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# The Medieval Dress and Textile Society

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>OBITUARIES</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>EXHIBITIONS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CONFERENCES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NEW BOOKS</b> – NOTICES AND REVIEWS	<b>5</b>
<b>RECENT ARTICLES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>RESEARCH GRANTS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>WEBSITES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>MEDATS</b>	
<b>FUTURE MEETINGS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SUBSCRIPTIONS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>COMMITTEE ADDRESSES</b>	<b>9</b>

## Editorial

Following the valiant efforts of Hilary Davidson in taking over the Spring newsletter in an emergency, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to take up the task of editing the newsletter for the longer term. My job is to give you the best service possible. To this end I am eager for feedback, whether positive or negative, and suggestions for anything that might make the newsletter more useful and interesting.

Members may care to avail themselves of the possibility of receiving the newsletter as a PDF file by e-mail.

The next MEDATS newsletter is planned for January 2008. All copy to the Editor before the last week of February, please, e-mail: medatseditor@hotmail.co.uk or by post to the address on page 11.

**TIMOTHY DAWSON**

**COVER PICTURE:** Blue-and-red-coloured silk bow with embroidered flowers China, Liao Dynasty, 10th to 12th century. Inv. no. 5248. © Abegg-Stiftung, 2007; (Christoph von Viràg) See **EXHIBITIONS**

## OBITUARIES

### **DEBORAH S. PULLIAM**

Deborah S. Pulliam died of cancer in late May this year aged 54. Born in Indianapolis on June 2nd 1952, Deborah was the youngest of three children. Her family is noted for its long ownership of newspapers, and she showed early promise in that direction, editing her school's yearbook and contributing to its literary magazine. Yet she was evidently by no means constrained by this background.

She left her home town on 1970 to study for a degree in anthropology at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. After graduation, Deborah returned to the newspaper industry to support herself while she pursued her real interests in domestic crafts. Those working with her observed that she was something of a perfectionist and could be extremely demanding, and that, perhaps for those reasons, she was a very good editor. Deborah edited the *Castine Patriot*, and contributed to various other newspapers and magazines.

Pursuing her true passions, she worked during the later 1970s and 1980s as a crafts person-interpreter at the Colonial Williamsburg historical centre specializing in traditional basketry, just one of her wide range of talents. In



1988 Deborah moved to the small town of Castine in Maine, where she at last felt entirely at home. There she maintained a simple lifestyle, indulging her interests in organic farming and ecological issues.

Deborah was noted for her workshops in spinning and other textile crafts. In addition to her general journalism, she wrote prolifically on crafts throughout, especially being a long time contributor to the magazine *Piecework*. She also wrote two cookery books.

## **Mary Hulton**

All members of Medats will be saddened to hear of the death of Mary Hulton on 6<sup>th</sup> July this year. Her husband Les had died in 2005. They were both very important to MEDATS and much loved. They had done so much to help the Society. Les had been invaluable in creating the website, and Mary was unfailingly efficient in gathering together material for the Newsletter. Mary was greatly appreciated for her common sense contributions to the work of the committee where both her experience and her kindness were greatly valued. Medats has sent contributions to the Cancer Research UK for both Les and Mary.

Mary was devoted to the history of Coventry. She talked to MEDATS on two subjects firstly on 'The town rose by the making of cloth and caps': Records of Hatters and Cappers in medieval Coventry in 2000' and secondly on 'The London weavers company: status among urban crafts' in 2003. She lectured at the Institute of Education (Department of Arts Education – history) from 1978-1996, and was later appointed as an associate Fellow of the University of Warwick. She published much on the history of textiles in Coventry. In 1987 she published 'Company and Fellowship': the Medieval Weavers of Coventry' and later 'Coventry and its People in the 1520s', (Dugdale Society, vol. xxxviii, 1999) and 'True as Coventry Blue' in the Coventry and County Heritage series, no 21, 2000.

