The Medieval Dress and Textile Society

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Editorial

Difficult times. Your committee has been giving a great deal of thought to how to strengthen the society, and has had some very useful suggestions from members. (But do keep them coming!) One very promising idea is for the society to put out some publications, although, of course, that will require material for us to publish.

Speaking of material to publish – Newsletter contributions please!!!!!!

The trend for receiving the newsletter as a PDF file by e-mail is gaining strength. The advantages to you are colour, and getting it at least a week before the print version would arrive. The advantage to MEDATS is a reduction in our costs. You may e-mail me via medatseditor@hotmail.co.uk to arrange this method of delivery.

Otherwise, information about MEDATS and application forms may be had from the Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 948 Guildford GU1 9AH, of from the society website: www.medats.org.uk

Timothy Dawson

Cover picture: *The Flight into Egypt* (c. 1510) Flanders. National Gallery of Victoria, acc. no. 1344-D4.

Collections

The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV)

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

The NVG has a not inconsiderable collection of textiles and clothing. Most of it dates from the seventeenth century to modern fashion, but there are a few medieval gems. In addition to the tapestry on the cover, and other items, there is also a very interesting set of sixteenth-century doublet and Venetians pieced together from offcuts all of the same brocaded cloth.

Contacts and further information
Phone +61 3 8620 2222. Fax +61 3 8620 2555. enquiries@ngv.vic.gov.au
Web http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/

Hours
The Ian Potter Centre:NGV Australia
Open 10am-5pm. Until 9pm Thursdays. Closed Mondays except public holidays
NGV International, 180 St Kilda Road
Open 10am-5pm. Closed Tuesdays, except public holidays.
Open public holidays except Christmas Day, Good Friday, and limited hours on Anzac Day (open 1–5pm).

Recommendations and suggestions of institutions in Britain and abroad can be sent to the Editor, medatseditor@hotmail.co.uk, or by post to 45 Bismarck Drive, Leeds LS11 6TB.

EXHIBITIONS

Islamic Textiles

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva
Now until 19th April 2009

An exhibition of medieval textiles with costumes and fragments in wool, linen, silk, and cotton, painted and printed and worked as tapestries and embroideries.
http://www.ville-ge.ch/mah/index.php

Byzantium 330–1453

Royal Academy, London
Now on until 22nd March 2009

Highlighting the splendours of the Enduring Roman Empire, the exhibition **Byzantium 330–1453** will comprise around 300 objects including icons, detached wall paintings, micro-mosaics, ivories, enamels plus gold and silver metalwork. Some of the works have never been displayed in public before.

This epic exhibition has been made possible through a collaboration between the Royal Academy of Arts and the Benaki Museum, Athens.

Tickets
Adults £12, Concessions (seniors, disabled, NADFAS etc) £10, Students £8, Corporate Guests £8, Income support, unwaged £4, Children 12-18 years old £4, Children 8-11, £3, Under 7 years old free.
Tickets may be purchased in person at the RA Ticket Desk, on the day or in advance of the visit. Advance tickets are also available by telephone on 0870 8488484.

Exhibition opening times
Open to public – 10am–6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Late night openings – Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

Charles the Bold (1433–1477)

Groeningemuseum, Brugge. www.museabrugge.be
27th March 2009 – 21st July 2009

Two of our members who visited this exhibition when it was held at Bern in Switzerland described it as "one of the best exhibitions ever". So it is a good thing for those of us who missed it the first time, that we have a second chance! Further details can be found on
http://www.bhm.ch/en/ausstellungen_sonder_uebersicht.cfm

Rogier van der Weyden 1400-1464

Louvain,
20th September 2009 to 6th December 2009

This is the chance of a lifetime to discover or rediscover one of the greatest Flemish Primitives. A prestigious exhibition about a master painter with an exceptional talent for portraying emotion. More than 100 masterpieces on loan from major European and American collections - including works which last saw Flanders over five centuries ago.

Further information http://www.rogiervanderweyden.be/en

Conferences Forthcoming

Understanding Dress History in the 21st century: An investigation of approaches to dress and textiles
Friday 30 January, 10am – 5pm
Lecture Theatre, V&A Museum, London, U.K.

