



## Order of Medieval Women: Women of Consequence

# Medieval Musings

"We cannot live in a world that is interpreted for us by others... use our own voice, see our own light." **St. Hildegard von Bingen, 1098 - 1179**

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## VIKING GOLD COLLAR



Gold collar, Färjestaden, Sweden,  
ca 5th century A.D., The Gold Room,  
Swedish Historical Museum, Stockholm.

Öland, Sweden the collar is dated to their Migration Period, 400-550 AD. Composed of five ornate gold rings and a total weight of about 700 grams, the collar includes 274 bird motifs made from a filigree technique using very small beads on threads first braided together then attached to a frame. The gold is believed to have been from the Roman Empire when, in 476 after the West German Empire fell, late Roman solidi (coins) were plentiful. Since the 17th-century Swedish legislation has protected discovered antiquities thru state purchase, resulting in an unusually large number of gold and silver objects being preserved.



## LIFE IN MEDIEVAL LONDON

Twelfth century London was a time of change. By 1099 William Rufus' two-year construction of Westminster Hall had just been completed, a building designed to impress his subjects with his power and authority. As the largest hall in England with over 17,000 square feet, the hall had six foot thick stone walls, interior draped arches, plastered and painted wall passages around its perimeter and checkered patterns of light and dark stones above the windows. By 1150 judges were sitting in its Court of Common Pleas hearing civil grievances and coronation banquets were being celebrated; the earliest recorded was Prince Henry's crowing in 1170.

After William's death from a hunting accident in 1100, his brother Henry I assumed the throne with consort Matilda. By this time London's population had grown to 25,000, a large increase from the 8,000 a century before under Æthelred and Emma of Normandy. London was England's main city for commerce but did not become its political capital and official administrative center until King John had the royal treasury and financial records moved from Winchester to Westminster in about 1200.

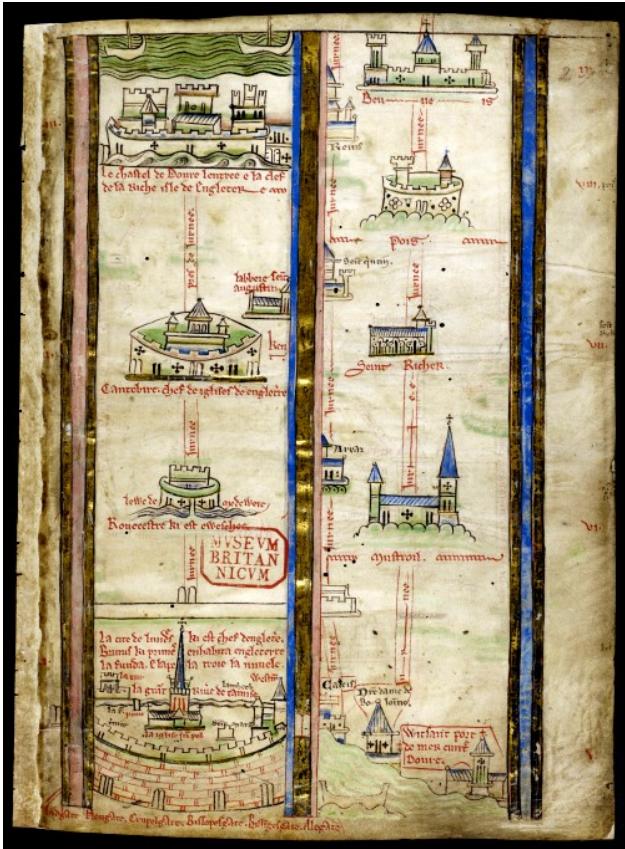
Medieval London was a maze of twisting streets and lanes with most structures constructed of wood and straw, making fire a constant threat. Construction of a stone bridge to replace the original wooden Roman bridge that crossed the Thames began in 1176 with

final completion in 1209, spanning 33 years and three monarchs, Henry II, Richard-the-Lionhearted and John. The 20-foot wide bridge was 300 yards long supported by 20 Gothic styled arches with gatehouses, a drawbridge and street houses which would provide rent for the bridge's upkeep for the next 600 years.

By 1179 London was viewed as contentious, described as "Among the noble and celebrated cities of the world ... the capital of the kingdom of the English is one which extends its glory farther than all the others and sends its wealth and merchandise more widely into distant lands....It is happy in the healthiness of its air; in its observance of Christian practice; in the strength of its fortifications; in its natural situation; in the honor of its citizens; and in the modesty of its patrons. It is cheerful in its sports, and the fruitful mother of noble men." Churches were well-placed, St. Paul's was the episcopal seat of the city with another 13 churches in greater London and 126 parish churches located in the suburbs.

London was protected on its east by the Palatine Castle (Tower of London), its "keep and walls rising from very deep foundations and are fixed with mortar tempered by the blood of animals" a Roman technique to improve strength. To the west were two strongly fortified castles and to the north a high massive wall with seven double gates and towers at regular intervals. The original south walls had suffered under "the mighty Thames, so full of fish, has with the sea's ebb and flow washed against, loosened, and thrown down those walls in the course of time." About two miles from the city was the Royal Palace of Westminster surrounded by a heavily populated suburb whose houses were spacious with gardens and trees. On London's north side were well-known wells with sweet clear running water, the most notable being Holywell, Clerkenwell, and St. Clement's. The area had pastures, meadows with flowing streams able to turn mill-wheels (in 1086 the *Domesday Book* recorded 5,624 watermills in England) in addition to a great forest nearby with woodland pastures, lairs of wild animals, stags, fallow deer, wild boars, and bulls.

"The city is honored by her men, glorious in its arms, and so populous that during the terrible wars of King Stephen's reign the men going forth from it to battle were reckoned as 20,000 armed horsemen and 60,000 foot-soldiers, all equipped for war. The citizens



Matthew Paris's depiction of London: Royal MS 14 C VII, fol. 2r,  
1250-1259, British Library, London.

of London are regarded as conspicuous above all others for their polished manners, for their dress and for the good tables which they keep. The inhabitants of other towns are called citizens, but those of London are called Barons...and...a solemn pledge is sufficient to end every dispute."

