

Bard Graduate Center Research Guide: Byzantine and Medieval Material Culture



Welcome, BGC survey students and beginner medievalists! This guide is designed to provide you with resources that will compliment your survey lectures on the Byzantine and Medieval periods and help you begin research on objects and topics dealing with this era.

If you've tried these resources and you're still stumped, remember that BGC Library staff are available for research consultations Monday through Friday from 11 to 6, and Sunday from 12 to 5. We're here to help!

This guide was compiled by Erin Eisenbarth and Janis Ekdahl at the Bard Graduate Center Library.

Images above, left to right: Chalice of Emperor Romanos, Middle Byzantine, Late antique, San Marco Treasury (Venice); Arm reliquary of Saint Elizabeth, German, ca. 1240, Collection of Prince of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Sayn; both found in the [BGC Visual Media Resources collection](#); Icon with Saint Demetrios, Byzantine, ca. 950–1000 ([Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970.324.3](#)).

Reference Sources for Byzantine and Medieval Culture

The BGC's reference section, located on the second floor, holds many volumes that might be of use to you as you research this period. This list isn't comprehensive, so go take a stroll through the stacks and see if any other works catch your eye.

General Reference Works

- ***Dictionary of Medieval Terms and Phrases*** (2004) BGC REF DA129 .C67 2004
- ***Dictionary of the Middle Ages*** (1982 - 1989) BGC REF D114 .D5 1982 (13 volumes)
- ***Enciclopedia dell'arte medievale*** (1991 -) BGC REF N5965 .E592 (10 volumes)
- ***Medieval France : an Encyclopedia*** (1995) BGC REF DC33.2 .M44 1995
- ***Medieval Scandinavia : an Encyclopedia*** (1993) BGC REF DL30 .M43 1993
- ***New Cambridge Medieval History*** (1995-2005) BGC REF D117 .N48 1995 (7 volumes)

- **Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium** (1991) BGC REF DF521 .O93 1991 (3 volumes)
- **Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages** (2010) BGC REF D114 .O94 2010 (4 volumes)