They will both be greatly missed by us all.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

### **Dragons of Silk, Flowers of Gold**

#### **Textile Treasures of the Chinese Liao Dymasty (907-1125)**

Abegg-Stiftung Museum, Riggisberg, Switzerland

**Unique silk garments and accessories from what is today northern China are the focus of the current special exhibition at the Abegg-Stiftung. These splendid textiles, around 1,000 years old, provide an insight into the luxurious dress worn by the upper classes of that time. Together with elegant gold-trimmed ceramic vessels, they introduce us to the world of luxury and beauty that the princes of the Liao Dynasty inhabited – even in the grave.**

The elite of the Liao Dynasty clad itself in silk from head to foot, both in life and in death. This exhibition shows textiles found in the grave of a noblewoman, whose funeral wardrobe included cloaks, coats, jackets, pants and skirts, as well as a headdress, splendid ornamental bows and silk boots. It is likely that the deceased was wrapped in several layers of clothing. She seems to have

been buried wearing three pairs of pants and two skirts as well as at least two jackets and a coat.



Jacket with embroidered birds, 11th to 13th century. Inv. no. 5253  
© Abegg-Stiftung, 2006; (Christoph von Viràg)

### **Nomads dressed in silk**

The little-known Liao Dynasty was founded by the nobility of the Qidan, a group of seminomadic tribes that regularly set up camp in the upper reaches of the Liao river in what is today northern China. In 907, the tribes united and founded the Qidan Empire, which was later renamed Liao. This empire rose to become the principal power in Eastern Asia and at one time controlled an area stretching from Manchuria and Mongolia as far as what is today Beijing. The Qidan also defeated the army of the Song Dynasty that ruled the rest of China. At the peace talks between them it was agreed that the militarily defeated Song Dynasty pay a tribute of 200,000 bolts of silk a year. The Qidan elite then had this silk worked into the most exquisite raiments, consisting of several layers of fabric. Indeed, the silk was so plentiful that it was used even as a lining material and for padding.

**The exhibition continues daily 2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m until 11<sup>th</sup> November.**

## **COLLECTIONS**

Recommendations and suggestions of institutions in Britain and abroad can be sent to the Editor, [medatseditor@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:medatseditor@hotmail.co.uk)

## **CONFERENCES**

### **Abegg-Stiftung Colloquium: Iconography of the Liturgical Vestment in the Middle Ages**

Riggisberg, Switzerland 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2007

Programme (two sessions each day)

Session I: Body and Vestment in Theology and Liturgy

- Thomas Wetter – Body inscription and veiling. Religious-historical

comments on the liturgical vestment.

- Michael Brangert – Metaphoric of the vestment in the writing of Gertrud von Helfta (1256–1302).
- Andreas Odenthal – "diaconi cum rufis precincti". Traces of medieval and early modern use of liturgical vestments in the cathedral of Halberstadt.

#### Session II: Pictorial Transformations of the Sacrifice and Holy Story

- Esther Meier – Turning towards God and outward action. The illustration of the prayer of acceptance in medieval mass books.
- Evelin Wetter – *Memoria passionis* and other concepts of an iconography of the liturgical vestment.
- Gudrun Sporbeck – Cologne vestments in the middle ages.
- Hans Fuhrmann – The 'Abraham-carpet' in the cathedral of Halberstadt: the relation of the text and illustration.

#### Session III: Representation, Propaganda and Memoria

- Franz Kirchweger – A critical look at the function and use of the coronation robes of the Holy Roman Empire.
- Caroline Vogt – Episcopal self-fashioning: the Thoma A'Becket mitres.
- Tanja Kohwagner-Nikolai – Schutzpatrone und Stifter: Bildteppiche zur Schaffung von "corporate identity" im spätmittelalterlichen Frauenkonventen.
- Kate Heard – 'All holie compnye of heaven': uniformity and individuality in the iconography of late medieval English orphreys.

#### Session IV: Local and Functional Relations of the Iconography of Liturgical Vestments

- Uta-Christine Bergman – Serial production of embroidered orphreys in the late middle ages.
- Inger Estham – Embroideries in Vadstena and Uppsala cathedral: a comparison.
- Birgitt Borkopp-Restle – Local relation in the iconography of liturgical vestments in St Mary's church in Gdansk.
- Gerhard Weilandt – Part of the whole: textile frontals in the context of church decoration in Nuremberg.

Further information telephone +41 31 808 12 01 / fax +41 31 808 12 00 / e-mail: [info@abegg-stiftung.ch](mailto:info@abegg-stiftung.ch)

### **Dyes in History and Archaeology: Annual Conference 26**

Vienna, Austria, 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

All presentations will be in English.