This conference of the **Early Modern European Dress and Textiles Research Network** is the culmination of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded two-year investigation. An increasing number of scholars in different disciplines are now turning to dress and textiles and their histories in order to better understand the multiplicity of meanings that they offered in different parts of Europe between 1500 and 1800. Their study often involves archival work and literary analysis. At the same time those involved in preserving and displaying these items, and those concerned with reconstructing dress (often for theatrical purposes) have developed a much deeper understanding of the material qualities of Early Modern dress and textiles – what they were made from and how. The network brought these researchers, who often work in very diverse settings and with very different sources, together over a two-year period.
The conference fulfills two aims of the Network: to bring together scholars and practitioners working with early modern dress and textiles in different disciplines and settings to identify common areas of understanding and to develop new research tools; and to debate common practical and theoretical problems concerning early modern dress and textiles.

Provisional Programme

9.15 Registration
10.00 Welcome
Session 1 - *Dress Through Documents*

Session 2 – *Dress as Object*
Questions
12.30 Round Table Presentations – *Recent Doctoral Work*

1.00 Lunch

2.00 Session 3 – *Dress and Performance*
3.30 Questions
3.45 Round Table - *The Future of Dress & Textile History*
4.30 Summary
5.00 Close
Opportunity to visit *Magnificence of the Tsars* exhibition

A full programme will be circulated nearer the date

The conference is free to pre-booked delegates including tea, coffee and lunch.

Further information and Booking

Bookings must be made by 20th January 2009 and numbers are limited.
For further information, queries or booking please contact:

Hilary Davidson
Network Facilitator, EMDTRN Conference
Dept. of English and Drama
Queen Mary, University of London
Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS
h.davidson@qmul.ac.uk

The 44th International Congress on Medieval Studies.
Kalamazoo, U.S.A. May 7th - May 10th 2009

DISTAFF (Discussion, Interpretation and Study of Textile Arts, Fabrics and Fashion) will be sponsoring four sessions:
1) Techniques with Thread;
2) Heroes, Ladies and Fools;
3) Inside and Outside the Church;
4) Long Ago and Far Away.

Further details from Robin@netherton.net or www.distaff.org

Henry VIII and the Tudor Court, 1509-2009

13th - 15th July 2009
Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey, Surrey, U.K.

3-day academic conference to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's accession. To honour the occasion, Historic Royal Palaces, along with Kingston University London and Oxford Brookes University, will host a three-day international conference at Hampton Court Palace on 13 – 15 July 2009.

The conference will be interdisciplinary, drawing on history, literature, music, art, textiles, architecture and theology. It will focus particularly on the fashioning of Henry VIII's court, including the occasion, itinerancy and material culture of the Tudor court (particularly relating to Hampton Court Palace), the European context of Henry VIII's reign, biography, and image, whilst also situating Henry as the sacral monarch around whom it all revolved, and honouring his continuing legacy.

The conference will feature a number of keynote speakers, including:

- Prof. G.W. Bernard (Professor of Early Modern History, University of Southampton)
- Dr Susan Brigden (Reader in History, Lincoln College, Oxford)
- Prof. Eamon Duffy (Professor of the History of Christianity, Magdalene College, Cambridge)
- Dr Maria Hayward (Reader in Early Modern History, University of Southampton)
- Prof. Greg Walker (Masson Professor of English Literature, University of Edinburgh)
- Dr David Starkey, CBE

It will also include a roundtable on image and iconography led by Prof. Dale Hoak (Chancellor Professor of History, The College of William and Mary, Virginia) with Prof. John N. King (Professor of English and Religious Studies, (Ohio State University), Dr Tatiana String (Lecturer in the History of Art, Bristol University) and Dr Tarnya Cooper (Sixteenth Century Curator, National Portrait Gallery).