Dictionaries on Religion, Myth and Symbolism

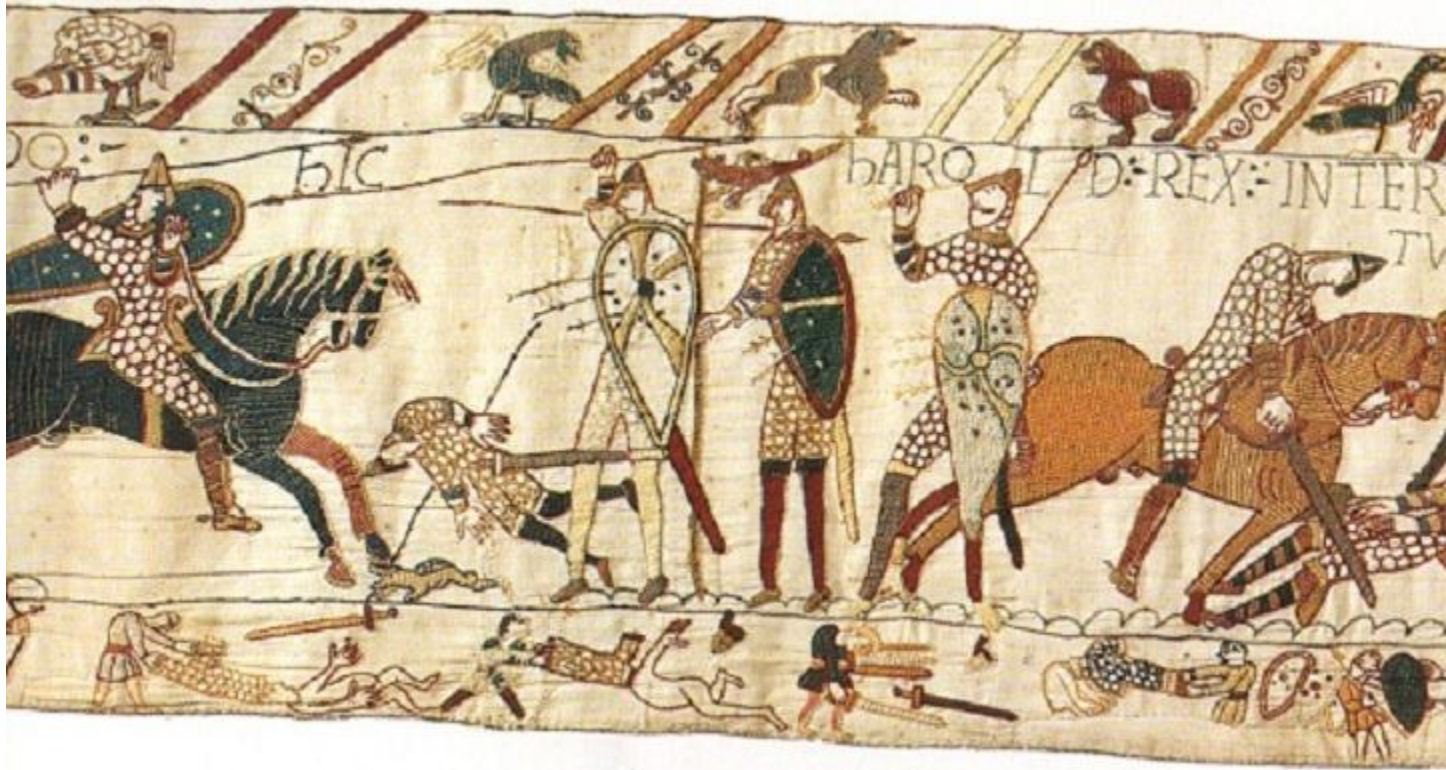
- **Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols (3 volumes)** BGC REF GR35 .J6
- **A dictionary of symbols** BGC REF BF1623 .S9C5 1991
- **The Complete Dictionary of Symbols** BGC REF AZ 108 .C66 2005
- **Dictionary of Symbolism** BGC REF AZ 108 .B5313
- **The Oxford Dictionary of Popes** BGC REF BX955.2 .K45 1986
- **Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity** BGC REF BR 145.2 .O86 1990
- **The Oxford Guide to the Bible** BGC REF BS 440 .M434 1993
- **Butler's Lives of the Saints** (4 volumes) BGC REF BX 4654 .B8 1981

Online Resources

- **Cambridge Histories Online** -- Cambridge University Press has digitized a number of their [invaluable reference works](#), including the *New Cambridge Medieval History*, *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, and histories of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Bard College provides online access to these resources.*
- **Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History** - The Metropolitan Museum of Art's massive online history of art includes sections on [Byzantine](#) and [Medieval](#) Art, with links to objects, maps, and relevant thematic essays.
- **Oxford Art Online** - Our subscription to [Oxford Art Online](#) includes access to Grove Art Online, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms, The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, and The Oxford Companion to Western Art. Searches include all of these references, making it a great first stop when you're beginning to familiarize yourself with a subject.*

* These resources must either be used on campus or accessed through our proxy server.

The Death of King Harold



The Bayeux Tapestry, French, ca. 1070, [Bayeux Museum, Centre Guillaume-le-Conquerant](#)

Important Books and Readings on Byzantine and Medieval Studies

BGC Survey Readings:

Eva R. Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange From the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," *Art History*, vol. 24:1 (2001): 17-50. ([pdf](#))

Pierre Alain Mariaux, "Collecting (and Display)," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 213-232. ([pdf](#))

Herbert L. Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), 19-43, plates 1-8 (ch. 1: "Matter"). ([pdf](#))

Dale Kinney, "The Concept of "Spolia"," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 233-252. ([pdf](#))

Cynthia Hahn, "The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries," *Gesta*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (1997): 20-31. ([pdf](#))

BGC Publications:

Lions, Dragons, & Other Beasts : Aquamanilia of the Middle Ages, Vessels for Church and Table, Peter Barnet and Pete Dandridge, editors. New Haven, Conn. : Published for the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture, New York, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, by Yale University Press, 2006. **NK8427 .L56 2006**

Other Important Texts:

(all of these titles are located in the lower level monograph stacks)

