THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF MEDIEVAL ART

ICMANEWS

THE ICMA WELCOMES YOU!

ICMA News welcomes submissions from medievalists at any career stage, representing a diverse range of perspectives, living around the globe, and working in any geographic region of the medieval world.

WITH FEATURES ON:

Gaming with archaeology, AI in the classroom, and exhibition reports on Siena, the sculptures of Notre-Dame, and the Silk Roads.


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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, STEPHEN PERKINSON

March 10, 2025

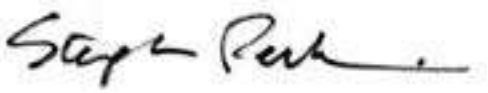
To the ICMA Community,

I write this newsletter at an enormously unsettling moment for educational and cultural institutions that are, like the ICMA, based in the US. I won't list the various challenges here—no matter where you reside or what your professional affiliation, I'm sure that you are already all too familiar with them, and the list is likely to have changed significantly by the time this message is in your hands. But I did want to offer two thoughts here that I believe will be broadly applicable, no matter how circumstances evolve. First, the ICMA remains—and shall remain—steadfastly dedicated to our mission: "to promote and support the study, understanding, and preservation of visual and material cultures produced primarily between ca. 300 CE and ca. 1500 CE in every corner of the medieval world." Second, our community remains vibrantly strong. As I noted in my brief remarks to those of you who were able to gather at our reception at the CAA conference in New York in February, our membership numbers and our finances are both robust, and we continue to benefit from the work of our exceptionally talented and diverse membership. I'm grateful to be a part of this community, and am greatly heartened by the knowledge that, while those of us in cultural and educational domains face an uncertain future, we do so together.

There are many achievements and events that I could highlight here, but I want to focus on one milestone in particular. As I noted in my last letter to the membership, the editorship of our flagship journal *Gesta* changed in January, with Susan Boynton and Diane Reilly having completed their wildly successful term as co-editors. For six years, Susan and Diane ensured that *Gesta* maintained its stellar reputation for publishing outstanding scholarship while making sure that the journal also kept pace with crucial developments in our field's parameters and interests. They were tenacious and creative in this work, forging excellent relationships with all those involved in our publishing efforts, and nurturing the development of articles by scholars at all stages of their careers. They did this work in a time that had its own very, very significant challenges. They responded creatively and energetically to those challenges, ensuring that publication continued apace, while also advocating for ways that we might devise new approaches to address emerging needs. I believe firmly that the ICMA does many important things, but none are more important or more enduring than *Gesta*. We all owe Susan and Diane a considerable debt of gratitude for safeguarding the vitality of that essential publication throughout their editorial term. I'm also grateful to Heather Pulliam and Kathryn Rudy for taking on the editorial mantle, and am excited to see the directions of the fruits of their labors.

I have a lengthy thought piece in the **FEATURES** section of this issue, so I'll close by inviting you all to what will no doubt be rich and stimulating ICMA-sponsored sessions at the conferences at Kalamazoo and Leeds in a few short weeks, and at the festive receptions we'll be hosting alongside those conferences. Please keep your eyes open for emails from the ICMA announcing these and a great many more exciting opportunities in the months to come.

With all good wishes,



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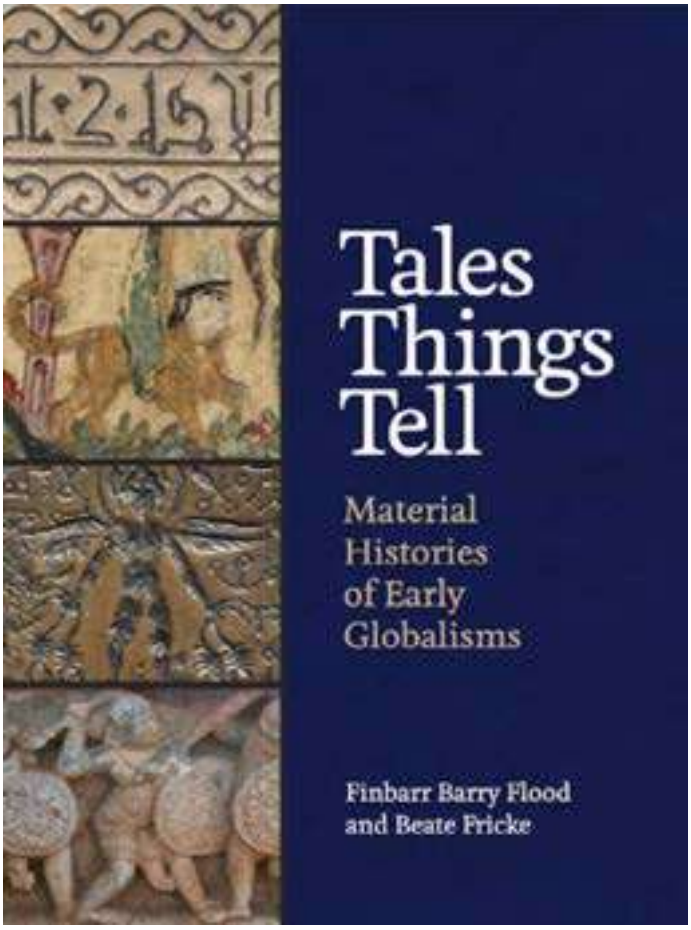
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

ICMA Annual Book Prize



Tales Things Tell: Material Histories of Early Globalisms
Beate Fricke and Finbarr Barry Flood
Princeton University Press, 2023.

Beate Fricke and Finbarr Barry Flood have made a major contribution to art history and the interdisciplinary practice of medieval studies with their eminently readable study, ***Tales Things Tell: Material Histories of Early Globalisms.*** Building on work that Fricke, a scholar of western European medieval art, and Flood, a specialist in the Islamic medieval and early modern periods, have done together over more than a decade, the arguments are derived directly from medieval objects rather than from abstract academic concepts. These "archives of flotsam" nevertheless directly engage the literature of anthropology, especially the work of James Clifford and Alfred Gell on materiality and aesthetics. Amidst many attempts to do global art history, this book stands out for its erudition and the identification of convincing points of convergence and comparison. By engaging with a wide variety of scholarship in archeology, literary studies, and economic history, the authors ground their visual analyses in a solid matrix of corroborating evidence. The underlying, anthropological concept of "entanglement" presents a way forward for global medieval art history, one that productively balances global networks with distinctively local phenomena. This text is already reconfiguring conversations in the discipline about how collaborative approaches to premodern material might transform our archives and their interpretation.
Click **HERE** for the Princeton University Press site.

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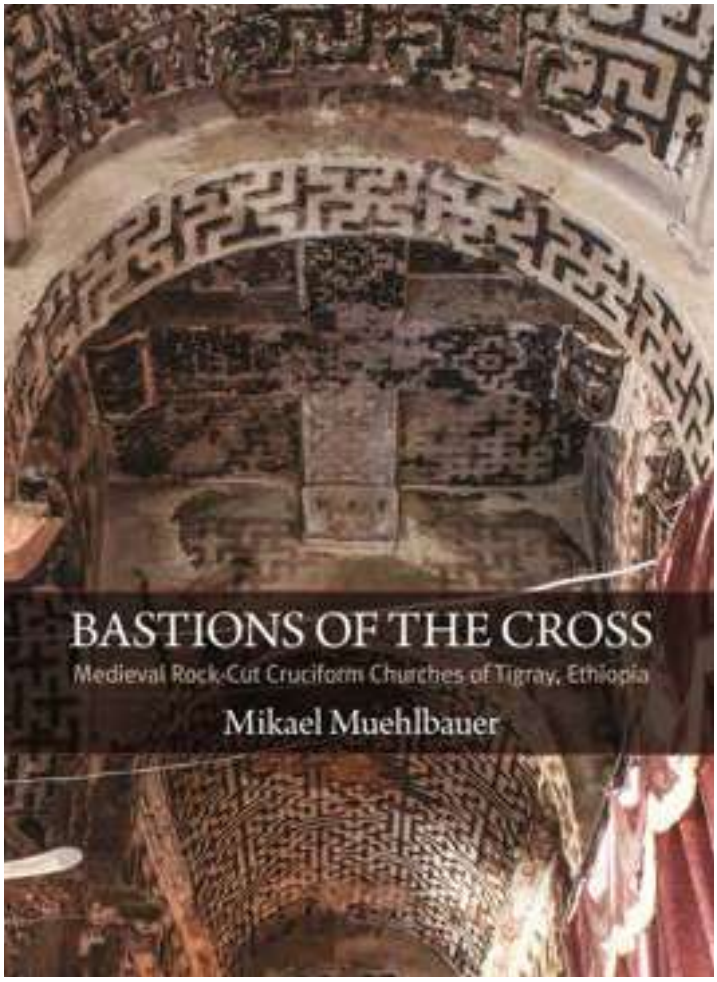


FINALIST

Bastions of the Cross: Medieval Rock-Cut Cruciform Churches of Tigray, Ethiopia
Mikael Muehlbauer
Dumbarton Oaks, 2023.

This year, we want to name Mikael Muehlbauer's *Bastions of the Cross: Medieval Rock-Cut Cruciform Churches of Tigray, Ethiopia* as a Finalist. The book is richly deserving of this status for its rigorous, detailed, and accessible investigation of a group of monuments that have been little studied to date, for reasons of politics, geography, and the Eurocentric biases of medieval studies. Muehlbauer pays close attention to visual and material evidence, including architectural ornament, textiles, and wood-carving. He thereby shows us a medieval world centered not solely on the Mediterranean, but also on the Indian Ocean, and the intersections of culture, religion, and trade across its waters. Click **HERE** for the Harvard University Press site.

MEMBER NEWS

Member Awards and Appointments

If you are a member and your work has garnered a national or international award in the twelve months prior to July 2025, please send your information to Melanie Hanan, newsletter@medievalart.org, by ***June 15, 2025*** *(for publication in the summer issue).*

Jennifer Borland (Professor of Art History, Oklahoma State University) has received the 2025 Karen Gould Book Prize in Art History from the Medieval Academy of America for her book ***Visualizing Household Health: Medieval Women, Art, and Knowledge in the Régime du corps*** (Penn State University Press, 2022).

Gregory Bryda (Assistant Professor of Art History, Barnard College) was named the 2024 PROSE Award finalist in the Art History and Criticism category (sponsored by the Association of American Publishers) for his book ***The Trees of the Cross: Wood as Subject and Medium in the Art of Late Medieval Germany*** (Yale University Press, 2023).

Annick Herren (M.A., University of Basel) was **awarded the Hanna Levy-Deinhard Prize** from the Art History Department of the University of Basel for her master's thesis entitled: "Wilt du genant werdn ain gespons min: Die spirituelle Reise der Seele als Braut Christi im Cod.710(322) der Stiftsbibliothek Einsiedeln als neues Narrativ in Schrift und Bild."

Christopher Platts (University of Cincinnati) won the Medieval Academy of America (MAA)'s 2025 CARA Award for Excellence in Teaching, which will be formally announced at the MAA's annual meeting in Boston and Cambridge, MA, in March.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2
Students from the College of the Holy Cross and Worcester Public Schools on opening night enjoying the digital tour.

"Art in an Early Global World at WAM," a collaborative digital project led by **Amanda Luyster** (Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Arts, College of the Holy Cross), has been awarded a $30,000 Scholarship in Action Grow grant from the College of the Holy Cross. This collaboration between the Worcester Art Museum, the College of the Holy Cross, and students from the Worcester Public Schools AP Art History program provides a virtual guide to objects made before 1500 CE, around the globe, at the Worcester Art Museum. This grant will purchase ten additional iPads and museum mounts so that the project will be available to the public in many different galleries at the WAM. The project can also be accessed through smartphones in the galleries and from home. It is **online now** and will continue to expand its coverage in coming semesters.

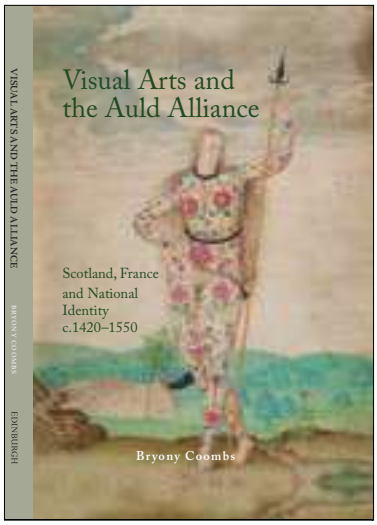
Recent Books by Members

If you are a member who has published a book (or equivalent research project) twelve months prior to July 2025, which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send a full citation, digital image of the book cover (minimum 72 dpi, jpg or png), and hyperlink to Melanie Hanan ***newsletter@medievalart.org****, by* ***June 15, 2025*** *(for publication in the summer issue).*

For book descriptions, publisher information, purchasing opportunities, etc., please click the book titles below to link to publisher pages.

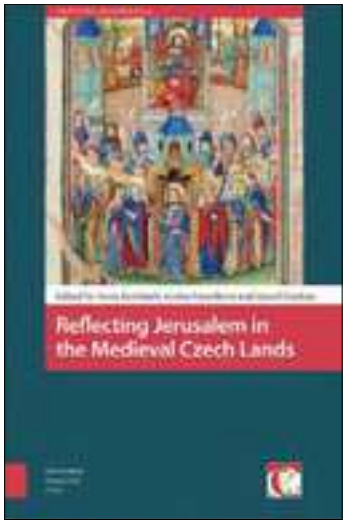
Buettner, Brigitte, and William Diebold, eds. ***Medieval Art, Modern Politics*****. De Gruyter, 2025. (Open Access)**

Calder, Michael. ***Art and Drama on a Late Medieval Rood Screen: Unveiling a Mystical Passion*****. De Gruyter and Medieval Institute Publications, 2024.**

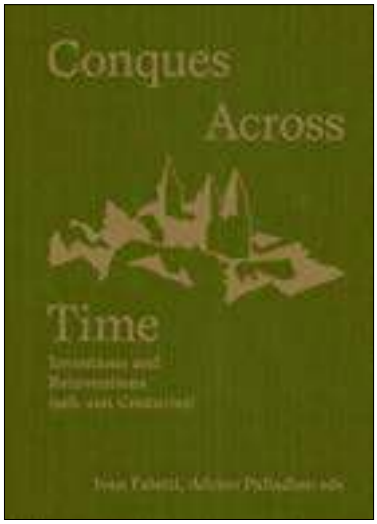


Coombs, Bryony. ***Visual Arts and the Auld Alliance: Scotland, France and National Identity c.1420–1550*****. Edinburgh University Press, 2024.**

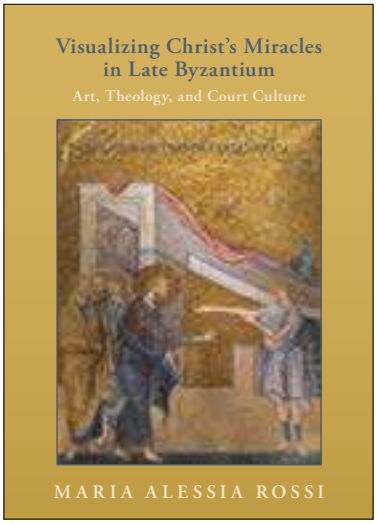
Cordez, Philippe, ed. ***Art médiéval et médiévalisme*****. 2d ed. Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte, 2024. (Open Access)**



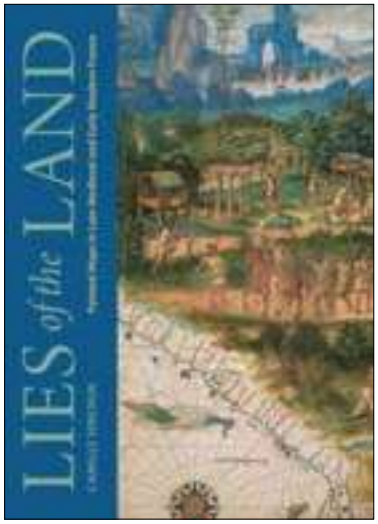
Kernbach, Anna, Lenka Panusková, and Daniel Soukup, eds. ***Reflecting Jerusalem in Medieval Czech Lands*****. Amsterdam University Press, 2024.**



Foletti, Ivan, and Adrien Palladino, eds. ***Conques Across Time: Inventions and Reinventions (9th–21st Centuries)*****. Viella/Masaryk University Press, 2025.**



Rossi, Maria Alessia.
Visualizing Christ's Miracles in Late Byzantium: Art, Theology, and Court Culture.
Cambridge University Press, 2024.



Serchuk, Camille.
Lies of the Land: Painted Maps in Late Medieval and Early Modern France.
Penn State University Press, 2025.
This book project received an ICMA–Kress Publication Grant in November 2023.

In the Media

If you are a member with a media appearance in the twelve months prior to July 2025 and which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send a full citation and hyperlink to Melanie Hanan, ***newsletter@medievalart.org****, by June 15, 2025 (for publication in the summer issue).*

ICMA EVENT RECAPS

If you would like to organize a virtual event or a study day for the ICMA at your local museum or institution if conditions in your area allow, please contact Ryan Frisinger at ***icma@medievalart.org****. International events are welcome.*

ICMA Pop-Up, Milwaukee, WI | Tour of *Material Muses: Medieval Devotional Culture and its Afterlives* + Joan of Arc Chapel (October 12, 2024)

Fig. 1
Claire Kilgore speaking about the Annunciation scene on a thirteenth-century copper incense burner. Image: Tania Kolarik.

