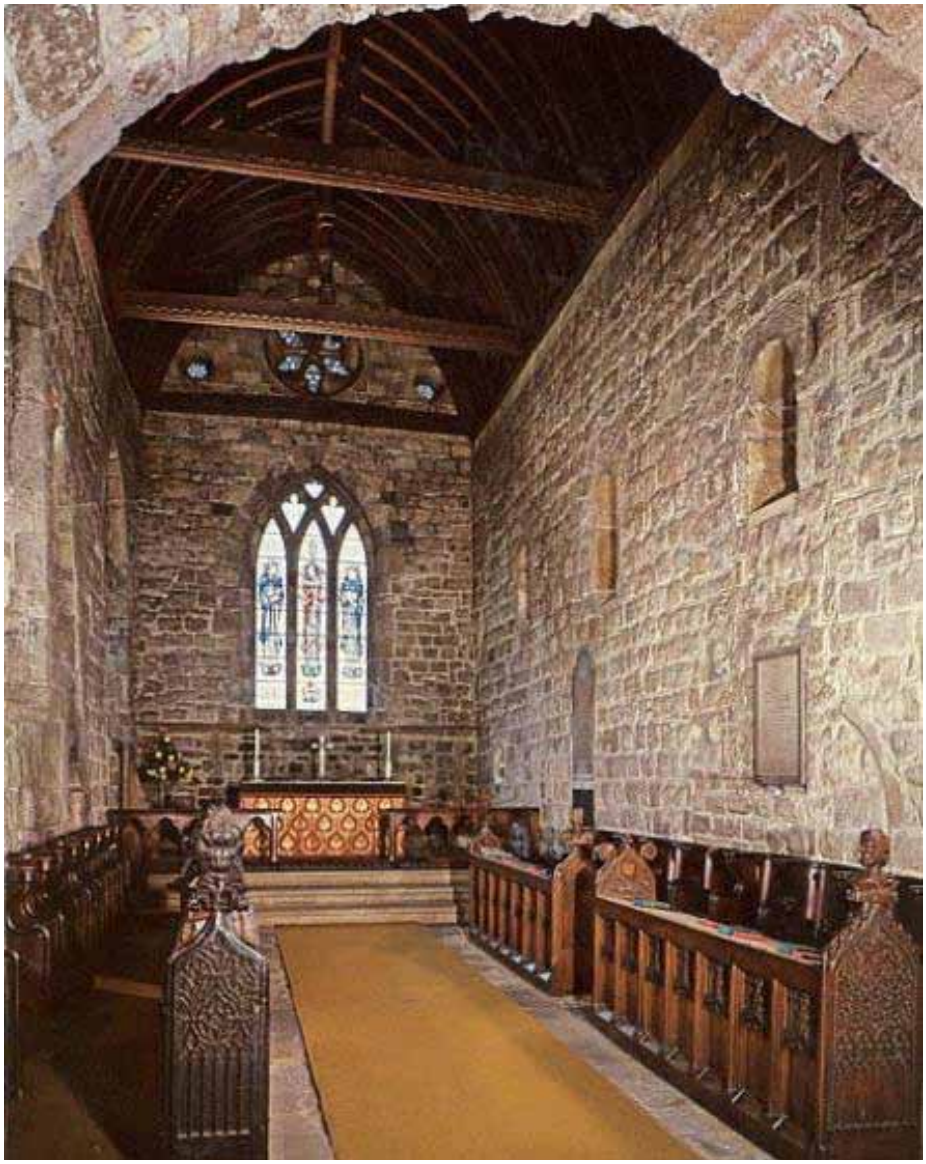
visit these places in order to crawl under the skin of persons long gone by. In order to do that, they need to get something to work with in order to be able to sense them. Places may help in this way; and are therefore of importance. Places may be especially helpful, when they are illuminated by great stories. As is exactly the case at Jarrow!

## A Cultural Route

As of now, the good people at Wearmoth-Jarrow are still pondering what their next step should be. One-way of transgressing the current deadlock might be to consider another model: establishing a cultural route.

"Cultural routes" have been signalled as the way forward for the heritagisation of Europe, as envisioned by The European Council. Founded as an initiative in 1987, the Council in 2010 committed to an "Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes".

In usual European Lingo the official object of this agreement is to seek: *"to reinforce the potential of Cultural Routes for cultural co-operation, sustainable territorial development and social cohesion, with a particular focus on themes of symbolic importance for European unity, history, culture and values and the discovery of less well-known destinations."*



*The chancel at St. Pauls, Jarrow; with substantial parts stemming from Bedes's time.*

In this case it would mean that the Wearmouth-Jarrow site might be linked to a local itinerary consisting of (amongst others) such places as Durham, Lindisfarne, Yeavering, Hexham, Escomb and York. In a larger context it might even be profitable to seek European recognition and link to places further afield - e.g. Fulda and Achen - connected to the two towering near-contemporaries, Bonifatius and Alcuin, who were fostered in the intellectual milieu of Biscop Benedict and the venerable Bede.

### Wearmouth and Jarrow
www.wearmouth-jarrow.org.uk/

### The bid for World Heritage Inscription
www.wearmouth-jarrow.org.uk/about-wearmouth-jarrow/wearmouth-jarrow-nomination-file

### Icomos report
2012 Evaluations of Nominations of Cultural and Mixed Properties to the World Heritage List.
whc.unesco.org/archive/2012/whc12-36com-inf8B1-en.pdf

### The Council of Europe and Cultural Routes
www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Routes/default_en.asp

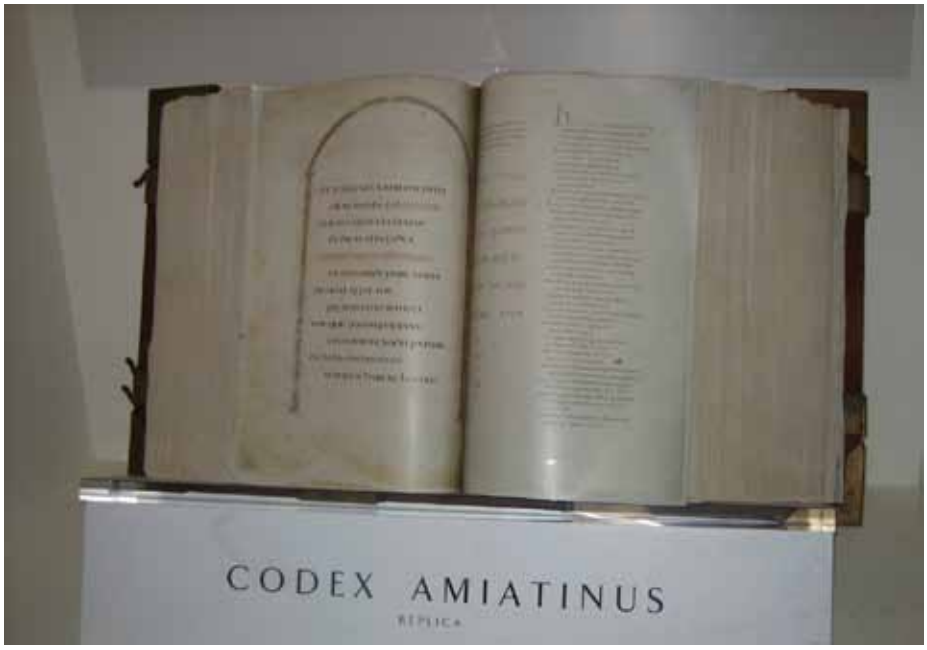
# Amiatinus, Lindisfarne and Beowulf

*Where to begin? It has often enough been claimed, that when it comes to the Dark Ages, the literature is as boundless, as the questions are profoundly unanswerable. Nevertheless, anyone visiting Bede's world and the wider Northumbria has to start somewhere. In reverence to the late Patrick Wormald, and his exposé on "Bede, Beowulf and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy", one place would definitely be to consider four major scriptural and literary witnesses - two codices, a "pocket-gospel" and the poem of Beowulf. Some of these are displayed at the British Library until mid-June.*

The Bible was for Bede at the heart of all learning. Although not the most famous part, biblical commentaries were amongst his most prominent euvre. These texts were based on his study of the Bible, which was at the centre of the library at Jarrow and Wearmoth.

