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# The Medieval Dress and Textile Society

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## Editorial

Happy New Year to all! I hope the Festive Season has not taken too great a toll. The last meeting in August last was, by all accounts, another great success, at least academically. We look forward to 2008 being another exciting year, with a series of meetings which ought to maintain a great deal of interest.

Unfortunately, the committee has been obliged to make some hard decisions about the cost of holding its meetings. As a result, we have been compelled to increase the charges for future meetings. Spring and Autumn will henceforth cost £20 for members, while the Summer meeting, held in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting, will now cost £15. The AGM itself will, of course, remain freely open to all.

As I have committed myself to this job in the long term, future newsletters should be able to manifest a degree of regularity. Hence, deadlines will be the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, August and December, with the newsletter coming out in the first week of the following month. Contributions may be sent by post to the address on page 11, or by e-mail to [medatseditor@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:medatseditor@hotmail.co.uk). Copy in electronic form (on CD, if not by e-mail attachment) makes my job easier, but do not let that inhibit you!

Members may care to avail themselves of the possibility of receiving the newsletter as a PDF file by e-mail. One benefit is that you can have a newsletter in colour. Those lovely silks shown in the last edition would have made it very worthwhile!

**TIMOTHY DAWSON**

**COVER PICTURE:** 16th century cope of purple silk and gold velvet, embroidered with gold. Toledo Cathedral Treasury. Photo: Hilary Davidson. See also **CONFERENCE REVIEW** and page 19.

## EXHIBITIONS

### **Medieval Treasures from the Cleveland Museum of Art**

J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.

The Cleveland Museum of Art houses one of the finest and most comprehensive collections of Early Christian, Byzantine, and Western Medieval art in the world. Acquired over a period of ninety years and formed by two of America's most distinguished medievalists, the museum's second director, William M. Milliken (1930–1958), and the collection's former curator William D. Wixom (1958–1978), the Cleveland Museum's holdings include works produced in continental Europe, the British Isles, and the Mediterranean basin from the third through the early sixteenth century.

Medieval Treasures from the Cleveland Museum of Art is the first traveling exhibition to showcase a significant number of the museum's Early Christian, Byzantine, and Western Medieval treasures. Comprising works of art executed in a variety of media – painting, sculpture, decorative arts, textiles, prints, and illuminated manuscripts – the exhibition offers a rich survey of the arts and culture of Medieval Europe from the Late Antique period through the Age of Humanism.

Allowing visitors to explore aspects of artistic patronage, gifts and gift-giving,

public and private devotion, courtly life, and medieval warfare, Medieval Treasures offers a unique and unprecedented opportunity to view the Cleveland Museum of Art's celebrated collection of Early Christian, Byzantine, and Western Medieval art outside Cleveland, and to explore the rise of a decidedly Christian culture in both the East and West through some of the most lavish and prized examples of artistic production to survive.

Until January 20<sup>th</sup> 2008.

**Bourgeois Pride and Princely Splendour:** Costumes from the C16<sup>th</sup> to C18<sup>th</sup>  
Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg, Switzerland.  
20<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2008, Daily 14.00 - 17.30

The Abegg-Stiftung is planning an exhibition of important historic costumes from the collections of the Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt and the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden in Germany. The exhibition will show a group of around twenty bourgeois costumes from the seventeenth century, which originally belonged to families in Cologne and later came to Darmstadt with the collection of Baron von Hüpsch. A smaller number of women's costumes from the late eighteenth century complements this group. The second part of the exhibition presents a costume of the Elector Moritz of Saxony, datable to the first half of the sixteenth century, from the collection of the Dresden Rüstkammer. All of the costumes were examined and conserved in the conservation workshop of the Abegg-Stiftung over the last few years. The results of this research will be presented in a richly illustrated catalogue.

