



ICMA NEWS

...AND MORE

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Sherry C.M. Lindquist, Editor

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

The leaves may be dropping and the first snows arriving, but the ICMA is not about to hibernate!

We have just received word from the Kress Foundation that it has awarded us funds for the next three years to help cover the travel expenses of scholars speaking at ICMA-sponsored conference sessions in this country and abroad. This is welcome news indeed, and we are greatly indebted to the Foundation for supporting this aspect of our scholarly activity. The Kress is no longer limiting refunds to speakers alone. *Chairs of sessions will also be eligible for refunds IF they give a regular talk in the session, and a title and a precise hour has been designated for the talk in the program.* Moderators are still excluded. The ICMA does not hold its own annual conference, and our reputation is built on the high-quality sessions that we have been offering at conferences staged by others. Now that we have received this new Kress grant, it is essential that our members keep drawing up sessions for conferences and submitting them to the Programs Committee for ICMA sponsorship. We urge you to propose sessions not only at the mammoth CAA, Kalamazoo, and Leeds conferences, but at other, smaller, ones as well.

Just this November, for example, the ICMA sponsored a fine session at the Byzantine Studies Conference, held at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. The session was entitled "Cultural Exchange in the Frankish Levant," and was organized by Cecily Hilsdale from McGill University (see her report below). The ICMA also co-sponsored a well-attended evening reception (with the Jaharis Center for Byzantine Art and Culture and with Simon Fraser University itself). The ICMA presence in Vancouver was meaningful: it enhanced

our visibility in the Pacific Northwest and among Byzantinists, and led to suggestions for new forms of collaboration between the ICMA and our colleagues in Canada.

The Kress Foundation also makes possible the research and travel grants that are awarded by the Grants and Awards Committee of the ICMA each year in the autumn. The five winners for 2014 are Betsy L. Chunko, Muhlenberg College; Kathryn B. Gerry, Memphis College of Art; Tracy Chapman Hamilton, Sweet Briar College; Nicholas A. Herman, Université de Montréal; and Cristina Stancioiu, College of William & Mary.

At its meeting in New York in October, the ICMA Board of Directors approved the merger of the Membership and Development Committees into one. The active New York and Los Angeles branches of the former Development Committee will continue to hold their very successful series of events, and we hope that additional local groups can be formed that will bring members and supporters together in a similar fashion. This process has already begun in the New England area and around Washington, D.C., thanks to the splendid efforts of the Membership Committee chair, Jan Marquardt, in Massachusetts, and Martina Bagnoli at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore.

The Board also elected four new foreign Associates. They are: Anastasia Drandakis

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SPECIAL REPORTS

Exhibition Review

Le Trésor de l'abbaye de Saint-Maurice
d'Agaune, Louvre, March 14 to June 16, 2014

Catalog: Élisabeth Antoine-König, ed., *Le Trésor de l'abbaye de Saint-Maurice d'Agaune* (Paris: Somogy, 2014), with essays by Élisabeth Antoine-König, Pierre Alain Mariaux, Olivier Roduit, and Regula Schorta.

Founded in 515 by King Sigismond of Burgundy, the abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune is the oldest continuously functioning monastery of the Latin West. It is perhaps best known to medievalists for its canonical, and exceptionally rare, monuments of Merovingian and Carolingian metalwork. The renovation of the abbey's exhibition facilities in anticipation of its fifteen-hundredth anniversary occasioned the exhibition of nineteen precious-metal objects, along with textiles, documents, manuscripts, and sculpture, at the Louvre. The exhibition, installed in the *espace Richelien*, marked the first time in its history that the treasury has been displayed outside abbey precincts.

The exciting benefit of the Louvre exhibition, and really any treasury-specific exhibition, is to experience the glorious messiness, the wonderful heterogeneity, of the medieval church treasury. Within a space of five galleries, strictly chronological, the viewer moved swiftly from Late Antique papyrus and Coptic textiles to twelfth-century repoussé silver (probably produced locally), a thirteenth-century "Mongol" cup, fifteenth-century relic *bursae*, and even a 1577 silver reliquary statuette of Maurice astride a nattily attired horse. Laced throughout the exhibition were the histories signaled by the objects (indexically, symbolically, legendarily, etc.), histories that sprawled globally.

Such a diachronic snapshot, succinct and potent, served to transform the treasury into an arena in which people, objects, and cultures, literally and figuratively, crossed. Indeed, the exhibition pithily illustrated the three main concerns underpinning the medieval church treasury phenomenon, that is, the liturgical, the economic, and the political/memorial. Lucas Burkart's argument of the *Scharnierfunktion*, or "hinge-function," of the medieval church treasury—the treasury as interface between a variety of seemingly unconnected societal interests—was richly demonstrated.

Agaune (*Acaunus*, *Agannum*, etc.), originally a Celtic settlement and strategically located just north of the Great

Saint Bernard pass, was colonized by the Romans c. 15 BCE. The Theban Legion, hailing from Upper Egypt and led by Maurice, was massacred at Agaune around either 285 or 302 on the orders of Emperor Maximian, per Maurice's fifth-century *passio* and other sources. The martyrdom's location was later revealed in a dream to Bishop Theodore of Octodurus (now Martigny), who c. 380 erected a basilica on the site (Figure 1), a site already occupied by a first-century CE nymphaeum and a third-century CE temple to Mercury.



