The Medieval Dress and Textile Society

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Image above from a 15th century French manuscript edition of the Decameron.
Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France
https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7100018t/f663.item

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Forthcoming Zoom Talk - Beds and Bedding c.1350-1600, by Pat Poppy

This will be a very general look at beds and bedding across the later medieval period. It will cover all levels of society. Some of it will focus on information from wills and from 16th century probate inventories.

This is an experiment after the success of the Zoom Conference. The Zoom talk and discussion will be at 15.00 GMT on the 28th November 2020. You will need a Zoom account and you will need to register at the link we provide. You will get an emailed link to the meeting directly from Zoom, so you will need to watch for that. The link will take you to registration, not to the meeting.

https://tinyurl.com/bedsandbedding

Above: The Great Bed of Ware, Victoria and Albert Museum. Photo by Pat Poppy

From the Textiles at Home Conference

Linen Clothing in the Howard Household Accounts, 1464-1484, by Sarah Thursfield

[The Cover image for this issue is, according to Sarah "the nun who put her confessor's pants on her head during a nocturnal crisis", and it is rather special.
https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7100018t/f663.item]

The four surviving Household Books of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk were first transcribed and published by the Roxburghe Club in 1844, reissued by Sutton Publishing in 1992. They

cover a vast range of business, but I have transcribed fifty pages of clothing and textile references, and one reason for presenting this paper is to alert our members that I'm very happy to share the file for research use, as there is much to be studied.

The information on clothing far from complete and there is much more of men's dress than women's. It shows the extent of trade, from the local to international, and the complexity of the suppliers and makers involved. Some of the linen appears to be locally produced, though probably not on the estate itself; most was purchased from local merchants, from 'brown cloth' at 2d. to 4d. the ell (45") to 'Holland' at 5d. to 7 ½d, and just a few pieces of 'lawne' at up to 10s. On a visit to Calais in 1466 Howard laid in a huge supply of linen piece-goods, much of which was probably destined for sheets and other domestic uses.

Image above from a 15th century French manuscript edition of the Decameron. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France
(https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7100018t/f674.item)

Shirts for men were sometimes purchased complete (typically costing from 9d. to 12d) and sometimes issued as lengths of linen, though there is little evidence as to who sewed them together. One clue is the household servant called a 'chamberer' who seems to be responsible for domestic and personal linens including overseeing the laundry. Smocks for Howard's daughters seem always to be made 'in house'; did they have to learn to make their own?

A notable absence from the accounts is any mention of underpants, apart from a relatively expensive pair of breeches bought for a sailor. This has set me on a quest for English illustrations of, or references to, men's linen undercrackers, shreddies or kecksies at this

period: did they buy them en-suite with shirts, or did they go without? Any information would be welcome.

'Cloth in Bristol and Chester 1620-1623': a summary, Dr Hannah Lilley and Professor Catherine Richardson

For MEDATs 2020 we presented some of our preliminary findings about domestic cloth in Chester and Bristol during the early 1620s, taken from the broader Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project: 'The Cultural Lives of the Middling Sort: Writing and Material Culture 1560-1660' (middlingculture.com). Chester and Bristol are two of our case study communities, and we situated domestic cloth ownership in relation to social status for these cities, focussing on probate inventories for three households: one of 'elite middling' status, one of solid middling status, and one of precarious middling status.

Thomas (inventoried in 1621) and Katherine Throppe of Chester formed our highest status middling household. Thomas was an alderman and vintner, and so had a trading background but became very wealthy in his lifetime. This led to him gaining a coat of arms, making him one of the 'gentlemen middling' we might characterise as 'elite middling'. Although cloth only made up 3.2% of the value of goods listed in Thomas' inventory, they had some luxurious examples with, for example, a valance 'with a tawney silk finge and greene curtains' worth £4 – the only valance of this kind inventoried in early 1620s Chester. Michael Threlkell, a hosier of Bristol who was inventoried in 1623, was our second example and he was of Solid Middling status, with his shop based on Winestreet, Bristol's commercial centre. Domestic textiles made up a very high proportion of Michael's inventory value – 20% - which suggests the importance of these kinds of material investments at a solid middling level. One of the cloth types Threlkell invests in is pintado for bed curtains. Pintado is 'a fine cotton cloth painted or dyed with patterns of flowers, imported from India and used especially for cupboard cloths, quilts, and curtains' (Oxford English Dictionary). It is, then, a hardy fabric used for heavier cloth within the home, and by the eighteenth century it became known as chintz. This is very rare for the early 1620s in Bristol, only being used in the curtains and valances of 9 individuals spread across the upper middling and solid middling groups. Our final