Fig. 2
Tania Kolarik (center) explaining the physicality of wearing liturgical vestments during Catholic Mass. Image: Lynne Shumow.

On Saturday, October 12, 2024, Abby Armstrong Check, Claire Kilgore, and Tania Kolarik organized a tour of their co-curated exhibition, *Material Muses: Medieval Devotional Culture and its Afterlives,* at the Haggerty Museum of Art and a site visit to the Joan of Arc Chapel, both located on the campus of Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI. *Material Muses* considered how artists since the end of the Middle Ages have looked back to the art from this period as inspiration for creating "authentic" devotional objects of their own time. This exhibition drew from medieval and post-medieval collections at the Haggerty Museum of Art and the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

The tour began within the Haggerty Museum of Art, where Armstrong Check, Kilgore, and Kolarik each spoke to their curatorial choices around the exhibition's themes of "Birth," "Ritual," and "Death," and highlighted an object within each thematic section. In the "Birth" section of the exhibition, Kilgore discussed the role of movement in animating an Annunciation scene located on the hinged lid of a thirteenth-century copper incense burner, loaned to the exhibition from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Art Collection [Fig. 1]. For her discussion of "Ritual," Kolarik described the different components of Catholic liturgical vestments for performing Mass through the exhibition's eighteenth-century luxury silk vestment set [Fig. 2]. Armstrong Check closed out the discussion within the "Death" gallery space, comparing a print from Georges Rouault's mid-twentieth-century *Miserere Series, Debout les Morts! (Arise You Dead!)* with a page opening from Philippe Pigouchet's *Ces presents heures a luisiage de Romme* (1497),

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which contained a printed border of the *danse macabre*. Armstrong Check highlighted the potency of the "dance of death" in the medieval period and Rouault's articulation of medievalism recalling the same imagery in post-WWII France [Fig. 3].

Fig. 3
Abby Armstrong Check (standing center) discussing Georges Rouault's 1948 *Debout les Morts! (Arise You Dead!)* aquatint. Image: Lynne Shumow.

Fig. 4
Exterior of the Joan of Arc Chapel on the campus of Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI. Image: Tania Kolarik.

The group then left the Haggerty Museum of Art and walked a short distance across Marquette's campus to the Joan of Arc Chapel [Fig. 4]. The now-named Joan of Arc Chapel began its life as the Chapelle de St. Martin de Sayssuel, part of a larger sixty-room chateau structure in the French village of Chasse, a small hamlet just south of Lyon in the Rhone River Valley. Through subsequent wars—including the Hundred Years War, the French Revolution, and WWI—the chateau structure endured a battering and fell into a state of ruin and dilapidation. Gertrude Hill, a Minnesota native and daughter of railroad tycoon James J. Hill, collected the structure and painstakingly brought it over, stone by stone, to the United States before the 1927 ban on the sale of French antiquities. Armstrong Check gave a fascinating talk about the foundation of the chapel in France and its subsequent moves, first to Jericho in Oyster Bay, Long Island, and then to Milwaukee, WI [Fig. 5]. If you are interested in learning more, Armstrong Check is currently in the process of finishing an article on its history and the role of medievalism in Wisconsin.

Fig. 5
Abby Armstrong Check (standing center) presenting on the history of the Joan of Arc Chapel. Image: Claire Kilgore.

The event was enriched by a dozen undergraduate students from Lawrence University who traveled to Marquette's campus with their professor, ICMA member Danielle Joyner. Additionally, as the exhibition tour and site visit were open to the public, there were several residents of Madison and Milwaukee in attendance, including ICMA members from UW–Madison. Overall, the curators and attendees had a lively discussion about medieval objects and architecture in Milwaukee and encourage ICMA members to check out the many hidden medieval treasures in Wisconsin.

- Submitted by Abby Armstrong Check, Claire Kilgore, and Tania Kolarik

ICMA Exhibition Tour, National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, DC | *An Epic of Kings: The Great Mongol Shahnama* (December 6, 2024)

On December 6, 2024, ICMA Members and area medievalists came together for a tour of the National Museum of Asian Art's *An Epic of Kings: The Great Mongol Shahnama* led by exhibition curator Simon Rettig (Associate Curator for the Arts of the Islamic World, National Museum of Asian Art). The Great Mongol *Shahnama* is the most celebrated of all medieval Persian manuscripts. Considered Iran's national epic, the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) was completed by the poet Firdawsi in 1010. The copy known as the Great Mongol *Shahnama* was produced three hundred years later, commissioned by a ruler of the Ilkhanid dynasty, a branch of the Mongol Empire. Between the manuscript's covers, art, power, and history intertwined. This exhibition, which closed January 12, 2025, presented twenty-five folios from this now dismantled manuscript alongside contemporaneous works from China, the Mediterranean, and the Latin West, highlighting the cosmopolitan nature of the Ilkhanid empire.

ICMA Library and Exhibition Tour, Bridwell Library and Meadows Museum, Dallas, TX | *Unearthing the Legacy of Islamic Spain* (December 13, 2024)

The day began with a guided tour, led by Bridwell Library Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts Arvid Nelsen, of the library's extraordinary collection of medieval manuscripts and devotional books. In the afternoon, participants toured the Meadows Museum's exhibition *Unearthing the Legacy of Islamic Spain,* led by Center for Spain in America (CSA) Curatorial Fellow Cristina Aldrich. This exhibition focused on the nineteenth- and twentieth-century reception of Spain's Islamic heritage, with paintings, photographs, drawings, and printed materials reflecting diverse perspectives on the country's long history of Muslim rule—from the arrival of the Umayyads in the eighth century to the expulsion of the last Nasrid sultan in 1492. The day concluded with a tour of the museum's medieval holdings, showcasing the depth and diversity of Spain's artistic heritage.

ICMA Study Event, Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO | *Global Connections, 500–1500 and Narrative Wisdom and African Arts* (January 17, 2025)

ICMA members attended a study event at the Saint Louis Art Museum with curators Maggie Crosland (Birmingham Museum of Art), Judith Mann, and Hannah Segrave. Maggie Crosland walked attendees through *Global Connections, 500–1500,* the reinstallation of medieval artworks at the Saint Louis Art Museum. After the Global Connections discussion, Judith Mann and Hannah Segrave led a 30-minute tour of the European Art Galleries. Attendees also had the opportunity to explore the exhibition *Narrative Wisdom and African Arts,* which placed historical works made by artists across sub-Saharan Africa during the thirteenth to twentieth centuries in conversation with contemporary works by African artists working around the globe.

ICMA Exhibition Tour, Musée du Louvre, Paris | *Figures du Fou Du Moyen Âge aux Romantiques* (January 31, 2025)

ICMA members took a last look at the exhibition *Figures du Fou Du Moyen Âge aux Romantiques* at the Musée du Louvre on Friday, January 31, 2025. Exhibition co-curator Pierre-Yves Le Pogam led the group through the exhibition. The exhibition examined the omnipresence of fools in Western art and culture at the end of the Middle Ages, and attempted to parse the meaning of these figures, who would seem to play a key role in the advent of modernity.

ICMA Early Morning Exhibition Viewing, British Museum, London | *Silk Roads* (February 23, 2025)

ICMA members attended an early morning viewing of *Silk Roads* at The British Museum on January 23, 2025. Arriving prior to the museum's public opening hours, they heard a brief introduction by one of the exhibition's curators. Working with 29 national and international partners to present objects from many regions and cultures alongside those from the British Museum collection, the exhibition offered a unique chance to see objects from the length and breadth of the Silk Roads. From Tang Chinese ceramics destined for ports in the Middle East to Indian garnets found in Suffolk, they revealed the astonishing reach of these networks.

ICMA Annual IDEA Lecture, NYU and Online | Martina Rugiadi, *"Staging Medieval Art: Photography, Archaeology, and Living Objects in Afghanistan"* (February 6, 2025)

For centuries, the town of Ghazni has been a site of devotion, visited by those seeking to be blessed and healed at the tombs of its saints. Yet our scholarly gaze has primarily focused on the city's short-lived royal past of the eleventh to twelfth centuries, the remains of which were meticulously documented with stunning photographs in the 1950s and 60s. Martina Rugiadi, Associate Curator in the Islamic Art Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, used these images in her IDEA lecture to reveal broader, more inclusive histories that transcend disciplinary boundaries.

ICMA Reception, New York | College Art Association's Annual Conference (February 14, 2025)

ICMA members enjoyed a casual reception on Friday during the CAA's annual Conference at Grace's on West 14th Street in New York.

ICMA at the College Art Association Annual Conference 2025, New York | *"Moving Pictures, Living Objects"* (February 15, 2025)

Organized by:
Heather Pulliam, University of Edinburgh
Kathryn M. Rudy, University of St. Andrews

Speakers:
Notre-Dame Through the Eyes of Jean de Jandun
Lindsay S. Cook, Penn State University

Shifting Shadows: Using Virtual Reality to revive Dynamic Lighting Conditions for Gilded Panel Paintings
Sanne Frequin, Universiteit Utrecht

Wie man Skulpturen aufnehmen soll: A Continuing Question in the Study of Gothic Sculpture
Jacqueline E. Jung, Yale University

Reanimating the Inert: Digitizing Haptics and Mourning in Japanese Buddhist Handscrolls
Halle O'Neal, University of Edinburgh

Spycraft—Medieval Books and the Magic Lantern: The Unfolding Revelation of Scripture in the Évangéliaire de la Sainte-Chapelle
Thomas Rainer, University of Zurich

Late Gothic Micro-Architectural Designs: 3D-Modeling the Basel Goldschmiederisse
Martin Schwarz, University of Chicago

Inaugural ICMA Associates Lecture 2025, Centro di Cultura e Storia Amalfitana, Amalfi, Italy, and Online | Gerardo Boto Varela, "Royal Cemeteries in Medieval Iberia: Geopolitical System and Sites of Dynastic Memory" (February 15, 2025)

Thanks to an idea pursued by Francesca Dell'Acqua since COVID-19 in 2020, the ICMA New Initiatives Working Group devised a new initiative named the "ICMA Associates Lecture Series" as part of a broader effort aimed at reaching out to scholars outside of North America and promoting the ICMA among them. Through its associates, the ICMA now partners with medieval research institutes in and outside of Europe to host an annual lecture, in-person and online, with a local ICMA associate as sponsor. The initiative launched in 2025 in Amalfi with the lecture "Royal Cemeteries in Medieval Iberia: Geopolitical System and Sites of Dynastic Memory," by Gerardo Boto Varela from Universitat de Girona. In this lecture, he discussed how the multiplication, distribution, and ecclesiastical variety of royal burials in the context of the Iberian Peninsula was unique compared to other European regions. Until now, historiography explained the multiplicity of Iberian royal cemeteries (not only in Castile) as the expression of unquestioned power, which made it unnecessary to rely on a single, reiterative cemetery. Gerardo Boto Varela showed how this hypothesis in medieval Iberia is not accurate. The political principles in Aragon and Navarre were no different from those of the western kingdoms of medieval Spain, and yet they did establish from the fourteenth century onward a single coronation place and dynastic cemetery. That is why the central argument of this discussion was approached from the perspective of geopolitics: 1) How was the monumental memory of the kingdom articulated to dominate all the lands of the kingdom? 2) Is it true that by gaining new frontiers with the territorial "Reconquest," a city was designated as the most politically and ecclesiastically relevant, in order to compensate for the burdens of a presumably fragile and questionable legitimacy?

COMMEMORATIONS

If you would like to submit a commemoration of an ICMA member who has died in the twelve months prior to July 2025, and which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send a 200–500 word obituary and, if possible, an accompanying photo to Melanie Hanan, ***newsletter@medievalart.org****, by June 15, 2025 (for publication in the summer issue).*

IN MEMORIAM

JOHN MCNEILL
(1957–2024)

John McNeill, who died late last year after a short illness, was a scholar of high international repute and secretary of the British Archaeological Association (BAA) for 24 years. His achievements as a scholar were of remarkable breadth, publishing on the architecture and sculpture not only of Romanesque England, but also (among others) southern Italy and western France. A particular focus of his work was on monastic architecture, in particular the construction, elaboration, and function of cloisters. However, he ranged freely across the medieval landscape, occasionally even dipping into the Gothic. His publications showed a rare apprehension of the telling detail, and his wide knowledge allowed him to draw (or negate) comparisons others would miss. One fine example from his (over 20) publications that reveal his attention to the minutiae is: "Towards an Anatomy of a Regional Workshop: The Herefordshire School Revisited," in ***The Regional and Transregional in Romanesque Europe*** (Routledge, 2021). This article deals with much-studied sculpture from the west of England, overturning some long-held conceptions on its creation, both through close analysis of the material evidence and the judicious drawing of inferences about how sculptors may have worked and interacted. "The Continental Context," in ***The Medieval Cloister in England and Wales*** (Routledge, 2006), is another example of John's prodigious mastery of material from practically the whole of Europe and across many centuries.

Both of these publications were written for the BAA, and appeared in volumes that exemplify the zest John brought to his role as secretary of the BAA: the cloister article is in a special volume of the *Journal*; the Herefordshire School article from a publication of papers from the International Romanesque conference he founded. During his period as secretary, the activities of the BAA expanded, and the membership increased despite it being a time when academic interest in medieval art was declining in the UK. John worked outside the mainstream of the university system in the UK; he was involved in adult education, first in London and later in Oxford, attracting a devoted band of students. He was also a very active leader of tours, and there was a strong overlap between his students and those who chose to travel with him, and, indeed, of membership of the BAA.

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The BAA's biennial international Romanesque conference, attracting scholars from Hungary to Galicia, as well as participants from the United States, is one of John's more striking achievements, thriving as it has (through seven iterations) in a period when Britain's relationship with Europe has been strained. It was also a forum for many of John's talents—his organizational flair, his erudite but engaging way in which he would introduce monuments on the site visits—but these conferences also revealed more than the scholar and administrator. John was a most convivial man; tributes that have been passed to me stress repeatedly his kindness and humor and how effectively he encouraged fellow scholars, especially those in the early stages of their career. His loss is a great blow to medieval scholarship, but an even greater one to his friends, and his wife Anna and their son Freddie.

A full obituary will appear in volume 178 (2025) of the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association.*

Richard Plant is an architectural historian living in London. He is acting secretary of the BAA.

SPECIAL FEATURES

REPORT AND RESOURCE:

Gaming Islamic Archaeology

By Stephennie Mulder

Fig. 1

In the spring of 2024, a collaborative UT Austin-Syrian team set out to create a demo for *The White Banner*, a mobile digital game playable in Arabic and English (Fig. 1). The game is based on the history of the Qasr, an eighth-century Islamic palatial mansion located near the medieval city of Balis in Syria. The Qasr was excavated from 1998–2010 in a partnership between local residents, the Syrian Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM), and Princeton University. During the Syrian war, the site was bulldozed and looted by ISIS and Syrian and Iranian government forces, causing a painful rupture with local residents' relationship to the site and their own heritage. The game's collaborative design seeks to serve as an aid to the reconstruction of a lost material heritage and to embody and put into practice a model that empowers local people to tell the story of their own relationship to the site, while simultaneously serving as a tool for teaching and learning for those both inside and outside of Syria.

While the development of a digital game may not seem like the most obvious path for communicating the results of an archeological excavation and connecting local communities to the site in the aftermath of wartime destruction, digital gaming is an important and rapidly

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growing medium for engaging with the past. Gaming is a multi-billion-dollar industry, with an annual revenue in 2023 of nearly 300 billion dollars. To put that in perspective, that amount surpasses the market share of the film industry by over four times and the music industry by over eight times. Digital games are played by all genders in roughly equal numbers, and the average age of game players is 36. In the United States, 75% of households have at least one game player, and there are 41 million video game players with disabilities. A love of gaming cuts across social strata, racial and gender identities, and national borders. In short, gaming is universal and unifying, and historians, art historians, and archaeologists stand to benefit from exploring gaming as a means of teaching and encouraging immersive encounters with the past in the present.

Digital games have drawn on themes derived from medieval history almost from the inception of digital gaming as a medium, yet despite the massive popularity of historical gaming, scholars have only recently begun to realize the potential of games for teaching and facilitating a deep engagement with the past. The popularity of gaming juxtaposed with this lack of engagement by scholars is all the more striking at a moment when we are constantly beset with think pieces about the death of humanities, history, and archaeology programs, the decline in majors in these fields, and cuts to programs. Yet the reality is that public interest in historical, archaeological, and heritage-related subjects remains extremely strong, as evident from the popularity of television series ranging from *Rome* to *Vikings* to *Downton Abbey*. This interest in history is arguably evident even in historically-themed fantasy series like *Game of Thrones,* which is loosely based on the medieval European Wars of the Roses and which—when it aired from 2011–19—broke records as the most-watched television show in the world. Gaming, too, reveals a thriving interest in historical themes, with an added benefit: many orders of magnitude greater global reach. Games drawing from historical content like Sid Meier's *Civilizations, World of Warcraft* or *Assassin's Creed*—whose latest iteration *Mirage* is set in medieval Baghdad and was developed collaboratively with a team of historians and art historians—have become global hits, attracting dedicated fans around the world, many of whom experience the history the games represent as accurate and edifying and often seek out further knowledge.