Althaus, Frank and Sutcliffe, editors. ***The Road to Byzantium : Luxury Arts of Antiquity***. Exhibition jointly organized by the State Hermitage Museum and the Courtauld Institute of Art and held at Somerset House. London : Fontanka, 2006. **N6250 .R63 2006**

Cormack, Robin and Vassilaki, Maria, editors. ***Byzantium, 330-1453***. Exhibition at Royal Academy of Arts, London. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2008. **N6250 .B99 2008**

Evans, Helen C. and Ratliff, Brandie, editors. ***Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition, 7th-9th century***. Final exhibition, of three, devoted to Byzantium organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012. **N6250 .B965 2012**

Evans, Helen C., editor. ***Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)***. Second of three exhibitions devoted to Byzantium organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New Haven [Conn.] : Yale University Press, 2004. **N6250 .B962 2004**

Evans, Helen C. and Wixom, William D. ***The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261***. First of three exhibitions devoted to Byzantium at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1997. **N6250 .G55 1997**

Freedman, Paul. ***Out of the East : Spices and the Medieval Imagination***. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. **TX406. F75 2008**

Kalavrezou, Ioli et al. ***Byzantine Women and their World***. Exhibition at Harvard University Art Museums. New Haven: Yale University Press, c2003. **N6250 .K27 2003**

Kessler, Herbert L. ***Seeing Medieval Art***. Orchard Park, NY : Broadview Press, 2004. **N5970 .K47 2004**

Hoffman, Eva R. ***Late Antique and Medieval Art of the Mediterranean World***. Malden, MA : Blackwell, 2007. **N7258 .L38 2007**

Jeffreys, Elizabeth et al., editor. ***The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies***. New York : Oxford University Press, 2008. **DF552 .O93 2008**

Lasko, Peter. ***Ars Sacra, 800-1200***. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994. **N6245 .L37 1994**

Maguire, Henry, editor. ***Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204***. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1997. **DF521 .B934 1997**

Netherton, Robin and Gale R. Owen-Crocker, eds. ***Medieval Textiles and Clothing***. Woodbridge : Boydell Press, 2005- (published annually) **GT575 .M435**

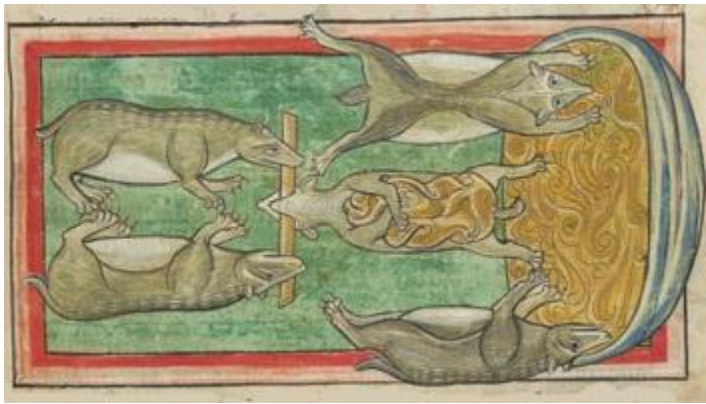
Ross, Marvin C. ***Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection***. Washington, D.C. : Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1962-2005. **NK715 .D84**

Rudolph, Conrad, editor. ***A Companion to Medieval art : Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe***. Malden, Mass. : Blackwell, 2006. **N5970 .C56 2006**

Vikan, Gary. *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*. Washington, D.C. : Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2010. N6250 .V54 2010

Webb, Diana. *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West*. New York : I.B. Tauris, 1999. BX2323 .W422 1999

Bestiaries



(Top): "Hedgehogs Eating Grapes", *Bestiary*, England, c.1230, [Royal MS 12 F.xiii, British Library](#)

(Bottom): "Badgers Building a Set", *Bestiary with extracts from Giraldus Cambrensis on Irish birds*, England, c. 1235, [Harley MS 4751, British Library](#).

BGC Library catalog

[Click here to go to the BGC Library catalog.](#)

If a keyword or subject search on your specific topic doesn't yield results, you might try going a little more general.