These libraries must have contained more than 200 volumes, which were for a large part the result of the continued effort of Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrith during their travels in Gaul and Italy. Centrepiece here was the Codex Grandior, also known as the bible of Cassiodorus.

In 692 the Abbot at Jarrow and Wearmouth, Ceolfrith, commissioned three copies to be made of this grandiose epitome. It has been calculated that more than 2000 calves were need to procure the vellum for the three copies, of which one full copy is extant, while rudiments have been discovered of the other two in recent years.




*A Copy of the Codex Amiatinus is exhibited at the Museum of Bede's World at Jarrow. The opening shows the page with the dedication*

The Codex Amiatanus exists because Ceolfrith decided to leave

## Exhibitions

### British Library

Until the 17th of June 2012 the St. Cuthbert Gospel is at the centre of an exhibition at The British Library. The display explores both the significance of the Gospel as a book and its association with St Cuthbert. The Gospel itself is on display along with with a 9th-century copy of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People and a beautifully illuminated 12th-century copy of Bede's prose Life of St Cuthbert. At the same time, however, the Lindisfarne Gospels are not on view due to restauration.

www.bl.uk/whatson/permgall/treasures/

### Durham 2013

However, in 2013 the Lindisfarne Gospels will be on show in the new exhibition facilities on Durham's UNESCO World Heritage Site. The exhibition is a contemporary interpretation of the North's most enduring story, the tale of St Cuthbert and one of the World's greatest books.The exhibition will showcase some of Britain's most significant manuscripts and books alongside stunning artefacts from Anglo-Saxon England. Accompanying the exhibition will be a festival of lectures, musical performances an other events.

www.lindisfarnegospels.com/

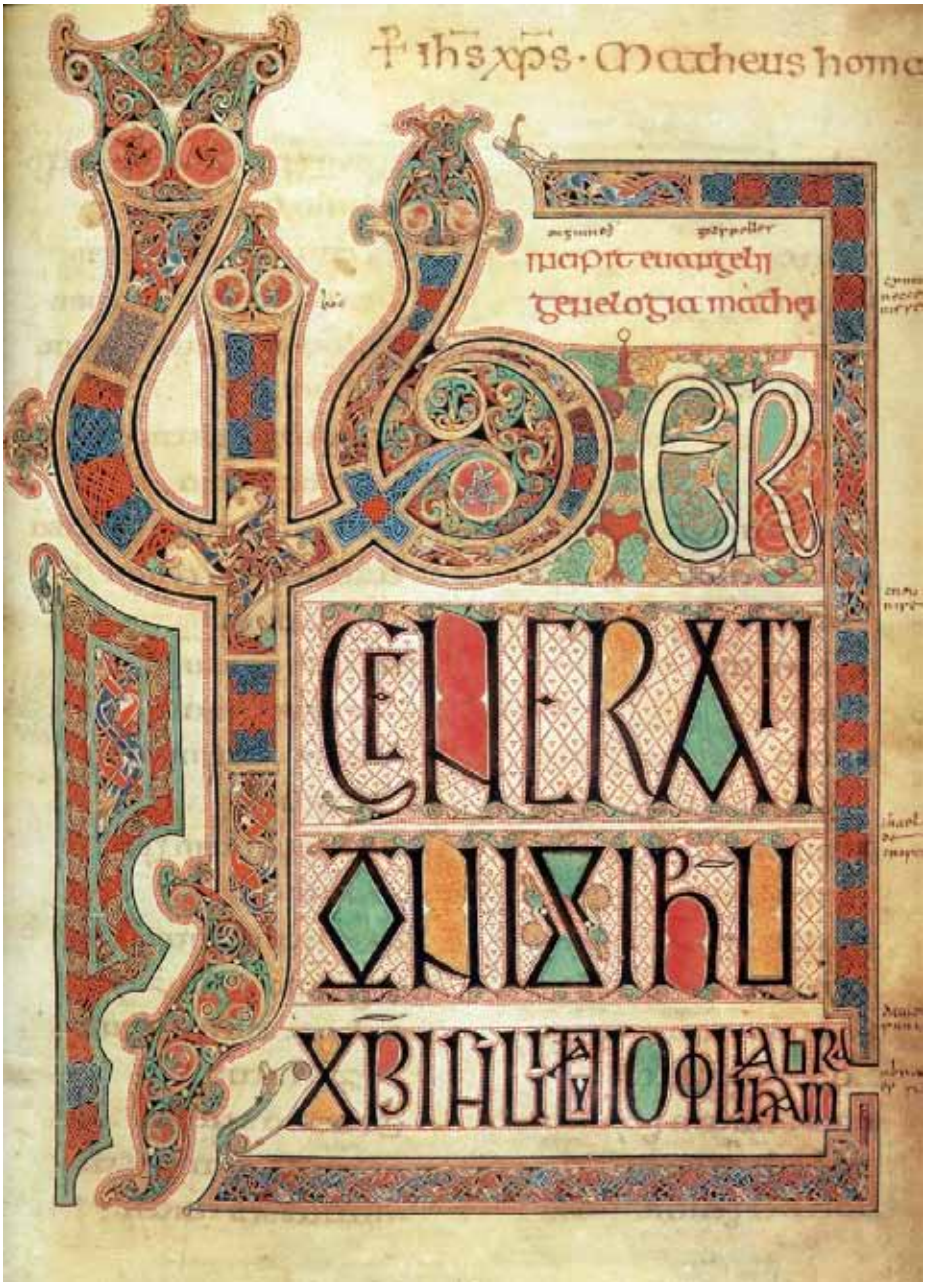
for Rome in 716 in order to once more visit Rome, hand over this most precious gift to the Pope and die. Unfortunately he never made it all the way, but died at Langres, where he was buried. Some of his companions however took it upon themselves to fulfil his request and carry the codex to its destination.

Whether it ever reached Rome is still an object for speculation. What we know is, that it ended up in Florence, at which point the dedication was changed, obscuring the fact that the codex was produced in Northumbria. It took until 1888 to figure out that this work, infused with late–antique ideals, was indeed planned and executed in the far North. Simply, it seemed incomprehensible that such a meticulous work with absolutely no artistic affinity with the tastes of the Northumbrian world was not the result of a true Latinate effort.

As of today the 1040 leaves of strong, smooth vellum arranged in quires of four sheets and written in uncial characters with two columns a page are the epiphenomena of the Latinate culture and learning, which resided at Bede's Jarrow; as opposed to the artistic endeavours which were prominent at Lindisfarne.

In short: Bede's World was Latinate, eclectic and also heavily ultra-montaniste in its leanings - as upposed par example to the world of Lindisfarne.