The Syrian-Princeton excavations took place from 1998–2010 and revealed an early eighth-century palatial country villa or estate called the Qasr, probably belonging to the Umayyad prince Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik, as well as an eleventh-century shrine and a thirteenth-century residential quarter. The excavation brought to light a large corpus of late antique and medieval Islamic objects comprising tens of thousands of ceramic sherds and numerous complete and near-complete vessels, stucco, coins, wood, textiles, and mosaic.

In 2015, five years after excavation ceased, northern Syria came under the control of the militant group ISIS, and the area of the site was deliberately damaged and looted in a series of events that multiplied the trauma of war for local communities. ISIS notoriously destroyed heritage performatively, often broadcasting their actions live on social media. They used the destruction of heritage as an act of terror, one that aimed to demonstrate their impunity to the outside world, whose governments issued outraged statements but remained ultimately helpless to stop it.
Yet wartime heritage destruction is not new, nor is it the sole preserve of terrorist organizations. The occupation of Iraq by U.S. forces in 2003 brought devastation to the country's heritage in one of the world's great cradles of civilization, including the looting of the country's museums, libraries and the direct military occupation of archaeological sites like Babylon. More recently, in Gaza, it has been estimated that U.S.-backed Israeli bombardment has destroyed over 70% of Gaza's homes and flattened entire neighborhoods, which included once-vibrant museums, mosques, churches, universities, and archaeological sites. This means that alongside the Gazan death toll now numbering in the tens of thousands, there is a compounding loss of the spaces and places that made those human lives meaningful, a form of destruction of memory that has been termed memoricide. Memoricide or the destruction of memory and identity embodied in heritage has long been recognized as an attribute of genocide, and it was part of the case brought against Israel to the International Court of Justice by South Africa

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Fig. 2

in February 2024. Regardless of the causative agent in any given case of wartime heritage devastation, the outcome is the same: the destruction of memory and the multiplication of the trauma of war.

Over the past two decades, initiated by the work of anthropologists like Laurajane Smith, the field of Critical Heritage Studies has raised important questions about the meaning and nature of the field of cultural heritage. In particular, Smith's notion of the "Authorized Heritage Discourse" or AHD, first articulated in 2005, has enabled scholars to examine how the prevailing global heritage model, which promotes a set of often-unexamined assumptions about the definition and meanings of heritage that promote a certain group of *Western* values as *if they were universally applicable*. The authorized heritage discourse typically privileges "monumentality and grand scale, innate artefact/site significance tied to time depth, scientific/aesthetic expert judgement, social consensus and nation building" (Smith 2005, 11–12) and de-privileges local and non-expert understandings of heritage.

Cognizant of how recently heritage has been used as a tool to harm, the *The White Banner* game's cooperative design aims to do the opposite: to incorporate a method and approach that engages local communities in an agentive, collaborative process of creative critical heritage exploration and re-connection. The production of a demo of the game is currently being finalized by a team at UT Austin headed by myself, and we are working closely with our colleagues in Syria. It was initiated in the summer of 2024 and should be finalized in the spring of 2025. Our team consists of several colleagues in Syria, some of whom participated directly in the excavation of the site as well as heritage workers with experience in the archaeology and museum sectors. The project has two primary aims: to provide an educational tool for the public outside Syria and to explore gaming as part of what we hope will be a reparative heritage strategy for local people in the aftermath of armed conflict. The project asks: to what degree can interactive gaming models help students, scholars, the interested public, and local people understand and ameliorate the physical extinction of cultural heritage in the aftermath of war and conflict? How can such immersive environments bring the past alive, and what role could they play in imagining new futures in the aftermath of conflict? Can games

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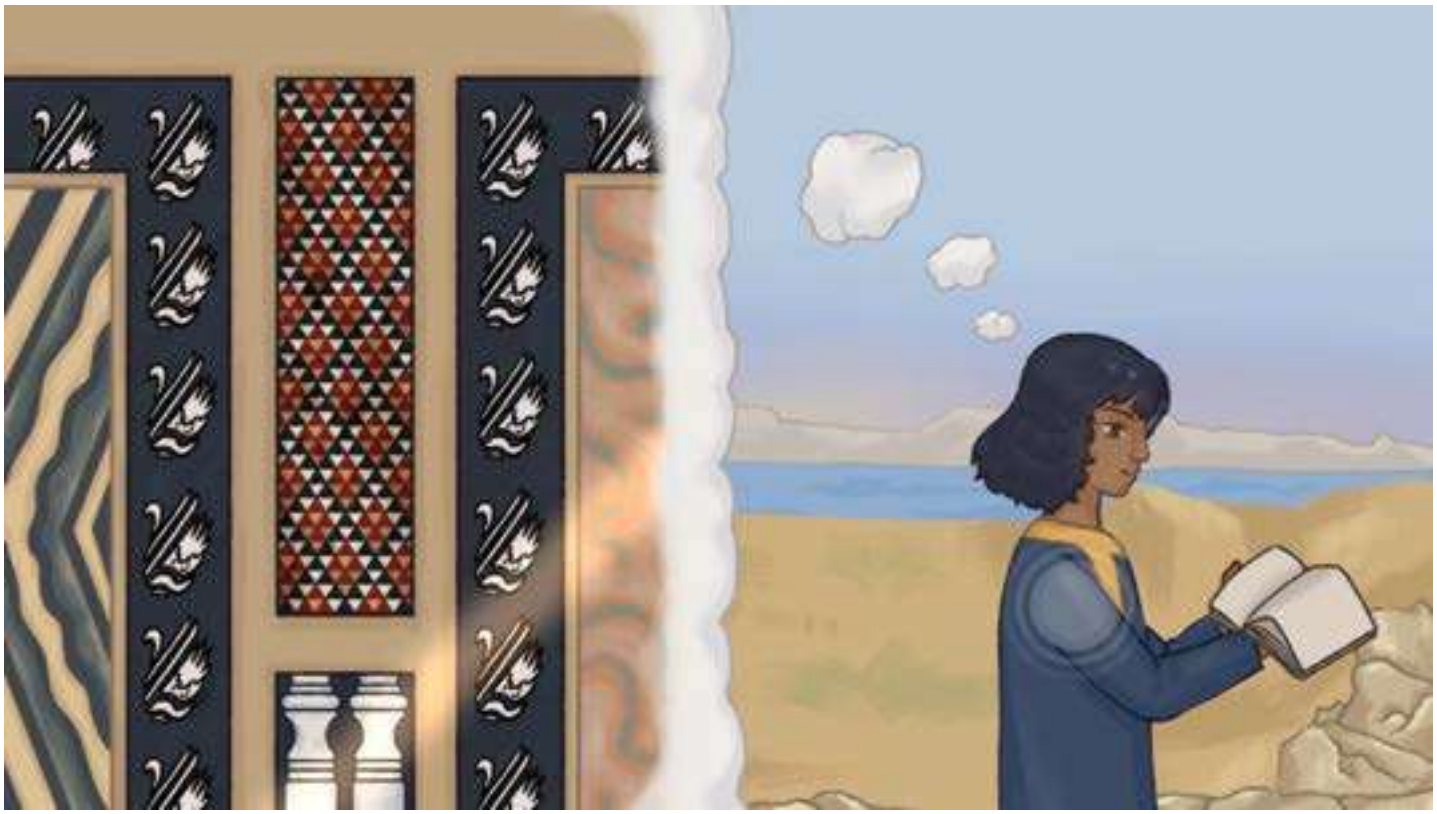

Fig. 3

play a role in restorative heritage practices, and return play, joy, and agency to people in the narration of their own past? And how can the immersive, multisensory experience of gaming create a sense of place and play that can be used as a teaching tool for those far from such conflicts, for whom access to that past is often restricted to the pages of a textbook? I don't yet think we have all the answers, but these are the sorts of questions that animate this project and which I hope will provide a way forward as we explore the further development of the game.

In *The White Banner,* gameplay is narrated through the eyes of Marwa or Marwan, young, fictional family members of the first dynasty of Islam, the Umayyads (661–750 CE), whose white pennants give the game its title. Because most Syrians do not have access to gaming systems, and to facilitate the game's distribution among players outside Syria, the game is designed for play on a mobile device. The player has the choice to play in Arabic or English. In the game's universe, Marwa/Marwan's story begins in the present, with a story that centers the experience of our colleagues, with whom we worked closely for over 12 years. Marwa stands overlooking the site with her father Abu Marwa, who is based (with permission) on a member of our team in Syria (Fig. 2). Marwa is told not to come to the site anymore because the tragedy of the destruction of the site has left it vulnerable to the *jinn*. The *jinn,* or genies, are a staple of orientalist depictions of west Asia, but in fact an understanding of the *jinn* as being present in ruins is a key local heritage belief, and this element was suggested by our colleagues in Syria. Marwa, of course, does not heed her father's advice, and returns to the site in the evening to read about the transformative events surrounding the Abbasid revolution of 750 that took place at the Qasr (Fig. 3). She wanders in the site and finds a bit of white fabric protruding from the ground, which she touches, releasing the *jinn*, who takes her back in time to the historical moment she had been reading about in her book. Gameplay begins at this moment of crisis between the Umayyads and their rivals and eventual successors the Abbasids, setting up a scenario in which the game's object is the exploration of the excavated site as this crucial episode of Islamic history unfolds.

Marwa then finds herself inside the Qasr, and she can move freely in some areas of the palace, running up the towers and exploring the rooms

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Fig. 4

and apartments. The structure of the Qasr itself was based on our excavated plan and a digital reconstruction produced over a decade ago. The building's plan consisted of a central reception hall flanked by apartments on the north and south. The reception hall was ornamented with painted frescoes that were found still intact up to the dadoes (Fig. 4). Marwa's primary mission is to keep the white banner of the Umayyad rebels safe while the rebellion is planned, and she can explore freely as she seeks a hiding place for the banner, but she also has three skills she must acquire: trade and commerce, science and technology, and politics and strategy. Her acquisition of them is visualized through the growth of a branch on the knowledge tree, based on the eighth-century Lion Gazelle mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar. She acquires knowledge and skills through interaction with several non-player characters or NPCs, including a Jewish vizir who is also the learned court astrologer, her older sister Mayla, who is skilled in courtly strategy and diplomacy, and an Indian merchant who teaches her about the far-flung trade networks of the Umayyad empire. After a series of encounters and attempts to hide the banner, Marwa eventually makes her way outside the Qasr to the bath house, where she encounters one of the Umayyad generals who informs her that the rebellion is now afoot.

We're still at an early stage with the development of this game and much remains to be done. The next stage will involve user experience testing in Syria and at UT Austin, and we are currently actively seeking funding for the full development of the game, which will take several years. Yet early reactions from our colleagues in Syria as well as elsewhere have been overwhelmingly positive. At each step, the demo was collaboratively produced in consultation with Syrian colleagues, many of

Fig. 5

whom worked for years at the site and who have deep, affective relationships to the area and its heritage. It's our hope that it will have a positive impact and in some small way help to create a new future for an old site, one that has endured far too much in the past decade.

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REFLECTIONS ON AI IN THE CLASSROOM:

How We are Not Using AI in the Classroom

By Sonja Drimmer & Christopher J. Nygren

Premise

Prompt engineering is a term that has become commonplace since the widespread availability of generative AI applications like ChatGPT. The idea is that the outputs of the large language models (LLMs) on which these applications are based are only as good as the prompts that are input: vague prompts result in equally vague outputs. And thus was born the race to train for careers in prompt engineering. Unfortunately, the bubble seems to have burst before even the first generation of students was trained for this career outcome.

We were given a prompt as an invitation to participate in this newsletter: "How are you using AI in the classroom?" While we have accepted this invitation, we are engaging in the most humanistic act we can imagine—refusing the prompt.

The emergence of machine learning, and in particular computer vision, alongside popular generative text programs such as ChatGPT have caused educators to hunt for "ChatGPT-proof" solutions: some have devised new kinds of writing assignments that do not lend themselves to automated text generation; others, however, have cited the "inevitability" of this technology's incursion into education and, rather than fight it, have instead decided to incorporate some elements of AI into their pedagogy. In his contribution to this newsletter, Stephen Perkinson has offered valuable first-hand experience of what it is like to try to incorporate the use of LLMs and "generative AI" into a classroom dedicated to the study of the Middle Ages. There is much to learn from Dr. Perkinson's experience, and those who wish to incorporate so-called AI into the classroom do well to learn from his experiences.

As scholars who have been preoccupied for several years with the impact of this new technology on the study of art history, we would advise the following for those thinking of incorporating it in the classroom: don't.

We believe that the intellectual, ethical, and institutional downsides to using this technology are so substantial that normalizing its integration into pedagogy poses risks that far outweigh whatever benefits one might associate with it. In fact, we would argue that thus far the only benefits to using AI in art historical research have been to demonstrate how poorly equipped it is to conduct research in the historical humanities.

The purpose of our contribution here is to offer a digest of those downsides (for an expansion of this discussion, see our article **"Art History and AI: Ten Axioms"**) and some concrete suggestions for resisting the incursion of machine learning into art historical pedagogy:

- **Environmental:** The energy demands to run the LLMs in which programs like ChatGPT run are so high that they both contribute massively to harmful emissions while also disrupting the power supply in ways that exacerbate economic disparity. Likewise, the water required to cool data centers is already exerting a heavy strain on water retention and provision. Even as DeepSeek's most recent advances promise to be less resource-intensive, research has shown that, in an instance of what is known as Jevon's Paradox, efficiency gains spur an increase in consumption.

- **Ethical:** There is a particular paradox that makes AI essentially useless as a tool for studying history. The entire point of what we do as historians is to look for *untold stories*…elements of the history of mankind that are novel and unexpected. There is a fundamental epistemological disjuncture between what PhD-holding historians do and what ChatGPT and its ilk do: the former meticulously, purposefully, and rigorously comb through a mountain of human-curated documents looking

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for revealing details that diverge from the baseline, offer indications of cultural shift, or elements humanity embedded in seemingly mundane activities; the latter processes terabytes of machine-harvested data in order to predict what will be the most likely next token in a string, and when these tokens are words they may or may not result in a grammatically coherent sentence.

- **Institutional:** Educational technology (Ed tech) is an industry of its own whose ends are very far removed from those of the educators they purportedly serve. As Audrey Watters has shown in her book, ***Teaching Machines: The History of Personalized Learning*** (MIT Press, 2023), the zeal to "optimize" education by means of technology goes back well over a century, and both the promises offered and the language used to make these promises have changed remarkably little. This is a profitable industry that requires ever-new products to sell to educational institutions by convincing administrators and educators alike that teachers can improve learning outcomes and prepare students to meet the demands of the job market, all while "scaling up" by integrating new technologies into the classroom. Remember Massive Open Online Courses or MOOCs? How much time and money were wasted by investing in the technological and physical infrastructure required to perform what ultimately we all did under the duress of a global pandemic, the devastating educational outcomes of which we are still feeling?

Ultimately, though, our objection to incorporating LLMs and generative-AI in the classroom is more fundamental: not only does it short-circuit the pathways of learning, but it also potentially nullifies what we see as our fundamental pedagogical commitment to our students and our scholarly commitment to the past. This may seem overblown rhetoric, but it is important to take a moment to reflect on what we do in the classroom. What, at the level of first principles, are we trying to accomplish through the study of the Middle Ages and early modernity? Why do we continue to believe it is important to educate students about the past? Having an answer to that question is a crucial first step to understanding that the promotion of AI in education is nothing less than an attempt to colonize the university with the impoverished notion of "learning" that resides at the core of "Machine Learning."

We believe that learning is something akin to the prolonged process of embodied cognition that cuts across accumulated experience, instantaneous calculus, acculturation, and institutionalized education, which combined allow someone to operate in the world. This goes from knowing not to eat raw chicken and "don't pick up the long scaly things with fangs" to "buckle the seat belt before pulling out of the driveway." But it also encompasses sentiments like "I relate to Hamlet because I too have wondered what it would be like to commit suicide and stop existing" or "how did we go back to making literature in the wake of the Bubonic Plague? I can imagine it would have been hard to make 'art' in 1350." All those things are the product of a process of "learning." Some of it is lived, some institutionalized, and some of it is a natural human instinct for survival and empathy. If that is what we mean by "learning," it is vital that at every turn we insist upon the humanity of the process.

Computers are good at pattern recognition; but pattern recognition and token prediction are not learning. To continue calling them machine "learning" or artificial "intelligence" is to agree with a fallacious metaphor that risks irreparable harm to students, the citizenry, and, by extension, humanity in the form of death-by-a-thousand-cuts.

One crude definition of human cognition might run something like this: one of the highest forms of learning is to have cultivated the ability to look at a situation and imagine it otherwise. This runs the gamut of cognition from the ethical (would it have been right to strangle the infant Pol Pot in his crib?) to the aesthetic (Beethoven but with electric guitars) to the historical (I live in a world with steel support beams, but can I imagine what it would have been like to walk into a Gothic cathedral and not understand how the building supported its own weight while reaching toward heaven?). Machine Learning has now beaten a human player at the game GO. This was long

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thought to be an impossible feat of "cognition." Ultimately, though, the game was jailbroken by a machine that could process permutations and recombinations to make the mathematically "optimal" move. This is an amazing accomplishment of computer engineering. But "learning" entered the equation when master GO players began seeing the game otherwise by seeking to find the rationality behind a mathematically "optimal" move. Our job as educators is to make sure that our students are learning, and this means thinking critically about what it has meant to be a human being at different moments in time. What did "love" mean in the fourteenth century? What did a "portrait" look like in the Middle Ages and how is that different from the hundreds of "portraits" you've taken with your iPhone? These are questions to which a machine is unresponsive in the most fundamental way because it is made of silicon and shares no kinship with human beings who lived hundreds of years ago. For our part, we will continue trying to induct our students into what Marc Bloch called "the solidarity of the ages," in all its complexity.