Full details can be obtained from the DHA website or

Dr. Regina Hofmann-de Keijzer  
University of Applied Arts Vienna  
Institute of Art and Technology - ARTEC  
Department of Archaeometry  
Salzgries 14/1  
A-1013 Vienna - Austria

There are direct flights from London Heathrow to Vienna.

John Edmonds will give a paper on imperial purple at the conference, and a talk to the Austrian Textile Society on the 11<sup>th</sup> November following conference on the development of textile dyeing 1500-1900.

## **International Medieval Congress**

Leeds, UK, July 7th to 10th 2008.

The theme will be The Natural World. Paper proposals have to be submitted by 31st August 2007. see [www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc)

### **Call for Papers -**

#### **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.

Abstracts are invited from knitters, historians, conservators, theorists, educators, curators, technologists and industry. Proposals will be considered for 20 minute papers or poster presentations. Abstracts for presentations should be no more than 300 words.

Selected papers or presentations will be considered for publication in the annual journal of the Textile Society, *Text*.

**Deadline for abstracts: Monday 1st October 2007.**

Notification of decision: Monday 5th November.

Enquiries and abstracts to the conference administrator: [J.A.Horgan@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.A.Horgan@soton.ac.uk).

Organising committee: Linda Newington, Maria Hayward and Jessica Hemmings

## **NEW BOOKS**

***The Making and Meaning of Illuminated Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, Art and Architecture: Tributes to Jonathan J.G. Alexander*, eds Susan L'Engle and Gerald B. Guest**

Harvey Miller Publishers (Brepols) 2006

**Maria Hayward, *Dress in the Court of King Henry VIII***

Maney Publishing 2007

488pp, 172 b/w illustrations, 25 colour plates. £48.00

Henry VIII used his wardrobe, and that of his family and household, as a way of

expressing his wealth and magnificence. This book encompasses the first detailed study of male and female clothing worn at the court of Henry VIII and covers the dress of the King and his immediate family, the royal household and the wider court.

In the absence of any surviving clothing belonging to the King, the evidence employed derives primarily from the great wardrobe accounts, wardrobe warrants and inventories, correlated with evidence from pictorial and narrative sources and a small selection of contemporary surviving garments, principally from Continental collections.

Beyond Henry's personal wardrobe, important areas for consideration include how the queens used their clothing to define their status, the provision of textiles for ceremonial dress and the function of livery.

In addition there is information on the cut and construction of garments, and fabrics and colours.

Further selected contents include:

- Henry VIII: the man and his image;
- Creating magnificence - the role of the Great Wardrobe;
- The cycle of royal life - coronations to funerals;
- Henry VIII's ceremonial wardrobe - observing the ritual year;
- Caring for the King's clothes - the wardrobe of the robes and the laundry;
- Female fashions at court;
- The King's children - dressed to impress;
- The royal household - form, function and livery;
- Outside the household - the stable, the hunts and beyond;
- Tudor military splendour;
- The households of Henry's wives, sisters and children;
- The royal artificers;.
- *The Wardrobe Book of the Wardrobe of the Robes* prepared by James Wolsley in December 1516, edited from BL ms Harley 2284;
- *The Inventory of the Wardrobe of the Robes* prepared by James Wolsley on 17th January 1521, edited from BL ms Harley 4217.

[www.maney.co.uk/books/kinghenry](http://www.maney.co.uk/books/kinghenry)

See page 11 for the cover image.

### **Margaret Scott, *Medieval Dress and Fashion***

The British Library, 2007.

208 pages, 140 illustrations. £30

In a recent review of a conference on Fashion and Jewellery, the reviewer commented that there is little illustration of dress before 1300. This study written by Margaret Scott, the distinguished historian of dress at the Courtauld Institute, provides a visual feast of costume illustration from 840 to 1570. The British Library (BL) is also to be congratulated, since while it provides about two thirds of the illustrations, it has also encouraged the author to include about a third of illustrations from non BL sources. Interestingly most of the non-BL illustrations fall before 1300 and after 1500.

