



Sarum Seminar NewsandViews

FALL 2003

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Monreale —A Norman Cathedral in Sicily—

By Bob Nyden

Last April, my wife, Cyndy, and I spent three weeks in Sicily trying to take in the history, culture and feel of the place. Sicily has been subject to invasions and foreign rule throughout history. Amazing Greek temple and theater ruins dot the island, and the Romans, North Africans, Normans and the Spanish Bourbon kings all have left their marks.

What, Normans? Yes, England wasn't the only place the Normans invaded in the 11th century. Roger I marched into Palermo in 1072, blessed by Papal mandates. Although his son Roger II continued the program of conquest all the way to Naples on mainland Italy, in Palermo much of the Norman period was marked by a surprisingly genteel and sybaritic court, with social tolerance and support for various arts. By 1171, when Roger II's grandson, William II "The Good" was crowned, the court maintained some surprising features for a medieval Catholic monarchy. Muslim officials, physicians and astrologers were plentiful, and William is thought to have been fluent and literate in Arabic.

William II began the cathedral at Monreale (Mon-ray-AH-lay) in 1174 to help validate his monarchy (he was only 21 years old and in political competition with his archbishop) and to mandate the so-called Latin, or Roman Catholic church as Sicily's official religion. In an amazing display of what money and determination can do, the cathedral was essentially complete by 1186.

The site is at 1000 feet elevation (300 m) in the hills south of Palermo, and included a heavily fortified Benedictine abbey. The exterior is solid, Romanesque, with Norman triple apse at the East and massive square towers at the West. The bronze double main doors are bas relief masterpieces by Bonanno of Pisa (of the leaning tower fame).



Sarum Seminar
NewsandViews

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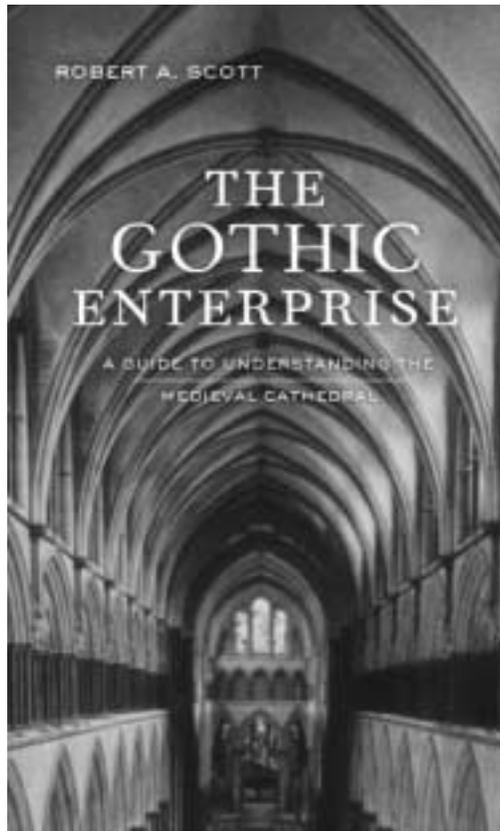
continued on page 5

News from Bob and Julia

Greetings from the Book Circuit! By the time you get this newsletter, Bob will have made his first bookshop appearance to promote *The Gothic Enterprise*. Scheduled so far: launch parties October 24th in Princeton and November 25th at Sarum College; book talks October 18th at Barnes & Noble, Utica, NY; November 5th at Easy Going Travel Shop and Bookstore, Berkeley; and November 26th at Ottakars' Bookshop, Salisbury; a private seminar in Clinton, NY on October 20th and a lecture to the Salisbury Cathedral Guides on November 26th. Write for details: jfremon@earthlink.net.

The book looks great, thanks to the wonderful photos and drawings contributed by Sarum Seminar friends, and also to the sensitive and expert design, and editing, by the folks at University of California Press. Now that the book is out (after all these years!), Bob can start exploring new subjects that intrigue him—stay tuned.