Suggestions

While in recent years universities have promoted student "productivity" (projects, online portfolios of their work, social media posts about their research papers, the list goes on), little of this push to deliver outputs and create content serves the actual purpose of education, which is to foster the capacity to think well, read well, listen well, and look well. Higher education strengthens the process; if we are going to teach sophisticated materials and challenging content, students need to learn how to think, read, listen, and look their way through it. The emphasis on "content creation" is detrimental to the educational mission. "Content" is a vague term that has been defined down in such a way that a grammatically acceptable, conceptually unobjectionable, and procedurally unimpeachable ten-page paper about the reliquary of Sainte Foy generated by an LLM counts as acceptable "content" for a student to submit in response to an assignment.

One concrete step towards pedagogy after AI is shifting the focus of our attention from product to process: both students' and our own. In both of our experiences we have found it fairly easy to determine when a response to a question was generated by AI. For instance, in spring 2024 Nygren taught a course on the Italian Renaissance. One question in a quiz conducted through Canvas (the Learning Management System [LMS] at his home institution) asked about court art. About 10% of the responses included reference to Hans Holbein's *Ambassadors,* a work of art that was not discussed in class. A few others used Velazquez's *Las Meninas* as a core example, always with the same banal commentaries about the *Spanish* court context. Similarly, when in Fall 2024 Drimmer set a question asking students to respond to the biopic of Hildegard von Bingen, *Vision*, by relating the film to works they had studied in class, one essay brought up the works of Dante, whose name did not appear once in lecture or assigned readings. The point here isn't how easy it is to surveil and penalize our students, activities that waste our time, make us feel disillusioned, and alienate us from the actual work of providing education; the point is that coordinating our assignments tightly to the content of the course prevents generative AI from being responsive to the writing prompt in a satisfactory way.

An exercise that compels students to become aware of the process by which they formulate responses to our prompts is one of the most traditional pedagogical exercises in the art historian's toolkit. Drimmer has students sit in a dim classroom, look at a work in silence for twenty minutes, and jot their thoughts. The class then reconvenes not only to talk about their observations but also to reflect on what that process was like. They always say, "it's hard." Without fail, they articulate how challenging it felt to maintain their focus when they thought they had nothing left to write and then how unexpected it was to be able to work through a barrier of stultification toward discovering more to see, to think about, and to write.

A discomfiting fact worth articulating is that so many of the students who arrive at universities like ours have been so underserved by their secondary schools that the outputs of ChatGPT

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are often *better* than what they can produce (if by "better" one means grammatically and orthographically correct and keyed to the syntactic and structural formulas of college writing). So the suggestion to have them compare an algorithmically generated essay to their own or even to published work of scholarship risks defeating the very purpose of the exercise; our students might either extrapolate from it that they may as well outsource school work to code or they may not have the skills to distinguish thoughtlessly automated text from a scholar's thoughtfully argued essay. In this challenging context, then, we need to focus less on product and far more on process. We need to cultivate students' attention. They need to learn to attend to images. They need to attend to words.

Within the context of the "attention economy," all people who spend any time online, our students included, are constantly subject to the brutal competition for their eyes. Another return to traditional methods is making attendance mandatory and equating attendance with attention. Drimmer regularly teaches large enrollment classes and, implementing a suggestion from a graduate student in her program, recently began recording attendance by producing name cards that each student picks up from a table as they enter the class and returns as they leave (the cards not retrieved at the beginning are recorded as absences). It's an elegantly low-tech solution that has shown immediate results: the average grade on exams in Drimmer's classes has risen by nearly ten points since she made attendance mandatory.

Our hypothesis is that grades have increased because there is now a very subtle technology for encouraging students to attend—both literally to attend class, but also to attend to the material that is covered in class. Attention is a skill that must be cultivated. As educators, we try to help our students learn to process that which is unique. We help them learn to see distinctions that make a difference and to notice subtle gradations that have maximal impact. That is a truly human skill. By the time "artificial intelligence" has "seen" millions of photographs of paintings or sculptures, all the distinctions—the uniqueness that makes these objects the product of human minds and hands—have been flattened under the steamroller of "big data."

We teach our students to see the things that are human, to appreciate the unexpected, and to see the variation that breaks the pattern rather than repeats it. Our job as educators is to foster that in our students.

Finally, we need to advocate for ourselves and demand from our universities specific plans for supporting students as they learn to write. Thus far university administrations have mostly capitulated, incorporating AI into higher education in ways that are financially intensive. ChatGPT does not comply with FERPA, and therefore administrators have contracted with Microsoft (Copilot) to incorporate AI into university-licensed software in ways that will supposedly preserve student privacy while nevertheless feeding anonymized data into the hopper of LLMs. That's when they care to exercise any caution at all about the wholesale incorporation of this technology into education. A more brazen example is California State University, the largest public university system in the United States, which has just signed a $16 million deal with OpenAI to "create an AI-empowered higher education system." The **press release from the university itself** is worth reading in full to see the discrepancies between the vision of "empowerment" it projects and what we believe actually works to develop students' critical faculties and humanity. The power of learning to write is not the written product itself but the process of *learning* to write. Ultimately, AI short circuits that process and in so doing breaches the entire educational contract.

If these sound like unexciting proposals: good. One of the seductions of technosolutionism is the promise of exciting new tools to advance the project of learning and enhancing students' experience of education. That seduction is more often than not snake oil. There is no killer app, no one cool trick, no hack. We may need to deprogram ourselves from thinking that there is.

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An AI Exercise in the Classroom

By Stephen Perkinson

In what follows, I describe my experimental plans to confront—in a very limited way—what I see as some of the major educational implications of the advent of Large Language Models (LLMs) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. Part of what drove me to attempt this was an experience I had recently in a class I was teaching. Over the course of several years (and, in particular, in the wake of the lessons learned from the pandemic), I have adopted the practice of using a number of very low-stakes assignments in my classes. I design these to ensure that students put in some work, that their workload feels manageable rather than overwhelming, and more broadly that they come to view their education as a process of asking questions and embracing uncertainty rather than a contest in which they display the knowledge they already possess. One of my favorite low-stakes assignments involves collaboratively annotating assigned readings. Using an interactive tool available in Canvas (our campus's Learning Management System—to use yet another acronym, our LMS) that allows students to see each other's comments, students must select and respond to each assigned reading in one of three ways. They can highlight a portion of text, annotating it with a comment like, "this seems important, because…," and then add a sentence or two laying out their rationale for finding the passage significant; they can instead provide a comment along the lines of, "I found this confusing, but I wonder if the author is trying to say…," followed by a sentence attempting to decipher the perplexing part of the essay; or they can respond in any way they like to another student's comments. There are no right or wrong responses, and no one is expected to "get" the article's point in this round of reading—we aim for that in our class discussion. I read all of the responses, but my only "assessment" of them is to count them. If a student has posted three annotations, they have successfully completed the task. In theory, this should address one of the main factors that educational research has demonstrated is a primary cause of student cheating: students' fear that being wrong will harm their score on an assignment and their overall grade. Even a student prone to procrastination or too distracted to read the full article could post all three of their annotations on the first page of the essay and then skip reading the rest of it if they really wanted to. That would obviously be less than ideal, but it is possibly marginally better than not doing even a single page of reading before class. Moreover, it is just not the sort of thing I am terribly interested in policing.

In spite of all of that, however, I began to notice something in the student responses over the last several months (in other words, since the arrival of AI tools): a small number of students in each class posted annotations that were at once voluminous and vapid. Although most students responded in a highly conversational mode—making quick, funny asides or responding to each other in charmingly supportive ways—I was noticing a small subset of annotations that relied on nearly identical, bland framing: "this passage is compelling because," followed by an observation that was at best vague, and at worst lifeless and insipid. I quickly came to the depressing realization that a handful of students were choosing to use AI tools for an assignment that had virtually no stakes attached to it and that could be done satisfactorily (for the purposes of the grade, at least) with an absolute bare minimum of human effort. My suspicions were confirmed hilariously when an inattentive student fell fully asleep at the switch and managed to cut and paste an entire AI-generated response into his annotation, such that their annotation began with the phrase, "ChatGPT said: This passage is compelling because…."

Since the arrival of AI tools, my more tech-savvy colleagues have encouraged me and others to include a clear statement on the use of AI on each of my syllabi, and I have done so. My AI statements are short and to the point. They begin by stating emphatically that the use of AI is explicitly prohibited for any and all work in the class. They explain the rationale for this ban in terms that students at a college like mine can easily relate to: having AI do your work is akin

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to a musician or an athlete hiring someone else to practice their musical instrument or lift weights for them, and then going into a concert or game without having done any of that crucial preparatory work. My statements conclude rather grimly that I reserve the right to consider the use of AI for any assignment, no matter how minor, to be a serious breach of the academic honesty portion of our student code of conduct. I provide a link to the student handbook, encouraging students to familiarize themselves with the (potentially severe) consequences for committing such an act of dishonesty.

My experience, however, has made it clear to me that this combination of low-stakes assignments, empathetic explanation, and dire threats was not working. The AI tools exist. Extraordinarily loud voices in our society are constantly telling our students that AI is the wave of the future and that these tools will make their lives easier. They tell our students that using them is simply how things are already being done in the wider world, and that they will be expected to be adept at using them in their future working lives. Not surprisingly, for some of our students these tools have simply become part of how they do their schoolwork. Interestingly, even one of the companies promoting these tools is finding this problematic: the LLM company Anthropic **reportedly** now requires job applicants to certify that they did not use AI to write their cover letters.

I realized that much of what I had been doing boils down to waving my finger and telling my students not to do something because I think it is bad for them. In other words, I had basically been lecturing them with various reasons that I thought AI was bad—reasons they were undoubtedly hearing from many other professors. I had been expecting my students to passively absorb and agree with my advice, rather than using techniques that I know from other contexts tend to be much more powerfully persuasive. I was not asking them to engage in the active, hands-on forms of learning that I have used effectively to teach my regular class content.

These realizations led me to devise a plan for a class I am teaching this semester on Gothic art. The plan involves a single class session that will have students use AI to examine a monument they have already become familiar with in class: Reims Cathedral. My plan for the class is in some ways similar to one that a colleague brought to my attention last fall, and that was **published online** in the Spring of 2023, in which a History professor teaching a class on nineteenth-century American history has students critique an AI-generated biography of Frederick Douglass. My version is, however, slightly different, both in its topic and its framing. To be clear, I expect this to be an exercise in failure. And that is the point. I want to try to meet students where they are—in other words, to acknowledge the fact that they are hearing positive things about AI tools, and to recognize as well that they are probably finding themselves using these tools—but I also want to help students understand that AI tools may prevent them from benefiting from the most profound opportunities provided by an educational institution. In other words, I do not want these students simply to hear me say, "Do not use AI tools in your schoolwork;" I want them to understand through direct experience why I and others believe these tools are corrosive in certain educational contexts.

To help me understand the things that students are hearing about the use of AI in the world beyond my college campus, I asked two of my oldest friends who work in what an academic like me would call "the business world" to tell me how they are seeing AI tools used and discussed. The first friend is based overseas where she works with international corporations as a communications and marketing consultant. This is someone with a liberal arts education who is both informed and curious about human history and culture, and who is highly literate—a truly exceptional writer. But she reported to me that she now finds herself using ChatGPT (at the more advanced, subscription-based level) nearly every day of the week for her job. She kindly described to me the ways she uses it: "I use it as a sparring partner as I iterate through my own drafts. I use it to shorten things ('make this 500 characters'). I use it to check that the language and words I've used are suitable for an audience of people who use English as a working language and not a native language."

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She reports moreover that she foresees these tools as utterly transformative in her larger professional world. "I am working now on changing my entire business model, changing my service offering, because about half the work I did in 2023 is going to disappear. I am a horse buggy manufacturer and the first Model Ts are rolling off the assembly line. I can like it or not. It's just a fact. I cannot stop the tide."

Another friend, working for a firm that identifies fraudulent practices in the medical industry, reports that he never has occasion (at least not yet) to use AI tools to do his work—to write reports, fill out spreadsheets, and so on. He tells me that he has not yet found it worth his while to figure out ways of having AI tools do his work for him—he is fast enough at it on his own. However, he says he finds it necessary to engage with AI tools to help him understand the ways they are now being used to commit increasingly sophisticated forms of fraud. He finds that it is not enough to simply know how to use these tools to perform certain tasks; he reports that it is crucial to understand their biases and shortcomings in order to be able to anticipate what their "tells" might be when they are put to nefarious uses.

My class meeting will begin with these anecdotes, because I feel it is important to acknowledge what students already have been led to believe: that AI tools are powerful, and that students will likely find themselves engaging with these tools in their future lives (at work and beyond). Prior to class, students will already have realized that I am not someone who views this future in particularly optimistic terms. I have assigned them to read **a piece** by Sonja Drimmer and Chris Nygren, **another piece** by Sonja alone, and **an opinion piece** by the journalist Karen Attiah. All of these share a profound unease (to put it very mildly) with these tools, as well as a sharp awareness of the major ethical concerns that they raise.

I will lead this class meeting later this semester, but I have already done a kind of test drive of it with a small group of my students. The class meeting I have planned will consider what AI tools can tell us—or perhaps more accurately, what they will consistently fail to tell us—about the image program found at Notre Dame de Reims. To this point in the course, students have spent considerable time exploring that program. Among their readings is Barbara Abou-El-Haj's "The Urban Setting for Late Medieval Church Building: Reims and its Cathedral Between 1210 and 1240," published in *Art History* in 1988. I chose this particular essay in part for its historiographic significance. As many readers here will be aware, this essay was among the first to explore in depth the ways in which the image programs of Gothic cathedrals can both mask and, if interpreted in light of archival evidence, reveal the enormous social tensions and animosities within the urban societies that created them. Contemporary ecclesiastical sources recounting the building of cathedrals, of course, often told stories of a "cult of the carts," describing the buildings as generating and benefitting from an enormous upsurge of faith and claiming that the building campaigns produced considerable social cohesion across all classes as people came together to support the goals of the church. Earlier scholars had of course at times questioned the accuracy of that story, but Dr. Abou-El-Haj's work was among the first to seriously and methodically challenge it. Making use of archival sources and visual analysis, her 1988 essay presented a picture of the strained relations between church authorities and commune residents. She found that on several occasions those tensions erupted into significant acts of violence that led to interruptions in cathedral building campaigns. She moreover pointed to ways in which the imagery added to the church in the wake of those uprisings seems to respond to those acts of public resistance, forcefully asserting a particular vision of unassailable ecclesiastical authority. In our class meetings on the cathedral, I was able to fill in students on scholarship published both by Dr. Abou-El-Haj and others in the years since the 1988 article, building on and refining its arguments.

Dr. Abou-El-Haj's work is often cited to this day in scholarship on Gothic monuments, but her findings do not always register on the many popularizing websites and freely available online sources dedicated to Gothic cathedrals. Although her life was heart-breakingly cut short before she was able to complete her book on the

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topic, key elements of her work were assembled after her death by a number of her colleagues, who **posted it on the ICMA's own website** in 2017 for others to make free use of. Other pieces of her scholarship appeared in volumes that are available digitally and that, in the piratical world of technology, has become available (legally or not) to LLMs as they scoured the internet in recent years gathering the data from which they assemble their answers.

Students will thus arrive in our AI class meeting with some real prior knowledge of a significant angle of interpretation of Gothic cathedrals and an understanding of what that interpretation is founded upon; they will also undoubtedly be aware (through the additional readings but also through the other conversations they have been part of on campus) that professors often have significant reservations about the use of AI tools. In our meeting, we will put some of these tools to the test. The fundamental question will be: does what these tools tell us about Gothic cathedrals, and about Reims in particular (as our test case), align with what we have learned in class, or does it leave out significant—and perhaps even crucial—pieces of the story?

For our purposes, we will use four LLMs that are available either publicly or through portals that my campus is experimenting with: ChatGPT (the widely-known LLM developed by OpenAI that often seems to be a go-to for students seeking to use an AI to assist them with their work); Scholar GPT (which bills itself as "an advanced AI tool tailored for nonprofit organizations that require reliable research and data analysis capabilities"); Gemini (Google's LLM); and Claude 3.5 Sonnet (released by Anthropic last fall). Each of these is distinct, but the results they produce are in many respects similar. We will be working in a collaborative process, with the class collectively developing an initial prompt (the question we input to the AI chat screen) and then refining our prompts based on the responses. As I write this, with the class meeting in the future, I cannot predict how the class session will go. My initial trial run of this exercise, however, proved eye-opening for the small group of students who took part.

These students began with what they hoped would be a simple, common-sense, but informed prompt: "In what ways does the sculptural program at Reims cathedral reflect social tensions in the city?" The different tools generated a range of similar—and similarly vapid—responses. The initial prompt produced a flood of words that largely echo the familiar description of cathedrals as monuments to social unity and religious devotion. The AI tools initially only barely grappled with the core of the question: the query about social tensions. Examples of those responses included:

> The stylistic diversity in the sculpture at Reims indicates the involvement of multiple workshops and individual artists. This reflects the growing power and influence of craft guilds in medieval cities. Tensions could arise between these guilds, the church, and the city's governing bodies regarding control and artistic expression.