example was of Bristol sailor Edward Wheaton. He was of precarious middling status, living in only two rooms and with very little furniture. His cloth ownership of basic bedding and napery, which makes up 9.6% of his inventory value, was an important possession which raised him above the dependent poor and wage labourers.

These three examples (placed within a wider statistical context for these locales) demonstrated that fabric would have been striking at all levels as the main colour in the room, and appreciated as offering comfort, and that basic categories of bedding and napery applied to individuals across the middling groups. For those of solid middling status, soft furnishings are used for entertaining guests: they stored textiles and owned sets to be used on special occasions. A domestic hierarchy through textile embellishment of spaces was established from the solid middling level upwards, with Thropp and others of the upper middling status having objects made for spots like windows and chimneys, decorative cloth in rooms throughout the house, embellishment to give a sense of uniqueness to the cloth, and upholstered furniture. Domestic cloth at the middling level, therefore, was a means through which individuals expressed their identity in relation to others within their locale – a part of their expression of social superiority through the domestic environment.

A cassock that is a spinning: Evidence for home produced textiles and clothes in wills, inventories and household accounts from 1485 to 1603, by Ninya Mikhaila and Jane Malcolm-Davies

The Typical Tudor will be published in early 2021 as a study of clothing and textiles for the mean and middling sort from 1485 to 1603. A database of more than 55,000 garments and accessories from transcribed wills, accounts, inventories and court records reveals insights into the acquisition of clothing for ordinary men and women. This paper compares the evidence for the production of textiles and apparel in the home with that for professional workshops during the Tudor period. It illustrates the network of relationships – both commercial and personal - which were crucial for the maintenance of a comely appearance.

Image : Pompeia Paulina from *Boccace Des Cleres et nobles femmes*, 599, fol. 77v, Paulina taillant un vêtement, Bibliothéque National, France (BnF)

Medieval Dress and Textile Society
AGM Minutes 2020

Zoom meeting 10 October 2020
3.00 pm – 4.00 pm, social meeting extended to past 5.00 pm

Apologies of Absence

Apologies from Carole Thompson and Elizabeth Coatsworth had been sent in in advance, and we had 25 members attending.

1. Welcome by Ninya Mikhaila, Acting Chair

All attending members were welcomed to our new and unusual way to hold an AGM, and Ninya reflected on how at the last committee meeting in person in January 2020 the committee had been discussing making more use of modern media, since part of the committee was taking part in the meeting via Zoom, and how this is now more a necessity than a choice, and how we can turn this necessity into opportunities for members and the committee.

2. Minutes of previous AGM

The minutes had been published in a previous newsletter and were accepted by unanimous vote. Members voted via the Chat option in Zoom.

3. Matters arising

The dates for the conference, AGM and study day had to be postponed/changed due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

4. Treasurer's report – Mary Frost / Challe Hudson

Mary Frost gave her last report as she has handed over to Challe now. The report was shared with members via screensharing, and the figures are correct for the original AGM date, up to March 2020. The accounts are in credit. At the time of the AGM the only item needing attention is the £70 payments received for tickets for the AGM in April 2020. Those payments need to be refunded or we can offer members to have the payment roll over to the next AGM, which will hopefully be on 08.05.2021, together with the 2021 conference, except if Covid-19 regulations intervene.
The report is included in these minutes as a separate PDF file.
To facilitate voting instead of asking all to vote all members were asked to use the chat if they wanted to abstain or vote no.

5. Publicity Secretary's report – Heather Mbaye

Heather took over from Alice Gordon who had to stand down from the committee for personal reasons mid-year and has created an Instagram account. Most of the publicity work was done in the last few weeks, regarding the conference and AGM. Heather asks to please send any photos that can be used with attribution on the Instagram and Facebook so that we can build our following. Veronica Saenz offered to share pictures of MEDATS events 2018.