Topics to be discussed

- Continuities with the Late Medieval past
- The occasion of court
- The ceremony of court
- New directions on Henry's Queens
- Music and the Reformation
- Royal education
- Architecture and the court
- Patronage and gift-giving
- Itinerancy and the itinerary of Henry VIII
- Painting at the Tudor court
- Thomas More and humanism
- Courtly biography - A European court?
- Display and disorder: using material culture
- Gender and power at the Tudor court
- Measuring Henry VIII's legacy
- Plays and playwrights at the Tudor court

Tickets

Conference tickets will be available to buy online from 19 January 2009. The full ticket price is £239 plus VAT. This does not include accommodation. Day tickets, at £90 plus VAT a day, will be available to purchase from 2 March 2009.

Further Information

http://www.hrp.org.uk/HamptonCourtPalace/WhatsOn/Default/Henryconference2009.aspx?EventDate=13/07/2009&Step=View

International Medieval Congress

Leeds, UK,
13th - 16th July, 2009

The theme for 2009 is "Heresy and Orthodoxy". There will be sessions on textiles, notably on **Copes and Cloaks, and Decoration and Disguise**

Future dates are 12th - 15th July, 2010 and 11th - 14th July, 2011.

Conference Report

MEDATS Autumn meeting 2008
Courtauld Institute, London
4th October 2008

Our Autumn Meeting did suffer somewhat from the recent instability in our organisation (We still need a Program Secretary) and a delayed newsletter. Karen Watts stepped in a did a valiant job of not only organising the event, but giving a paper herself and assisting another speaker.
All the papers provided, if nothing else, a feast for the eyes, but reminded all of the need and opportunity for much more research on the masses of material that are in this country's numerous collections.
The highlight of the day was undoubtedly Karen's own paper on the cloth of gold brigandine belonging to Henry VIII in the Royal Armouries collection. Following one gorgeous picture of all that gold after another, the greatest gasp of admiration was elicited by the sight of an original point and aiglet. Where else would that happen!

Publications

John Edmonds, 'Imperial purple dye'.
Journal of the Association of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers, December 2008.

Bettina Niekamp and Angieszka Wos Jucker, *Das Prunkkleid des Kurfürsten Moritz von Sachsen (1521-1553) in der Dresdner Rüstkammer, (Dokumentation - Restaurierung – Konservierung)*
Abegg-Stiftung. 2008,
184 pages, 136 illustrations.
Other authors: Jutta Charlotte von Bloh and Anna Jolly.

The Rüstkammer (Armoury) of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (Dresden State Art Galleries) has a splendid collection of court dress of the Electors of Saxony for the 16th and 17th centuries, including inner and outer clothes, hats, gloves and shoes.

The oldest court costume dating from the Renaissance period to have been preserved in its entirety is that of the Elector Moritz of Saxony (1521-1553). It is a full ensemble comprising a type of short coat with dense pleats and fashionably puffed and hanging sleeves, a yellow silk doublet and trunk-hose with yellow leather stockings *ensuite*.

The whole outfit was lent to the Abegg Foundation of Switzerland (http://www.abegg-stiftung.ch/e/abegg.html) and was fully examined and conserved in their conservation workshops before being put on display in the exhibition ***Bourgeois Pride and Princely Splendour. Costumes from the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century*** (20th April – 2nd November 2008).

The results of the research are published in this richly illustrated catalogue. The text is in German and presents a detailed analysis of the composition of the garments. A particular rare and welcome strength of the book are the patterns showing the structure of each piece.

The conservation work is fully described and includes tables of the fibre analysis. There are also chapters on the provenance of the pieces and on the Elector Moritz (Maurice) himself. The dating criteria and comparative analysis

on contemporary garments are particularly useful. Of the 136 illustrations, most are in colour. The quality of the full colour illustrations of the objects themselves is exceptional. There is also a full bibliography.

Lisa Monnas, Merchants, Princes and Painters: Silk Fabrics in Italian and Northern Paintings, 1300–1550
Yale University Press, 2009
ISBN 978-0-300-11117-0

Covering a period that witnessed the flowering of the Renaissance and the major expansion of the Italian silk industry, this volume examines silk fabrics depicted in paintings from Italy, England and the Netherlands over the course of 250 years. Through a close study of the workshop practice and techniques of the artists who represented these fabrics, Lisa Monnas offers a masterly evaluation of the paintings as source material for classifying surviving textiles. Dealing with an exceptionally long period, she considers a large number of examples in greater depth than has ever been attempted, and gives particular attention to the identification of historic textile types and their weave structure.
420pp, 100 b/w and 150 colour illustrations.