*The Insular majuscule script of the Lindisfarne Gospels © British Library*



## Lindisfarne

At exactly the same time, as Ceolfrith was planning the execution of his three great Bibles and Bede took part in the implementation, abbot Eadfrith took it upon himself to "write this book for God, and St. Cuthbert and – jointly for all the saints, whose relics are in the Island". The book in question is of course the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Island, "Holy Island".

Much ink has been spilled upon the question whether the abbot Eadfrith himself was the scribe or whether he just commissioned it. From the technical analysis of the manuscript we do know that the book – apart from the rubrics an a few minor corrections – was executed, that is both written and illustrated by the same hand. It is believed that it was written while Eadfrith was still head of the scriptorium at Lindisfarne and in the years before the elevation of the saint in ca. 698.

As opposed to the uncial, a formal capitular hand, which was developed in Rome in the 4th century, and which was used for the Amiatinus, the Lindisfarne gospels were written in a script, called "Insular majuscule script", developed in Ireland. It spread from there via Iona to Lindisfarne and further into Northumbria.

In the same way as the Amiatinus, the Lindisfarne Gospels are

written on pages quires of four sheets – that is four sheets of skin, each large enough to hold two pages, placed on top of each other and then folded in two down the middle to make eight leaves. The manuscript consists of 258 leaves, for which at least 129 pieces of very high quality vellum were required. The writing was done with and a dense, dark brown ink and probably executed by pens made out of either reeds or quills.

Fifteen pages in the Gospels are decorated with the famous delicate abstract patterns. Each gospel is introduced by an illustration depicting the Evangelist with his symbol, a "carpet page" and a major initial page.

The illustrations were executed with pigments stemming from six local plants and rocks. Thus the artist faked the "lapis lazuli" by boiling up woad and then adding hoof and horn gum to give the granulated surface of "real" lapis lazuli.

A whole list of such ingenious innovations have been discovered by the archaeological excavation of the manuscript done by Michelle P. Brown, amongst others the invention of the use of a lead stylus, de facto a pencil, and the light box – a contraption made out of glass or horn on which the leaves were placed; when lighted from below by candles or oil-lamps, the sketches by the lead stylus (done on the back of the vellum) could be seen by the artist, who were applying the sumptuous colours and designs.

Her work as a detective has also been invaluable in discovering the sources for the patterns in the jewellery and stone sculpture of the time as well as the affinity to the

*St.Cuthbert's Gospel © British Library*

Bible project at Jarrow apparent in the echo of the illustration of Ezra in The Amiatinus and the miniature of the Evangelist Mathew.

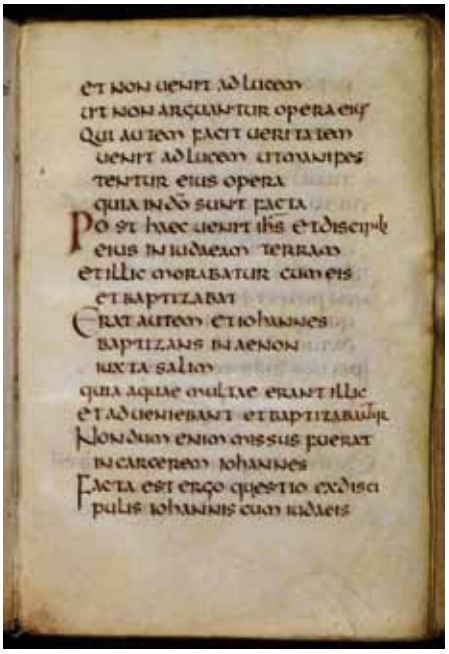
It is tempting to visualize the scribes of these two religious centres getting together at academic conferences and discussing the pros and cons of the different scripts, techniques and artistic concepts unfolded in these singularly magnificent – albeit very different – works of art.

## St. Cuthbert Gospel

*"…since death is upon me I admonish you to loose no opportunity of learning from me so long as I am able to teach you." Cuthbert, never doubting the truth of the words of Boisil, answered: "And what, I ask you, is it best for me to read, which I can yet finish in one week?" He replied: "The evangelist, John. I have a book consisting of seven gatherings of which we can get through one every day, with the Lord's help, reading it and discussing it between ourselves so far as is necessary."*

*They did as he said. They were able to finish the reading so quickly because they dealt only with the simple things of the "faith which worketh by love" and not deep matters of dispute. So when the reading had been completed in seven days, Boisil the man of the Lord, having been attacked by this said disease, reached his last day and, having spent it in great gladness, he entered into the joy of perpetual light." (Quoted fromBede's life of St. Cuthbert, chapter VIII).*

St. Cuthbert was a 7th-century, English Christian leader, renowned for his ascetic practices and the miracles attributed to him during his lifetime as well as posthumously. Born in Northumbria around 635, he entered the monastery of Melrose in 651, and later became guest-master at the newly founded monastery at Ripon. Cuthbert subsequently became prior of Melrose, then prior of Lindisfarne, and went on to live as a hermit on the island of Inner Farne, off the coast of Northumbria. He was consecrated as bishop of Lindisfarne in 685, but died at



*St.Cuthbert's Gospel © British Library*

his Inner Farne hermitage on 20 March 687. He was elevated to sainthood in 698 when his body was reinterred in a new wooden coffin.

This coffin was subsequently removed from Lindisfarne by the community of St. Cuthbert and was carried with them as they travelled around the North East in the wake of Viking raids in the 9th and 10th centuries.

At the end of the 10th century, the community took Cuthbert's coffin with them to Durham and settled there. The coffin plus a number of other relics may still be seen there in a small museum, currently being renovated.

Cuthbert was one of England's most popular and widely venerated saints both in the Anglo-Saxon period and after the Norman Conquest, and his shrine is still a major medieval pilgrimage centre.

In 698 according to tradition, when St. Cuthbert was reinterred in the Church at Lindisfarne, the monks had wanted to collect the bones of the saint, in order to place them in a reliquary on the altar. "Unfortunately" they found his body uncorrupted, when they opened the grave of the saint. Accordingly he was reinterred, but not before a number of rich gifts were placed in his coffin, amongst those the most precious of them all, a gospel of St. John. Having eleven gatherings and not seven it is not easily identified directly with the copy, which according to Bede was so diligently perused by the saint and his teacher. It was however very proper to place the gospel of St. John in his grave. Often – as opposed to those of Mark, Matthew and Luke – considered the prime inspiration for the contemplative life, which Cuthbert was in seach of most of his life.

The book is unique in being the earliest surviving intact European book. It has a beautiful original red leather binding adorned with an interlace pattern framing a double vine scroll in the middle. The decoration is thought to have been made by using gesso to build the decoration before covering it with leather and finally painting it. Traces of this can still be found.

According to an inscription in the Gospels, the book was found in 1104 lying at the head of the saint, when St Cuthbert was transferred to his final resting place in Durham Cathedral. After the reformation it entered private collections finally ending up in the library of the Jesus Society in Lancashire. For years it was on a loan to the British Museum. Recently, however, the Society lacked funding and put the manuscript up for sale.

The price was £9 mio. which The British Museum in collaboration with the Durham Cathedral was able to raise in order to keep this national treasure in England.

## Beowulf

The famous epic poem of Beowulf was only by the barest of chance preserved for the aftermath. Its 3182 extant lines of beautiful Old English verses survives in only one manuscript known as the Nowell Codex. Further this codex was badly damaged by the fire, which destroyed huge parts of the so-called Cotton Collection. Afterwards the poem fell into obscurity until Icelandic and Danish scholars and poets rediscovered it.

