
The Medieval Dress and Textile Society

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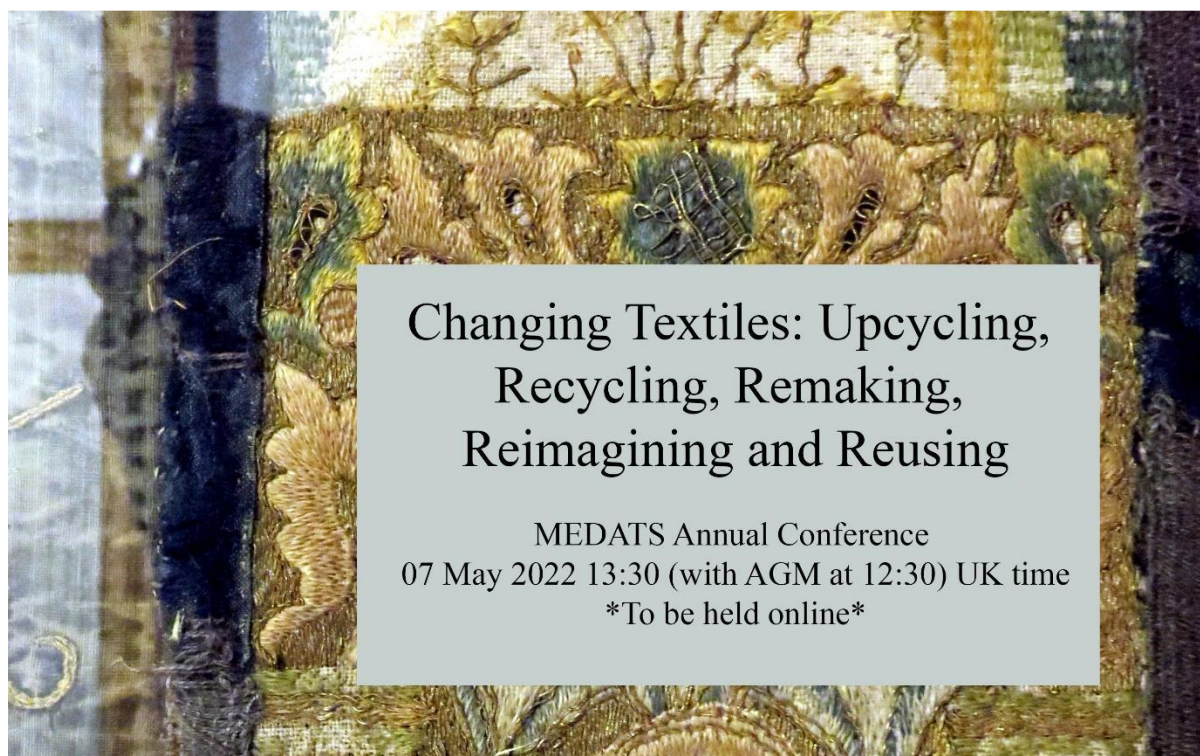


Tapestry, c.1525. Fight Between a Falcon and a Heron. Burrell Collection, Glasgow. (CC-BY-NC)

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Abstracts for our forthcoming conference



Amica Sundström and Maria Neijman – Historical Textiles
The reuse of medieval gilt-leather embroideries in seal bags

There are 14 preserved gilt-leather embroideries from the Middle Ages in Sweden and Finland. In this paper we will shed light on further examples that can be found in medieval seal bags. This increases the number of known examples of gilt-leather embroideries and precedes the previous dating for these kinds of embroidery. In the National Archives of Sweden (Riksarkivet) collections there are a number of medieval documents with associated

seals. In order to protect the wax seal, these have been sewn into a textile wrapping, a seal bag. The documents and the textiles can be linked to an exact date and to a context. The bags are often in excellent condition since they have been sheltered from sunlight and pests such as moths, even though they are 700 years old. By studying these seal bags in the National Archives we can draw new conclusions about the idea of reusing, even very magnificent, gilt-leather embroideries as wrapping for seals on legal documents.

Ingela Wahlberg – Textile Studies, Uppsala University

Reused, recycled, reshaped and rehomed – fifteenth-century silk velvets with traces of squares, from Vadstena Abbey

During the fifteenth century silk and silk velvets were often used as a background to, for example, Maria and the child Jesus in paintings. The silks were often patterned with a kind of square design, as if the fabric had been folded and manipulated. During research work with textiles from Vadstena Abbey, several examples of these kinds of squared silk velvets were found, preserved as vestments. The analyses have partly been done with the USB-microscope. This paper will predominantly discuss the silk velvets reused in the liturgical textiles made in Vadstena Abbey in comparison with paintings depicting squared silks. The silk velvets from about 15 liturgical textiles can be traced back to two bolts of imported velvets, using the pattern. The Brigittine nuns produced liturgical textiles for the many altars in the abbey church. After the Reformation the textiles were sent to other churches and today we can count about 70 textile objects that can be traced back to the production in the abbey.