London supported a variety of businesses including several places where merchants could hire daily laborers. Conveniently located along the riverbank where ships brought in wines for sale were vintners with public cook-shops located in their cellars offering, "according to the season, dishes of meat, roast, fried and boiled, large and small fish, coarser meats for the poor and more delicate for the rich, such as venison and big and small birds." According to William Langland's late 14th-century poem *Piers Plowman*, there would have been a cacophony of street cries including the shouts of cooks and tavern-keepers, 'Hote pyes, hote! / Goode gees and grys! Ga we dyne, ga we!' The cook-shops were popular not only with citizens when faced with unexpected visitors weary from their journey and not wanting to wait until fresh food could be bought and cooked, but with hungry soldiers traveling thru the city at all hours of the day or night, often thousands at a time.

Immediately outside one of the gates was Smithfield, a smooth field where every Saturday, unless it was a major feast-day, a famous exhibition and sale of fine horses was held. Earls, barons, and knights that were in town along with many citizens who would come to see "the high-stepping

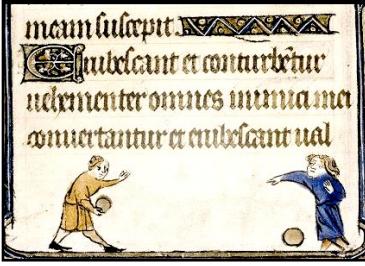
palfreys with their gleaming coats, as they go through their paces, putting down their feet alternately on one side together. Next, one can see the horses suitable for esquires, moving faster though less smoothly, lifting and setting down, at is were, the opposite fore and hind feet, here are colts of fine breed, but not yet accustomed to the bit, stepping high with jaunty tread; there are the sumpter-horses, powerful and spirited; and after them there are the war-horses, costly, elegant of form, noble of stature, with ears quickly tremulous, necks raised and large haunches. As these show their paces, the buyers first try those of gentler gait, then those of quicker pace whereby the fore and hind feet move in pares together." Races were held at Smithfield with "chargers that are so powerful to carry and so swift to run, a shout is raised, and orders are given that the inferior animals should be led apart....Their mounts also enter into the spirit of the contest, their limbs tremble, and so impatient are they of delay that they cannot keep still. When the signal is given, they stretch their limbs to the uttermost, and dash down the course with courageous speed. The riders, covetous of applause and ardent for victory, plunge their spurs into the loose-reined horses, and urge them forward with their shouts and their whips....." Another part of Smithfield included "implements of husbandry, swine with long flanks, cows with full udders, oxen of immense size, and woolly sheep. There also mares fit for plow, some with foal and others with brisk young colts closely following them."

London was also a center of sea trade, "Arabia sends gold; the Sabaean spice and incense. The Scythian brings arms, and from the rich, fat lands of Babylon oil of palms. The Nile sends precious stones; the men of Norway and Russia, furs and sables; nor is China absent with purple silk. The Gauls come with their wines."

Sports were popular in London. "After dinner, all the young men of the town go out into the fields in the suburbs to play ball. The scholars of the various schools have their own ball, and almost all the followers of each occupation have theirs also. The seniors and the fathers and the wealthy magnates of the city come on horseback to watch the contests of the younger generation, and in their turn recover their lost youth; the motions of their natural heat seem to be stirred in them at the mere sight of such strenuous activity and by their participation in the joys of unbridled youth."



Horses, MS Harley 3244 f. 48v , British Library, London.



Playing ball, Book of Hours MS. Douce 62, fol. 096r, ca. 1400, French, Bodleian Library, Oxford, England.

After dinner on Sundays during Lent “young men from the households of bishops, earls, barons, and adolescents would go into the fields on their war-horses skilled to run in circles with a pretense of war, carrying out field exercises and mock battles. Equipped with lances, shields and, for the younger boys, spears forked at the top with the steel point removed, they enjoyed engaging in combat, each hoping for victory.”

Easter brought a type of naval warfare where a youth, poised on the stern of a small boat powered by the swift current and many oars, positioned to strike a shield that had been firmly bound to a tree mid-stream. If the youth broke the lance by striking the shield while maintaining his footing he succeeded, however, if he struck the shield firmly and the lance remained unbroken he was thrown overboard into the flowing river. Two boats are moored on each side of the target with several boys on board ready to grab him as soon as they see him or “or when he rises on the crest of the wave for the second time.” Spectators enjoyed the event from the bridge and terraces fronting the river, “ready to laugh their fill.” On feast-days through the summer the young men participated in archery, running, jumping, wrestling, slinging the stone, hurling the javelin and fighting with sword and buckler (small round shield).



London Bridge, Yates Thompson MS 47, ff. 94v, 1461-1475, British Library, London.

“In winter ... when the great marsh that washes the north wall of the city is frozen over, swarms of young men issue forth to play games on the ice. Some gain in speed in their run with feet set well apart slide sideways over a vast expanse of ice. Others make a seat out of a large lump of ice, and whilst one sits thereon, others with linked hands run before and drag him along behind them. So swift is their sliding motion that sometimes their feet slip, and they all fall on their faces. Others, more skilled at winter

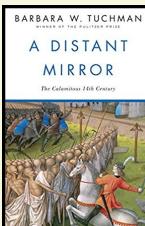


“Vita alme virginis Liidwine,” Johannes Brugman, St. Lidwina, ice skating accident, Schiedam, 1498.

sports, put on their feet the shin-bones of animals, binding them firmly round their ankles, and holding poles shod with iron in their hands, which they strike from time to time against the ice, they are propelled swift as a bird in flight or a bolt shot from an engine of war. Sometimes, by mutual consent, two of them run against each other in this way from a great distance, and, lifting their poles, each tilts against the other. Either one or both fall, not without some bodily injury, for, as they fall, they are carried along a great way beyond each other by the impetus of their run, and wherever the ice comes in contact with their heads, it scrapes off the skin utterly. Often a leg or arm is broke if the victim falls with it underneath him; theirs is an age greedy of glory, youth years for victory, and exercises itself in mock combats in order to carry itself more bravely in real battles.”