The poem tells about Beowulf, a hero of the Geats, who comes to the aid of Hrothgar, the king of the Danes. The monster Grendel plagues his great hall, Heorot. Beowulf kills Grendel with his bare hands and Grendel's mother with a sword, which Beowulf finds in Grendel's mother's lair. Later in his life, Beowulf who is now king of the Geats, finds his realm terrorised by a dragon whose treasure has been stolen from his hoard in a burial mound. He attacks the dragon with the help of his thegns or servants, but they do not succeed. Beowulf decides to follow the dragon into its lair, at

*The first page of Beowulf © British Library*

Earnanæs, where only the young Swede Wiglaf dares join him. Beowulf finally slays the dragon, but is mortally wounded. He is buried in a tumulus or burial mound, by the sea.

It stands to reason that the poem has been heavily used as an illustration – and vice versa – of such finds as e.g. the ship-burial at Sutton Hoo and the magnificent halls excavated at Yeavering in Northhumbria. Further the poem has been "excavated" for illustrations of the secular life of the early Anglo- Saxon conquerors cum immigrants and their central social system structured in warfare as well as in the mead-halls characterised through gift-giving, drinking habits, epic performances and storytelling about monsters and vile dragons.

Naturally this "excavation" was de facto "stopped" in the second half of the 20th century. As with so many other historical sources – e.g. the Icelandic corpus of literature - Beowulf was attacked by the suspicious scholarly elites fostered in the post-naïve (post-modern) climate. The date of the poem was ca. 1000 AD and might have distinct poetic qualities, was the general opinion. Thus as a historical survival it was better used as a source for the romantic nostalgia of Anglo-Saxons looking back beyond the ravages of the Vikings, than as in any way as a beacon to lighten up the dark ages.

*Yeavering at Northumberland National Park*
*© Peter Sellwood at www.ramblingpete.walkingplaces.co.uk*

However, today the scholarly consensus, is much less certain, due not least to the work of historians like Eric John, who in 1974 argued for a date more or less in the age of Bede, on the basis of the system of land tenure he saw in the poem. At the same time another attack on the suspicious literates was launched by Patrick Wormald, who in a brilliant comparative analysis of the names in the poem and other relevant sources found that the poem had to be dated pre 840 AD, since the names in the poem hardly surfaced in sources after that date.

Although such hard-core social-anthropological and historical writing is still met with disdain, the winds are definitely blowing in that direction.

Maybe the poem cannot be dated more precisely than to the period between 675-875; the pendulum is nevertheless swinging in the direction of an earlier date allowing for new and fresh excavations into the "Wörter und Sachen" (Words and Artefacts) of this magnificent piece of poetry; and thus supplementing the remarkable manuscripts of the scriptoriums of the religious institutions at Jarrow and Lindisfarne as a witness to the culture and mentality of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria.

## The Mead-Hall Community

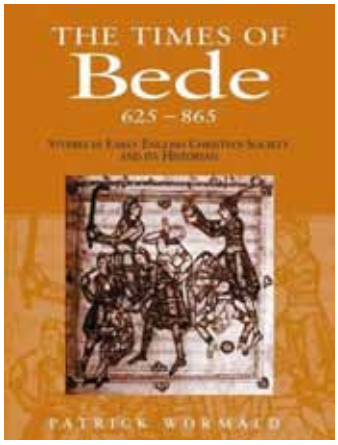
Want to know more about life in the great halls? A new article by Stephen Pollington provides the background to the Anglo-Saxon concept of the "Mead-Hall". In the article the role of conspicuous consumption and the use of commensality in the great halls in both Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon England is unfolded. At the same time the concept is discussed from an archaeological and a literary point of view.

### The Mead-Hall Community.

Stephen Pollington
In: Journal of Medieval History
2011, vol. 37 p. 19 – 33

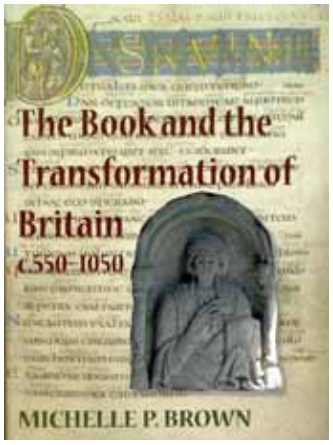
*Drinking Horn from Taplow*
*© British Museum*

# The four manuscripts and their Anglo-Saxon context



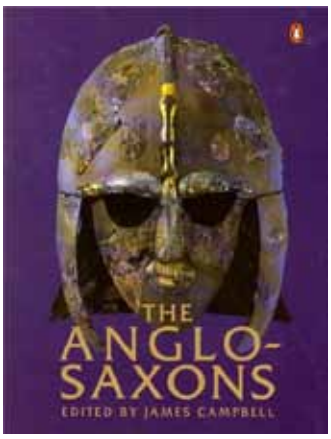

## The Times of Bede

Studies in Early English Christian Society and its Historian.
Patrick Wormald. Edited by Stephen Baxter.
Blackwell Publishing 2006



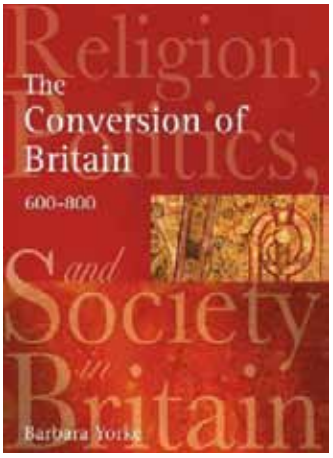

## The Book and the Transformation of Britain c. 550-1050

Michelle P. Brown
British Library 2011



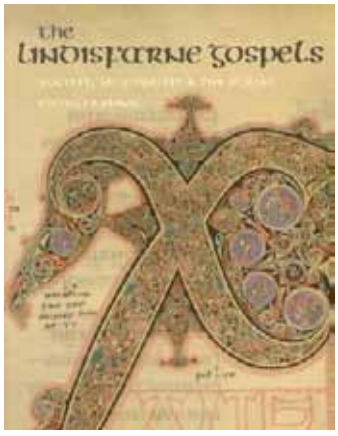

## The Anglo-Saxons

James Campbell, Eric John andPatrick Wormald.
Penguin History 1991 (1982)



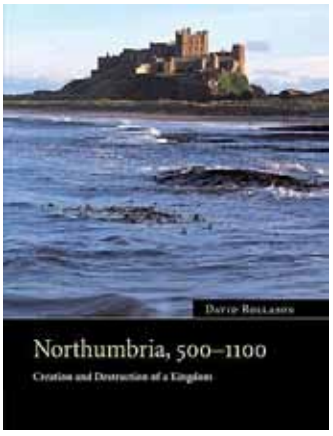

## The Conversion of Britain

Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, 600-800
Barbara Yorke
Longman 2006



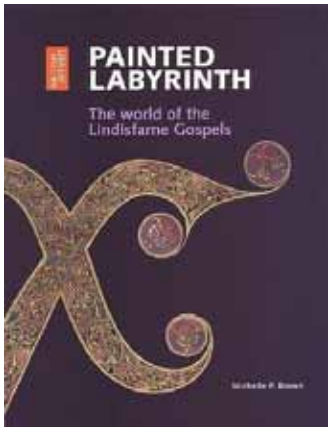

## The Lindisfarne Gospels

Society, Spirituality and the Scribe.
Michelle P. Brown
British Library, Faksimile Verlag & Toronto University Press: London, Luzern & Toronto 2003.