#### **Accompanying Publication**

*Kölner Patrizier- und Bürgerkleidung des 17. Jahrhunderts: Die Kostüm-  
sammlung Hüpsch im Hessischen Landesmuseum Darmstadt*

(Riggisberger Berichte 15)

Johannes Pietsch and Karen Stolleis, with Nadine Piechatschek.

c. 300 pages, with numerous illustrations and drawings; German text with an English translation of the main chapters

ISBN 978-3-905014-35~8

Price: CHF 85.- + postage; CHF 50.-- at the exhibition

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## **CONFERENCES FORTHCOMING**

### **North European Symposium For Archaeological Textiles X**

National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2008

North European Symposium for Archaeological Textiles (NESAT) was founded in 1981 to promote study and publication of textiles from archaeological sites in Northern Europe. It is a forum for archaeologists, historians, conservators and crafts people with expertise and interest in the many aspects of North European textile history from prehistoric to recent times. The conferences have been held every 3 years in various North European cities and all proceedings have been published by the organizers.

The **Tenth Jubilee Symposium** will take place in Copenhagen on 14<sup>th</sup> –17<sup>th</sup> May 2008, organised by the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research (CTR) in cooperation with the Department of Conservation at the National Museum of Denmark and the Lejre Experimental Centre.

The organising committee: Marie-Louise Nosch (director, CTR), Ulla Mannering (research programme manager, CTR), Margarita Gleba (research programme manager, CTR), Eva Andersson (research programme manager, CTR), Maj Ringgaard (conservator, National Museum/CTR), Jesper Stub Johnsen (director of Conservation Department, National Museum), Irene Skals (conservator, National Museum), Marianne Rasmussen (Head of Research, Lejre Experimental Centre).

In the past, participation in the NESAT was based on initial attendance or invitation of the organisers. The participants presented a paper or a poster and only few listeners (previous NESAT attendees) were present. In the recent years, NESAT has grown and it is no longer possible for everyone to present papers. Furthermore, interest in textile archaeology has grown substantially and we feel that it is important to open NESAT to a wider group of researchers. Therefore, NESAT X will be based on open call and the papers to be presented will be selected by a scientific committee, consisting of the members of NESAT steering board and members of the organising committee. While the number of papers will necessarily be limited, we would like to encourage the use of posters as a way of presenting material. The poster authors will also be given time to present their posters, which will be published in the conference proceedings.

As before, priority will be given to unpublished material and inter-disciplinarily approaches in textile research. Unlike the previous symposia, NESAT X will emphasise certain research areas. The scientific committee invites especially papers in the following areas of textile research:

- *The history of textile research*

Since the first NESAT textile research has come a long way. The jubilee symposium provides an appropriate forum to reflect on how far it has developed in the past 27 years.

- *New methodologies and approaches in textile research*

While remembering the past, we should also look into the future, particularly to advances in conservation and analyses of archaeological textiles.

- *Experimental textile archaeology*

Recreating textiles and testing textile tools is becoming a common method in textile studies. The aim is to discuss ways of using experimental archaeology in research.

If space is available, listeners are welcome.

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## **In the Loop: Knitting Past, Present and Future**

A three day international interdisciplinary conference.

Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, UK, 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

The resurgence of interest in knitting over recent years has inspired this conference to explore the field from a broad range of practical and practical angles. Proposals crossing geographical or temporal boundaries in the following areas are particularly welcome:

- Knitting narratives, including film, literature and the internet;
- Knitting, fashion and the industry;
- Knitting culture, including subversion, gender, tradition and stereotype;
- Knitting, technology and the future.

Keynote speakers: Sandy Black; Barbara Burman; Liz Collins; Sabrina Gschwander.

Enquiries to the conference administrator: J.A.Horgan@soton.ac.uk.

Organising committee: Linda Newington, Maria Hayward and Jessica Hemmings

## **Costume Colloquium: A tribute to Janet Arnold**

Florence, Italy 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2008

To commemorate the ten anniversary of the death of Janet Arnold, the Romualdo del Bianco Foundation and the Friends of the Costume Gallery of the Pitti Palace is organising four days of study, lectures, site tours and visits.

### **Tentative program:**

Wednesday November 5<sup>th</sup> -

- Arrival and registration.

Thursday November 6<sup>th</sup> -

- Participant Welcome and Opening.
- Presentations and Study Sessions.
- Specialised site visits (Palazzo Vecchio).
- Reception and cocktails

Friday November 7<sup>th</sup> -

- Presentations and Study Sessions.
- Specialised site visits (Palazzo Vecchio).
- Social events.