Jaana Ratas – Tartu University

Tracing the life cycle of late medieval garments: study of archaeological textile finds from Estonian towns

This paper is based on the late medieval sewing waste archaeologically revealed in the towns of Estonia. The research includes about 200 woollen textile fragments with a total of 325 seams. Most of the textile fragments originate from the recycling of garments, during which the seams and worn-out parts of the garments were cut off and thrown away. Sewing waste provides good information about consumption habits, and sometimes helps to identify the objects. Wear marks and seams should be studied together. Wear marks on the surface of broadcloth are clearly visible as its surface is napped and the nap disappears in the process of wear. This paper will show that the clothes were re-made and re-cycled two or more times before they ended in cesspits. The worn-out surface of the fabric was turned inside, and the less worn, inner side turned outside. Totally worn or ragged parts of the garments, for example the soles or foot parts of the hose, were cut off and replaced with new ones. Fabric from the outer layer of a garment could be used as a lining when it had lost its nap from both sides.

Challe Hudson – BAC Stitch: the Bacton Altar Cloth Research Group

Title: Digitally reconstructing the embroidered fabric that became the Bacton Altar Cloth

The Bacton Altar Cloth, recently conserved and displayed in the exhibit 'The Lost Dress of Elizabeth I' at Hampton Court Palace, is a unique survival of a highly embellished luxury textile created *circa* 1600. The manner of its construction strongly suggests that the pieces of embroidered fabric that make up the Altar Cloth have had at least one previous life as part of a different textile object, which has been cut up and stitched together to form the table cover as we see it now. Studying digital images of the front and back of the Bacton Altar Cloth, this research attempted to identify visible traces of this history, and determine what that object could have been. After computer software was used to map its embroidered motifs, seams, selvages, and patterns of excessive wear, the pieced fabric of the table cover was digitally separated into its component parts and virtually reconstructed to form the shape of the panels that were cut down to create the Bacton Altar Cloth. The traces of past uses and reuses of this fabric help reconstruct its history and illustrate the enduring value of luxury textiles in the early modern era, when even the most elite persons might welcome a recycled object.

Helen Elletson – William Morris Society

Title: Bringing the 'Arabian Nights' to Hammersmith: William Morris's reimagining of historic Persian carpets

In 1876, William Morris wrote to his daughter May about an oriental carpet he had recently added to his already extensive collection, 'It will make you feel as if you are in the Arabian Nights'. Morris's great appreciation of Persian carpets led to him not only collecting them and advising the South Kensington Museum on purchasing the finest examples, but went as far as attempting to bring the art of the east to his own home when he began manufacturing hand-knotted rugs at Kelmscott House in Hammersmith.

This paper will explore Morris's own outstanding collection of Persian carpets, how he displayed them in his homes, his role as historic textile adviser to the South Kensington Museum, and his successful endeavours at mastering the ancient art of weaving himself. It was the latter which resulted in Morris's ground-breaking role when founding the Hammersmith carpet workshops and thereby creating the highly-prized works of art that emulated the exquisite patterns and profound beauty of the historic Persian carpet.

Katherine Diuguid – Independent Scholar and Textile Artist

Reimagining the Woman Clothed with the Sun

Drawing inspiration from the Douce Apocalypse and the Trinity Apocalypse manuscripts, 'The Red Dragon Lurks in Front of the Woman Clothed with the Sun' reimagines the 7-headed dragon's arrival in the story of the Woman of Revelation 12. Both Anglo-Norman manuscripts overlook this moment of the story, providing an opening for artistic interpretation. While utilizing traditional embroidery techniques, this embroidered panel blends the Anglo-Norman aesthetic influences while providing visual commentary through the gaze of a modern female artist.

In addition to discussing the medieval Apocalypse manuscripts that served as aesthetic inspiration, this paper will also discuss medieval ecclesiastical textiles that provided technical inspiration. It will focus on the design and creation of the Woman Clothed with the Sun in the embroidered panel, and by focusing the discussion on this complicated character, it will illustrate how medieval art from other mediums can inspire the creation of new textile artifacts that are both faithful to the medieval inspiration and the artist's contemporary voice.