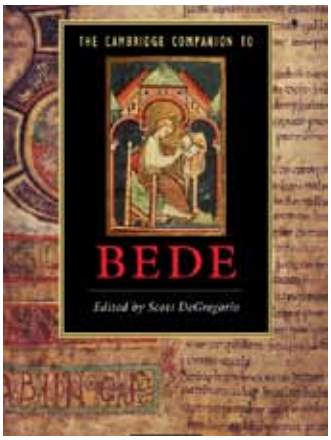

## Northumbria, 500-1100

Creation and Destruction of a Kingdom
David Rollason
Cambridge University Press 2007




## Painted Labyrinth

The World of the Lindisfarne Gospels.
Michelle P. Brown
British Library: London, 2003.




## The Cambridge Companion to Bede

Scott DeGregorio ed.
Cambridge Companions to Literature
Cambridge University Press 2010

*Review:*

# Anglo-Saxon Art. A New History. Leslie Webster. The British Museum Press 2012

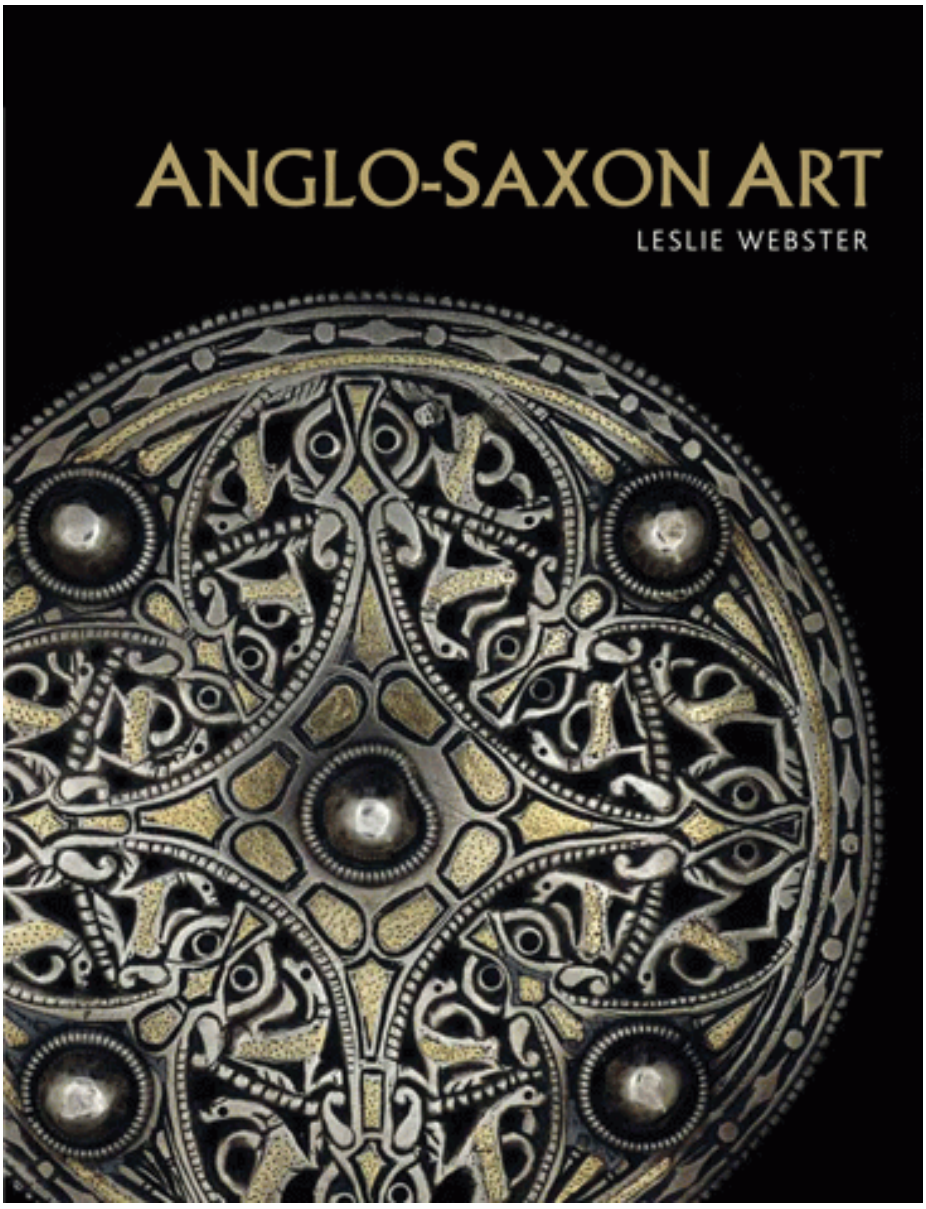
One of the very puzzling things about the more prominent pieces of Anglo-Saxon Art – the jewellery, the weapons, the manuscripts etc. – are their intricate character and their invitation to close-up inspection.

The Anglo-Saxons – not least the early bands of warriors of the 5th century and their ancestors up until mid 9th century – must have presented themselves as close-knit elites, bands of brothers. How else explain the fact that you nearly would have had to sit on the lap of a chieftain or a kinglet to get a glimpse of his brooches; or stand close to the altar at mass to get a glimpse of the book-craft and miniatures.

Of course there were stone sculptures to entice the public to enter the churches and marvel at the wall-paintings, the glittering textiles and the tabernacles of shrines and imported icons.

And we might believe that at some point there existed a carved wooden sculpture-tradition, now completely lost except for a few fragments. In general though, the art of the Anglo-Saxons was best consumed close up.

Accordingly the art of the Anglo-Saxons is no easy matter to tackle head on, as is very well documented by a new introduction to the various art forms, written by archaeologist and art-historian, Leslie Webster.




Following this insight - that each piece of art - must be read carefully, the book very appropriately opens with an introductory chapter, which shows what might be gained from a close reading of the images, and seeing the text.

One of the more facinating examples of this is a silver gilt pommel from the Woodeaton area in Oxfordshire. Seen from the wearer's point of view it has the form of a horned animal. Seen from the enemy's point of view it looks like a stinging bee or a winged bird, where the blade might have presented the sting or the beak. Indeed, very cheeky... (seen on page 36).

Having "learned" to read the artistic language, we are treated to a numer of well-written chapters outlining the heavy Roman influence, both the ancient and Christian. The final chapters present a more secular perspective and introduce the reader to the connections between "Art and Power" and the "Viking Impact". Illustra-

*Openwork Sword Pommel. Anglo-Saxon, late 8th century AD*
*From near Woodeaton, Oxfordshire, England © British Museum*

ted with more than 200 colour and black-and-white illustrations the book gives us ample opportunity to get close to this very close-knit social world, its mentality and world-view .

If one wishes to explain the entangled and obviously complex mythic stories of fabulous birds or crouching dogs, twisting in shaman-like transcendence, this is a good start. And where else learn to properly appreciate the artistic merits of the miniatures in the manuscripts?

There is always room for some quibble. Does it make sense to publish an introduction to Anglo-Saxon Art and leaving out an introduction to another of the major art-forms, poetry? Especially as the deep layers of storytelling found in many of the art-pieces seem to be echoed in literature and poetry - as may be witnessed by the visual program of Franks Casket, which is discussed in some detail in the book, while the inscriptions are only cursorily touched upon.