And:

> While the cathedral's primary purpose was religious, the inclusion of secular themes and realistic portrayals of human figures reflects the growing interest in the natural world and human experience. This shift could have been seen as a challenge to traditional religious authority.

And, in a remarkable piece of understatement:

> The financial cost of such a large undertaking could have caused tensions between the religious leaders, and the common people of the city.

The occasionally oddly-placed punctuation mark is just one of the features of these tools that students began to notice. The students remarked on the odd, conditional and passive statements produced by the tools and they immediately recognized their utter lack of precision (noting, for instance, the frequent use of phrases like "could have been seen" which leave open the question of whether they *were seen* in the way described, and if so, *by whom,* and *in what context*). We spent a little time in effect grading these responses (they received failing grades from the students), and then moved to test the theory that refining the prompts allows for better answers.

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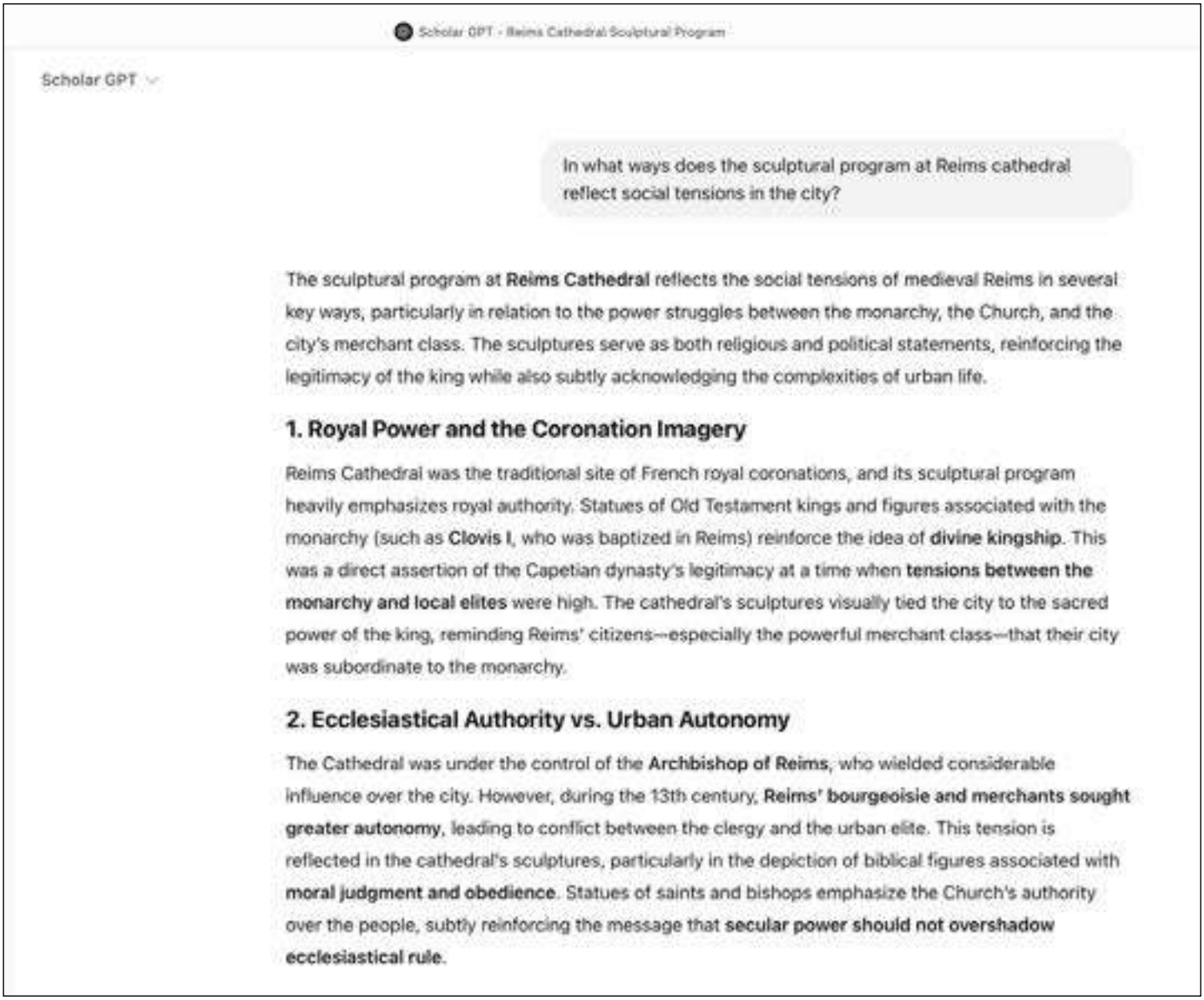

Fig. 1
Interactions with Scholar GPT on Reims Cathedral Sculpture Program

As the test group refined its prompts, they managed to cajole the AI tools into producing answers that appeared, at first glance, more directly focused on specific elements of the sculptural program. The students initially found themselves tempted to pronounce these responses to be improvements, noting that they now had the feel of a (barely) competent answer on a college-level exam. But even as they read the responses more carefully, the test group students found that the answers remained frustratingly vague. The responses hinted at historical facts and mentioned portions of the cathedral's image program, but they never connected the historical information to particular elements of the images; indeed, students quickly realized that the AI tools seemed incapable of engaging with the images visually at all. The students began to wonder whether the inability of AI tools to perform visual analysis might have something to do with the fact that they cannot actually see in the ways that humans see. After all, AI tools see objects only as they are mediated through data, and they lack (at present, at least) the capacity to shift between the stylistic, iconographic, and theoretical registers of analysis that inform effective art historical scholarship.

Students in the test group also rapidly noticed that the initial AI responses were entirely lacking citations, and when AI tools were asked to cite sources (even "Scholar" GPT had to be specifically asked to provide them),

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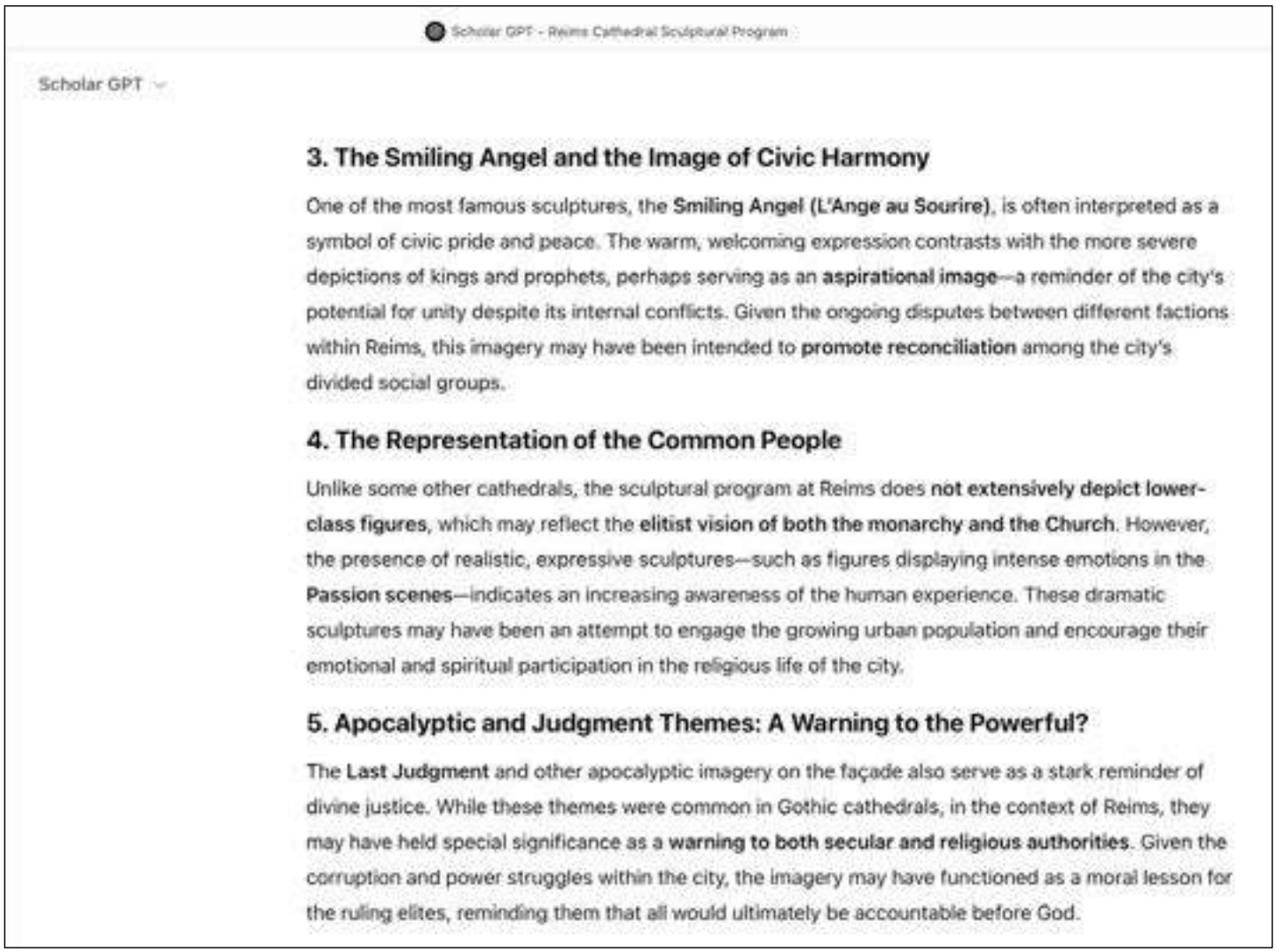

Fig. 2
Interactions with Scholar GPT on Reims Cathedral Sculpture Program

their citations were minimal. Some of the sources they provided were quite elementary. Gemini, for instance, provided as a source a page published by UNESCO bearing that organization's justification for including Notre-Dame de Reims on its list of "World Heritage Properties." Not surprisingly given the purpose and audience of that source, the elements that Gemini culled from it were essentially celebratory in tone—more press release than historical analysis. As my test group of students asked Scholar GPT to provide specific and focused information on one of the portals that we had discussed extensively in class, it provided links to four sources, one of which was an undergraduate's senior thesis that had been posted online. The other three sources were by accomplished scholars with PhDs in the field, including Barbara Abou-El-Haj herself. But in each of these instances, the citations were extraordinarily vague. None provided page numbers. One "citation" of an edited volume offered no indication as to which of the essays in the volume contained the source for the ideas that the AI tool extracted from it. Links to the sources that seemed to promise to clarify matters were not helpful. One led to a paywall requiring an institutional log-in (presumably the LLM had managed to circumvent these somehow). Two other "citations" (one reading "download book" and the other "read more") had the appearance of links, but clicking on them produced no effect (here again, it seemed that the LLM had extracted information from presumably copyrighted sources).

The more the test group of students attempted to guide the tools by refining the prompts, the more frustrated they became. Even when the prompts were highly specific and leading (our

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final prompts could only have been written by someone who already had a pretty clear sense of the responses they should produce), they generated vague answers. After over an hour of trying to refine the prompts, the AI tools never succeeded in doing what art historians are trained to do as undergraduate students: to combine visual analysis with information (whether historical, religious, literary, etc.) drawn from written sources in order to produce a precise account of the ways that an artifact reflects the specific context in which it was created as well as the manner in which it can be understood as seeking to shape the perceptions of its viewers.

In other words, even in this trial run version, this pedagogical exercise demonstrated precisely what Sonja Drimmer and Chris Nygren persuasively predicted: AI tools are not capable of "doing" art history. Moreover, when students use them, they cannot possibly develop the skills that art history classes teach: the ability to provide a genuinely convincing historical account of an artifact from the past. Students will not see that kind of work modeled in the results derived from an AI tool, and they certainly will not be doing that work themselves. That work requires human attention to a visual object and a careful consideration of the sources that allow us to develop an analysis of that object. Because LLMs rely on online sources for their "training," they cannot draw upon the vast majority of sources that art historians (and especially medieval art historians) learn to rely on: archival materials, articles in journals that seem obscure to the incurious algorithms of LLMs, and books that continue to sit on shelves without having been digitized. Nor can they draw upon encounters with other artifacts or monuments; they can only rely on the pixelated forms of those things. Even when a digitized source is available and an AI tool can provide a bland and imprecise summary of it, the tools appear incapable of connecting the visual with the conceptual.

With this exercise and its associated readings, I am not trying to make a grand statement about the future of LLMs. I simply hope that students will come out of this experience with significant questions about the technologies that they are being encouraged by others to embrace, and that they will be more aware of the countless major ethical problems these tools raise. But most importantly, I hope my students will better understand why so many of us who care about their educations are so often urging them not to use them in their classes: not because we are technophobes possessed of a futile yearning for some lost, simpler age, but because we see these tools as detrimental to human learning when they are deployed as educational shortcuts. Perhaps the students will, at the very least, emerge from this experience with an informed skepticism with which to confront utopian claims about the AI-driven future. At best, perhaps they will gain a fuller sense of what the costs of these tools are, preparing them to ask with care and deliberation: what kind of future do we humans want?

Stephen Perkinson is President of the ICMA and Professor of Art History at Bowdoin College.

EXHIBITION REPORTS:

Siena: The Rise of Painting, 1300–1350: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, October 13, 2024–January 26, 2025

By Sarah Wilkins

Fig. 1

As a specialist in trecento art, it is not often that I encounter a blockbuster exhibition focusing on my period. It is an artistic moment that defies easy categorization as either Medieval or Renaissance, instead balancing precariously between the two. So it was with great anticipation that I awaited the opening of the masterful *Siena: The Rise of Painting, 1300–1350* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (October 13, 2024–January 26, 2025), and I saw it with great delight. This exhibition, now closed in New York, was co-organized with the National Gallery, London, where it will run from March 8–June 22, 2025, and is the first major exhibition on Sienese trecento art at either museum. *Siena: The Rise of Painting* was conceived over a decade ago by Joanna Cannon (then Courtauld Institute of Art, now Professor Emerita) and Caroline Campbell (then Curator of Italian Painting at the National Gallery, London [NGL]; now Director of the National Gallery of Ireland), and developed in concert with Stephen Wolohojian (John Pope-Hennessy Curator in Charge of the Department of European Paintings at The Met).

The focus of the exhibition is the four most famous Sienese painters active in the first half of the trecento. Duccio di Buoninsegna, the eldest, was active from the late duecento, and is the presumed teacher of the next generation of Sienese artists: Simone Martini, who died in Avignon in 1344; and the brothers Ambrogio and Pietro Lorenzetti, both of whom died before 1350, presumably of the Black Death. But this magnificent exhibition does much more than draw attention to a few "big names." It brings together over 100 Sienese paintings, drawn from the holdings of The Met and the NGL, as well as numerous other collections in both the US and Europe, putting them into conversation with each other. It also puts the paintings into conversation with works in other media, including marble, enamel, manuscript, textile, and ivory, originating from elsewhere in Italy, from France, and as far afield as Iran. In doing so, it presents us with a Siena not isolated or provincial, but one that was a key player in multiple networks of information, material, and design. Most significantly, it makes a convincing case for the broad contemporary

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Fig. 2

Fig. 3

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Fig. 4

Fig. 5

appeal of this gorgeous material, often derided as appealing only to a rather niche audience of specialists (of which I am unabashedly one).

The exhibition opens onto The Met's Duccio, purchased for an eye watering $45 million dollars in 2004. Despite some early controversy over its **authenticity**, this work is a small jewel, and it deserves the space it is given here to sparkle. Meant to set the scene for the exhibition, it appears between a Byzantine icon on one side and a French ivory on the other, and illustrates two of the stylistic threads that Duccio wove together into something new and Sienese. Also of note is the final object in this room: a fragment of a sculpted crucifix. Damaged in World War II beyond restoration, its destruction revealed two parchment sheets identifying its artist—Lando di Pietro—previously unknown as a sculptor. A reminder that even in loss, knowledge can be gained.

After this prelude, the exhibition that follows is divided into numerous spaces that flow seamlessly into one another. These are organized to draw out different aspects of Sienese trecento art. Some focus on individual artists or even an individual work (for example, Duccio's *Maestà*), while others are more thematic like "Siena and the North: The Via Francigena," "Polyptychs," or "Paintings for Personal Devotion." Throughout, the paintings at the heart of the exhibition are put in dialogue with other media. One of the things that struck me is that many objects transgressed their categorization; you could see rationales for placing individual objects in multiple categories.