Source: Segments were taken from the description of London in the time of Henry II from the preamble to William fitz Stephens’s *Life of Thomas Becket* from 1170-1183. English Historical Documents, Vol. 2, 1042-1189, Ed. David C. Douglas, pgs. 956-962.

## READERS CORNER: A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14<sup>th</sup> Century by Barbara Tuchman



Winner of two Pulitzer Prizes and a National Book Award, Tuchman was one of the great author/historians of her time. The book is not only a seven hundred page encyclopedia of the 14th-century's political, military, religious, social, cultural and economic history, it is a compelling account of individual men and women living through those turbulent disastrous times including Philippa of Hainault, Isabella of France, Joanna of Flanders, Jeanne de Belleville, Joan of Arc and Enguerrand de Coucy VII, a high-ranking noble, heralded as “the most experienced and skillful of all the knights of France.”

## “THE QUEEN’S FIRE CROSS”

In 1229 Piere Dreux, Duke of Burgundy, learning of Louis VIII's death, incited a rebellion after having been entrusted by Louis to guard Bellême, a small village in northwestern France. Blanche of Castile, regent for their 12-year-old son Louis, successfully led a siege to counter the rebellion, capturing the château and town. The win was later considered Louis' first military victory, however, the villagers, aware of Blanche's instrumental contributions to the siege's success, raised a cross in memory of her command, known as the La Croix-feue-reine, “The Queen's Fire Cross.”



unknown source



Silk, created under secrecy and traded for centuries over exotic trade routes has historically been associated with wealth, power and social status. China's production of silk, an important part of their economy, was jealously guarded until Japan discovered the lucrative secret becoming a state-controlled industry. By the 5th-century silk production had found its way to the Middle East where craftsmen understood how to weave and dye it but not how to make it. By the 6th-century, Byzantium's demand for silk was so great Emperor Justinian decided, as its largest single consumer, they should be privy to the secret.

After gold, silk was viewed as the most desirable of luxury goods in the ancient world and accounted for a large drain on Byzantium's treasury. (1 pound of purple-dyed silk was worth 2 pounds of gold, 1 pound of white undyed raw silk worth 1 pound of gold.) When Justinian was unsuccessful in creating alternative trade routes to the major silk-producing center of Sogdiana (now Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), he sought other options. Sixth-century historian Procopius of Caesarea recounts how silkworm eggs were brought to Constantinople in 552 from Sogdiana:

*About the same time there came from India certain monks; and when they had satisfied Justinian Augustus that the Romans no longer should buy silk from the Persians, they promised the emperor in an interview that they would provide the materials for making silk so that never should the Romans seek business of this kind from their enemy the Persians, or from any other people whatsoever. They said that they were formerly in Serinda, which they call the region frequented by the people of the Indies, and there they learned perfectly the art of making silk. Moreover, to the emperor who plied them with many questions as to whether he might have the secret, the monks replied that certain worms were manufacturers of silk, nature itself forcing them to keep always at work; the worms could certainly not be brought here alive, but they could be grown easily and without difficulty; the eggs of single hatchlings are innumerable; as soon as they are laid men cover them with dung and keep them warm for as long as it is necessary so that they produce insects. When they had announced these tidings, led on by liberal promises of the emperor to prove the fact, they returned to India. When they had brought the eggs to Byzantium, the method having been learned, as I have said, they changed them by metamorphosis into worms that feed on the leaves of mulberry. Thus began the art of making silk from that time on in the Roman Empire.*

Byzantium's silk industry broke both China's monopoly of silk production and Persia's strict control of the Western silk trade routes. Constantinople became the new source for silk with a concentration of imperial workshops under the state monopoly where processes could be carefully protected with strict controls applied to every stage of production. From the 4th to the 10th-century Imperial silks appear to have been manufactured exclusively by Christian females weavers located in the women's section of the imperial palace (*gynaecium*). Like serfs, silk workers were bound to these factories by law and could not leave to work or live elsewhere without the permission of the owners, although later there was some manufacturing of non-Imperial silk guilds in Constantinople.

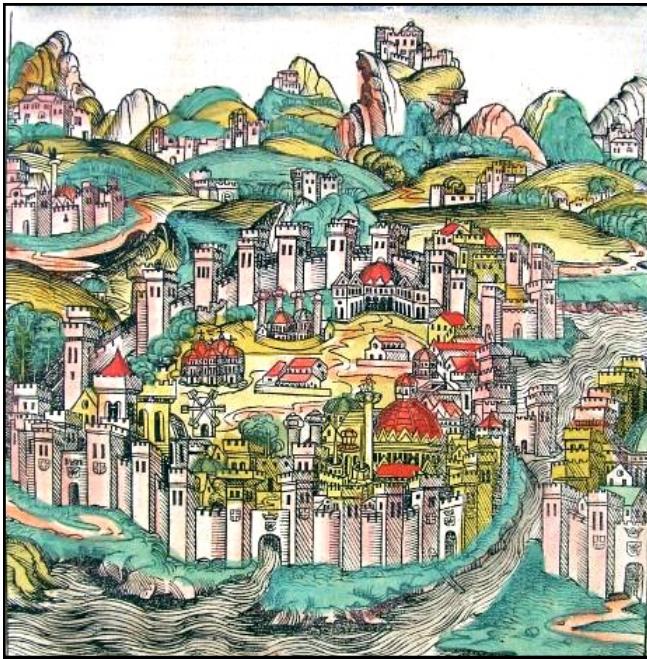
Byzantium's financial foundation was based on trade in its major city Constantinople which was well-placed at the junctures of important east-west and north-south trade routes. For the next 650 years, silk provided a strong economic and political foundation, not only as a means of payment but as one of their most important diplomatic gifts to the West. Their elaborate, carefully staged political festivals offered opportunities for the finest imperial silks to be paraded before citizens of Constantinople and visiting foreign dignitaries, serving as a prime symbol of Imperial Byzantine power.