The well-written text thus provides an excellent introduction to the history of dress not only in England but also in Europe, since the BL has such an excellent collection of European medieval manuscripts. The book functions in two ways. In addition to the continuous text of the five chapters, there are double pages on which the illustrations are gathered together with long captions

of some 60 words. The text contains much historical detail, and often more extended descriptions and background to the pictures so that both captions and text need to be read together. This occasionally makes for an awkwardness that could have been avoided with fully integrated photos. On the other hand, it does allow the illustrations to be reproduced at a large scale and, as far as I could judge, in reasonably accurate colour.

The bibliography (no foot or end notes – I would have loved to have the exact reference to cats collars in Naples on p. 148) and the glossary helps the reader who is unfamiliar with the subject. The relationship between the glossary and the index and the pages could be better. It would have been good to have page and picture numbers cited in the glossary so that the reader could be directed straight to the illustrations. There is no way the reader can know either from the Glossary or Index that Pellanda is well illustrated on fig 67. Admittedly dress items are to be found in the index but, for instance, riccio sopra riccio is in the glossary but not the index and it would have been helpful to have a reference to page 125. Sacci and rochet are neither in the glossary or index.

The bibliography is excellent and wide ranging. It is a curious comment on the divide between printed and online information sources, that the printed advertisement of the book encourages one to buy it at [www.bl.uk/shop](http://www.bl.uk/shop), but the bibliography eschews any mention of websites including the excellent BL Images Online, where the student of medieval dress can find many illustrations of dress, though one wishes there was more medieval material there.

There is not really space here to begin to discuss the views expressed by Margaret Scott on the relationship of illumination to the actual dress worn (and which has only survived very rarely), on the relationship of illumination to accounts such as in the coronation of King Charles V of France or the illustrations of the Roman de la Rose where visual description may be compared with textual description. All these and many other points of discussion make this an essential book for our member's bookshelves.

**Reviewed by John Cherry**

## **RECENT ARTICLES**

John H. Edmonds, 'Textile dyeing through the Ages' *Folk Life*, 42 (2003-4) pp 61-72.

June Swan and Lisa Monnas, 'The ankle boots and stockings of William of Waynflete, Bisop of Winchester (1395-1486)' in *Late Gothic England: Art and Display*, ed. Richard Marks, 2007, pp. 35-47.

## **RESEARCH GRANTS**

The Society of Antiquaries has established a fund in memory of Janet Arnold to help with the study of the history of dress Applications have to be in the end of the first week in January in the relevant year. For details see [www.sal.org.uk/grants/janetarnold.php](http://www.sal.org.uk/grants/janetarnold.php)

## **WEBSITES**

### ***The Lexis of Cloth and Clothing in Britain c.450-1450: Origins, Identification, Contexts and Change***

**A five year textile research project of the universities of Manchester and Birmingham**

Launched in November 2006, this project now has a website to document its progress at <http://lexisproject.arts.manchester.ac.uk>

The purpose of the project is to examine words pertaining to textiles and clothing in all the languages used in the British Isles in medieval times, to establish "hot links" to on-line dictionaries of those languages, and to illustrate the written entries with maps, pictures of surviving textiles and depictions from art.

Assistance is invited from interested parties in two ways:

- Suggestions for useful additions to the website;
- Contributions of lexicological information that could complement and extend the work of the research team would be particularly welcome.

For further information contact Brian W. Schneider –  
Admin.LexisProject@manchester.ac.uk

## **VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM**

### **Introductory tours and gallery talks**

If you have any questions about any of the events listed below, please call 020-7942-2211

#### **Daily introductory tours:**

These tours tell the history of the V&A and introduce a selection of its treasures.

Daily:           10.30 Introductory Tour  
                  11.30 Introductory Tour  
                  12.30 British Galleries Tour  
                  13.30 Introductory Tour  
                  14.30 British Galleries Tour  
                  15.30 Introductory Tour  
Wed only   16.30 Introductory Tour

All tours last approximately one hour and start at the Meeting Point in the Grand Entrance unless otherwise instructed. If you are hearing impaired, please ask the Information Desk for the sound enhancement equipment.