James Clark – University of Exeter and **Emma Slocombe** – National Trust



Hardwick Hall textile. Photo ©National Trust

Textile Transmissions: the recovery, recycling and reinvention of church vestments through the social networks of the English Reformation

This paper introduces Textile Transmissions, a collaborative project exploring the recovery, recycling and reinvention of church vestments through the social networks of the English Reformation. It centres on Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, the seat, and vision, of Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury (c. 1527-1608). Better known as 'Bess of Hardwick', she furnished the interiors of this architectural masterpiece with rich textiles that signified her wealth and social status. Bess's great

furnishing schemes, initially for Chatsworth and then at Hardwick (recorded in 1601), were in fact founded on medieval textiles which had originated as priests' vestments and altar hangings in the collections of churches of all kinds before the Tudor Reformation. The dissolution of the monasteries (1536-1540) and later phases of reform had removed these fabrics from their original setting and function and offered them up for adaptation and re-use. Luxurious velvets and 'cloth of gold' were refashioned into great hangings for beds and walls. Embroidered figures, fine examples of English craft skill, first made to decorate copes, hoods and orphreys, were recovered and rearranged for interior design. Textile Transmissions was prompted by the need to develop a deeper understanding of Bess's collecting practice and its significance in the cultural and social context and ideological climate of Tudor England. The paper presents the project's initial findings and efforts to close gaps in knowledge by connecting surviving textiles with the archival record to reveal the lost life story of the recycled and refashioned.



Learning Through Reconstruction

MEDATS Study Day
Saturday 29th October 2022
10am - 5pm, Lancaster Hall Hotel
35 Craven Terrace, London W2 3EL
IN PERSON EVENT

(Image: historical garment reconstruction, sleeve detail. Photo credit: Ninya Mikhaila).

Call for Papers

The Medieval Dress and Textile Society invites proposals for 20 minute papers on the theme of 'Learning Through Reconstruction', relating to research and study performed through, or supported by, the reconstruction of dress and textiles of the period c.400 – c.1625.

Presentations may include works in progress, finished reconstruction projects or planned projects, on any type of clothing or textiles including armour and furnishings. In particular, this conference will aim to promote papers which demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Rigorous and detailed use of remaking practices as a component of scholarly study.
- Close study of surviving dress and textile artefacts.
- Theoretical examination of the value and use of reconstruction, remaking, experimental archaeology or re-enactment study in the field of dress and textile history.
- 'Embodied' research practices.
- Interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary research.
- Innovative collaboration between researchers from different approaches and backgrounds (e.g. 'hands-on' makers and 'hands-off' academics working together in new ways).

TO APPLY:

Please submit a 200 word (approx.) abstract explaining the subject matter of your paper to Events Secretary, Natalie Bramwell-Booth, at events@medats.org.uk, by 29 July 2022.

New MEDATS Email List

We are about to start using MailChimp to send newsletters and other official announcements from the Society. You will receive an invitation to join the list and must click the link to complete the process. If you have any questions or difficulties, please contact webmaster@medats.org.uk.

Dress and Textile Collections You Know and Love

The MEDATS website is about to undergo a redesign, and we'd like to include suggestions from you. We will list locations worldwide with collections related to medieval textiles or dress, including but not limited to armour, decorative textiles, fashion, textile manufacturing, inventories of clothing, and archaeological finds. Collections with online exhibitions and databases are particularly useful. Please send a brief description of your favourite institutions and the scope of their relevant collections to: suggestions@medats.org.uk.

Cover Image – The Burrell Collection

The Burrell Collection, closed for five years for refurbishment, reopened on the 29th March. Sir William Burrell (1861–1958), a noted collector of late Gothic and early Renaissance European art, including magnificent tapestries and stained glass, donated his 9,000 item collection to the City of Glasgow in 1944. The cover image is one of the many tapestries in the collection. Dated to c.1525 it depicts a Fight between a Falcon and a Heron. An aristocratic gentleman in a voided velvet short gown astride a white horse with tasselled bridle looks up at a heron fighting a falcon. On the left a falconer in a dark red velvet short gown wearing a falconry glove whirls a lure above his head. On the right a man raises his right arm. Set in a landscape with a castle in the background, forests and rural buildings in the mid-ground and a pond with ducks and dog sat looking up in the foreground.