Byzantine's monopoly of silk production was broken when Muslims conquered Persia and acquired the secrets of silk production which soon spread into Sicily, Spain and later Italy. In these European regions workshops were established by local rulers who also retained control over the lucrative industry and, by the 13th-century, European silk was competing successfully with Byzantine products. Justinian's Industrial espionage and smuggling in the 6th-century changed the course of history, breaking several silk monopolies and providing a strong basis for Byzantium's economy thru-out the middle ages.



Collecting cocoons & spinning silk, France, Talbot Master, ca 1440, Royal 16 GV fol. 54v, British Library, London.

## A PORPHYROGENNETOS BRIDE TO LEGITIMIZE AN EMPIRE



View of Constantinople, *Nuremberg Chronicle* published 1493, Woodcut Print of Medieval Town from *Liber Chronicarum* Compiled by Hartmann Schedel.

Byzantium viewed itself as the living remains of the Old Roman Empire with 10th-century Constantinople the epitome of civilization and culture. After his father Henry's death in 936 Otto I assumed his father's position as Duke of Saxony and King of Germany; continuing to unify all German tribes into a single kingdom, viewing his "divine right" to rule and again assuming the role as the Church's protector. While his early reign was filled with unrest and rebellion from his siblings and various local aristocrats, the following decade was marked with Otto's undisputed domestic power.

In 961, after Italian king Berengar I attacked the Papal States and the city of Rome, Pope John requested Otto's help as the Church's protector. After negotiating terms, Otto successfully restored the Pope's control and in 962, following Charlemagne's example, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope John XII in Rome. Otto continued to enlarge his empire seeking to link his empire to parts of southern Italy, an area that had partially belonged to the Byzantine Empire since 873. By 967 there was significant conflict between Otto and the Byzantine Empire as the Byzantines were claiming sovereignty over the principalities of

southern Italy coupled with their objection of Otto using the title *Emperor*, believing only the Byzantine Emperor Nikephoros II was the true successor of the ancient Roman Empire. Byzantium, concerned with Otto's expansive policy into their sphere of influence, opened peace talks with Otto who made it clear he sought visible recognition of his kingdom's legitimacy from the older Byzantium Empire, substantiated with a marriage alliance between his son Otto II and an imperial princess.

In 968 Otto sent Liutprand, bishop of Cremona on a mission to negotiate a Byzantine bride for his son, specifically requesting Ramanos II's daughter Anna, granddaughter of Constantine VII, a true *porphyrogenitus*. Coldly received by Emperor Nikephoros Phokas Liutprand was unsuccessful in negotiations, perhaps due to a document that had been issued several years before by Constantine VII that dictated *porphyrogenetos*, purple-born princesses, should not be allowed to marry foreigners with the exception to the Franks, as they had been specifically permitted by Constantine I, "because he himself drew his origin from those parts ... [and] because of the lands and the nobility of those tribes." The Romans, [Byzantines] were therefore allowed to intermarry with the Franks (Christians) from the western parts of Europe.

The following year Phokas was assassinated and the new emperor, John Tzimiskes, found it expedient to establish positive relations with the Ottonians. Tzimiskes, aware Otto wanted his son to marry a *porphyrogenetos*, began negotiations with Liutprand. Tzimiskes did not have any children of his own and did not want to permit his step-daughter, a real *porphyrogenetos* and member of the previous ruling dynasty, to crown an alliance. Seeking a suitable bride for 17-year-old Otto II Tzimiskes decided his wife's 12-year-old niece, a young girl named Theophana, although not "born in the purple," was a Byzantine princess and their marriage could help establish stronger bonds between the two kingdoms.

Theophana was brought to the Great Palace to prepare for her new role centered around the detailed instructions from the *Book of Ceremonies* recorded by Constantine VII ca 957. She knew a marriage abroad positioned her as an ambassador of Byzantine culture which required her to be prepared to properly execute the entire annual Byzantine cycle of traditions and court ceremonies. Groomed to represent the imperial ideal in dress, deportment, relevant language and culture as she presided in various official duties, she understood, as did all royal wives, her most important role was to bear children and oversee their education.

By the mid 10th-century the term "Byzantine princess" had developed into several levels of distinction, from



Byzantine Dress Ornament, ca 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century, Walters Museum, Baltimore, MD.

those “born in the purple” a chamber in the Great Palace, to daughters of reigning emperors or co-emperors who were designated heirs to the throne, to a slightly lower level of Byzantine princesses related to the ruling family but were not born in the Porphyry Chamber, and finally those who became princesses by marrying into the ruling family.

The wedding took place on April 14, 972 in St. Peter's Basilica, officiated by Pope John XIII, marking a very significant development in East West relations and establishing Theophana's imperial credentials as a Byzantine princess. Although she came with a magnificent



Christ Blessing the Otto II and Theophana, Byzantine style dress, imperial couple presented as equals-not typical of western art, Ivory, 980 AD, Paris.

escort and breath-taking treasures Theophana was not the “born in the purple” princess Otto I had wanted, yet what she lacked in blood she made up by her sheer presence as she arrived in Rome to marry the young German prince. In addition to her extravagant gifts that confirmed her close imperial connections she also brought an alliance to Emperor John Tzimiskes which Otto I needed for his security of Italy. Her entourage included eulogists, chroniclers, historiographers, Greek servants, her own priest, and ladies-in-waiting who would attend her at official ceremonies in the West.