Bob will be teaching again in Stanford's Continuing Studies Program this winter quarter, and we'll lead a "Gothic Enterprise" trip to Salisbury May 24-31 (with a two-night add-on in Canterbury). Julia is also working with Bill Mahrt to offer an intensive Singers' Workshop in



Salisbury June 20-29. Sarum College is holding a slot for us in October 2004 as well – if you are part of any kind of group that would like a week in Salisbury next fall, let me know and we can design something specially for you. We're able to get back into the trip business because we've teamed up with Bob Tennyson and Jim Wiedeman at Cardoza-Bungey Travel in Palo Alto. They will be handling all our enrollments, reservations and accounting. It promises to be a great partnership.

You may already have seen our new website: <http://sarumtravel.com>. (It was designed by Susan Cann, who also did this newsletter.) On the website you'll find information about Bob's book and about our trips,

travel tips for visiting Salisbury and southern England on your own, and links for local accommodation and transportation. We also sell travel insurance and car rentals through the site, and even books and music! Whenever you link to amazon.com through us and make any kind of purchase, we earn a little commission. What could be easier?

Bob Scott & Julia Fremon

Bell's Books Puts *The Gothic Enterprise* on Display

Bell's Books, at 536 Emerson Street in downtown Palo Alto, is carrying Bob's book, *The Gothic Enterprise*. In fact, in late September and early October, they did a wonderful window display on the book, complete with a cathedral model by Bob Nyden, but I fear the display will be gone by the time this reaches you.

However, even if the display is gone, the book will still be available, so give them a call at 650-323-7822.

The bookstore is open from 9-5 Monday through Saturday, with late hours on Friday evenings until 9pm.

1215: The Year of Magna Carta: book review & quiz

by Nancy Pinkerton

While in Salisbury this June, our group was fortunate to attend a book-signing event by the two authors of *1215*. We were also delighted to be accompanied by author John Gillingham the day we toured the ruins of King John's Clarendon Palace.

If you were unable to be part of these events, you can quench your curiosity about the year 1215 by reading this excellent book. It is intended for a general audience, but does have 6 pages of bibliography for the curious reader, as well as the entire text of the Magna Carta, thoughtfully typeset and much easier to read than the hand-written version we've all admired in Salisbury's chapter house.

The book sketches what it was like to be alive in the year 1215. Political struggles are interspersed with other issues such as courtly manners, fashion trends, education, food preferences, travel to the continent, establishment of towns and religion. It conveys why John was such an unpopular royal in the eyes of his peers, his enemies, and his subjects. John's politics are present in this book, but by no means the focus. Lifestyles and culture of the years 1190-1230 in England and France are the broader themes, and they are presented in a conversational style of writing.

An excellent (and short) companion book is Danziger's *The Year 1000*, a paperback, which describes the life and times of average citizens at the first millenium.

Danny Danziger and John Gillingham, 299 pages, hardcover, £16.99
ISBN 0-340-82474-3, Hodder & Stoughton, publishers, www.madaboutbooks.com

Danziger: award-winning columnist for THE SUNDAY TIMES, and author of 8 books, including *Eton Voices* and *The Year 1000*.

Gillingham: emeritus professor of history at LSE and prolific author, including *Richard I* and *The Wars of the Roses*

Don't look now!

*Come back here for the
quiz answers*

(take the quiz on page 4)

- 1 B
- 2 D
- 3 A
- 4 B
- 5 C
- 6 C
- 7 D
- 8 A (7 bishoprics and 17 abbacies were vacant in 1211; it was more profitable for John to remain excommunicated and under interdict than to fill the vacancies.)
- 9 B (clauses 4, 18, 24, 26, 30, 45, 48)
- 10 D
- 11 B
- 12 A

Now take the QUIZ on page 4

Sarum Seminar Sponsors Chair in Salisbury Cathedral

At the September meeting of Sarum Seminar the attendees enthusiastically banded together to sponsor one of the new chairs for Salisbury Cathedral. Everyone's memories of the misery of sitting on the old chairs made it very easy to round up the \$200 needed for one of the new chairs and with the sponsorship comes the opportunity to have a name plate attached to the chair.