Saturday November 8<sup>th</sup> -

- Optional Excursion to Pisa (Palazzo Reale and Cerratelli Foundation).
- Presentations and Study Sessions.
- Specialised site visits (Palazzo Vecchio).
- Social events

Sunday November 9<sup>th</sup> -

- Presentations and Study Sessions.
- Specialised site visits

Registration for such a prestigious event in such a location will not be cheap (estimated £300 – £400) and is not yet open at going to press. Pre-registration expressions of interest may be made via [www.costume-textiles.com](http://www.costume-textiles.com)

## CONFERENCE REPORT

### ***Vestir a la Española: Prestigio y Vigencia del Atuendo Español en las Cortes Europeas (Siglos XVI y XVII)***

[Dressing the Spanish Way: Prestige and Usage of Spanish Attire at the European Courts (16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries)]

Museo Del Traje, Madrid, and Real Monasterio de El Escorial, Spain. 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2007.

This long-awaited conference addressed the topic of Spanish dress and its influence in the royal courts all over Europe during the Hispanic Golden Age of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Spanish influence is recorded in so many sources - plays, portraits, wardrobe accounts, dictionaries, textile designs – yet this is the first international conference to directly look at what dress in Spain was at the height of Hapsburg power, and thence what defined ‘Spanishness’ of dress elsewhere, through all the complex relationships of politics, manufacture, religion, trade and marriage. The event also formed an informal festschrift for Carmen Bernis, the Spanish scholar who died in 2001 and whose extensive research into clothing during the times of the Catholic Kings, Charles V, and Don Quixote has formed a foundation for subsequent research into early Spanish clothing.

The conference began in the Museo del Traje (Museum of Costume) in the University quarter. The spacious lecture hall was needed to accommodate all the delegates. No attendance cost meant it was fully subscribed with international and many locals ranging from history academics to fashion and design students. Simultaneous translation helped the audience enjoy papers in a number of languages as the speakers came from Britain, Europe and the US. The first day of three looked at basics of sixteenth-century Spanish dress, relying on detailed portraits of the royal families of Charles V and Phillip II by Moro, Sanchez Coello and others to explore the cassocks, *sayas* (gowns), *verdugados* (farthingales), *lechugillas* (ruffs), as well as the mannerisms and piety that composed the Spanish way of dressing. The use of the colour black in dress proved a recurring theme and provoked much discussion about its various meanings. Sumptuary laws, dress in literature, and the craftspeople of the royal Wardrobe were also addressed. The second day moved to the Monasterio de El Escorial in the mountains outside Madrid to hear papers exploring how the court portraits influenced styles both of aristocratic portraiture and clothing, in other European courts.

The last session back in the Museo looked at how foreigners saw Spain, using the experiences of royal women such as Katherine of Aragón, Eleanor of Toledo, and the Infantas Catalina Michaela and Isabella Clara Eugenia in foreign courts after marriage. Wardrobe accounts provided much fresh material for these subjects. Also presented was how French princesses adopted Spanish modes when they married into Spain. The empire’s waning influence through the seventeenth century filled most of the last session, though ending with two intriguing papers considering 16<sup>th</sup> century fashion as far afield as Bohemia and Hungary.

Guided tours of El Escorial and the Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales for the speakers provided an abundance of material culture resources to complement the papers. Each textile or rarely published portrait - and there were many - begged for further research. The organisers plan post-prints that should prove a

very useful volume for non-Spanish speakers to expand knowledge of this significant topic. The conference showed the strength and reach of the Hapsburg empire, and how much work there is still to do to mine the riches of this fascinating period.

Hilary Davidson

## NEW BOOKS

### **Jong-Kuk Nam, *Le commerce du coton en Méditerranée à la fin du Moyen Age***

Brill 2007, The Medieval Mediterranean Vol. 68

ISBN: 9789004162266

This book examines the significance of the cotton trade in the Mediterranean traffic in the Later Middle Ages and evaluates its effects on the economy of the Occident. It covers all aspects of the production of, commerce and trade in cotton. The merchants of Venice, Genoa, Barcelona and Florence played the most important role in the cotton trade in the Mediterranean. The massing of supplies of raw material by the merchants of the four maritime cities led to the mass fabrication of cotton products. In this way Western society saw a remarkable growth in the consumption of cotton products in the Later Middle Ages.