The Burrell Collection, Pollok Country Park, 2060 Pollokshaws Rd, Bellahouston, Glasgow G43 1AT

Symposium available via Zoom

Rethinking the Wearable in the Middle Ages

Zoom / 38 West 86th Street, Lecture Hall, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, United States.
April 28–29, 2022. Contact: academicevents@bgc.bard.edu

Further information at <https://www.bgc.bard.edu/events/1340/28-apr-2022-symposium-rethinking>

This conference seeks to expand our current understanding of the wearable in the Middle Ages. Current scholarship on the topic in Byzantine, western medieval, Eurasian art, as well as Islamic traditions tends to encompass clothing and jewellery, and is frequently medium-specific, with minimal regard to the interrelatedness of different aspects of appearance. On the one hand, work on medieval textiles has tended to approach questions of identity, consumption, and appearance by comparing textual sources and visual depictions with surviving textiles. The study of medieval jewellery, on the other hand, largely focuses on the classification and attribution of precious metal pieces from excavations and museum collections, as scholars make sense of pieces long removed from the bodies they once adorned. Tattoos, prosthetics, cosmetics and headgear are almost entirely absent in our understandings of medieval dress practices. This separation was not always so, however, and indeed nineteenth-century art historians such as Gottfried Semper integrated all aspects of bodily adornment in their considerations of the nature of ornamentation and surface decoration.

New Online Book

Burgundian Black: Re-Working Early Modern Colour Technologies

Boulboulé, Jenny and Sven Dupré. *Burgundian Black: Reworking Early Modern Colour Technologies*. Santa Barbara: EMC Imprint, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.55239/bb001>

The book is published online under a CC-BY-NC license and can be found at:
<https://burgundianblack.tome.press/>

Edited by Jenny Boulboulé and Sven Dupré as part of the ERC ARTECHNE Project, *Burgundian Black* is an open access work of multimedia scholarship exploring the significance and production of black dyes and pigments in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands. It has a selection of essays and multimedia contributions:-

Claudy Jongstra - Reinterprets Burgundian Black: An Essay in Images

Samuel Mareel & Marijke Wiene - Displaying and Experiencing Burgundian Black in Museum Hof Van Busleyden

Paula Hohti - Power, Black Clothing, and the Chromatic Politics of Textiles in Renaissance Europe

Sophie Jolivet - The Construction of an Image: Philip the Good in Black (1419-1467)

Jo Kirby - Material Realities of Dyeing Black: Trade in Colorants in Europe c. 1400–1700

Natalia Ortega Saez & Vincent Cattersel - Reworking Black Dye Technologies of the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands: Three Types of Black Dyeing

Art Proaño Gaibor & Chrystel Brandenburgh - Remaking Black Silk/Wool Stockings

Erma Hermens & Suzan Meijer - Colouring Black in Fabric and Paint

Anne-Laure Van Bruaene - Deuil d'Europe: Lucas d'Heere's World Gone Black

Jessie Wei-Hsuan Chen - Before Black There Was Red: the Madder Illustration Woodblock for the Herbals of Rembert Dodoens (1517-1585)

Jenny Boulboullé - Illuminating Burgundian Black Splendours

Birgit Reissland - Black Colour Technologies for Burgundian Illuminators

Birgit Reissland - A Practical Guide to the Production of Black Pigments, 1350-1700

EXHIBITIONS

Iron Men: Fashion in Steel

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 29th March to 26th June 2022

Further details at <https://ironmen.khm.at/>

This exhibition brings together some of the most spectacular examples of European Renaissance armour from museum collections worldwide including the Wallace Collection, London and the Metropolitan Museum New York, as well as rarely exhibited highlights from the Imperial Armoury in Vienna. This exhibition of 170 objects at the Kunsthistorisches Museum hopes to shed new light on the role played by armourers in the culture of the Renaissance. Shields, helmets and full suits of armour will be displayed alongside paintings, textiles and sculptures to argue that armour was by no means merely functional, but played an important role in the creation of cultural identity.

Our chairman Ninya Mikhaila will be joining Stephan Krause, curator of the exhibition, and Toby Capwell from the Wallace Collection for an #artaperitivo Instagram live talk on Tuesday 12 April.



Above: Kolman Helmschmid (1471-1532), The Landsknecht armour of Wilhelm von Rogendorf (1481-1541), Augsburg, dated 1523 Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Social Fabrics: Inscribed Textiles from Medieval Egyptian Tombs

Exhibition University Research Gallery Harvard Art Museums. January 22, 2022–May 8, 2022

The exhibition's core fabrics date from the ninth through twelfth centuries. Most were produced in Egypt and belong to the prized category of tiraz textiles. Bearing state-controlled inscriptions, tiraz represent a privileged network headed by the caliph, the temporal and spiritual ruler of the Islamic world. They were distributed not on the open market, but as gifts to favoured courtiers and officials. For further information on the exhibition go to <https://harvardartmuseums.org/exhibitions/5836/social-fabrics-inscribed-textiles-from-medieval-egyptian-tombs> There is also a published catalogue with the same title, edited by Mary McWilliams and Jochen Sokoly and distributed by Yale U.P. ISBN: 9780300260090, £45 (\$45)

Below: Cleveland Museum of Art. Cushion cover with tiraz inscription, Egypt, early 9th century. Wool and linen: tapestry weave. Cleveland Museum of Art, J. H. Wade Fund, 1959.48, TL42343.6.