7. Membership Secretary's Report – Linde Merrick
The report is correct for 7. October, 2020.
We currently have 145 paid up members, 115 from the UK and 30 from overseas.
29 new members have joined because of the September conference. These are split into 17 UK members and 12 overseas ones.
Regrettably 29 UK and 12 overseas members from last year have allowed their memberships to lapse.
Electronic payment methods are proving popular with the UK membership – we have 52 standing order payers, 47 using PayPal, 1 using BACS transfer and only the remaining 15 sending in cheques. All our overseas members have paid using PayPal.
The majority of the membership have opted for electronic newsletters, with only 41 UK and 4 overseas members requesting postal copies.

8. Ticketing Secretary Report – Carole Thompson
Carole could not attend the AGM due to last minute computer problems, but had sent in the numbers via email, which we failed to find in time for the AGM, but are given here:
8. April, 2019, St Stephens Hall, Wool conference and AGM: 61 tickets sold
21. September, 2019, Lancaster Hall Hotel, Learning Through Reconstruction: 52 tickets sold
Friday 28. February, 2020, Study Day, Norwich Museum: 22 tickets sold (sold out).
Roughly 50% of the tickets were sold as 'early bird' tickets.

9. Newsletter Editor's report – Ninya Mikhaila / Pat Poppy
Ninya's last newsletter went out to members in July 2019, after which point Pat Poppy took on the role and brought out the November 2019 issue and the April 2020 issue. The handover was very smooth and Pat needed very little input from Ninya.

As with the social media, any input for the newsletter by members would be very welcome, maybe an exhibition you have been to, or seen online, pictures of interesting places they have been, or items they have examined, as long as the pictures are free to share publicly.

10. Website Manager's report – Saragrace Knauf
We have recently posted an electronic Membership form.
Saragrace is currently working on trying to find a free 'plugin' that will allow us to sell the merchandise on the website, and asked for suggestions to make the website more interesting.

11. Events Secretary – Natalie Walker
Natalie thanked Gale Owen-Crocker for an excellent job in her years as Programme Secretary and for mentoring and preparing her to take over. This has worked really well and Natalie would recommend it as a way of introducing new committee members to their role in the future.
The new conference venue, Lancaster Hall Hotel in London, worked well for our last big meeting which was the Learning Through Reconstruction study day / conference day in September 2019. We intend to keep the venue for all large conference events in the future. Learning Through Reconstruction was a well-received and productive event, and we plan to continue to host this annually in autumn, alongside the Annual Conference with AGM in spring. The Conference theme for 2021 is "Animals" and any suggestions for topics or speakers are welcome

The online conference next weekend, 17.10.2020, comprises a mixture of research approaches, and all speakers will join us online.
MEDATS is considering continuing to produce some form of online event in the future, as a way for a larger audience to access our output**.**

Next year's conference will be held on 8. May 2021, bar Covid-19 restrictions, and the topic is "Animals". There is no topic yet for the 2022 conference, or the Learning through Reconstruction day/ Study days. The committee so far had not followed up on Kirstie Buckland's offer to check topics that MEDATS have already done a conference on for new research that might make it worth revisiting a topic.
Natalie very kindly offered to have a look herself, to have some suggestions for next Saturday (conference).
Some suggestions already came in over chat:
Debbie Bamford: natural dye study day, with the Crutchley Archive
Challe Hudson: The Monumental Brass Society just planned a study day with the topic: new discoveries in the field, might be of interest to do something similar?
Aislinn Collins suggested a day on use/wear

12. Secretary's Report – Christine Carnie
There had been some problems accessing the emails, and Christine is still catching up with committee discussions over the summer, as to date of the AGM. The secretary@medats.org.uk email is now working, thanks to Saragrace sorting this out. Some emails are directed to the Secretary and are answered directly or forwarded to the relevant committee member. Keeping notes of the meetings has evolved into keeping track of emails, our main means of communication now for the committee, and picking out topics that need follow up, or to record decisions made.