So when next you are in the cathedral, look around for a chair that says "Sarum Seminar, Stanford, California" on the back. Since there are only 1,800 chairs to look over, and it'll probably be raining outside anyway, why not spend a happy afternoon on the quest? Maybe we should offer a prize to the first member to find, and photograph, "our" chair!

1215: The Year of Magna Carta: quiz

- 1) At Runnymede is one acre of land transferred to the USA to honor our president upon his death. It is dedicated to:
a) FDR b) JFK c) Lincoln
d) Eisenhower
- 2) An audit of King John's wine cellar at Clarendon Palace in 1201 reveals that he had this many gallons of wine from Poitou and Anjou:
a) 5,000 gallons b) 20,000 gallons
c) 50,000 gallons d) 180,000 gallons
- 3) In 1215, what percent of the population lived in cities?
a) 1/10 b) 1/4 c) 1/3 d) 1/2
- 4) During King John's reign prices rose sharply. An ox costing 40p in 1190 sold for how much in 1215?
a) 60p b) 80p c) 100 p d) 120p
- 5) The most famous medical school in 1215 was located in:
a) Milan b) Paris c) Salerno d) London
- 6) In 1209, John told King William of Scotland he would invade unless King William:
a) paid John £10,000, b) gave John his 2 daughters to use for arranged marriages, c) both A&B,
d) none of the above
- 7) There were four versions of the Magna Carta. Lacock Abbey has a copy of one from the year:
a) 1215 b) 1216 c) 1217 d) 1225



- 8) In King John's reign, the crown collected church revenues during periods of vacancy of a bishop or abbot. When Hugh of Lincoln died in Nov. 1200, John didn't appoint a new bishop until July 1202, netting him how much in income?
a) £2649 b) £900 c) £4118
d) £1763
- 9) John's law enforcement system was of great concern to the authors of the Magna Carta. How many of the 63 clauses pertain to the activities of sheriffs?
a) 3 b) 7 c) 10 d) 12
- 10) Which amendment of the US Constitution is based on Magna Carta clause #39?
a) 2nd b) 3rd c) 4th d) 5th
- 11) John declared much of the English countryside as "forest" to create a royal monopoly over the products. At the end of his reign, how much of England was zoned "forest"?
a) 1/4 b) 1/3 c) 1/2 d) 3/5
- 12) In need of funds in 1204, John "dis-afforested" the whole of Cornwall and was paid how much by Cornish residents?
a) £2200 b) £3200 c) £4200 d) £5200

Find QUIZ ANSWERS on page 3

— Full text about each matter can be found in the book
1215: The Year of Magna Carta; see review on page 3 —

Monreale *continued from page 1*

But as the *Rough Guide to Sicily* writes, all this “gives no hint of what’s inside: the most extraordinary and extensive area of Christian medieval mosaicwork in the world, the apex of Sicilian-Norman art.”

As in St. Mark’s in Venice, the predominant impression at Monreale is of gold. The glittering surfaces nearly cover the interior, serving as background to about 130 mosaic scenes, the most imposing of which is an immense Christ Pantocrator on the central apse over the altar. Nearby, above the royal throne, Christ is shown crowning William II. Also on the apse is a mosaic icon of St. Thomas Becket, perhaps the earliest public work honoring the English saint, since Becket was only canonized in 1173.

Interestingly, in 1177, William married Joan, a daughter of King Henry II of England. This made William the brother-in-law to Richard I and John, and meant that it was William’s father-in-law who had inspired the murder of Thomas à Becket in 1170.

The dazzling mosaics cover about an acre and a half (6340 sq. meters) of wall area, providing a sequence of Old and New Testament scenes in an order specified by the Second Nicene Council (AD 787) to educate the faithful in the teachings of the Christian Church.

The nave provides the stories of the Old Testament in forty-two lively and amazingly realistic scenes, from the spirit of God moving on the face of the waters, through Jacob wrestling with the angel. The chancel, transept and apses show the life of Jesus and New Testament subjects, and the nave side aisles depict miracles and teachings of Christ.