#### **Curator talks**

Free talks take place on Thursdays at 13.00 and Sundays at 15.00. Talks explore the wider context and history of the objects on display and are led by V&A staff. Meet at the Meeting Point in the Grand Entrance. Titles and names of speakers for each day of talks can be found by visiting What's On.

## **MEDATS FUTURE MEETINGS**

The committee has discussed widening the range of venues for future meetings, including the possibility of meetings in the North.

### **Autumn 2007 Meeting – October 27<sup>th</sup>**

*Archaeological Textiles from Northern Europe*

Courtauld Institute, Somerset House London WC2R 0RN

### **Spring 2008 Meeting – March 1<sup>st</sup>**

*Dress and Textiles for Formal Entries into Cities*

Courtauld Institute, Somerset House London WC2R 0RN

### **Summer 2008 Meeting: May 17<sup>th</sup>**

Annual General Meeting and *Aspects of Medieval Jewellery & Clothing*

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

*Tapestries: Design & Production*

Provisonal topics 2009:

### **Spring 2009 – March**

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

## **MEDATS WEBSITE**

The society website as been fully renovated, again thanks to Hilary Davidson. We hope you will find it more accessible and useful. **[www.medats.org.uk](http://www.medats.org.uk)**

## **MEDATS SUBSCRIPTIONS**

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

Members who do not pay regularly by Standing Order, or whose subscription payments for 2007 membership year, which were due on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007, have not already been received, have been sent individual subscription statements, indicating the sum owing. 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.

## **MEDATS COMMITTEE ADDRESSES**

**President** - Claude Blair OBE, 90, Links Road, Ashted, Surrey KT21 2HW.

**Chairman** - John Cherry, 58 Lancaster Road, London N4 4PT

**Hon. Secretary** - Karen Watts, Royal Armouries, Armouries Drive, Leeds LS10 1LT

**Treasurer** - Linda Woolley, 48 Castle Road, Rowlands Castle, Hampshire, PO9 6AS

**Membership Secretary** – Dr. Carol Chattaway, Bow Cottage, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 5BE

**Programme Secretary** - Dr. Jane Bridgeman, 2 Granville Square, London, WC1X 9PF.

**Newsletter Editor** - Dr. Timothy Dawson, 45 Bismarck Drive, Leeds LS11 6TB

**Publicity Secretary** - Sem Longhurst, Cedar Bank, Diamond Terrace, Greenwich, London, SE10 8QN

### **Non-Executive Committee Members**

Dr. Mary Hulton, 8 Oxley Drive, Coventry, CV3 6FB

Dr. Geoff Egan, Museum of London (SS), 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London, N1 7ED



**Dress at the Court of  
King Henry VIII**

MARIA HAYWARD

## MEDATS Autumn 2007 Meeting – October 27<sup>th</sup>

### *Medieval Archaeological textiles in north-western Europe: Recent Finds & Scholarship*

#### Four Speakers so far agreed:

- Hilary Davidson (Museum of London): 'Latvian textiles' (title to be confirmed)
- Elizabeth Heckett (Cork, Ireland): 'From rags to riches: a short commentary on Irish archaeological textiles from 7th to 16th centuries'
- Francis Pritchard (Whitworth Museum & Art Gallery Manchester): 'The Llangors textile (a 9th century linen garment with silk embroidery found in a lake near Brecon)' (title to be confirmed)
- Geoff Egan: 'Approving Lucchese Medieval silks. Seals of approval & recent London finds'

Still to be confirmed: A speaker from Denmark & a speaker from the Netherlands

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### BOOKING FORM

Autumn 2007 Meeting – October 27<sup>th</sup>

### *Medieval Archaeological textiles in north-western Europe: Recent Finds & Scholarship*

Courtauld Institute, Somerset House London WC2R 0RN

**To be returned BEFORE Friday 12th October**

to Sem Longhurst, Cedar Bank, Diamond Terrace, Greenwich, London, SE108QN

Tickets	Booking in advance	At the door
MEDATS members	£15	£20
Non-members	£25	£25
Non-members joining at the door		£15+Membership fee

- I wish to attend the above meeting and request ..... tickets for members  
..... tickets for non-members  
..... tickets for students
- I enclose a cheque for £
- I enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for my MEDATS ticket(s).

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Post Code .....

Phone: ..... Date: .....

Email: .....