<http://www.brill.nl/print.aspx?partid=74&mcid=6&pid=25656>

### **Antoinette Rast-Eicher (ed), *Archäologische Textilfunde – Archaeological Textiles***

Proceedings of NESAT IX, Braunwald 18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2005

ISBN: 9783033012677

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Erste Versuche beim Aufrauen von Wollgeweben.

Address List.

Online book-shop: <http://www.lesestoff.ch/fulldisplay?>

## **Review:**

### **Maria Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII***

This magnificent and substantial book not only presents transcripts of original documents with commentary, but places it into its wider context of life at the Tudor court of King Henry VIII. Dr. Hayward has presented her new research in a book that is not only erudite but an utterly absorbing read written in an engaging style that inspires the reader to keep turning the pages.

In addition to chapters on the great wardrobe and the king's tailors, the book includes full transcripts of James Worsley's wardrobe book commissioned in December 1516 and his inventory compiled in January 1521. Along with the 1547 inventory and other wardrobe accounts and warrants, this wardrobe book and inventory represent the only other substantial record of the king's clothes in English archives.

Dr. Hayward has presented us with Henry VIII as he has never been seen before with discussions of Henry's physique, portraiture, personal wardrobe, jewellery, regalia and ceremonial robes. However she has also considered the monarch in the context of his court and household. Henry VIII is compared with his father, Henry VII to provide historical context, and with the other rulers of Europe who were his social equals, in order to assess how they used clothes to define their royal image. The contents of this book also reflect developments in historiography such as the rise in interests in the structure and composition of early modern courts. Court ceremonial was linked to the annual cycle, while the pattern of coronations and funerals dictated royal dress and behaviour, just as strongly as personal inclination.

The Henrician court was European in outlook, while demonstrating moments of marked insularity. All of these features created a magnificent court with Henry VIII at the centre.

Although the book is chiefly concerned with the study of male dress, there are chapters on the dress of Henry's wives, their households and children.

The final chapter is a delight to all interested in the recreation of Tudor dress. Here is presented some of the evidence on the cut, construction and decorative techniques that can be drawn from the written sources. A very useful glossary of terms is included as well as a full index.

The book is illustrated with numerous illustrations in black and white of extant clothing, portraits and comparative iconography. Sadly, there are no colour illustrations.

Opened at random each page gives forth revealing gems about Henry VIII. For example, the king loved shoes. The Milanese ambassador observed that Henry "wants to have his feet in a thousand shoes". Dr. Hayward discovered a wide range of footwear-even a pair of football boots! He generally preferred shoes with velvet uppers. The rate of acquisition recorded in the accounts suggests that he may have worn a pair for as short a time as a week before discarding them. He also had slippers with textile uppers for indoor or informal wear. On one occasion in 1527, Henry had hurt his foot playing tennis and had to wear slippers at the evening entertainment and, politely, all the court did likewise. He had furred winter and night buskins as well as riding boots. In the last months of

his life he found it uncomfortable to wear shoes and shortly before his last illness, Richard Cecil signed a warrant for a yard and a half of black velvet “to make two pair of large slippers newly devised” for the king.

This wonderful academic book is written in a most engaging style. It presents the most vivid picture of Henry VIII since Edward Hall who had the advantage of actually being at the Tudor court. However, Hayward explains and elucidates what Hall simply describes.

Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII by Maria Hayward is published by Maney Publishing, 2007 in both hardback and paperback, 458 pages.

**Karen Watts**

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## **MEDATS PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS**

A couple of suggestions have been made to make membership of the society more useful. The committee would be very pleased to get comments on these ideas.