Although not a *porphyrogenitus* Theophana's contributions to diplomatic needs and political ends made her the most celebrated of Byzantine princess' to marry as a diplomatic alliance. She introduced the use of a fork, frequent bathing, luxurious garments and jewelry into the royal court. She gave birth 5 times between November 977 and July 980, the last being twins (Otto III's twin sister died before October 8, 980). On June 15, 991 Theophana died in the Imperial Palace in Nijmegen and was buried in the church of Saint Pantaleon in Cologne. Before her death she had successfully negotiated a true *porphyrogennetos* princess as a Byzantine bride for her young son Otto III, yet by the time Zoe's ship reached Bari in 1002 Otto III at 21 had died earlier that month, leaving Zoe no alternative but to return home, eliminating a strong alliance between the two empires.

## DON'T UNDERESTIMATE VIKING WOMEN

From 750-1100 AD the Mälaren Valley was one of the most densely populated areas in what is today Sweden. In 1870 archaeological research was conducted on the island of Björkö, known for its more than 3,000 Viking extant graves, many yet to be excavated. The focus of the archeological excavation included a 10th-century warrior's burial chamber in Birka, an area that had been a thriving trading hub, rich with Byzantine and Arab silver from the sale of furs and slaves sent down the Dnieper and Volga rivers. Prominently placed on an elevated terrace between the town and a hill fort in direct contact with its garrison, the excavated high-ranking warrior's burial chamber included a sword, ax, spear, armor-piercing arrows, battle knife, 2 shields, and 2 horses, a stallion and a mare.

In 2014 DNA samples from the warrior's canine tooth and upper arm bone brought surprising results; conclusively proven and proclaimed in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, the person buried in the elevated hill was a woman about 30 years old, five and half foot tall, supporting Viking legends from the early Middle Ages that not all warriors were men. Also found in the grave was a full set of gaming pieces and board used to strategize battle tactics, something found in very few warriors' graves. The Hnefatafl pieces, a precursor to chess popular in Northern Europe during the 9th to 11th centuries, suggests the female warrior was a strategic battle officer, a member of the military caste and one who would have led troops into battle. Viking lore has long hinted at women warriors and though other excavations have



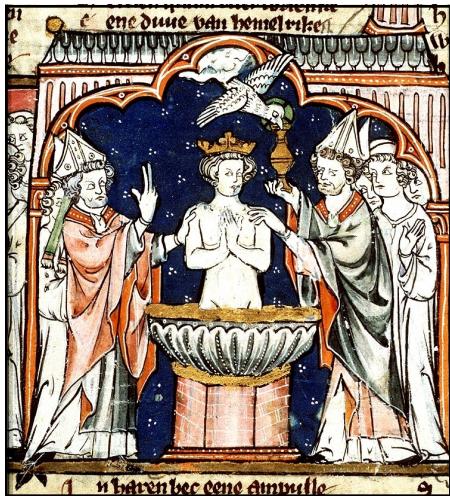
Hnefatafl pieces, [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com).

found women buried with weapons, the association had been dismissed, “believing the armament was grave goods reflecting the status and role of the family rather than the individual.” As early as the 10th-century Irish text tell of Inhgen Ruaidh [‘Red Girl’], a female warrior who led a Viking fleet to Ireland. Numerous Viking sagas, such as the 13th-century *Saga of the Volsungs*, shares stories of ‘shield-maidens’ fighting alongside male warriors. Archaeological research and scientific analysis will continue to unravel the past providing a clearer understanding of earlier societies, who they were and what was their social order.



Reconstruction of grave site, Smithsonian.com, Þórhallur Práinsson ©Neil Price.

## A CEREMONY RICH IN TRADITION



The dove of the Holy Spirit brings the Ampoule to  
Saint Remigius, Jacob van Maerlant, Spiegel  
Historia, West Flanders, ca 1335-55,  
Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Dutch National Library.

Reims Cathedral, also known as the Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Reims, has been the site of many important historical events in France's history beginning on Christmas night, 498, when Clovis was baptized by Saint-Remi, an event that signified the establishment of the French kingdom. After 816, when Louis the Pious was crowned, Reims became the chosen place for coronations, a tradition that would continue for over 30 French kings.

Louis' coronation also initiated the ritual or unction of anointing the king's forehead with oil, eventually evolving into the most important act in France's coronation, serving as a reminder of king Clovis' baptism. In 1131 two vials of sweet smelling oil were discovered from Saint Remi's sarcophagus in time for Louis VII's coronation as a junior king. The oil was continued to be used for subsequent kings until its destruction in 1793 when the French revolutionaries smashed the ampoule with a hammer in the public square, believing that "to break the ampoule was to break the kings."

The sacred oil was kept at the Abbey of Saint-Remi in the Holy Ampulla, a round gold plaque reliquary set with jewels and a white enameled dove representing the Holy Spirit.

On the day of a crowning the abbot wore the reliquary around his neck walking barefoot under a canopy carried by four mounted noblemen at the head of a procession of monks from the Abbey to the steps of the Cathedral's high altar where he presented the relic to the Archbishop of Reims. The king took several oaths standing before the main altar where the Gospels and reliquary of the True Cross rested, promising to defend the Church, preserve its canonical privileges, uphold peace, justice for his people and drive out heretics. Simply clothed in a tunic and chemise, prostrate before the Archbishop, he was anointed with the oil of the Holy Flask on the head, chest, between the shoulders, each elbow, and hand. Symbolic of the investiture was the presentation of the scepter and oath and, by the 10th-century, the ring and sword; the hand of justice was added later.

Louis VII, recognizing his declining health, had his 14-year-old son Philip Augustus, great-grandson of Adele of Normandy, crowned on November 1, 1179, anointed as king by his uncle the Archbishop Guillaume aux Blanches Mains, becoming the first French monarch to style himself as "King of France." Although few queens were crowned in Reims since often the new king was too young to be married at the time of his accession, on May 19, 1051, Anne of Kiev became the first queen crowned at Reims, her coronation immediately following her marriage to Henry I. In 1223, after Philip II's death, his son Louis VIII and consort Blanche of Castile were also crowned at Reims.