Figure 1. Archaeological site of the first basilica (the "Martolet") at Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, fourth through twelfth centuries. © saviozfabrizzi, Abbaye de Saint-Maurice. Photo: Thomas Jantscher

The first gallery at the Louvre pointedly evoked, with just a handful of objects, this fertile Late Antique stew of Classical authority, local custom, and Christian disruption. An altar donated by a Titus Vinelius Vegetinus to honor the god Sedatus, a deity popular along the Danube, stood adjacent to altars dedicated to Mercury,

the nymphs of Agaune, and more, as well as altars documenting the existence of a Roman toll at the site. From the mid-sixth-century came a Christian interloper, a grave stele of the monk Rusticus. The iconographic decoration of the Rusticus stele (birds drinking from a chalice) points to the Latin West; the overall stele morphology (a triangular pediment surmounting a rectangle) refers more to the Coptic or Byzantine East. Also present: a sixth-century Burgundian papyrus (from the Bibliothèque nationale de France) recording a copy of the homily delivered by Bishop Avit of Vienne at the abbey's 515 consecration.

The Merovingian and Carolingian showstoppers occupied the second gallery. The Vase of Saint-Martin (Figure 2)—a late-first-century BCE Roman sardonyx vase with a late-fifth- or early-sixth-century cloisonné-garnet-ground mounting—proudly displays its Classical iconography (perhaps Aphrodite coaxing Polyxena to join Achilles in death?). The c. 600-650 Casket Reliquary of Theuderic contrasts the colorful brilliance of its recto (gemstones, pearls, Antique spolia) with the relative aus-

terity of its verso, whose inscription mentions not only the priest Theuderic, who had the reliquary made, and its lay donors Nordolaus and Rihlindis, but also the two metalworkers, Undiho and Ello, who made it (Figure 3).

At the center of the gallery stood the famous and frustratingly singular “Charlemagne Ewer,” the hammered gold and gemstones of the ewer tentatively attributed to the Carolingians c. 850-900, its famously debated cloisonné-enamel plaques broadly (i.e., responsibly) localized to the Near East c. 850-900 (Figure 4). Viewing the ewer in person is revelatory. The green-ground enamels are nearly transparent, their gold substrate visible beneath. By contrast, the other enamels, arranged into motifs ultimately derived from Sasanian iconographies, are relatively opaque. The whole evoked bright pieces of color, each rimmed by gold, floating atop a wonderful green Jell-O.

Equally revealing was the presence, in neighboring vitrines, of twenty-six relic authentics, variously dated within the Merovingian and Carolingian eras, and the treasury’s surviving relic textiles, many of them of Coptic, Syrian, and Byzantine origin, one of them localized to eighth- or ninth-century China. Many of the abbey’s reliquaries were opened and their contents removed in 1923; whatever protocols there may have been recording which authentics, textiles, and reliquaries went together were quickly lost. Eight of the textiles—a marvelous, motley assortment—can be identified as having come from within the “Charlemagne Ewer.”

The third, fourth, and fifth galleries covered the twelfth through sixteenth centuries. In 1262 Louis IX of France,



Figure 2. Vase of Saint Martin, sardonyx vase: Rome, first century BCE. Mounting: Burgundian (?), late fifth to early sixth century, © Trésor de l'Abbaye de Saint-Maurice, Photo: Jean-Yves Glassey and Michel Martinez.



Figure 3. Thenderic Reliquary Casket (recto), southwest Germany (?), c. 600-650. © Trésor de l'Abbaye de Saint-Maurice Photo: Jean-Yves Glassey and Michel Martinez.

in exchange for some of the Theban Legion’s relics for his priory at Senlis, offered the canons of Saint-Maurice a mounted relic of the Holy Thorn (the monks were replaced by canons under Louis the Pious; the Augustinian rule was adopted in 1128). The exhibition displayed both the Holy Thorn reliquary and, excitingly, the surviving gift record from Louis’s chancery, seal attached. Indeed, many elegantly executed documents—gift records, privileges, charters, papal bulls, and inventories—were scattered throughout the exhibition. The presence of these documents, carefully preserved throughout the centuries, eloquently indexed the attention, anxiety, and scrutiny that attended the movement of relics and precious things alike.

The economic functions of the church treasury made interesting appearances. For example, in 1147, Count Amadeus III of Savoy-Maurienne “borrowed” a gold antependium (possibly Carolingian, containing around 16 kg gold) from the abbey to mint into coinage and help finance his crusade (he died in Cyprus in 1148/1149). In 1150, his son, Humbert III, donated 30 kg silver and 2 kg gold to the monastery, to be paid over four years, as partial recompense; the exhibition included Humbert’s dated and sealed gift record. Humbert’s silver, it is thought, is that which was used to create the twelfth-century reliquaries (the c. 1150 Sigismond Reliquary Chasse and c. 1165 Reliquary Head of Candide among them) still extant and displayed adjacent to the gift record.