- Many of our books on medieval material culture fall under a subject heading that begins with "[Medieval 500-1500.](#)"

Other subject search terms that might be useful to you are:

- [Christian art and symbolism](#)
- [Church decoration and ornament](#)
- [Art, Byzantine](#)
- **Names of individual sites and places (such as Sutton Hoo and Ravenna)**
- **Types of materials and techniques (Ivories, Enameling, Metalwork)**
- **Names of particular individuals, particularly religious and civil authorities**

Important Periodicals for Byzantine and Medieval Material Culture

The BGC subscribes to a number of journals that carry articles on medieval material culture. The list below contains some of the most relevant, but there are many more that might be of use to you.

[Anglo-Saxon England](#) (Cambridge University Press) 1972-current

[Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture](#) (Cambridge University Press) 1932-current

[Dumbarton Oaks Papers](#) (Harvard University Press) 1941-current

[Early Medieval Europe](#) (Blackwell Publishers) 1998-current

[Early Music History](#) (Cambridge University Press) 1981-current

[Essays In Medieval Studies](#) (West Virginia University Press) 2001-current

[Gesta](#) (International Center of Medieval Art) 1963-current

[Harvard Theological Review](#) (Cambridge University Press) 1908-current

[The Journal of Ecclesiastical History](#) (Cambridge University Press) 1950-current

[Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies](#) (Duke University Press) 1997-current

[Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies](#) (Duke University Press) 1971-1995

[Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures](#) (Pennsylvania State University Press) 2010-current

[Mamluk Studies Review](#) (Middle East Documentation Center, University of Chicago) 1997-2007

[Mediaevalia](#) (SUNY Press) 1975-present

[Medieval Review](#) (formerly Bryn Mawr Medieval Review) (Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University) 1993-current

[Mediaeval Studies](#) (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies) 2003-current

[Medieval Archaeology](#) (London : Society for Medieval Archaeology) 2003-current

[Medieval Encounters](#) (Brill Academic) 1999-current

[Paregon](#) (Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies) 1983-current

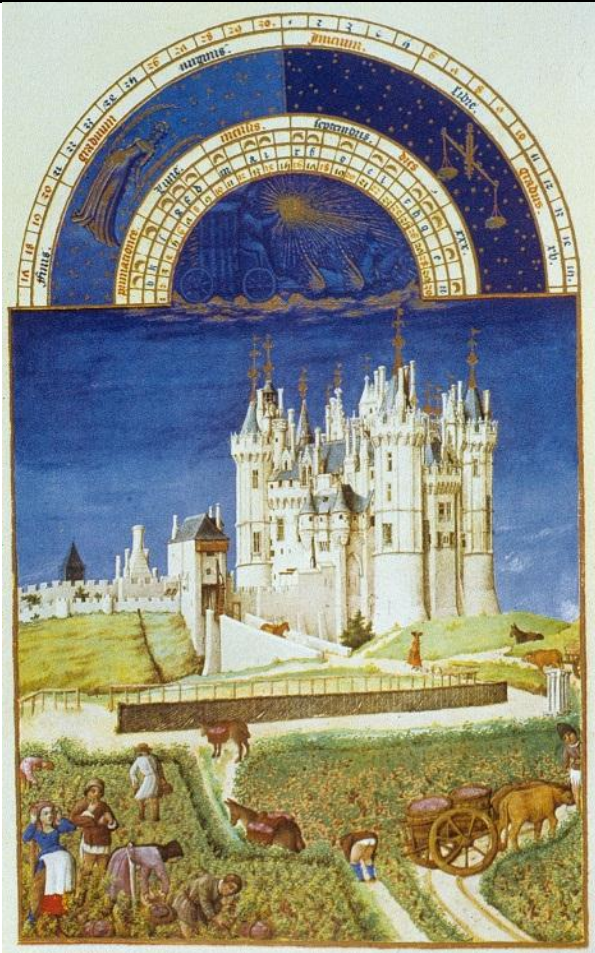
[Peregrinations](#) (International Society for the Study of Pilgrimage Arts) 2002-current

[Speculum](#) (Mediaeval Academy of America) 1926-2007

[Traditio](#) (Fordham University Press) 1943-2009

[Vidimus](#) Monthly on-line magazine devoted to medieval stained glass.