In 1211, after a fire destroyed the older church, the rebuilding of Reims began over the sites of the 3 earlier structures including the 5th-century historic basilica where Clovis I had been baptized. The new cathedral became one of three great High Gothic French cathedrals built in 13th-century, the others being Notre-Dame de Paris and Notre-Dame de Chartres. The cathedral incorporated the new technique of bar tracery which used thin stone elements to support the window, allowing the stained glass to dominate. The cathedral's total finished length was 489 feet, about 26 feet longer than Chartres and also included a labyrinth built into the floor of the nave, very similar to Chartres. The maze included depictions of the four master masons, their names and number years they had worked there. In 1779 the



Coronation of Louis VIII and Blanche of Castile,  
Reims, 1223; Grandes Chroniques de France, circa 1450.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Reimes Cathedral's labyrinth was chosen as the national logo for French historical monuments.



Joan of Arc, King Charles VII coronation, Reims cathedral, 1780-1867, Jean-Auguste Ingres, Louvre Museum, France.

labyrinth was destroyed by the priests charged with running the cathedral because of children playing on it during ceremonies. Reims Cathedral, a major center of commerce since Roman times and site for almost all French monarchs to be anointed, is also the home of champagne wines. Its south transept window includes three lancets illustrating working the vines, harvesting and on the far right being supervised by Dom Pérignon, the famous cellar master.

Rheims became a very special place for Joan of Arc when she began her mission, proclaiming to Charles VII she would lead him to his coronation at Reims which she did on July 17, 1429. Joan was later described as kneeling before Charles through tears of joy, looking up at him and saying, "Noble King, now is accomplished the pleasure of God, who willed that I should raise the siege of Orleans and should bring you to this city of Reims to receive your holy coronation, thus showing that you are the true King, him to whom the throne of France must belong."

## THE VIKING BURIAL SHIP

In 1903 archaeologist Gabriel Gustafson received an unexpected visit from a local farmer informing him he had just come across the remains of a ship while digging into a large 120 foot long, 20-foot high burial mound on his property. Within two days the archeologist began his investigations and within three months excavation had unearthed a Viking ship that took 21 years to painstakingly restore. Now known as the Oseberg Ship, it was a particularly fine vessel built in southwestern Norway ca 820 AD, its prow and stern richly carved with beautiful animal ornamentation. The ship was not built for raiding as it would have lacked the speed since its oarports were devoid of any means of holding back waves from heavy seas, but rather was a ship of luxury, a rich woman's transport. Constructed immediately behind the mast was a burial chamber with two dead women laid on a bed made up with bed linens, its walls decorated with a fantastic woven tapestry. Analysis of the two women revealed the older woman, 70-80 years of age, probably died as a result of cancer while the cause of the younger woman's death, about 50 years old and thought to be a slave, could not be determined although she had a broken collarbone.



Animal head posts © Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo/ Kirsten Helgeland.

The grave had been disturbed in antiquity as precious metals were absent but, nevertheless, a great number of everyday items and artifacts were found including 4 sleighs, a cart, 3 beds, bones from 15 horses, 6 dogs, 2 small cows, and even "elf-trembler" rattles designed to scare off evil spirits. In the grave five uniquely carved animal heads were found, four of which were in excellent condition. While it is not known what the animal heads were used for they were made by different woodcarvers with two adorned with silver rivets. Other items found includ-



The Oseberg bed found on the ship, © Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway.



Oseberg ship, Viking Ship Museum © Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo © Peulle CC BY-SA 4.0.

ed a variety of textiles ranging from ornamental tapestries to coarser woolen fabrics perhaps used as draperies and 15 different silk materials believed to decorate the women's garments, some with multi-colored silk embroideries. The cart would have been pulled by two horses and could be dismantled for transport, its back panel intricately carved with cats while the front featured a man lying on his back being attacked by serpents. The sleighs, three of which were richly carved and painted in strong colors, are believed to have been made for pageantry and important events. Known for its exceptional Viking woodwork, the Oseberg Viking Ship is one of the few sources of Viking age textiles. Unique as the richest equipped Viking grave ever found, Oseberg tells of two powerful women that held great influence within the Viking society.

## HOUSE OF SAVOY

The House of Savoy was a royal family that began its 1000 year history in the mountainous Alpine region known to the Romans as Sabaudia. The obscure noble family began its slow climb to power in 1003 when Humbert I, Count of Sabaudia, also known as Humber the White-Hand, received from the German emperor Henry II in appreciation of his military service the Alpine territories of Maurienne, Aosta, and Valais. The



Maurienne Valley © Florian Pepellin CC BY-SA 3.0.

family slowly expanded with wise strategic marriages and careful international diplomacy, growing in power from ruling a small country in the Alps to the absolute rule of the 18th-century kingdom of Sicily, becoming the longest surviving royal house in Europe, ruling to 1860.



Adelaide of Susa, Palace of Venaria, Turin, Italy.

The territory Hubert I received in 1003 became known as Savoy and he the Count of Savoy, who from an early date exercised his rights more as a sovereign ruler than a feudal vassal. It is believed this was accepted by Henry II because of Humbert's loyalty and Henry realizing a "sovereign" ally with a vested interest in defending his own strategic lands would be more loyal than a temporal feudatory. In 1046 Hubert's younger son Odo married, as her third husband, Marchese Adelaide of Turin, daughter of Marchese Ulric Manfred and Berta of Milan. The marriage, considered equal to the most prestigious dynasties of Europe, united Lombard and Burgundian lands, founding a state which embraced a vast though scattered possessions on both sides of the Alps down to the Mediterranean. Adelaide's father Ulric Manfred, born in Turin and descent from a noble 10th-century Frankish family became one of the most powerful noblemen in Italy. As the last male margrave from the Arduinid dynasty, upon Ulfric's death, Adelaide succeeded her father as Marchesa of Susa, heiress of Auriate, Turin, Ivrea, and Aosta. After her husband Odo died in 1057/60 Adelaide decided against another marriage as she could exercise her marchionial power thru her children which she did, ruling the march of Turn and county of Savoy alongside her sons Peter and Amadeus II, followed by holding the reins of government on behalf of her grandson Humbert II until her death in 1091.