Finally, the first gallery, amid the Late Antique stone sculpture, greeted visitors with a surprise: the c. 1240 sculpture of Maurice on loan from Magdeburg Cathedral. Starting with Otto I, who founded a monastery at Magdeburg in 937, Maurice was adopted by the Ottonians as an imperial protector. Installed in the round, not against a wall, and lower than in Magdeburg (I bent to look him in the face), the sculpture entreated the visitor to circumambulate. Viewed from behind, my attention was caught both by the carefully rendered fastenings of Maurice’s



Figure 4. “Charlemagne Ewer.” vase: Carolingian, c. 850-900. enamels: Near East, c. 850-900 © Trésor de l'Abbaye de Saint-Maurice Photo: Jean-Yves Glassey and Michel Martinez.

SPECIAL REPORTS

(continued)

cuirass and his contrapposto pose, subtly but unmistakably indicated by the carefully balanced asymmetry of the shoulders and waist.

Most importantly, Maurice was placed not on the central longitudinal axis running through the five exhibition galleries, but instead to the left, perpendicular to the viewer entering the gallery. Upon first entering the *espace Richelieu*, therefore, Maurice was not to be seen. Instead, the visitor enjoyed a clear sightline through the first gallery to the centrally placed “Charlemagne Ewer” in the second gallery. The non-figural precious-metal treasury object was rightly accorded pride of place.

The gallery labels helpfully listed provenance data, find-spots, translated inscriptions, etc., including, for some objects, their mention in the oldest extant inventory of the treasury (drawn up c. 1560-1577 under Abbot Jean Miles and displayed in the second gallery). As with any treasury still *in situ*, the Saint-Maurice d’Agaune treasury cannot accurately or proportionally represent what the medieval church treasury once consisted of in its entirety (certain object types, such as liturgical vestments, do not survive at Agaune, and most of its liturgical books were destroyed by fire in 1693). Composite exhibitions, for example *Ornamenta Ecclesiae* in 1985 (still the standard-bearer), are needed for that purpose. The benefit of a treasury-specific exhibition, however, is precisely the locally specific history, which generates its own contexts, meanings, and resonances.

The exhibition was accompanied by a catalog, edited by Élisabeth Antoine-König and Pierre Alain Mariaux, which includes brief essays on the abbey’s history, its metalwork, and its relic textiles. The catalog is a prelude to a more extensive two-volume publication on Saint-Maurice, the first volume dedicated to architecture and archaeology, the second to the treasury, which will appear in 2015. These volumes are much needed and long overdue; the Louvre catalog marks the first scholarly catalog of the treasury since that of Édouard Aubert, whose work appeared in 1872. The new museum complex at Saint-Maurice, which includes visitor access to the active archaeological site and the reinstalled treasury (in a space five times the size of the previous facility), opened to the public on September 21, 2014.

Joseph Salvatore Ackley
Columbia University

Buried Treasures: Two Addenda to the Romanesque Sculptures in American Collections

Whenever my students gather around a ninth-century leaf from Metz that is housed in our university library, I cannot help but consider how this sole Carolingian object in a Colorado public collection shapes their perceptions of medieval art. Will it inscribe a special place within their hearts for the scriptorium of Metz? Will Carolingian art seem somehow more palpable or more accessible in their mental landscapes than, say, Ottonian art, which is not represented in our university holdings? The nearly 500 medieval objects, mostly manuscripts, and leaves, at the University of Colorado remain largely unknown beyond our campus borders, but they are formative for my students, especially those who have not traveled to the great collections of the American coasts and Midwest, much less to those of Europe. My sense is that many students across the country have a similar experience, understanding medieval art largely through the lens of a handful of relatively little-known objects in their local museums and libraries.

Even as someone who travels extensively, my thinking is by no means immune to the impact of my hometown medieval art. Often, when I am at my desk writing about sculptures that I can only access via two-dimensional images, I take a break and walk down two flights of stairs to visit a twelfth-century capital in our art museum. Its biting beasts and densely entwined vegetation ground me in the objecthood of my main area of research, Romanesque Sculpture. The fossilized shells within the limestone, the inadvertent marks caused by slips of the chisel, the play of shadows due to varied light effects, and myriad other aspects of this sculpture engross me on every visit, each of which offers new insights. It would be difficult to quantify the effect of this sculpture on my scholarship, but it is, nonetheless, profound.

Many of my colleagues have communicated to me similar experiences of the weight of the local. This aspect interests me as I peruse the catalog of *Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections*, which appeared in serial form in *Gesta* beginning in 1967, and subsequently published in two volumes.¹ This is not to discount the scholarly import of these publications, which have been an invaluable resource for specialists in establishing provenance, chronology, and other key issues. But by the same token, I cannot help be interested in how these catalogs document the contours of what can be regarded as so many

Images and captions taken from the media page of the Saint-Maurice website:
<http://www.abbaye-stmaurice.ch/page.php?id=fr67>.