It is virtually impossible to choose just a few highlights in a show as rich and varied as this, but mine include the way in which the curators brought together panels originally from one work but that have long been separated, allowing you to view them in new (or should I say, old) ways. The reuniting of all eight surviving predella panels

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Fig. 6

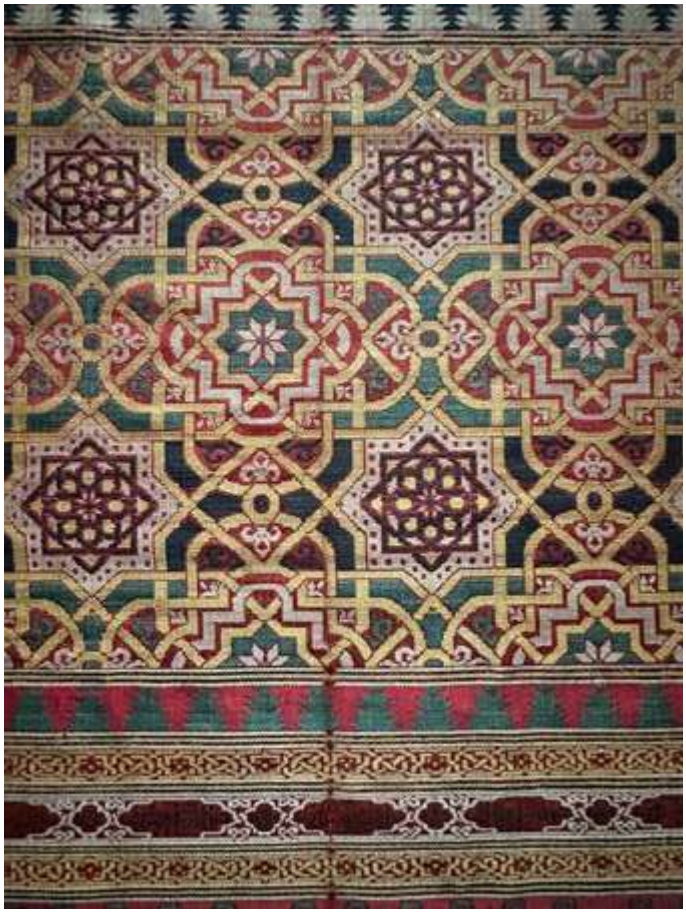

Fig. 7

from the back of Duccio's *Maestà,* normally dispersed in collections across the US and Europe, arranged in order, was revelatory (Fig. 1). Similarly stunning was the reassemblage of Simone Martini's *Orsini Polyptych* (Fig. 2) as well as his *Palazzo Pubblico Altarpiece.* Not a work that needed reassembling, Pietro Lorenzetti's monumental *Pieve Altarpiece* (Fig. 3), on loan from the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Pieve in Arezzo, provided a sense of the scale and majesty these artists could achieve. And it is impossible to not mention Martini's *Christ Discovered in the Temple* (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), a surprise star of the exhibition, with its relatable depiction of an unrepentant and sulky teenaged Jesus being reprimanded for worrying his mother (Fig. 4).

The inclusion of numerous French ivories—long connected with the Sienese style—as an integral part of the exhibition was enlightening, with a highlight being the wondrous *Polyptych with the Virgin and child and Scenes from the Infancy of Christ* (1280s) from the Toledo Museum of Art (Fig. 5).

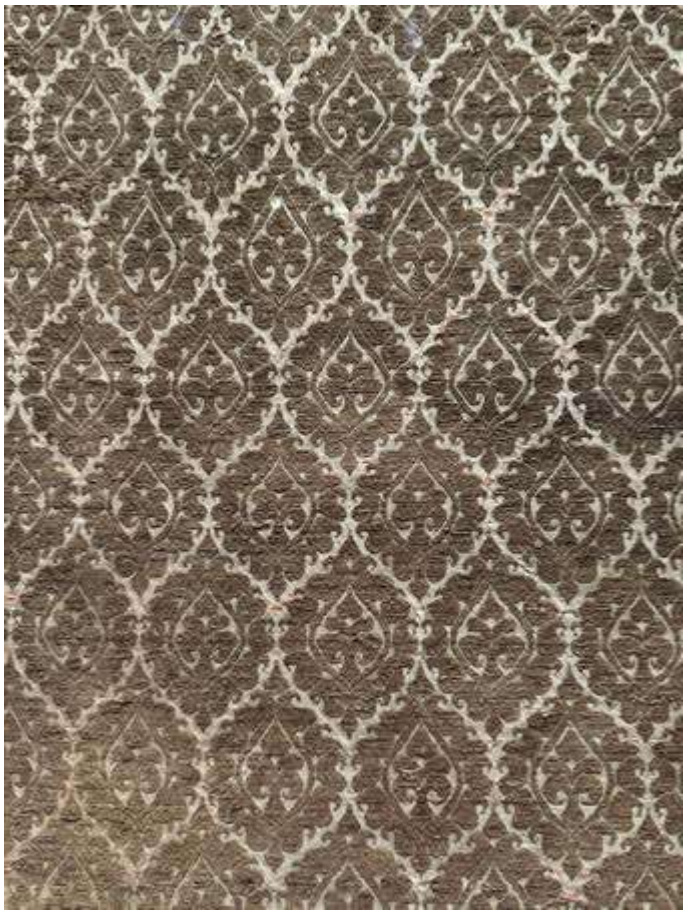

Fig. 8

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Fig. 9

Less expected was the impressive section "Textiles," in which fabrics from Lucca, Spain, Anatolia, Central Asia, and Iran were placed in conversation with those so lovingly depicted in Sienese paintings (Figs. 6–8). The unusual opportunity to view surviving textiles added another dimension to the understanding of the networks of trade and production that underlay the paintings.

Another great success of this exhibition was its bold modern design, with dark walls and massive pillars, which were used to create focused areas of varying size within the space (Fig. 9). At times these offered tantalizing glimpses of what was to come, or reminders of what had come before. The dramatic contrast between the stark setting and the brilliant, gilded works created a secular holy space in which to appreciate them. This care in design was also evident in the way smaller objects—ivories, enamels, and illuminated manuscripts were displayed—individually or with only a few to a case, so they could be examined closely. I also want to applaud the choice to display works so that they were visible from multiple viewpoints, when possible. Seeing the decorated backs of devotional panels gave a deeper appreciation of how original owners of these works of art would have interacted with and viewed them, as well as insight into the kind of damage that was often inflicted upon them when they were dismantled for the art market (Fig. 10).

I look forward to seeing how the exhibition will look in London, where several works will appear that were not in New York, while other works seen here will be absent. Indeed, I know many scholars who are planning to travel to see it there, saying something about the specialness and magnitude of this undertaking. For those

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Fig. 10

who missed the exhibition in New York, or who want to get a glimpse at what its installation looked like there as opposed to in London, there is an informative **Virtual Exhibition Tour—*Siena: The Rise of Painting*** led by Caroline Campbell and Stephan Wolohojian available on The Met's YouTube channel. There is also an excellent book that accompanies the exhibition, ***Siena: The Rise of Painting: 1300–1350***, edited by Joanna Cannon with Caroline Campbell and Stephan Wolohojian, published by National Gallery Global. Not a traditional catalogue, although it contains a list of the exhibited works, this is a lushly illustrated volume of essays divided into four broad categories: "Duccio of Siena," "The Heirs of Duccio's *Maesta*," "Sienese Contemporaries," and "Siena and the Wider World."

Sarah S. Wilkins is Adjunct Assistant Processor, CCE in the History of Art and Design Department at Pratt Institute, series editor for ***Trecento Forum*** *(Brepols), and the former president of the* ***Italian Art Society*****.**

Faire parler les pierres: Sculptures médiévales de Notre-Dame (Making Stones Speak: Notre-Dame's Medieval Sculptures), Musée de Cluny, musée national du Moyen Âge, Paris, November 19, 2024–March 16, 2025

By Jennifer M. Feltman

Fig. 1

Not only did the fire of April 15, 2019 catalyze interdisciplinary research on the Cathedral of Notre-Dame on-site as it was being restored, but it also fueled new research into the large corpus of Gothic sculptures that were fragmented away from the building and its site in earlier periods following the French Revolution, and then again in the nineteenth century under the restoration led by Lassus and Viollet-le-Duc. These new insights are presented in the exhibition *Faire parler les pierres: Sculptures médiévales de Notre-Dame* at the Musée de Cluny in Paris (November 19, 2024–March 16, 2024), which opened just a few weeks before the December 8th reopening of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris.

The title "Making Stones Speak" poetically references the overarching intent of the exhibit: to demonstrate the significant ways that conservation sciences working in tandem with art historical analyses can allow new stories to be told about these Gothic sculptures. Under the direction of curator Damien Berné, nearly 100 fragmented sculptures in total from the cathedral's five portals (west facade, north and south transept facades), choir screen (*jubé*), and enclosure (*clôture*) are re-narrated in the Gallo-Roman frigidarium and adjacent Notre-Dame room. Many of the sculptures come from the Cluny's collection and its reserve. Some are familiar, but others have never been exhibited. These have all been carefully cleaned and studied through a partnership with the Centre de recherche

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Fig. 2

et de restauration des musées de France (C2RMF) and the Laboratoire de recherche des monuments historiques (LRMH). The project represents the first re-evaluation of the Cluny's Notre-Dame fragments since the 1980s.

The exhibit also provides the first public viewing of more than 30 fragments of the ca. 1230 *jubé* of Notre-Dame that were discovered during the preventive archaeological excavations conducted by the Inrap (Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives) beginning in spring 2022. The vibrant polychromy remaining on many of these fragments has been carefully conserved thanks to the scientific research support from the Île-de-France Drac funded by Rebâtir Notre-Dame de Paris (the project managing the restoration work). These works are on loan from the Inrap. Additional fragments of the Notre-Dame *jubé* and *clôture* found in the excavation conducted by Viollet-le-Duc are on loan from the Musée du Louvre and the *depôt lapidaire* of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame.

Sculptures from American collections are absent, but one suspects this has to do with the rapid timeline for the exhibit, which had to be coordinated with the cathedral's restoration and reopening. On the other hand, there are a few loans from non-French collections. These include a newly discovered fragment from the *clôture* (in the collection of Robert McCarthy) and manuscript folios that seem to provide evidence for the iconographic program of the *jubé* and *clôture*.

The exhibit begins in the Gallo Roman frigidarium with the fragmented jamb sculptures from the Sainte Anne portal (Fig. 1). These are superimposed on full-scale images of the figures drawn by the eighteenth-century monk Bernard de Monfaucon. These are the only visual documents of the sculpture's original design. When positioned against the full-scale drawings, the extant fragments align remarkably well, demonstrating that the drawings of Monfaucon are quite precise. Following the evidence provided by lines in drapery of the figures, Berné has connected a few more fragments that are presented here.

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Fig. 3

The exhibit continues with a restaging of the main fragments from the Last Judgment portal lintel of Notre-Dame. Since 1977, these have been installed high above a doorway on the back wall of the Notre-Dame room of the Musée de Cluny. The new exhibit provided the opportunity to take these sculptures down and have them cleaned and studied by the teams from C2RMF and the LRMH. A new architectural frame mimicking the shape of the Gothic portal has been designed for this installation (Fig 2). Instead of looking up at the sculptures from a distance, the viewer is allowed to see the primary fragments *en face*, as if standing on scaffolding. This allows a greater appreciation for the artistry of their carving and a vision of the remaining polychromy without losing a sense of their monumentality or architectural context. The fragment on the viewer's right-hand side contains the most original polychromy. As studies of its colors reveal, the faces of the resurrected figures are coming to life, turning from a pale blueish color to pink.

Across from the Last Judgment portal installation is a double-sided wall with fragments from the *jubé* of Notre-Dame. One can pass through the middle of it, between figures that have been identified as Moses and Aaron. The various heads found in the recent excavation are on display as well (Figs. 3–4). They demonstrate the facility of the sculptors and showcase the remnants of polychromy. Many of the heads and torsos seem to belong to various iterations of Christ from scenes of the Passion. Others could belong to Apostles or those involved in the Passion. Several folios from a dismembered manuscript (ca. 1340?) provide evidence for the iconography. The folios, which may come from a historiated Bible, are dispersed in Paris, Chicago, Bloomington (IN), London, Oxford, Toronto, and Hong Kong. Some of the folios are on display next to sculptures from the cycle of the Life of Christ that seem to share similar imagery.

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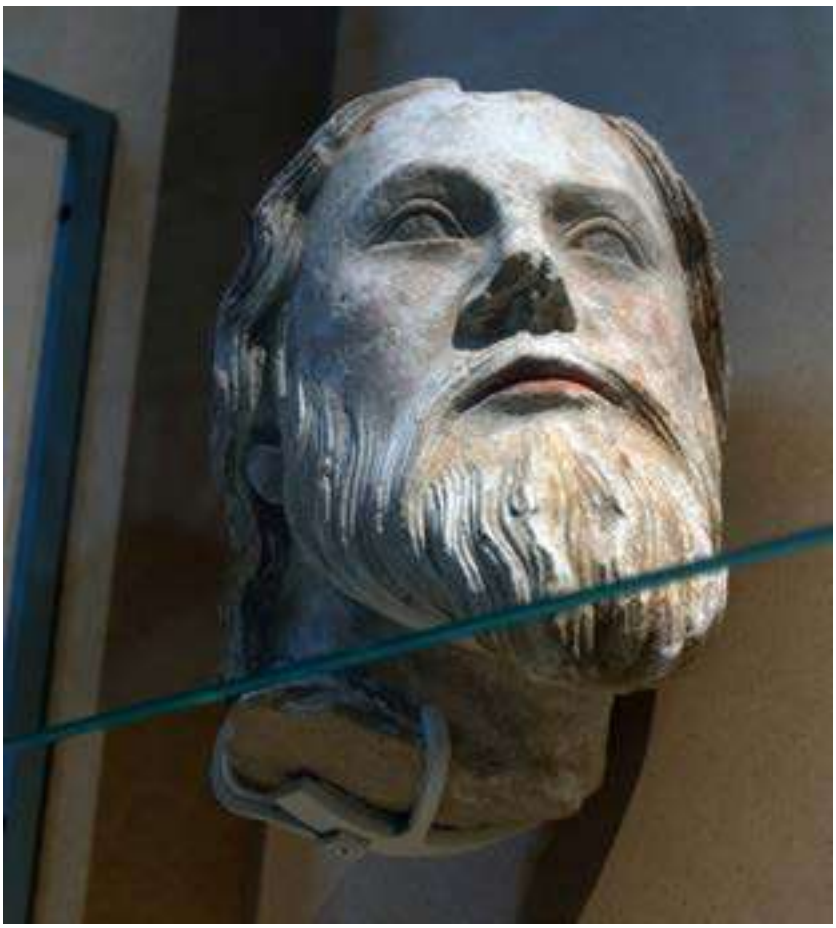

Fig. 4

Another revelation is a newly discovered fragment of the *clôture* of Notre-Dame. Charles T. Little and Pierre Yves-le-Pogam have identified this fragment as coming from a scene from the Book of Job (Fig. 5).

The exhibit continues in the adjacent Notre-Dame room. Here, the Heads of the Kings of Judah, a statue of Adam, statue fragments from the transepts, and the trumeau of the Sainte Anne portal all remain in their original positions. However, the previous restorations of the figure of Saint Marcel from the Sainte Anne trumeau have now been reversed (Fig. 6). The restored head from the nineteenth century is now mounted on the wall next to it.

The exhibit includes digital displays; in the Gallo Roman room, a holographic 3D model is projected over a sculpture of a capital, and in the Notre-Dame room, a terminal with an entertaining digital animation tells the history of the Adam figure over time. However, it is the sculptures themselves that are the centerpiece.

This is a sculpture-lover's exhibit, and it truly does reward the viewer with proximity to original works. It also appeals to the detective, interested in forensic evidence. Further, for those interested in the history of museums, "Making Stones Speak" is a veritable museology of the Musée de Cluny. This museum was created in 1843, in large part to house fragments of Notre-Dame that were then in the possession of the French state. In 1977, the collection grew exponentially with the discovery of the Heads of the Kings of Judah and other fragments, which were found buried under the Banque Francaise du Commerce Extérior.

A great achievement of the show is in how it brings together the rich collection of Notre-Dame sculptures at the Cluny with the sculptures from Notre-Dame now dispersed in other locations in Paris. This is enhanced by the loan of *jubé* fragments from the Inrap. These important works all deserve to be seen together.

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Fig. 5

Finally, the curator, collections manager, and staff responsible for the installation must be applauded for the finesse with which they have deftly mounted very heavy stones. These are not easy objects to mount. The displays both provide ease of view and allow the viewer to imagine their original architectural contexts.

If you can, get to Paris, see this show before it closes.

Jennifer M. Feltman is Associate Professor of Medieval Art and Architecture at the University of Alabama, a member of the research group "Le jubé de Notre-Dame de Paris: nouvelles découvertes" (dir. Christophe Besnier [Inrap]), and a member of the Chantier scientifique de Notre-Dame—Groupe Décor (dir. Dany Sandron [Centre Chastel]). She is currently directing the collaborative project "Notre-Dame in Color." In partnership with the Musée de Cluny and the Centre Chastel, the University of Alabama Visual Documentation Lab is developing 3D recreations of the polychromed sculptures of the Last Judgment portal of Notre-Dame.

Fig. 6

Silk Roads: British Museum, London, September 26, 2024–February 23, 2025

By Madeleine Duperouzel

The *Silk Roads* exhibition space.

The British Museum's landmark *Silk Roads* exhibition brought together over 300 objects from 29 institutions, weaving a vivid tapestry of connectivity, tolerance, and artistic virtuosity in a truly "global" Middle Ages. The exhibition was monumental in ambition but avoided overwhelming visitors through adherence to a tight chronological range, showcasing objects mainly from the fifth through eighth centuries when the major civilizations under consideration reached cultural and economic peaks. The exhibition's structure mimicked the fluidity of the networks travelled by historic traders, punctuated by glowing signs indicating major cities and sites along the way, from Korean Geumseong to Spanish Cordoba and beyond. Visitors could follow the land route through Northern China's Dunhuang and desert oases to the Central Asian steppe and onto the Middle East and Europe. Alternatively, they could move along water routes, charting a journey from the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, and eventually the Mediterranean basin.