Humbert's Cenotaph, St Jean-de-Maurienne Cathedral , Savoy, France  
© EMajor CC BY-SA 3.0

Adelaide's grandson Humbert II was followed by son Humbert III who reigned until his son Thomas I, Count of Savoy took the reins. Named after Saint Thomas Becket, Thomas was considered a miraculous birth by his father, having despaired of having a male heir after three wives. Thomas possessed the martial abilities, energy, and brilliance that his father lacked and Savoy enjoyed a golden age of splendor under his leadership with numerous offspring filling all of Europe with the name of Savoy for nearly 100 years. Thomas began a push northwest into new territories and in 1191 was granted in the Acosta Valley the "Charte des Franchises," which gave political and administrative autonomy to the regional capital. Working throughout his life to expand the Savoy family's control and influence Thomas was able to place his nine sons and at least five daughters into positions of influence including episcopal offices in surrounding territories at a time when bishops had temporal as well as spiritual authority. His son William became bishop of Valencene, Thomas a prévôt of Valence, Amadeo of Savoy-Bishop of Maurienne, Aimone Lord of Chablais, and Pietro canon at Lausanne serving as bishop and later as Earl of Richmond whose son Bonifacio became archbishop of Canterbury. In 1219 Thomas arranged a marriage between his 14-year-old daughter Beatrice and 14-year-old Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Provence, joining counties and cementing Savoy control of trade between Italy and France thru strategic mountain passes in the Alps. By 1233 Beatrice and Raymond's four daughters soon



Beatrice of Savoy, Raymond Berenguer IV of Provence, Francisco Camilo, 1634, Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain.

came to the attention of the royal families when Blanche of Castile sent her knight to Provence to initiate marriage negotiations for their oldest daughter Margaret, details were soon finalized requiring a 10,000 silver mark dowry. Unable to raise the entire dowry Raymond received contributions from allies and family members, pledging several of his castles to cover the rest. A year later their daughter Eleanor of Provence married Henry III of England, bringing with her "the Savoyards," including her uncle William of Savoy who became a close adviser to the king. The English disliked the intrusion of 300 Italian priests obtaining the most lucrative of positions in the church or marriages to the wealthiest English heiresses, "draining their country of its purest blood." Eleanor's positioning her relatives into influential government positions created animosity among the English during Henry's reign. The Royal House' title "Count of Savoy" continued to be handed down for more than three centuries, sometimes between collaterals but always in White-Hand's progeny.

## ROSSLYN'S 600 YEAR OLD SECRET REVEALED



Apprentice Pillar © Rabbies.

Dan Brown's 2003 *The Da Vinci Code* brought newfound notoriety to Rosslyn Chapel, a noble church built during the 15th-century under the belief that building a noble church was a passport to heaven. Rosslyn Chapel, the family chapel of Sir William Sinclair, 11th Baron of Rosslyn was such a church, begun in 1446 with construction stopping after William's death in 1487. The exquisite Rosslyn Chapel is located about eight miles south of Edinburgh, a masterpiece built by Norman stonemasons in the emerging Gothic architectural style with its tall pointed arches and ribbed vaulting. Roselyn has been renown for its interior stonework completely covered with variously detailed carvings and moral stories with a few related to Sinclair's ancestry as descendants of the Viking Rollo. Originally taking their name from Saint Clair in Normandy, one of the family's most notable claims dates from 1068 when William "the Seemly" Sinclair returned from Hungary with Atheling Edward "the Exile" and Edward's daughter Anglo-Saxon Margaret who married Malcolm III of Scotland in 1070.

Rosslyn Chapel has long been associated with possible connections to the Templars with the presence of five Templar signs within the chapel, a dove in flight with an olive branch in its beak, a five-pointed star, a floriated cross, the *Agnus Dei*



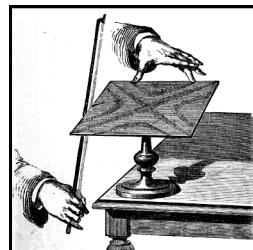
[//www.rosslynchapel.com/visit/things-to-do/explore-the-carvings/xplorethecarvings8/](http://www.rosslynchapel.com/visit/things-to-do/explore-the-carvings/xplorethecarvings8/).

or Lamb of God and finally the Veil of Veronica showing the face of Christ. Visiting the chapel in 1979 Thomas Mitchell, a musician and ex-Royal Air-force codebreaker with his son, a composer and pianist, became intrigued by the four cross-sections of arches at the end of the Lady Chapel with their 213 elaborately carved 'cubes'. To them the carvings appeared in what seemed a musical sequence with each arch ending with an angel playing a different musical instrument. Using the science of Cymatics where a specific design is configured on the surface of a plate coated with a thin layer of particles when subjected to a specific pitch, the Mitchell's were able to match each specific carved cube design to 1of 13 specific musical tones organized into vertical groups around the chapel's pillars. In 2006, after 27 years of research and experimentation, the carved cubes holding their 600-year-old secret musical code was unlocked, transforming the "frozen music" to "the Rosslyn Motel."

Listen to Rosslyn Motel: [//www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=25&v=cy2Dg-ncWoY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=25&v=cy2Dg-ncWoY)



'Stave Angel' points out 3 pitches accounting for 70% of the entire cube sequence.