Maybe, however, this will be remedied in the next publication from the pen of Leslie Webster: a monograph of the said casket and to be published in the autumn.

Until then we have to be content with this fascinating and thoroughly enjoyable introduction; as with all good reads it invites us to further explorations, museum visits and detailed examination of the many pieces of arts presented here.

*The Franks Casket. Anglo-Saxon, first half of the 8th century AD*
*Northumbria, England © British Museum*

*Review:*

# Early Medieval Northumbria. Kingdoms and Communities, AD 450 -1100. David Petts and Sam Turner (eds). Studies in the Early Middle Ages. Vol 24. Brepols 2011.

In a sense, early medieval Northumbria is an enigma. On one hand it presents us with some of the most evocative historical sources – foremost the writings of Bede, but also other material like hagiographies and letters. On the other hand charters are non-existent as are compilations of law. This leaves the Early Medieval Northumbrian historian with a dire need to consult archaeologists, art historians, onomastic scholars, biologist and zoologists in order to get a better grip on the lives and thoughts of people at that time. And vice versa!

*Reconstruction of the Hall at Yeavering © www.pastperfect.org.uk*

In 2006 a group of researchers got together in Newcastle in order to try and bridge the many traditions and see if the merging of their different nitty-gritty and specialised enquiries might throw new light on the region as well as raise the interdisciplinary awareness of the need for further collaboration.

The papers from this conference are now available in a very interesting edition prepared by Davis Petts from Durham University and Sam Turner from Newcastle.

Of course, as with any collection of papers, you have to sift the wheat from the chaff. Nevertheless it is a very interesting collection, in so far as it really tries to bring the reader up to date on the many lingering questions and scholarly controversies: To what extent constituted the Anglo-Saxon immigration a brutal subjugation of the British? Or was there rather an atmosphere of "continuity and convivencia ", which the archaeological excavations of Yeavering have hinted at? Should Early Medieval Northumbria be considered a homogenous kingdom albeit marked by strife and upheavals? Or was it rather a poly-cultural region consisting of an Anglo-Saxon coastal region and a less subdued hinterland in the West, characterised as a frontier zone – a zone of process more than place?

Lots of good questions and many interesting answers! As an example may be mentioned the analysis by Jenny Walker of the great halls at Doon Hill and Yeavering, showing how the "later" halls from the first half of the 7th century might be interpreted as evidence for a more hierarchical social structure, organising space for ritual processions and gatherings in order to showcase might and power of a new kind. Or as claimed by Colm O'Brien in his revaluation of the excavations at Yeavering: " Here the elite played out inside great timber constructions, clad to simulate Roman stone, the drama of the Hall in which a king received and gave honour, and fealty was confirmed with gold and mead".

There is definitely and increased appreciation of the need for regional studies as well as the need for more holistic oriented studies of the material culture in order to grasp Early Medieval History. For a long time this was a specialty of German Historians.

Now, it seems the English are getting there...


*Heinrich von Veldeke - Codex Manesse © Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg*

# Hyperborea - Music from the North

Under the title: "Hyperborea – Music from the North" medieval music-lovers and performers will gather in Freyburg this summer to take part in the 22. Medieval Musical Festival of Montalbâne.

Central for choosing the theme of this year's festival are the two prominent performers, the Swede Miriam Andersén and the Dane Poul Høxbro. Both are internationally known for their research into Medieval and Viking instruments trying to reconstruct the lost music of the Vikings. In the early years in the history of the festival a wide variety in the program was sought after. Nowadays, however, the organisers have chosen to focus on specific regions. This year, the North; in 2014, Iberia and El-Andalus will be on the programme.

Whatever the focus, the organisers try to organise a programme with music, written or performed exclusively for the event. Thus the music is not just a plain revival og medieval music, but has a decidedly "modern take" in its sound. At the same time it is dedicated to explore the more delicate and refined performances of medieval music, seldom heard at the more common medieval festival.

*St. Mariekirchen in Freyburg 2011*

*Miriam Andersén © Cathrine Cabrol*

PONS VIVI opens the festival with the "King from Thule" in the church of St. Mary in the city of Freyburg with Ian Harrison on the bagpipe, Poul Høxbro on the flute, and Susanne Ansorg of the violin. Another highlight will be a performance of the Nordic Epos Kalevala with the harpist, Andrew Lawrence-King. Other performers come from Estonia and Lithuania.

At the end of the festival Miriam Andersén will sing a number of Nordic ballads and Rune-songs.

Mentioned should also be the legendary midnight concert in the chapel at Neuenburg, where Norbert Rodenkirchen on his flute will try to catch not only the rats but also the roots of the The Pied Piper of Hamelin.

**Programme:**
See the program for this years Montalbâne festival

www.montalbane.de/

As usual the surroundings for the festival is especially evocative: Freyburg with towering Neuenburg, one of the largest early medieval German castles, which is not in ruins. And which recently was elected the most beautiful castle in Sachsen-Anhalt.

*Gunnar Stubseid © Knut Utger*

*Neuenburg in Freyburg an der Unstrut*
*© Stiftung Dome und Schlösser in Sachsen-Anhalt - Museum Schloss Neuenburg*

# Neuenburg at Freyburg

The building of the castle of Neuenburg was begun around 1090 by the Count Ludwig Springer and was later rebuilt to a very impressive complex of buildings, 3.5 times as grandiose as Wartburg, another of his castles.

## The Dobble Chapel

However, the architectonic showpiece is the two-storey chapel from (1180)1200 -1230 with Romanesque pillars at the bottom and a peculiar ribbed vaulting in the upper storey. Either Ludwig III (later nicknamed the Pious) (1151 – 1190) or his brother built the chapel.

Ludwig was nephew of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1122 – 1190), supported his politics and took part in his warring in Italy. In 1188 they both took up the cross at the Diet in Mainz. Ludwig died at Cyprus on his return from the third crusade.

It is believed that he might have been inspired by his travels in the entourage of the emperor to the rather peculiar decoration of the vaulted ribbings. Similar may however also be found in Köln in St. Andreas.
With its precious decoration in the upper storey in gold, black and red it is among the most important examples of such chapels, comparable only to those at Nuremberg, Cheb and Landsberg.

Remains of the original colouring in black and gold are preserved on the north wall window and has been used in the restoration. The only original piece of equipment is the altar block from the late 12th century, as the baptismal font - placed on the ground floor - probably came from the former St. Kilian's church at the foot of the castle.

## Dicker Wilhelm

Another prominent feature of the castle is the so-called "Dicker Wilhelm", a massive tower with foundations dating from around 1100. It was part of the original bailey of the castle and although heavily restored gives an impression of the might of the castle.

*Dicke Wilhelm © Stiftung Dome und Schlösser in Sachsen-Anhalt*

# Heinrich von der Veldeke

Ludwig III died without any progeny as he repudiated his first wife – Margarete von Kleve - in 1186. At their marriage in 1174, it is believed that the famous Troubadour Heinrich von Veldeke was present and may have performed parts of his major work, the Eneas Romance (sometimes called the Eneide) on this occasion.

## Eneide

The Eneide is a rewriting in Middle High German of a French rewriting of Vergil's Aeneid, Roman d'Eneas from around 1160. In a postscript (verses 13436 -13470) the troubadour claims, that he was prompted by Margarete von Kleve to write the romance. However, at her wedding to Ludwig she borrowed the manuscript. Unfortunately it was stolen by one of the guests who brought it back to his castle in Thüringen. Here it rested for nine years until it was cajoled out of his hands by a brother to the now late Ludwig III, resulting in a final finish of the poem at the castle of Neuenburg. Some scholars, however, disagree as to whether the postscript was actually written by Heinrich von Veldeke or whether it was appended at a later time.