13. Election of Officers
In these extraordinary circumstances we asked to confirm all elected officers in their roles and all officers co-opted at the AGM in 2019 (Treasurer Challe Hudson, Publicity Secretary Heather Mbaye, Newsletter Editor Pat Poppy). Ninya Mikhaila is standing for Chair, as Elizabeth Coatsworth had very kindly agreed to officiate for one more year in 2019 to give us time to nominate a new chair.
We have had Ninya as Acting Chair already, and all new committee members were nominated and seconded in 2019.
All members present agreed to the mode of election, and all nominations/officers standing were passed unanimously, with no one abstaining or voting no in the chat.
The list of elected committee members is part of the minutes of this AGM.

Ninya thanked all committee members that have stood down for their services

13. AOB
MEDATS is planning short informal information online meetings, either via Zoom or Google meet, or any other online video chat platform, where anyone can volunteer beforehand to share pictures of historic sites, exhibitions, or any singular item of interest. Pat Poppy offered to start us off in late November with the topic of what makes up the various layers of a period bed, any other volunteers are very welcome, please get in touch with either Ninya, Heather, or Natalie.

We are still working out how this will be put in place, and are open to suggestions. We might trial different platforms and models. Challe and Christine offered to share images of the Bacton Altar Cloth, from the exhibition at the beginning of this year at Hampton Court.

The MEDATS constitution is in need of an overhaul to make provisions for the new technologies, and the current pdf needs to be changed to include the updates voted on in 2015. Once this is done the current version will be available on the website, and we will send out the suggested changes in time for the AGM in 2021.
Another topic that came up in discussion to be voted on in 2021 was to discuss the option of not sending out membership cards and payment confirmations for online payments like Paypal or BACS since they are not needed as proof of payment.

14. Date of the next AGM: 08.05.2021, same day as the conference, London, or if restrictions are in place, virtual.

List of committee members standing for election:

Ninya Mikhaila, Chair
Nominated: Gale Owen-Crocker
Seconded: Carole Thompson

All other committee members are willing to stand until the 2021 AGM where everyone except Chair will be up for election.

Pat Poppy, **Newsletter Editor**

Heather Mbaye, **Publicity/Social Media Secretary**

Challe Hudson, **Treasurer**

Natalie Walker, **Event/Programme Secretary**

Linde Merrick, **Membership Secretary**

Saragrace Knauf, **Web administration**

Carole Thompson, **Ticketing secretary**

Christine Carnie, **Secretary**

Betty Coatsworth, Gale Owen-Crocker and Mary Frost are staying on the committee in an advisory capacity.

THE CORONATION MANTLE, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HUNGARY, BUDAPEST

I was lucky enough to visit Budapest last December and, although the 1522 "marriage" clothes of Maria of Hapsburg and Louis II of Hungary are no longer on display, I did manage to see the Coronation mantle that dates to 1031. The mantle is a separate room with very low light levels, and no photography is allowed, so I am sorry but there are no images to accompany this.

The mantle was part of the coronation regalia of Hungary from at least the 1290 coronation of Andrew III, and was last worn at the coronation of Charles IV in 1916. After the Second World War the mantle, and the rest of the coronation regalia, ended up in the USA. They were only returned in 1978. The mantle bears an inscription saying that it was made in 1031 for Queen Gizella (or Gisela 985 –1065) and King Saint Istvan (or Stephen c. 975 –1038), and presented by them to the Church of the Virgin Mary in Szekesfehervar.

The mantle has been altered over the years having probably originally been a bell-shaped chasuble which was changed to its current semi-circular shape in the late 12th or early 13th century. At that time the collar, which is of embroidered Byzantine silk decorated with pearls, was added. The main semi-circular shape is also of Byzantine silk, the ground is a blue (possibly originally green) twill weave silk cloth with a woven design of purple rosettes. In its present form the mantle is about 2.5 m x 1.3 m in size.

The mantle is densely covered with embroidered figures, some of which are identifiable by their inscriptions. The embroidery was carried out in couched gold thread and floss silk thread in a variety of colours and stitches, including stem stitch and chain stitch.