The exhibition's tantalizing opening was centered on a sixth- or seventh-century small, viridescent figurine of a Buddha, seated serenely under a spotlight in the comparatively cavernous entrance hall (Fig. 1). It encapsulated the overarching theme of the exhibition; crafted in Pakistan's

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Fig. 1

Swat Valley, the item journeyed along the Silk Road to its final resting place on the Swedish island of Helgö. Observing the figure, I found my preconceptions of strict delineations between geographies and chronologies fading away. Notions of familiar versus unfamiliar, near versus far, local versus exotic, luxurious versus ordinary, and East versus West all seemed to warp and weave around each other.

The curation successfully underscored another couple of central themes. The foremost of these was material history, specifically textiles—this was the *Silk Roads*, after all. Highlights included a fully intact sixth-century Byzantine riding coat and gaiters (Fig. 2), inspired by Persian fashion, whereupon close inspection the woven details of the wool could still be seen. A bolt of silk from ca. 200–400 CE Chang'an provided context about the silk trade but also showed the centrality of textiles to economic systems; soldiers in particular would often be paid in physical bolts of silk instead of monetary currency. The popularity of silk and the importance of its trade was demonstrated in a display in the Aachen section of tiny silk scraps, which functioned as wraps for Christian saints' relics despite their bearing motifs reflecting their Chinese or Central Asian origins. Furthermore, the exhibition successfully prioritized "ordinary"

Fig. 2

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Fig. 3

materials, not simply luxury items. The Belitung shipwreck display presented an assemblage of more every-day objects, possible personal effects of the ship's crew—a glass bottle, an inkstand, a bronze mirror—alongside an exquisite gold-work bowl with delicately engraved geese and a cup with images in relief of musicians. In the context of the shipwreck and of trade networks more widely, this range of objects demonstrated that anachronistically imposed distinctions between materials and presumed corresponding levels of wealth and social status were, in historical reality, usually much more blurred.

Another major emphasis of the exhibition was on flows and networks of knowledge. The difficulties of displaying an otherwise intangible concept was circumvented by a dual curatorial focus: first, on presenting books, documents, and manuscripts—the physical containers of ideas —and, second, relating these written objects back to wider material connections and commodity exchanges. A comparison of five ca. 764–70 CE wooden pagoda statuettes from Heijō-kyō, capital of Nara, Japan, with the Chinese script paper invocation scrolls (*dharani*) contained within them was complemented by a contemplative seventh-century Bodhisattva gilt-bronze figure from Mount Nachi. A collection of Arabic manuscripts from Baghdad linked papermaking, the formation

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Fig. 4

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Fig. 5

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of Arabic intellectual history, the transcription of the Qur'an, and Arabic global exploration, and was neatly encapsulated in a sixteenth-century copy of al-Idrisi's ca.1100–66 CE map of the world (Fig. 3). The theme of religious exchange also carried through the exhibition. For example, it began by exploring Buddhism's institutionalization and political role in East Asia, then charted its meetings with Islam in Central Asia, which in turn transitioned to contact between Islam and Christianity in the Middle East and Mediterranean. These relationships were not over-simplified; a rubbing of the eighth-century Xi'An Stela, which records the establishment of the Nestorian Christian "Church of the East" in seventh-century Tang China, prompted some personal reflection about my own associations of Christianity with the "West." Similarly, a standout curatorial decision was the choice to place a ca. 800–1000 CE "Manichean" wall-painting fragment below a ca. 900–1000 CE "Buddhist" wall-painting (Fig. 4); although portraying and speaking to different religious contexts, the images were stylistically similar. It gave visitors the opportunity to ask how far we can truly draw boundaries between peoples or cultures.

Audiences were not only asked to consider the movement of human-oriented goods and experiences along the *Silk Roads* exhibition, but also shown the related networks of ecological exchange. Animal imagery was prevalent, from eighth-century earthenware horse and camel statues from Chang'an, China, to near life-size elephants warring with leopards and mythical creatures in a Sogdian wall-painting from Bukhara (Fig. 5)—a major focal point of the exhibition—along with a neighboring wall-painting from Samarkand. Upon reaching Aachen in the European section, one found a beautiful eighth-century Avar golden vessel shaped like a nautilus shell. Such shells were important commodities traded in the Indian Ocean, a significant distance from the Avar heartlands of Eastern Europe. In the Constantinople section, this theme was explored through a large display describing both the significance of ivories to Byzantine culture as well as by directly linking specific objects—ca. fifth–seventh century pyxes and a diptych leaf—to the anatomy of an elephant's tusk.

It appears that another overarching curatorial concern was to push viewers to reorient their experience of history. By beginning the exhibition in East Asia, it wound through desert oases, caravan cities, and the heaving metropolises of Baghdad, Cairo, and Constantinople, only to return at the end to familiar European shores—Cordoba, Aachen, Sutton Hoo—and in doing so, the layout and curation invited a confrontation with the Eurocentrism that has dominated Medieval Studies. For instance, the Viking section is not found near the rest of Europe but rather framed by its relationship to the Arab world through these two cultures' exchange of silver and, somberly, slaves. By the time I reached the ca. 800 CE "Lichfield Angel," metaphorically back in England, I was already reflecting on the essential interconnectivity of artistic production between these areas as well as the complex relationships between people and material, as well as the different ways that cultures throughout history have engaged with new ideas.

The *Silk Roads* was a timely, thought-provoking exhibition that presented a convincing argument for the historical significance of cross-cultural interaction. Audiences were asked to relate this to our own globalized world. It also offered academics an invitation to collaborate across disciplines, investigating their respective societies in conversation rather than isolation. Significantly, it arrived at a moment in time when discourse about global interrelationships is dominated by hostility, trade-wars and tariffs, isolationism, and hardening borders. In response, the *Silk Roads* made a simple but profound point: humanity has always been shaped through cultural interaction, and we are better for it.

Madeleine Duperouzel is a DPhil student in History at the University of Oxford. Her current research focuses on the relationships between women, nature, and identity in the fourth to sixth-century Mediterranean.

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Tania Kolarik,
Assistant Editor for
Events and Opportunities

More calls for non-ICMA sponsored papers, fellowship opportunities, exhibition and conference announcements are posted to the website and social media, where they are available to members in a format that is timelier than the triannual Newsletter. Visit our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/InternationalCenterofMedievalArt), and follow ICMA on X (formerly Twitter) (https://twitter.com/icmanews). ICMA members can also share calls-for-papers, conferences, lectures, grants, employment opportunities and other news that benefits the medieval art community on the Community News page of the ICMA website: http://www.medievalart.org/community-news/.

FUTURE ICMA EVENTS

ICMA RECEPTION IN KALAMAZOO

Friday, May 9, 2025 | 6:30–9:00 PM ET
University Roadhouse | 1332 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI
6:30 PM: Students
7:00 PM: Members and Friends

SPONSORED BY THE ICMA

MINING THE COLLECTION AT THE 60TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MEDIEVAL STUDIES, KALAMAZOO, MAY 8–10, 2025

Mining the Collection (1): A Virtual Visit to the Wyvern Research Institute, London
Thursday, May 8, 2025 | 12:00 PM ET | Virtual
Organizer: Ryan Frisinger (ICMA)

A workshop led by Susannah Kingwill
(Wyvern Research Institute)

Mining the Collection (2): A Virtual Visit to the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscripts Studies
Friday, May 9, 2025 | 12:00 PM ET | Virtual
Organizer: Ryan Frisinger (ICMA)

A workshop led by Nicholas Herman
(University of Pennsylvania)

ICMA SESSIONS AT THE 60TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MEDIEVAL STUDIES, KALAMAZOO, MAY 8–10, 2025

Images of Dancing Women in the Middle Ages: Joy and Sorrow (1)
Friday, May 9, 2025 | 10:00–11:30 AM ET |
Sangren Hall 1750
Presider: Alessandro Arcangeli
(Università degli Studi di Verona)
Organizer: Licia Buttà (Universitat Rovira i Virgili)

Speakers:
"From Joy to Sorrow: On Images of Dancing Women in the Pamplona and Ausburg Bibles (Late Twelfth Century)"
Licia Buttà (Universitat Rovira i Virgili)

"*Saltatrix ebria:* The Diabolical Dance of Lust in Prudentius's *Psychomachia*"
Giulia Di Pierro (Universitat Rovira i Virgili)

"Capturing the Courtly Peasant: Reflections on Dancing Shepherdesses in Medieval European Art"
Kathryn E. Dickason (Simmons University)

"Dancing Women and Courtly Tales: Desire, Enthusiasm and Celebration in Limoges Enamels"
Maria del Mar Valls Fusté Sr.
(Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

"Dancing Women on Stained Glass: The Peasant Dance in the Solothurn Window of the Basel Town Hall and the Dance Iconography of Medieval Basel"
Annick Juliane Herren (Vitrocentre Romont)

Images of Dancing Women in the Middle Ages: Joy and Sorrow (2): Allegory and Courtly Culture
Friday, May 9, 2025 | 1:30–3:00 PM ET | Virtual
Presider: Alessandro Arcangeli
(Università degli Studi di Verona)
Organizer: Licia Buttà (Universitat Rovira i Virgili)

Speakers:
"The Representation of *Liesse* in the *Roman de la Rose*: Didactic Discourse and Mnemonic Process"
Adrien Belgrano (École des hautes études en sciences sociales)

"A Dance of Sexual Abandon?"
Emily Shartrand (Glendale Community College)

"Rupture and Demeanor: Dancers and Performers in Fatimid Arts"
Lev A. Kapitaikin (Tel Aviv University)

"The Moresque Dance as a 'Dance of Life': Symbolism of Choreutic Imagery on Ivory and Bone Marriage Gifts in the Late Middle Ages"
Helena Gracià (Universitat de Barcelona)

"The Appeal of Heavenly Dancing"
Karen Miriam Silen (Independent Scholar)

Images of Dancing Women in the Middle Ages: Joy and Sorrow (3): Postmedieval
Friday, May 9, 2025 | 3:30–5:00 PM ET | Virtual
Presider: Alessandro Arcangeli
(Università degli Studi di Verona)
Organizer: Licia Buttà (Universitat Rovira i Virgili)

Speakers:
"From Salome to Jane Avril: Dancing Sorrow Between Religion, Neurology, and Medievalism"
Donatella Tronca (Università di Bologna)

"Toward a Colonial History of Dance: From Le Pays Basque to Indigenous North America"
Lindsey Ann Drury (Freie Universität Berlin)

ICMA ANNUAL LECTURE AT THE COURTAULD, LONDON, MAY 14, 2025

Word/Play: Interiority, Performance, and Reading in Late Medieval Flanders
Speaker: Alexa Sand
Wednesday, May 14, 2025 | 5:30–7:00 PM BST
The Courtauld, Vernon Square Campus, London, UK
Learn more and register here: *https://courtauld.ac.uk/whats-on/word-play-interiority-performance-and-reading-in-late-medieval-flanders/*

Abstract:
A small group of devotional, literary, and spiritually instructional texts from late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Flanders and Northern France contain a remarkable array of marginalia depicting performance practices and play, ranging from puppet shows to violent ball sports. In the environment that produced these books, reading, especially in a devotional vein, was not merely transactional or functional, and the books are part of a performance culture in which engaging in various outward behaviors, especially those associated with "play" in all its aspects was critical to creating the awareness of and experience of inwardness, including a heightened sense of one's spiritual visibility to the divine. Drawing on scholarship in dance history, performance studies, and the history of sports, and responding to recent work by fellow art historians focusing on the nexus of sensory experiences—haptic, visual, aural, gustatory, and olfactory—that constitute what is sometimes characterized as "medieval somaesthetics," this work situates the illuminated manuscripts and the acts of reading they engendered as indices of a much larger realm of experience and practice that constituted the *prima materia* of late medieval selfhood. Understanding how these particular objects, images, and performances constituted the field of its enactment, is pertinent to twenty-first-century phenomena of self-formation and self-perception within the relentlessly performative realm of media culture.

Alexa Sand is Professor of Art History and Associate Vice President for Research at Utah State University, where she has taught since 2004. She earned her Ph.D. in art history from UC Berkeley, with an emphasis on medieval French art and literature. Her book, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation in Late Medieval Art* appeared with Cambridge University Press in 2014. Her most recent work has focused on medieval puppetry, including her 2021 essay in *Gesta*, "Puppets, Manuscripts, and Gendered Performance in the Hortus deliciarum." She is co-host of the podcast *Real Fantastic Beasts.*

Organized by Dr. Jessica Barker, Senior Lecturer in Medieval Art History, The Courtauld. This event is kindly supported by the International Center of Medieval Art (ICMA), and the drinks reception sponsored by Sam Fogg. This series was made possible through the generosity of William M. Voelkle.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ICMA MEMBERS

Volunteer for the ICMA Oral History Project

The ICMA Student Committee has launched the Oral History Project! Students interview members who have made significant contributions to the study of medieval art and the ICMA with the goal of preserving their unique stories and experiences.

The Student Committee is looking for student volunteers to participate as interviewers. All interviews are currently taking place via Zoom, though we hope to conduct them face-to-face in the future.

If you are interested please fill out the form at this link: *https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfioXnhEz3W83WPLeEfxJn3exWloQxF3fHQaj24zaRheNfckQ/viewform*.

ICMA Mentoring Initiative

In cooperation between the Membership and Advocacy Committees, the ICMA supports a program of mentorship events designed to offer groups of students the opportunity to build familiarity with various sectors of the field and consult with colleagues practicing medieval art history in a range of ways. Groups have convened most often on the occasion of exhibitions to confer with curators and gallery designers, along with local scholars. Informal mentoring lunches at the international congresses in Kalamazoo and Leeds create opportunities for discussion of students' and early-career scholars' questions and concerns. Look for announcements of both gatherings through ICMA eBlasts, social media postings, and on the website.

We always welcome suggestions for mentoring events from students and colleagues. Convene a group to visit a site; invite students to a planning session for an upcoming symposium; facilitate a meeting with colleagues engaged in public humanities projects or exploring the medieval period in non-academic forums. Please contact *icma@medievalart.org*. For information about upcoming events and a list of past recorded events, please visit: *https://www.medievalart.org/icma-mentoring-intiative*.

Resource for Teaching a Global Middle Ages

Many art historians wish to retool and expand their medieval art history courses to address the wide diversity of artistic expression that characterized a global Middle Ages. This work includes considering how race and racism intersect with the ways in which we teach the deeper past and reflecting on how the fields of art history and medieval studies were developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The ICMA has developed a resource that is intended to support those who aim to teach a history of medieval art that more fully explores, as the ICMA Mission Statement puts it, "every corner of the medieval world." For this resource, please visit: *https://www.medievalart.org/teaching-a-global-middle-ages-art-history*.

Resources for Online Teaching

The ICMA website offers a library of digital resources for teaching medieval art history, crowd-sourced from ICMA members and maintained by the Digital Resources Committee. Whether you teach medieval art history entirely online, in a hybrid format, or fully in-person, we invite you to consult the list as you write your syllabi, build your courses in your institution's LMS, plan lectures, and devise assignments.

In addition to image databases, interactive websites, and individual open-access essays, videos, and exhibition catalogs featuring medieval art and architecture, you will also find select pedagogical resources geared specifically toward faculty members who teach online.

See: *https://www.medievalart.org/resources-for-online-teaching-art-middle-ages/*.

ICMA Image Database

The ICMA has created an image database that pools member images and allows others to use them free of charge and without restriction. The images in the archive were taken by ICMA members. By placing images in the database, members agree that the images can be used by other members without restriction. As all of the photographers responsible for these images are named, it is hoped that anyone who uses them for publication will credit the source (ICMA) as well as the photographer. To access and submit to the database, please see: *https://www.medievalart.org/image-database*.

The Limestone Sculpture Provenance Project

Because many sculptures in public collections were removed from their original sites long ago, scientists and art historians have collaborated to answer questions concerning their geographic origin and attribution. One way in which scientists contribute to solving these problems is by determining the stone's composition using neutron activation analysis.

Small samples of stone removed from a sculpture, monument or quarry are irradiated in a nuclear reactor to produce radioactive isotopes of elements present in the stone. This compositional data is added to the Limestone Database which contains samples from sculptures in museum collections, from quarries in the Ile-de-France, Normandy, Burgundy, Périgord, and the Nile Valley, as well as from French monuments and British cathedrals. Compositional information in the database is used

to group sculptures and relate them to quarry stone by using multivariate statistical techniques. For the project's website, please see: *http://www.limestonesculptureanalysis.com/*.

ICMA Pop-Ups: Organize an Informal Event in Your Area

The ICMA Membership Committee encourages you to organize informal gatherings of ICMA members. Any type of event bringing members together would be great—a visit to a museum or special exhibition in your area; a picnic in a local park; morning coffee or evening cocktails.

You come up with the idea! We'll give you the email addresses of ICMA members in your area and help you plan! All we ask is that you take some pics and write a brief blurb of your Pop-Up event for a feature in ICMA News.