To locate articles on a specific topic in these journals you will want to use indexes, bibliographies, and full-text resources included in the [Databases & Indexes](#) section of this guide.



The Limburg Brothers, Flemish, started 1413-1416, Ms. 65, [Musée Condé](#)

Image Resources for Byzantine and Medieval Material Culture

The BGC's own [Shared Shelf](#) image management system holds thousands of images of medieval material culture -- make it your first stop when looking for images.

Many museums have digitized their collections -- see the [Institutions](#) page of this guide for places to start.

[Book of Kells \(Online\)](#) -- High-resolution images of each page of this important manuscript held by the Library of Trinity College in Dublin. The Library also holds the Book of Durrow, the Book of Howth and other reknown medieval texts, maps and music.

[Bayeux Tapestry](#) -- Good quality digital images of entire Bayeux Tapestry searchable through a thumbnail index.

[British Library Digital Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts](#) -- This searchable catalog contains descriptive records for manuscripts drawn from all the regions and periods represented in the British Library collections.

[British Library Sacred Manuscripts Collection](#) -- Digital versions of 78 religious texts. Includes a high resolution "page-turner" digital version of the Lindisfarne Gospel.

[CORSAIR: The Online Research Resource of the Morgan Library & Museum](#) -- Over 15,000 digital images from the Morgan Library & Museum's collection of Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts [<http://corsair.morganlibrary.org/collguide/MedRenMss.htm>] covering ten centuries of Western illumination and including manuscripts from all major schools.

[Early Manuscripts at Oxford](#) -- Digital facsimiles of over 80 manuscripts held by the various institutions associated with the University of Oxford. Scanned directly from the originals

Index of Christian Art (Princeton University) -- NOT AT THE BGC. Database is available on-site at the Metropolitan Museum's Watson Library. Bibliographic and iconographic index to images of late antique and medieval art objects, to 1400 C.E. Digital images are being incorporated gradually, beginning with the illuminated manuscript holdings of the Morgan Library, New York.

Brooch in the Form of a Bird of Prey



Vendel, late 500s.

Copper alloy with silver overlay; L. 2 3/8 in. (6 cm)
[Metropolitan Museum of Art \(1991.308\)](#)

Important Databases for Byzantine and Medieval Material Culture

At the BGC:

[International Medieval Bibliography](#) - A multidisciplinary bibliography of Europe, North Africa and the Near East (300-1500), including over 4,500 journals, conference proceedings and exhibition catalogs.

[Iter - Gateway to Middle Ages and the Renaissance](#) - A bibliography of interdisciplinary literature pertaining to the Middle Ages and Renaissance (400-1700).

[Patrologia Latina](#) - An electronic version of Jacques-Paul Migne's Patrologia Latina, which comprises the works of the Church Fathers from Tertullian in 200 AD to the death of Pope Innocent III in 1216. The database contains the complete Patrologia Latina, including all prefatory material, original texts, critical apparatus and indexes.

Available Elsewhere:

[Index of Christian Art](#) -- Maintained at Princeton University, this index records works of religious-themed art from early Apostolic times until about 1550. The BGC does not have a subscription to this resource, but for access to the index, [visit Watson Library, the Frick, the Morgan, or Columbia](#).

[Gothic Ivories Project \(Courtauld Institute, London\)](#)

Database of ivory sculptures made in Western Europe ca. 1200-ca. 1530 that includes updates on recent publications, exhibitions and conferences related to medieval art and Gothic ivories. Also includes a select bibliography about Gothic ivories.

Roundel with a Personification of the Moon



Carolingian, ca. 860–890.

[Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan.

Primary Sources for Byzantine and Medieval Material Culture

[ORB's Index of Transcriptions and Translations](#)

[The British Library's Digital Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts](#)

[Library of Christian Latin texts](#)

Latin texts with translations in English, French, German, and Italian, chiefly from the following corpora: Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Medievals; Corpus Christianorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum; Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina; Patrologiae Latinae supplementum; Sources chrétiennes; S. Bernardi opera omnia and Biblia sacra juxta vulgatam versionem. The Continuatio assembles Christian texts from the Carolingian era to the end of the Middle Ages. It also includes works absent from Migne's Patrologia Latina or previously published incomplete.