[//newearth.media/da-vinci-codes-musical-secret-rosslyn-chapel/](http://newearth.media/da-vinci-codes-musical-secret-rosslyn-chapel/)

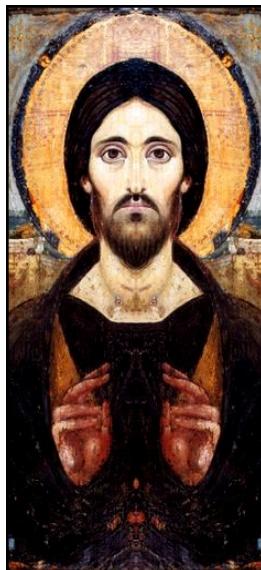
## A CAT HAS TALENTS?

The role of a cat has changed over time. In ancient Egypt cats were viewed as hunters and worshiped as gods and goddesses while the Viking's are thought to have taken their *skogkatts* (forest cats) with them on their travels. Freya, goddess of love in Norse mythology had two large blue cats pull her chariot thru the skies and, in Irish lore, God created cats to restrict the mouse population on Noah's ark to protect the food required to sustain its passengers. By 800 AD domestic cats were a high-status possession owned principally by the elite and considered important for protection of the harvest. Their value was set by an entire set of laws. *Catslechtae*, 'cat-sections,' a part of ancient Irish laws known as *Senchas Már* which outlined fines attached to stealing, injuring or killing a person's cat and penalties according to its talents. A *Breone* cat was "worth 3 cows if able to purr and keep its owner's house, grain store and kiln free of mice" while a *Meone* was worth only "2 cows if just good at purring." A cat's role continued to change and by the 12th-century cats had become associated with magic and sorcery.



Book of Kells, fol 76v © Trinity College, University of Dublin.

## A NEW WORD: ENCAUSTIC



Encaustic painting was used by Greek artists as far back as the 5th-century BC, although our understanding of this ancient technique is primarily from Pliny the Elder's 1st-century BC *Natural History*. It is believed that this technique evolved from pigment being added to beeswax that was used in ship preservation, a substance Ulysses tells his men to use to fill their ears as they approach the Sirens.

Christ Pantocrator, one of the oldest, most important Byzantine works, St. Catherine Monastery, Sinai, 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

The earliest surviving icons were painted using this ancient technique of adding pigment to heated beeswax that can then be applied in layers onto a thin wood base. One of Encaustic's most notable characteristics is its uncanny human quality achieved by blending different shades of colored wax to imitate lifelike flesh tones, able to depict highlights in eyes, hair, garments and slightly raised halos with almost indictable red spots to catch the light.

Encaustic painting was used in Egyptian mummy portraits, 6th-century Christian imagery in the monasteries of the eastern Byzantine church, and widely used in Russian medieval painting ca 950-1100, reaching its height in the Russian Novgorod School of Icon art ca 1100-1500. The largest and most important encaustic icons are found in St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai, Egypt founded by Byzantine Emperor Justinian I 548-565.

## THINKING LIKE A KING

Æthelberht's hesitation to convert to Christianity illustrates how a king needed to balance actions against perceptions. As a bretwalda (overlordship) he realized his conversion could become a rallying point for the anti-Christian factions in both his kingdom and subkingdoms, placing both at risk. Certainly, Bertha and Luidhard, her chaplain and representative of the Frankish church, discussed the situation, understanding baptism under Frankish court influence could be viewed as an explicit recognition of Frankish overlordship, undermining his independence from Bertha's Frankish Royal family. When Augustine, as an emissary of Pope Gregory came to England Æthelberht's conversion was then under Roman influence, allowing him to assert his independence, establish good terms with the pope and connection to the Mediterranean civilization.

## A LONG HISTORY, DIADEM

Diadems were a royal ornamental headband made of precious metal, frequently embellished with jewels and worn around a woman's forehead. Diadems trace their origins deep into antiquity, probably originating in Mycenae and Persia, referred to in the New Testament three times as the tiara of a king, soon becoming associated with classical Greek culture. The diadem was revived by Byzantine craftsmen who incorporated multicolored gemstones into jewelry, a practice uncommon during the Roman imperial period.



12<sup>th</sup> century, gold; cloisonné enamel, of Byzantine origin, shown with the Virgin and St. John the Baptist praying to Christ for salvation, also includes Apostles Peter and Paul. The presence of Cyrillic letters appear to confirm the diadem's attribution to a workshop in the principality of Kiev, home to both Greek and Russian goldsmiths. Byzantine cultural and political influence reached deep into central Europe during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, found during excavation in Kiev, n 1889, St. Petersburg, Russian Museum, inv. BK 2756 © St. Petersburg, Russian Museum.



10<sup>th</sup> century, Diadem or possibly a girdle, gold and stones, articulated in 7 parts, 2 of which are intentionally end pieces in a pentagonal form and with soldered rings on their ends through which a sash could be passed. The 5 rectangular plaques garnished in the center with a cabochon or vitreous paste, of hollow metal with simple folded and soldered edges, part of the treasure found in Charilla, the ancient Islamic city of Sajral Walad, Museo Provincial de Jaén 2789, source: <http://www.museosdeandalucia.es/>.



4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup>-century Diadem, gold, amethyst, emeralds, the 10 sections of this openwork diadem were each adorned with a central gem and pearls, now missing. The diadem was sewn onto a headband of leather or cloth with holes so wearers could adjust the size. Similar pieces were also worn as neckbands. This example would most likely have been worn by members of the imperial family as its amethysts evoke the imperial color purple, Constantinople, Walters Museum, Baltimore, MD.



Gold Diadem, Greek, probably Alexandria, Egypt, 220 - 100 BC, probably belonged to a noble woman of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. The clasp is shaped as a protective Herakles knot created by two intertwined ropes, a knot also common in the medieval and Renaissance period symbolic as a love token, located at the Getty Villa © Wolfgang Sauber CC BY-SA 3.0.