Royal School of Needlework: Crown to Catwalk

Exhibition at the Fashion and Textile Museum, London 1st April- 4th September 2022

2022 marks the 150th anniversary of the Royal School of Needlework (RSN), in celebration of this prestigious milestone the RSN will hold a major exhibition and publish a beautiful keepsake book. Published by ACC Art Books to coincide with the RSN's 150th anniversary *An Unbroken Thread – Celebrating 150 years of the Royal School of Needlework*, covers the remarkable history of the Royal School of Needlework from inception through to present day. The book also accompanies the RSN's exhibition *150 Years of the Royal School of Needlework: Crown to Catwalk*. In the book curator, archivist and current chief executive of the organisation, Dr Susan Kay Williams, explores the organisation's fascinating history, highlighting the key people involved, royal and other special commissions, and how it has continued to evolve with changing fashions over the decades, including its approach to teaching hand embroidery. The book also examines the RSN's associations with everyone from the arts and crafts designers, society ladies and theatre impresarios of the late 19th century, to its more recent collaborations with contemporary fashion designers such as Patrick Grant and Alexander McQueen. The exhibition, at the Fashion and Textile Museum, will present collaborations with the great names of the Arts and Crafts movement, commissions produced for the British royal family, contemporary works created for top, international designers, and pieces by the RSN's talented students. It will be an in-depth retrospective, presenting textiles from the RSN's 5,000-piece archive, alongside examples from museums and collections across the UK.

The Tudors: Passion, Power and Politics

Exhibitions at the Holburne Museum, Bath, until 8th May 2022 and at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool from the 21st May 2022 to 29th August

This exhibition was developed in a partnership with the National Portrait Gallery and National Museums Liverpool, and includes some of the most iconic images in British painting, including the 'Darnley' and 'Armada' portraits of Elizabeth I. Several of the works have never been shown outside London, including a portrait of Jane Seymour after Hans Holbein the Younger and the highly unusual Sir Henry Unton (c.1558–1596) portrait, which was painted posthumously and charts key moments in his life and death. Beginning with the oldest painting in the NPG's collection, a 1505 portrait of the first Tudor king, Henry VII, the exhibition follows the family's successive generations and their courtiers, including the Protestant spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham (c.1585) and Nicholas Hilliard's dashing miniature portrait of Sir Walter Raleigh (c.1585).

The exhibition at the Holburne has only 25 portraits, when it travels to Liverpool more material will be added with almost seventy works from the National Portrait Gallery, a selection of additional loans, and paintings from the Walker Art Gallery's collection.

MEDATS COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

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Web master

MEDATS SUBSCRIPTIONS

Information about MEDATS and application forms may be had from the Membership Secretary, Linde Merrick, or from the society website: www.medats.org.uk.

Annual subscriptions (payable in pounds sterling only) run from 1st January – 31st December
£15 Individual members worldwide;¹

(£6 paper newsletter surcharge for Europe, £9 for worldwide outside Europe)

£20 Households worldwide (2 members);²

(paper surcharges as above)

£10 Student members worldwide (with proof of status);

(paper surcharges as above)

£30 Institutions irrespective of location;

(paper surcharges as above)

Notes

1: Members may stand for office within the Society, vote in meetings and elections, and gain a discount on attendance at meetings. Within the UK the newsletter is usually available electronically as a PDF file to the recorded email address, or on paper by request.

2: One copy of the newsletter will be sent whichever mode is employed, but both named members enjoy the full range of rights and privileges.

Bank details: Lloyds TSB, 109 Finsbury Pavement, London EC2A 1LB

Account name: *Medieval Dress and Textile Society*

Sort Code: 30-95-74 Account Number: 24025468

To pay online via Paypal go to www.medats.org.uk

CANCELLATION POLICY FOR EVENTS

A full refund will be given if a cancellation is made 30 days or more before the event.

Refunds for cancellations made at shorter notice will be given on a discretionary basis dependant on whether the ticket can be resold or not. The final decision will be made by the treasurer.