[Online Medieval and Classical Library](#)

Indexed collection of some of the most important literary works of Classical and Medieval civilization. Searchable by author, title, genre, and language. Created and maintained by independent scholars.

[ORB: International Medieval Sourcebook](#)

An excellent Web site with extensive full-text excerpts and complete documents. Primary source material is organized by period.

[Patrologia Latina](#)

An electronic version of Jacques-Paul Migne's mid-19th century Patrologia Latina, a compendium of the works of the Church Fathers from 200 AD to the death of Pope Innocent III in 1216. The database contains the complete Patrologia Latina, including all prefatory material, original texts, critical apparatus and indexes.



Johann Gutenberg & Johann Fust, Mainz, ca. 1455, [The Morgan Library & Museum](#)

Important Institutions and Repositories for Byzantine and Medieval Material Culture

Local:

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) -- located just across the park from us, the Met has an extensive collection of decorative arts from this period.

- [The Department of Medieval Art](#): The Met's Department of Medieval Art is divided into two sections: [The Medieval Galleries](#) at the museum's main location, and [The Cloisters](#) in northern Manhattan.
- [The Thomas J. Watson Library](#)

[The Morgan Library & Museum](#) -- Financier J. P. Morgan's collection of rare books and manuscripts forms the basis of this museum and research library. It includes more than eleven hundred medieval and Renaissance manuscripts including, most notably, the ninth-century bejeweled Lindau Gospels, and the tenth-century Beatus, the Hours of Catherine of Cleves. [Corsair](#) provides access to over 15,000 digitized images of the manuscript collection.

United States:

[The Cleveland Museum of Art](#) (Cleveland, Ohio) -- Cleveland has outstanding collections of [medieval art](#) and [textiles](#). Their online catalog provides extensive information on their holdings.

[Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection](#) (Washington DC) -- an institute of Harvard University dedicated to supporting scholarship in Byzantine, Garden and Landscape, and Pre-Columbian studies. The [Byzantine Collection](#) consists of more than 1,200 artifacts spanning the imperial, ecclesiastical, and secular realms as well as about 24,000 coins and lead seals. An extensive bibliography of print resources on [gender](#) in Byzantium is among the online scholarly resources.

[Walters Art Gallery](#) (Baltimore) -- Walters Art Museum holds one of the leading collections of Byzantine Art in the United States including decorative tile fragments, liturgical silver and illuminated manuscripts. The Walters maintains particularly strong holdings of ivories, enamels, liturgical vessels, reliquaries, early Byzantine silver, and Ethiopian Christian art.

Europe:

[Abbeg-Stiftung](#) (Riggisburg, Switzerland) -- Located south of Bern, the Abbeg Stiftung is a museum and research institute dedicated to the study of historic textiles. Their collection is particularly strong in Medieval Europe. Although their collection is not online, the museum has published numerous catalogs and scholarly monographs -- search for them in our catalog using "Abbeg-Stiftung" as a keyword.

[British Museum](#) (London) -- Images of one-third of the collection of this encyclopedic museum can be searched online, including the burial sites at Sutton Hoo.

[Fitzwilliam Museum](#) (Cambridge UK) -- Musuem of the University of Cambridge, the Fitzwilliam's Department of Applied Arts is responsible for about 20,000 pieces of decorative arts and sculpture from Europe, the Middle East, India and the Far East. Objects include pottery, porcelain and glass, textiles, fans, furniture and lacquerwork; clocks and watches, domestic metalwork, including silver, pewter; jewellery and snuffboxes, armour and weapons, and sculpture. The Manuscript and Printed Books Department holds ninth-century Byzantine Gospel Books and some of the finest medieval and Renaissance manuscripts in existence.

[Musée national du Moyen Âge: Thermes et hôtel de Cluny](#) (Paris) -- The French national museum devoted to medieval art reknown for its early Medieval sculptures, objects of gold and ivory, tapestries, furnishings, stained glass, and illuminated manuscripts.

[Museum Schnütgen](#) (Cologne) -- Exhibited in one of Cologne's oldest churches, the Museum Schnütgen's collection includes works of the goldsmith's art, stained glass, ivories and textiles.