The design is split at the centre back by a large Y shape, there is one figure on the long arm of the Y, Christ seated in judgement, and another in between the V shape of Christ standing victorious. Both are framed by a mandorla, an oval, or more properly an almond shaped frame. Mandorla is Italian for almond. Outside of the Y are three concentric semi circles of figures. Innermost are sixteen full length Old Testament prophets, below them are seated Apostles separated by columns, and at the outermost edge are Christian martyrs in roundels separated by pairs of birds. Above and beyond these main divisions are countless other details, towers, other figures, etc. You could look at it for hours, and it is well worth a visit.

Many thanks to Gale Owen-Crocker for providing me with information from her book Elizabeth Coatsworth and Gale R. Owen-Crocker*, Clothing the Past: Surviving Garments from Early Medieval to Early Modern Western Europe*. Brill, 2017 ISBN 978-9004288706

Other information has come from F. Dozsaalin et al., *A Magyar Divat: 1116 Years of Hungarian Fashion*. Gombold Ujra, 2012, ISBN 978 963 08 3065 2

PAT POPPY

NEW AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Alexandra Lester-Makin. **The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World**: The Sacred and Secular Power of Embroidery (Ancient Textiles Series) Paperback. 256 pages. ISBN-13 : 978-1789251449. Oxbow Books (30 Sept. 2019)

The Hidden Life of Textiles in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean: Contexts and Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Islamic, Latinate and ... and Post-Medieval Mediterranean Archaeology. Paperback. 304 pages. ISBN-13 : 978-2503587738. Brepols, Bilingual Edition (28 July 2020) £85. The book contains published papers of the conference 'Textiles & Identity in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean: Paradigms of Contexts and Cross-Cultural Exchanges' of the British School at Athens held at the (Benaki) Museum of Islamic Art in 2016, as well as some new contributions.

Ulla Mannering. **Iconic Costumes**: Scandinavian Late Iron Age Costume Iconography. (Ancient Textiles Series). Paperback. 288 pages. ISBN-13 : 978-1789255478. Oxbow Books (15 Nov. 2020)

Michèle Hayeur Smith. **The Valkyries' Loom**: The Archaeology of Cloth Production and Female Power in the North Atlantic. Hardcover. 256 pages. ISBN-13 : 978-0813066622. University Press of Florida (30 Nov. 2020)

Janet Arnold Major Awards – Society of Antiquaries

Janet Arnold (1932–98) was an artist, teacher and fashion designer. Her practical skills, together with a passion for accuracy, made her a powerful advocate for the study of historical dress as a serious discipline. The use of archival material and visual and literary records are important, but as she demonstrated in her own work, a real comprehension of historical dress depends on the close examination and understanding of surviving garments, both whole and fragmentary.

Janet Arnold's bequest allows the Society to award grants in her name for the in-depth study of the history of dress and the materials from which it is made. For the current grant round (2020/21), in addition to the usual Annual Awards of £350–£5,000, the Society is offering up to 3 Major Awards of up to £10,000 pa for 2 to 3 years.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they wish to pursue a particular piece of original research based on items of dress or their remains with a view to eventually disseminating the results through publication, digital resources, display, cataloguing, teaching or through practical use in conservation or realistic reproduction. Within these parameters there are no geographical or chronological restrictions but in the current grant round the Society would like to encourage applications which:

- explore clothing and its components as material culture in the contexts of colonialism and its legacies
- redress narratives that would characterise clothing its components as craft or vernacular art by exploring their artistic and cultural value
- liberate previously unheard voices and explore new approaches to the study of clothing and the materials from which it is made
- explore decolonising museums and their collections with a focus on clothing and its components

For full details of the Arnold Awards and how to apply see the Grants Pages of our website: https://www.sal.org.uk/grant/janet-arnold-awards/

MEDATS COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

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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 Jan – 31st Dec.
Rates:
£15 Individual members worldwide;1 (£6 paper newsletter surcharge for Europe, £9 paper newsletter surcharge for worldwide outside Europe).
£20 Households worldwide (2 members); (paper newsletter surcharges as above)
£10 Student members worldwide (with proof of status); (paper newsletter surcharges as above).
£30 Institutions irrespective of location.
£5 Electronic newsletter subscription, non UK.
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 available electronically as a PDF file, or on paper. Please specify which method of delivery is preferred. If no preference is recorded, electronic delivery will be assumed as a default whenever an e-mail address is supplied.
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.
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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.