The Eneas is the first courtly romance written in German. It devotes a lot of verses to topics like courtly love and virtues as well as the detailed trimmings of life at-court. At the end it even describes Eneas and Lavinias wedding feast, where he presents us with an overall optimistic view of the world as basically a romantic venue. However, more central to the poem is perhaps the topos: the foundation of Rome and its allu- sions to the endeavors of Frede-rick Barbarossa to reestablish the Roman Empire in all its glory. One theory is that Heinrich von Veldeke was part of the entourage of the Emperor and wrote the poem as an homage to his virtues.

### Read more:

Eneasroman by Heinrich von Veldeke: Die Berliner Bilderhandschrift mit Übersetzung und Kommentar by Hans Fromm. Deutscher Klassiker Verlag 1992

Heinrich von Veldeke Eneas: a comparison with the Roman d'Eneas, and a translation into English / Rodney W. Fisher. Bern and New York : P. Lang, 1992.

*Portrait of the building master at Neuenburg*

# Horse Harness Pendants

*Horse Harness Pendant © Stiftung Dome und Schlösser in Sachsen-Anhalt*

## The Neuenburg Pendant

On permanent show in the Museum of the castle are archaeological finds, documents and models of the castle at different periods; all carefully exhibited and explained to the visitor. One of the more intriguing pieces is the Neuenburg Horse Harness Pendant, or "Neuenburger Pferdeschmuck-Anhänger"

The Neuenburg Pendant is made out of fire-gilt copper, engraved and embellished with champlevé in blue, green and white. It measures 10,7 cm x 9,0 cm x 0,7 cm. The pendant is formed like a lunula with two arches underneath, supported by capitals, from which hang three medallions, one of which is missing. The central one shows an engraved dog. The main part of the pendant is decorated with champlevé and shows three horned animals, which may be hunted by two dogs. Or the pendant shows daemons, threatening the hunter. The pendant is unique and may have been a product from France, where Ludwig III and his brother apparently grew up and got familiarized with the "new" courtly culture. It dates from exactly that time 1150 -1200.

## English Pendants

This is a very early date. Although horse pendants of copper alloy – both circular and open-work - have been found from the 12th century in England, the more elaborate ones are at least half a century younger. At this point they become more numerous, featuring heraldic forms and made with enamelling.

The form is typically either rectangular, or they look like small shields with coats of arms; some are silvered or gilded, but most must be characterised as nothing but glittering trinkets. Some archaeologists have proposed that these tingling pieces of horse–jewellery were reserved for the servants. The Lord had his horse covered in saddle blankets embroidered or appliqued with heraldic motives.

## The Pendant from Starup

However, in 2009 a remarkable pendant was found at Starup in Southern Jutland dating from the 14th century, which is on par with the early one from Neuenburg in terms of quality. The trinket consists of two parts, which have been

*Horse Harness Pendant fra Starup ca. 1300 © Anders Hartvig, Museum Sønderjylland, Denmark*

*Knight riding a horse embellished with horse pendants. Højby Church, Odsherred, Denmark ca. 1380 © Medieval Histories*

fitted into each other. The back part is in the form of a shallow bowl formed as a hexagram with lunulas in between.

Fitted into the bowl is the front of the pendant consisting of a centrepiece with an engraved and enamelled eagle and surrounded by six small pearls. All has been gilded.

In Hørby church in Denmark a wall painting shows a knight from around 1380 hunting with a falcon. His horse is beautifully embellished with jewellery of the same type as the Starup pendant.

It seems probable that such trinkets have come in very many different forms and qualities; and perhaps that the less elaborate have more often been lost.

## Read more:

The Medieval Horse and its Equipment ca. 1150 -1450.
John Clark.
Medieval Finds from Excavations in London , No 5
Boydell Press 2011

Ein Emailfund von der Neuenburg in Sachsen-Anhalt
Theo Jülich
In: Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft, Band 52/53. Berlin 2001

## Museum Schloss Neuenburg

D-06632 Freyburg (Unstrut)
www.schloss-neuenburg.de

www.museum-digital.de
Neuenburger Pferdeschmuck-Anhänger

## Museum Sønderjylland - Haderslev Archaeology

www.museum-sonderjylland.dk/siderne/Museerne/Arkeologi-Haderslev/01ud-Seletoejssmykke.html

*Another - less elaborate - horse harness pendant fra Starup © Anders Hartvig, Museum Sønderjyllland, Denmark*

Catch it while you can!

# Medieval Exhibitions in Europe 2012

## 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
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


## I cavalieri dell'imperatore

Duello e guerra nelle armerie rinascimentali Castello del Buonconsigli
via Bernardo Clesio, 5 38122 Trento Italia
23.06.2012 - 18.11.2012

## Shakespeare

Staging the world
British Museum
19.07.2012 – 25.11.2012

## Jagellonica

Art and Culture in Central Europe under the Jagiellonian Dynasty, 1386-1572
19.05.2012–30.09.2012, 29.10.2012 -27.01.2013, 01.03.2013 -16.06.2013
GASK – Mittelböhmische Galerie Kuttenberg
Königliches Schloss Warschau - Nationalmuseum Warschau
Haus der Brandenburgisch-Preußischen Geschichte, Potsdam

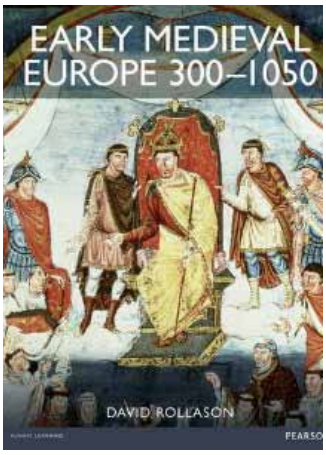

## Painting in Tuscany between Gothic and Renaissance

18.02.2012 -18.09.2012
Avignon, Petit Palais


## Otto der Große und das Römische Reich

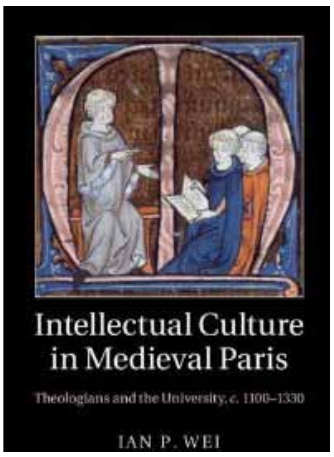
Kaisertum von der Antike zum Mittelalter.
27.08.2012-09.12.2012
Kulturhistorisches Museum Magdeburg

# New Books - in English



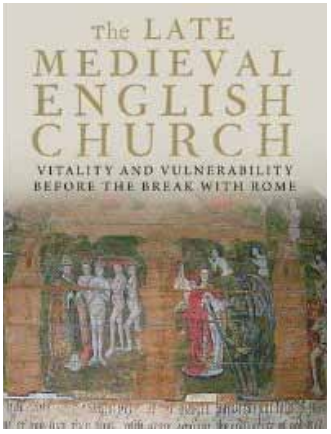

## Early Medieval Europe 300-1050: The Birth of Western Society

David Rollason
Longman 2012



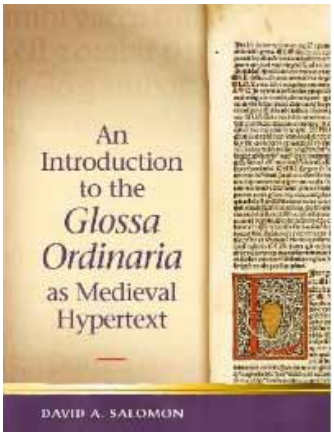

## Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris

Theologians and the University, c.1100-1330
Ian P. Wei
Cambridge University Press 2012