1. That the society website should have a members only area accessible by means of a user name and password. The contents of this area could be very wide ranging, and would hold, of course, an archive of the newsletter, and could include transcripts and possibly video or images from society meetings, images or information which might be hard to find elsewhere. The possibilities are only limited by our imagination.
2. That the society compile a cumulative bibliography of medieval dress and textiles drawing upon contributions from the membership. In addition to the usual bibliographical material, it is proposed that this document contain listings of accessible collections which hold items. which would be particularly useful in respect of the more obscure publications. It might also include brief reviews or comments on the entries. This bibliography would be most accessibly implemented as an electronic file, thus allowing for more ready searching. In that form it could be made available in two ways – annually as a CD supplement to the newsletter, or, more flexibly, on the internet as a feature of the proposed Members Area of the society website.

Please contact any of the committee with comments or further suggestions on these, or any other, ideas.

## **MEDATS FUTURE MEETINGS**

### **Call for Papers**

The committee would welcome proposals for papers or themes for future MEDATS meetings. Proposed papers may be for the projected themes below, but need not be restricted to them. Please send suggestions to the Programme Secretary, Pam Walker, via the address below.

The committee has been discussing widening the range of venues for future meetings, including the possibility of meetings in the North. Again, we would very much welcome suggestions as to locations and venues for such meetings.

## **Spring 2008 Meeting – March 8<sup>th</sup>**

*Dress and Textiles for Formal Entries into Cities*

Courtauld Institute, Somerset House London WC2R 0RN

## **Summer 2008 Meeting: May**

Annual General Meeting and *Dress in UK Museum Collections*

## **Autumn 2008 Meeting: October 11<sup>th</sup>**

*Aspects of Medieval Jewellery & Clothing*

Provisonal topics 2009:

## **Spring 2009 Meeting: March**

Henry VIII: *Textiles and Clothing for a Renaissance Monarch*

## **Summer 2008 Meeting: May**

Reconstruction. re-enactment, Living History

## **Autumn 2008 Meeting: October 11<sup>th</sup>**

*Tapestries: Design & Production*

## **MEDATS WEBSITE**

A suggestion has been made for a significant expansion of the website. See **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS** ABOVE.

## **MEDATS SUBSCRIPTIONS**

### **A reminder from our Membership Secretary.**

Members who do not pay regularly by Standing Order were sent individual reminders in November of their 2008 subscription payment due on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. Thanks to all who responded promptly. Outstanding payments should be sent, as soon as possible, to the Membership Secretary, c/o MEDATS, PO BOX 948, GUILDFORD, GU1 9AH, UNITED KINGDOM, in pound sterling, either in cash, or by cheque, payable through a British bank, and made out to MEDATS. Membership cards will be issued as soon as appropriate payment has been made or confirmed. Members requiring a separate receipt should enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with their payment.

Annual subscriptions (payable in pounds sterling only) run from 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December

- £10** Individuals in Britain and Europe
- £15** Households in Britain and Europe (2 members)
- £15** Individuals outside Europe and Institutions

Student membership (with proof of status) is as Individual, however all meetings in the first year of membership are free to attend.

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16th century cope of purple silk and gold velvet, embroidered with gold. Toledo Cathedral Treasury. Photo: Hilary Davidson. See also the cover picture.

## MEDATS Spring 2008 Meeting – March 8<sup>th</sup>

### *Dress and Textiles for Formal Entries into Cities*

#### Speakers confirm at press:

- Timothy Dawson (independent Scholar) 'Wedded to the City – Triumphal Entries into Constantinople, ninth–eleventh centuries.

**Consult the MEDATS website for more details.**

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### BOOKING FORM

Spring 2008 Meeting – March 8<sup>th</sup>

### *Dress and Textiles for Formal Entries into Cities*

**Courtauld Institute, Somerset House London WC2R 0RN**

**To be returned before 22<sup>nd</sup> February to:**

John Edmonds, 89 Chessfield Park, Little Chalfont, Bucks, HP6 6RX

Tickets	Booking in advance	At the door
MEDATS members	£20	£25
Non-members	£30	£30
Non-members joining at the door		£20+Membership fee

- I wish to attend the above meeting and request .....tickets for members  
.....tickets for non-members  
.....tickets for students
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