Michel Pastoureau: Black: The History of a Colour
(Translated from French by Jody Gladding)
Princeton University Press 2008
216 pp. 106 color illus.

Black--favourite colour of priests and penitents, artists and ascetics, fashion designers and fascists--has always stood for powerfully opposed ideas: authority and humility, sin and holiness, rebellion and conformity, wealth and poverty, good and bad. In this beautiful and richly illustrated book, the acclaimed author of *Blue* now tells the fascinating social history of the colour black in Europe.
In the beginning was black, Michel Pastoureau tells us. The archetypal colour of darkness and death, black was associated in the early Christian period with hell and the devil but also with monastic virtue. In the medieval era, black became the habit of courtiers and a hallmark of royal luxury. Black took on new meanings for early modern Europeans as they began to print words and images in black and white, and to absorb Isaac Newton's announcement that black was no colour after all. During the romantic period, black was melancholy's friend, while in the twentieth century black (and white) came to dominate art, print, photography, and film, and was finally restored to the status of a true colour.
For Pastoureau, the history of any colour must be a social history first because it is societies that give colours everything from their changing names to their changing meanings--and black is exemplary in this regard. In dyes, fabrics, and clothing, and in painting and other art works, black has always been a forceful--and ambivalent--shaper of social, symbolic, and ideological meaning in European societies.
With its striking design and compelling text, *Black* will delight anyone who is interested in the history of fashion, art, media, or design.

Michel Pastoureau is a historian and director of studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études de la Sorbonne in Paris. He is the author of many books, including *Blue: The History of a Colour* (Princeton) and *The Devil's Cloth: A History of Stripes*.

Research Grants

Janet Arnold Fund

Although by the time you read this the January deadline for applications to the Janet Arnold fund of the Society of Antiquaries has passed, it is not too late top plan your application for 2009. Details of the fund and the grants that it can give for the study of dress may be found at the Society of Antiquaries website. Further information can be found on http://www.sal.org.uk/grants/janetarnold.

MEDATS Future Meetings

Call for Papers
The committee would welcome proposals for papers or themes for future MEDATS meetings.

We would particularly from, or about, people working on the following subjects: **fur, black, checks, and stripes.**

Help!

In addition, we would most eagerly like to hear from anyone who would be interested in organising a meeting on any theme whatsoever! The question of who is to organise our meetings is one of the reasons why our future meeting schedule tends to be in a state of flux from one newsletter to the next.

Provisional topics 2009:

Summer 2009 Meeting: May
Annual General Meeting and *Henry VIII: Textiles and Clothing for a Renaissance Monarch*

Autumn 2009 Meeting: October
Aspects of Jewellery & Clothing
Including Elizabeth Heckett, 'The Limerick Mitre'.

Provisional topics 2010:

We hope to return to three meetings in 2010.

Spring Meeting: February
Underwear/linens against the skin

Summer Meeting: May
Quilting (to coordinate with the V&A exhibition, 'Quilts' March-July)

Autumn Meeting: October
Tapestries

Future topics

Reconstruction, Re-enactment, Living History
Dyes
Dress and Textiles for Coronations

MEDATS Subscriptions

Information about MEDATS and application forms may be had from the Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 948 Guildford GU1 9AH, of from the society website: www.medats.org.uk

Annual subscriptions (payable in pounds sterling only) run from 1st January – 31st 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.

The Cloisters, New York: Cope, Spanish, 1430's

The internet can be a great morass of rubbish, but we can be thankful for enthusiasts who will visit places we might not readily get to, such and put their photos into cyberspace. http://www.silverdragon.org/SABINE/cloistext.html gives often very detailed pitures of medieval textile and garments in the Metropolitan Museum's Cloisters Museum.

MEDATS Committee Addresses

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