[National Museum of Ireland](#) (Dublin) -- The early medieval collection focuses on prehistoric Ireland, including early work in gold, church treasures and the Viking and medieval periods. This section includes famous examples of early medieval Celtic metalwork in Ireland such as the Ardagh Chalice, Tara Brooch, the Derrynaflan Hoard, and the recently discovered Irish Bog Psalter.

Table fountain



French, c. 1320-1340

[Cleveland Museum of Art](#)

Other Websites of Interest

Collections of resources

[The Internet Medieval Sourcebook](#) -- hosted by [The Center for Medieval Studies](#) at Fordham University

[The ORB: The Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies](#) -- hosted at CUNY - Staten Island

[Association Villard de Honnecourt](#) -- Founded in 1984 as an organization to promote all medieval topics which relate to the practical sciences or technology.

[Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies](#) -- The University of California, Los Angeles Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies promotes interdisciplinary and cross-cultural studies of the period from Late Antiquity to the middle of the seventeenth century. CMRS sponsors and co-sponsors lectures, seminars, and conferences.

[Illuminare: Centre for the Study of the Illuminated Manuscript](#) --Website of the documentation centre at the Catholic University of Leuven devoted to the study of illuminated manuscripts produced in the Southern Netherlands from around 1350 to 1550.

[Institut d'histoire du livre](#) -- The Institut d'histoire du livre was founded to offer an interdisciplinary framework for research, not only in book history, but also in the various connected fields involved in the study of graphic communications such as the history of technology, economic history, art history, sociology, anthropology, linguistics and information science. English interface.

[International Center for Medieval Art](#) -- A world-wide organization dedicated to the study of medieval art and culture. Website contains numerous links to publications, events, organizations, and exhibitions.

[Medieval Academy of America](#) -- Founded in 1925, the largest organization in the world devoted to medieval studies. Supports research, publication, and teaching in art, archaeology, history, law, literature, music, philosophy, religion, science, economics, and social institutions. Clearing house for electronic resources concerning the visual arts of the Middle Ages, in Europe and the Mediterranean region.

[Mediaevum.de: Mediävistik im Internet](#) -- Up-to-date website with links to organizations, discussions groups, conferences, resources. In German.

[Palaeographia](#) -- A cooperative web portal sponsored by the Association paléographique internationale, the Gazette du livre médiéval, and the Comité international de paléographie latine. In French.

[PECIA: le manuscrit médiéval](#) -- Blog dedicated to the study of medieval manuscripts. Contains extensive links to libraries, reviews, publications, and other interest groups.

[Portal Kunstgeschichte](#) -- Discussions, events, publications, and news on medieval art history topics. In German.

[A Hypertext Book of Hours](#) -- An introduction to the structure of a book of hours based on several sources. Includes explanatory materials, Latin/English facing page texts, and numerous links to other books of resources.

[Romanes.com](#) -- Comprehensive site covering architecture and sculpture in France from the Romanesque through the Gothic period. Includes thousands of high quality images, interactive maps, bibliography, newsletter, blog, and links.

[Medieval Bestiary: Animals in the Middle Ages](#) -- Extensive, well-organized website with links to manuscript images, full text, and bibliography.

[Joconde \(Portal to the collections of the national museums of France\)](#) --Joconde (Mona Lisa) is a union database of the inventory records of over 350 French national museums of archeology, fine arts, decorative arts, ethnology, history, science and technology. 60% of the 500,000+ records are illustrated with one or more images. Navigation is entirely in French.

[Catholic Encyclopedia](#) -- Comprehensive resource on Catholic teaching, history, and related information published in 1908. Online by article title but no keyword searching.

[Resources for Medieval Art and Architecture \(Harvard University LibGuide\)](#) -- Excellent, in-depth, annotated guide created by Mary Clare Altenhofen, Associate Librarian for Research at Harvard's Fine Arts Library

Just for fun:

[Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog](#) (he [tweets](#), too!)

[The Medieval Archives](#) -- a podcast and its accompanying website

[Medivalists.net](#) -- a clearinghouse for news and links relevant to the Middle Ages