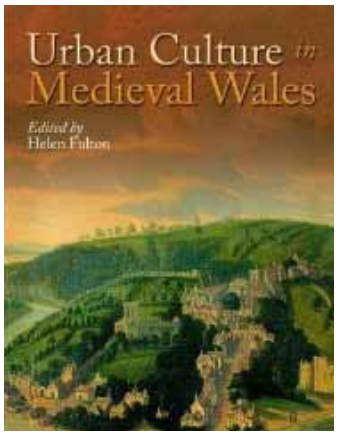

## The Late Medieval English Church

Vitality and Vulnerability Before the Break with Rome
G.W. Bernard
Yale University Press 2012



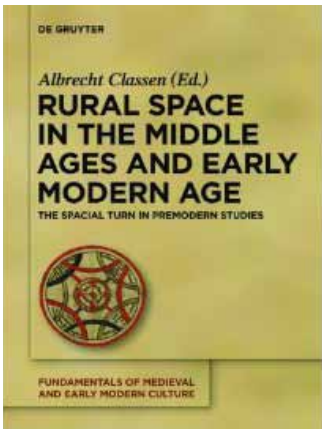

## An Introduction to the 'Glossa Ordinaria' as Medieval Hypertext

David A. Salomon
University of Wales Press 2012



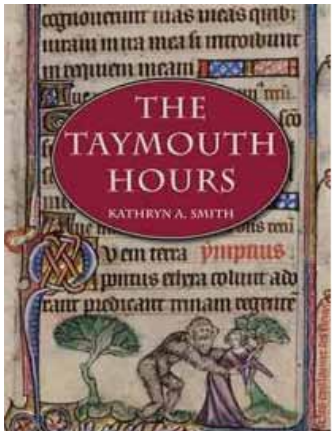

## Urban Culture in Medieval Wales

Helen Fulton ed
University of Wales Press 2012




## Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age

The Spacial Turn in Premodern Studies
Albrecht Classen
Walter de Gruyter & Co 2012



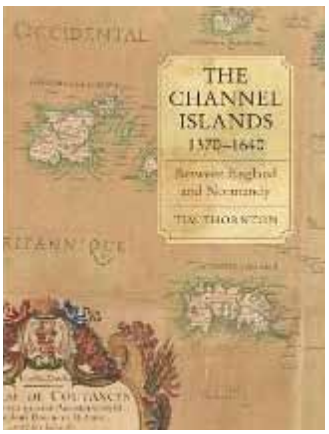

## The Taymouth Hours

Stories and the Construction of the Self in Late Medieval England
Kathryn A. Smith
The British Library Publishing Division 2012


## Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm

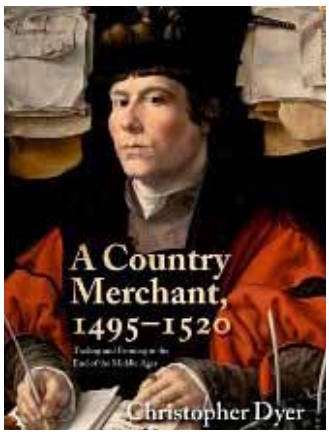
Leslie Brubaker
Bristol Classical Press 2012

# New Books - in English



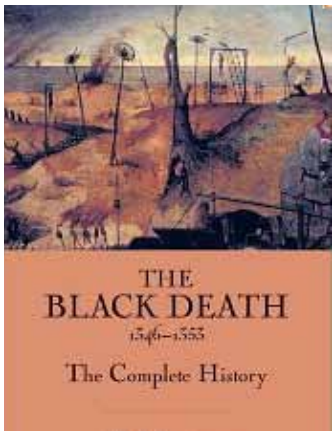

## The Channel Islands, 1370-1640

Between England and Normandy
Tim Thornton
Boydell Press 2012



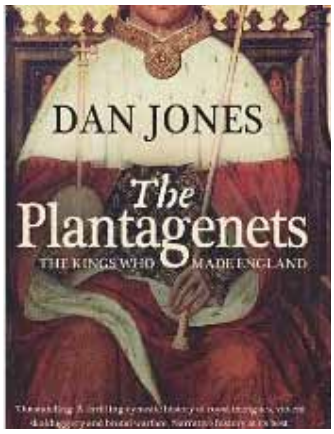

## A Country Merchant, 1495-1520

Trading and Farming at the End of the Middle Ages
Christopher Dyer
OUP Oxford 2012



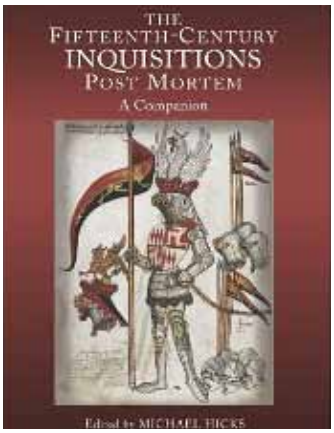

## The Black Death 1346-1353

The Complete History
Ole J. Benedictow
Boydell Press 2012



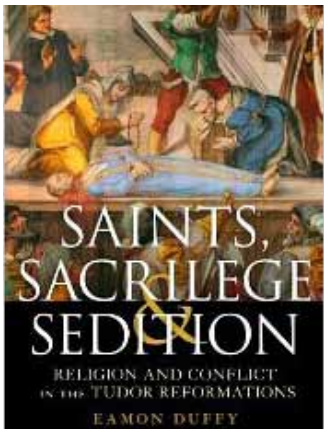

## The Plantagenets

The Kings Who Made England
Dan Jones
HarperPress 2012



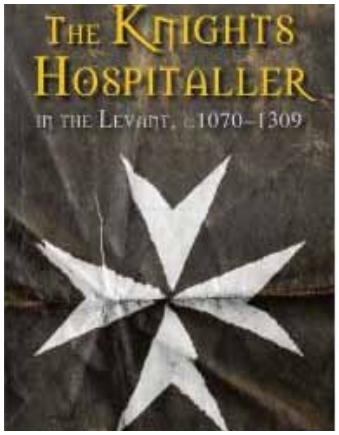

## The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem

A Companion
Michael Hicks
Boydell Press 2012



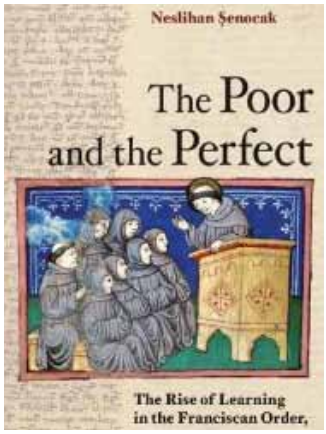

## Saints, Sacrilege and Sedition

Religion and Conflict in the Tudor Reformations
Eamon Duffy




## The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c.1070-1309

Jonathan Riley-Smith
Palgrave Macmillan 2012




## The Poor and the Perfect

The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209-1310
Neslihan Senocak
Cornell University Press 2012