Organizers of ICMA Pop-Ups should understand and follow the health protocols in their area and be sensitive to the preferences and concerns of participants.

If you're interested, please contact Sonja Drimmer (*membership@medievalart.org*), Chair of the Membership Committee, and Ryan Frisinger (*ryan@medievalart.org*), Executive Director.

ICMA Kress Grants for Virtual Conference Registration Fees

Due to the pandemic, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation has generously agreed to reallocate our Kress Travel Grants to cover the cost of registration fees for virtual conferences. Registration fees are typically not reimbursed for a Kress Travel Grant and we will revert to this policy when travel and conferences are safer again. Only participants in ICMA-sponsored sessions are eligible. For details about the application process, including how to submit application details, see: *https://www.medievalart.org/kress-travel-grant*.

ICMA Kress Travel Grants

The International Center of Medieval Art, through the generosity of the **Samuel H. Kress Foundation,** is pleased **to offer travel grants to speakers at ICMA-sponsored sessions at scholarly conferences.** Travel will be reimbursed up to US$600. Transatlantic and Transpacific travel will be reimbursed up to US$1200.

These funds are available **only to speakers and organizers delivering papers** as an integral part of the session (i.e., with a specific title listed in the program). Funds are payable on a reimbursement basis, via check to US bank account holders or via bank transfer to non-US bank account holders. Funds cannot be covered in advance of the session. **The ICMA cannot guarantee this support, but will make every effort to provide it, based on the availability of funds.**

Reimbursable expenses include:

Airfare

Trainfare

Rental car fees and gas

Mileage at the IRS 2015 rate of 57.5 cents per mile (if you are using your own car)

Lodging (two-night maximum)

ICMA does not reimburse:

Meal expenses

Conference registration fees

Presentation supplies such as computer or camera equipment

Session organizers: Contact Ryan Frisinger (*icma@medievalart.org*) with a list of speakers, affiliations, and departure location as soon as the session is finalized. This will help us determine the availability of funds.

For details about the application process, including how to submit application details, see: *https://www.medievalart.org/kress-travel-grant*.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

If you would like your upcoming exhibition, conference, or lecture series included in the newsletter, please email the information to EventsExhibitions@medievalart.org. Submissions must be received by June 15, 2025 for inclusion in the Summer 2025 newsletter.

Dr. Günther Findel-Stiftung / Rolf Und Ursula Schneider-Stiftung Doctoral Fellowships

Thanks to the initiatives by private foundations (Dr. Günther Findel-Stiftung/Rolf und Ursula Schneider-Stiftung) fellowships programs for doctoral candidates have been established at the Herzog August Bibliothek. These programs are open to applicants from Germany and abroad and from all disciplines.

Applicants may apply for a fellowship of between 2 and 10 months, if research on their dissertation topic necessitates the use of the Wolfenbüttel holdings. The fellowship is €1,300 per month. Fellowship holders are housed in library accommodation for the duration of the fellowship and pay the rent from their fellowship. There is also an allowance of €100 per month to cover costs of copying, reproductions etc. Candidates can apply for a travel allowance if no funds are available to them from other sources.

Candidates who already hold fellowships (e.g., state or college awards or grants from Graduiertenkollegs) or are employed can apply for a rent subsidy (€550) to help finance their stay in Wolfenbüttel.

Thanks to generous financial support by the Anna Vorwerk-Stiftung, the monthly fellowship will be increased by €150 per month until further notice.

Please request an application form, which details all the documents that need to be submitted, at *ed.bah@gnuhcsrof*. Reviewers will be appointed to evaluate the applications. The Board of Trustees of the foundations will decide on the award.

Application Deadline: October 1st or April 1st. The Board holds its selection meetings in February and July. Successful applicants can take up the award from April 1st or October 1st onward each year.

If you send your applications by mail, please submit only unstapled documents and no folders.

For more information, see:
https://www.hab.de/en/doctoral-and-young-scholars-fellowships/

EXHIBITIONS

(ALPHABETICAL BY COUNTRY)

BELGIUM

Pride and Solace: Medieval Books of Hours and their Readers
Groeningemuseum, Musea Brugge, Bruges
April 4–October 7, 2025

DENMARK

VØLVENS VARSEL: Ny vikingeoplevelse
Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen
Through 2027

FRANCE

A New Look at Cimabue: At the Origins of Italian Painting
Musée de Louvre, Paris
January 22–May 12, 2025
For the first time, the Musée du Louvre is dedicating an exhibition to Cimabue, one of the most important artists of the thirteenth century. The exhibition is the product of two "Cimabue-centric" events of great importance for the museum: the restoration of the *Maestà* and the acquisition of a heretofore-unseen Cimabue panel, rediscovered in France in 2019 and listed as a French National Treasure: *Christ Mocked*.

Apocalypse: Hier et demain
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
February 4–June 8, 2025

L'Apocalypse, et après...
Château d'Angers, Angers
March 1–June 1, 2025

Le retour du roi: Quand le château était habité
Château d'Angers, Angers
2025

GERMANY

Light in Dark Times: Medieval Stained Glass from the Khanenko National Museum in Kyiv
Museum Schnütgen, Cologne
April 3, 2025–April 12, 2026
The Museum Schnütgen is exhibiting a precious selection of stained glass from the Khanenko National Museum in Kyiv (Kiev), which will be on display outside Ukraine for the first time. They will be displayed in dialogue with stained glass from the Museum Schnütgen in the stained-glass exhibition space. The exhibition focuses on around 30 works from both museum collections. A total of twelve stained glass paintings, produced in glass workshops in France, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, have been loaned to Cologne from the Khanenko National Museum. This is the entire collection of the Museum in Kyiv, which is to be conserved and restored in Cologne with the help of the cathedral workshop (Dombauhütte).

Vor 1000 Jahren: Leben am Hof von Kunigunde und Heinrich II
Museen der Stadt Bamberg, Bamberg
October 25, 2024–April 27, 2025

ICELAND

Heimur í orðum: Handritasýning í Eddu/World in Words: Manuscript Exhibition in Edda
Edda, Reykjavík
Through May 12, 2025
At *World in Words*, visitors have the opportunity to view the Icelandic manuscripts – the nation's most precious cultural heritage. The manuscripts contain many ancient and renowned sagas and poems, but also various other texts that reflect how previous generations thought about their lives and their society. The exhibition's primary focus is on presenting the rich and complex world of the manuscripts, where life and death, passion and religion, and honor and power all come into play. The exhibition looks at how influences from overseas left their mark on the culture of Icelandic mediaeval society and the Icelandic language, but it also considers the influence that Icelandic literature has had in other countries.

SWEDEN

Medeltida mode/Medieval Fashion
Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya, Barcelona
February 23–May 26, 2024
Historiska, Stockholm
October 24, 2024–November 1, 2026
During the Middle Ages, all clothing was precious. There were no mass-produced clothes in cheap materials. All clothes were hand-sewn and measured for the person who would first wear the garment. The clothes were often used until they were completely worn out, and then the textiles could be used for patching and mending. In the exhibition *Medieval Fashion*, newly sewn women's garments from the 1100s to the early 1500s are displayed, including both simpler garments and more elaborate ones. The Medieval Museum has worked over four years to develop patterns, dye fabrics, and fully recreate these garments. The exhibition is a collaboration between the Medieval Museum and the Swedish History Museum.

UK

Fighting to Be Heard
Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford, UK
January 17–April 27, 2025

Oracles, Omens and Answers
Bodleian Library, Oxford
December 6, 2024–April 27, 2025

Siena: The Rise of Painting, 1300–1350
National Gallery, London
March 8–June 22, 2025

USA

Belle da Costa Greene: A Librarian's Legacy
The Morgan Library & Museum, New York
October 25, 2024–May 4, 2025

The Book of Marvels: Imagining the Medieval World
The Morgan Library & Museum, New York
January 24–May 25, 2025

Creation, Birth, and Rebirth
Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland
August 17, 2024–July 27, 2025

Envisioning Cluny: Kenneth Conant and Representations of Medieval Architecture, 1872–2025
Harvard University,
Graduate School of Design, Cambridge
January 21–April 4, 2025

Mapping the Heavens: Art, Astronomy, and Exchange between the Islamic Lands and Europe
Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City
December 14, 2024–January 11, 2026
The story of *Mapping the Heavens* begins in the Islamic World during the Early Middle Ages (c. 500s–1200s CE), where Muslim scientists preserved and advanced the study of astronomy. Access to these scientific texts—many collected and translated in Spain in the 1200s and widely disseminated in books after the invention of the printing press in the 1400s—fueled a revolution of new discoveries and created a shared astronomical knowledge across Europe. The works presented in this exhibition introduce the advancement of astronomy as a multi-cultural and multi-faith dialogue between scholars and scientists, showcasing the beauty and importance of the books, instruments, and images that communicated these discoveries.

Recasting the Past: The Art of Chinese Bronzes, 1100–1900
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Through September 28, 2025

Striking Designs: Communicating Through Coins
Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.
May 1, 2024–May 31, 2025

Symbols and Signs: Decoding Medieval Manuscripts
Getty, Los Angeles
May 20–August 10, 2025
Explore the mysterious world of medieval codes through manuscripts. Learn about the clever configurations of textual and visual elements that medieval scribes and artists deliberately and playfully employed to arrest the attention of readers and engage their minds in deciphering divine and worldly secrets. Intricately interwoven letters, puzzling monograms, cryptic symbols, and more await to be decoded.

Taught by the Pen: The World of Islamic Manuscripts
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT
February 24–August 10, 2025

CONFERENCES, LECTURES, SYMPOSIA, WORKSHOPS (BY DATE)

Late Antique and Byzantine Art and Architecture
Virtual Lecture Series
Yale Institute of Sacred Music
September 13, 2024–April 11, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://ism.yale.edu/performances-and-events/talks-lectures-and-lecture-series/late-antique-and-byzantine-art-and

The Püsterich of Sondershausen: Explosive Bronze Figures between Art and Science
Lecture
Society of Antiquaries, London, UK
April 2, 2025
For more information, see:
https://thebaa.org/meetings-events/lectures/annual-lecture-series/

24th Annual Vagantes Conference on Medieval Studies
Conference
Duke University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC
April 3–5, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://vagantesconference.org/conference-information-2023/

Taking a Look at Making Late Medieval Menswear
Virtual Conference
Medieval Dress and Textile Society
April 6, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://www.medats.org.uk/events/late-medieval-menswear/

Sala Sartori: Medieval Architectural Spaces and Water in the Iberian Peninsula; A Necessary Conversation
Hybrid Lecture
SenSArt, Palazzo Liviano, Padua, IT
April 9, 2025
For more information, see:
https://sensartproject.eu/https-sensartproject-eu-wp-content-uploads-2024-09-poster_seminars_sensart_24_25-1-1-pdf/

Association for Art History 2025 Annual Conference
Conference
University of York, York, UK
April 9–11, 2025
For more information, see:
https://forarthistory.org.uk/events/cfs-association-for-art-history-2025-annual-conference/

The Blood of His Flesh? Controversial Relics from Byzantium in Venice
Virtual Lecture
Mary Jaharis Center
April 10, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://maryjahariscenter.org/events/the-blood-of-his-flesh

On the Edge: The Divan of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir
Hybrid Lecture
Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
April 10, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://agakhan.fas.harvard.edu/news-events

Are you there, God? It's me, Kunst: The Confessions of Lukas Moser's Tiefenbronn Altar
Lecture
Newberry Library, Chicago, IL
April 11, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://www.newberry.org/calendar/jonathan-tavares-the-art-institute-of-chicago-tamara-golan-university-of-chicago

Reassessing Qarakhanid Funerary Architecture: Portals, Patronage, and Shaping Royal Identity in Pre-Mongol Central Asia
Hybrid Lecture
Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
April 24, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://agakhan.fas.harvard.edu/news-events

"This Holy One is Mother, Father, and Sister to Me": Gender and Beyond in Byzantine Hagiography
Virtual Lecture
Mary Jaharis Center
April 24, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://maryjahariscenter.org/events/gender-and-beyond-in-byzantine-hagiography

Byzantine Studies Symposium: Africa and Byzantium
Conference
Dumbarton Oaks
April 25–26, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://www.doaks.org/events/byzantine-studies/symposium

Topping it Off: Dress and Textiles Above the Shoulder
Virtual Lecture
Medieval Dress and Textile Society
April 27, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://www.medats.org.uk/events/topping-it-off/

The Malleability of Memory in Memorializing the Saints
Virtual Lecture
Mary Jaharis Center and East of Byzantium
April 29, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://maryjahariscenter.org/events/the-malleability-of-memory

Romanesque Sculpture and Water: The Art of Carved Vessels
Lecture
The Courtauld, London, UK
April 30, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://courtauld.ac.uk/whats-on/romanesque-sculpture-and-water-the-art-of-carved-vessels/

Teaching the History of the Liturgy
Hybrid Roundtable
Institute of Historical Research, London, UK
May 1, 2025
For more information, see:
https://www.history.ac.uk/events/roundtable-teaching-history-liturgy

The Lost Cloister of Southwark Priory
Lecture
Society of Antiquaries, London, UK
May 7, 2025
For more information, see:
https://thebaa.org/meetings-events/lectures/annual-lecture-series/

Figural Stone Sculpture in England, c. 750–900 AD: Continental Connections
Lecture
Cambridge Medieval Art Seminar Series
May 19, 2025
For more information, see:
https://www.hoart.cam.ac.uk/seminars/medievalartseminars

Tracing Jewish Histories: The Long Lives of Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts, Judaica, and Architecture
Symposium
The Courtauld, London, UK
May 19–20, 2025
For more information, see:
https://arthistory.case.edu/2024/11/tracing-jewish-histories/

Sala Sartori: La materialità e i suoi significati nel Medioevo: il cristallo di rocca
Hybrid Lecture
SenSArt, Palazzo Liviano, Padua, IT
May 28, 2025
For more information, see:
https://sensartproject.eu/https-sensartproject-eu-wp-content-uploads-2024-09-poster_seminars_sensart_24_25-1-1-pdf/

Memling and the Merchants
Virtual Roundtable Discussion
Warburg Institute
May 29, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://warburg.sas.ac.uk/events/renaissance-lives-hans-memling-2025

Cartooning the Medieval
Symposium
Newberry Library, Chicago, IL
June 5–6, 2025
For more information, see:
https://www.newberry.org/calendar/cartooning-the-medieval

Twelfth Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Conference
Saint Louis University, MO
June 9–11, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://www.smrs-slu.org/

Readers, Makers, and Medieval Consumer Culture: Manuscripts and Books from 1350–1550
Hybrid Conference
New York University, NY
June 23–27, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://earlybooksociety.org/conferences-2/

Medieval Communities
Conference
International Medieval Society, Paris, FR
July 3–5, 2025
For more information and to register, see:
https://www.imsparis.org/en/news/annual-conference-2025-registration/

CALL FOR PAPERS (BY DEADLINE)

Envisioning Gender and Sexuality in Premodern European Prints
Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, IL | Conference
Deadline: April 1, 2025
For more information, see:
https://hnanews.org/cfp-envisioning-gender-and-sexuality-in-premodern-european-prints/

Who Ruled the World? Queen Urraca and Her Contemporaries in the Early Twelfth Century/ ¿Quién gobernó el mundo? La reina Urraca y sus contemporáneos a principios del siglo XII
Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, ES | Conference
Deadline: April 1, 2025
For more information, see:
https://www.medievalart.org/calendar/call-for-papers-who-ruled-the-world-queen-urraca-and-her-contemporaries-in-the-early-twelfth-century-madrid-3-5-march-2026

The Medieval in the Modern World: A Newberry Library Workshop at The Met Cloisters
The Met Cloisters, NY | Workshop
Deadline: April 4, 2025
For more information, see:
https://www.newberry.org/calendar/the-medieval-in-the-modern-world-a-newberry-library-workshop-at-the-met-cloisters

Sanguis Christi. Visual Culture / Visionary Culture. 13th–18th centuries
Louvain-la-Neuve, BE | Conference
Deadline: April 15, 2025
For more information, see:
https://hnanews.org/call-for-papers-sanguis-christi-visual-culture-visionary-culture-13th-18th-centuries/

Permanence and Continuity in Medieval Art
INHA, Salle Vasari, Paris, FR and Université de Lille, IRHiS, Lille, FR | Conference
Deadline: April 15, 2025
For more information, see:
https://medievalartresearch.com/2025/02/24/cfp-permanence-and-continuity-in-medieval-art-deadline-15-april-2025/

Fascination with the Middle Ages in Modern German Literature and Other Media
Special Issue of Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literature
Deadline: April 17, 2025
For more information, see:
https://networks.h-net.org/group/announcements/20056565/cfp-fascination-middle-ages-modern-german-literature-and-other-media

Medieval & Early Modern Cartography: An Introduction
Mediterranean Studies Summer Skills Seminar | Virtual Seminar
Deadline: April 28, 2025
For more information, see:
https://www.mediterraneanseminar.org/overview-mediterranean-art-2025

Boccaccio 650: 1375–2025
Newberry Library, IL | Conference
Deadline: April 30, 2025
For more information, see:
https://www.newberry.org/calendar/boccaccio-650-1375-2025

Connecting Histories: Manuscripts Research Opportunity
Princeton University Library Special Collections | Mount Athos Research Opportunity
Deadline: May 1, 2025
For more information, see:
https://athoslegacy.project.princeton.edu/announcements/

CONTRIBUTORS:

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