The sweeping overview is certainly stunning, but for full effect you really should bring some good binoculars. The detail and intricacy of the work rewards close study, and only with glasses can the elaborate painted wooden ceiling be fully appreciated. A pocketful of change is also useful: powerful floodlights bring the mosaics to life and make the gold gleam, but a one-Euro coin buys only three minutes of light.

The imagination and ingenuity of the craftsmen bring constant gasps of surprise and delight from modern visitors. I absolutely loved the astonishing ocean-full of colorful fish that appear in the creation, and there are medieval construction techniques to be learned from the carefully patterned tesserae that form the vignettes of building Noah’s Ark and the Tower of Babel. No doubt the artisans used the abundant local fish markets, as well as the fervent building campaign just outside, as models for their work. But I wondered who inspired the dissolute looking Noah, who lies drunk and half-naked near the post-flood grape harvest.

Certainly the mosaics are the big attraction at Monreale, but there is more. The building is a fascinating reflection of the Islamic culture that infused Sicily in the 12th century. The nave arches are pointed, but not with quite the sharp apex found in Northern Europe. And the Saracen influence is exuberantly encoded in all the intricate mosaic floral borders and in-fill patterns that surround the biblical scenes.

Oh, and I haven’t mentioned the unusually large cloisters, a remainder from the Benedictine monastery, also with clearly Eastern inspired decoration. There are 216 pairs of columns supporting an elegant arcade around the garden quadrangle. Each capital is unique, and some columns have inlaid mosaic patterns on the shafts. And within the southwest corner is a cloister within a cloister, surrounding a small fountain with elaborately carved columns.

Finally, for those with an insatiable desire to explore the upper reaches of cathedrals (and who might need to work off a bit of gelato or pasta), a stairway off the south aisle leads to outside parapets high above the cloister. The maze-like path leads on through small barrel-vaulted passages and up more steps until finally a wonderful view is revealed down the Conca d’Oro valley toward Palermo, and you find yourself atop the cathedral’s central apse.

Sicily’s rich history is the source of an abundance of fascinating sites to visit, but for the medievalist, the art historian, or simply the visitor seeking exceptional beauty and craftsmanship, the cathedral at Monreale should be high on the travel wish list.

Naumburg and Freiberg: Renovated and Open for Tourism

by Ann Jones

Pssst, wanna buy a medieval house for only 5000 Euros? Although this sounds like an offer from a peddler who also sells things that fell off a truck, Dick and I saw one listed in the window of a real estate office in Naumburg on a spring trip. It does lack a few modern amenities such as sewers, but it's more authentic that way, right? The renovations and restorations going on in both Naumburg and Freiberg make them especially interesting to visit.

Naumburg and Freiberg are two cathedral towns in eastern Germany which were both quite important in the Middle Ages. Naumburg was built at the intersection of several trade routes. Its annual fair was one of the most important in the region. It has been a bishop's seat since 1028. Silver was discovered in Freiberg in 1168, and it was the largest town in Saxony during the Middle ages. After German reunification, townscapes in eastern Germany were revitalized. During the communist years, simple things like painting the outside of houses were neglected. The fresh paint and careful restorations completed and going on in Naumburg and Freiberg are making them destinations for German tourists.

Like many German cathedrals, Naumburg has both an east and a west choir. The cathedral is best known for the sculpture in the west choir. The rood screen there has lifelike sculptures of the passion story. The capitals, friezes and keystones on the screen have incredibly realistic plants. Inside

the west choir are life-size donor statues. They are represented as mid-13th century people, and the faces are of individuals. Since all of these cathedral benefactors had died 150 to 200 years before their statues were carved, one presumes they are not portraits. Knowing that doesn't detract from the effect, however; they look like statues of real people.

The cathedral itself shows the evolution of architecture from Romanesque to Gothic. The crypt is early Romanesque, the nave is late Romanesque, the west choir is early Gothic, and the east choir is late Gothic. The east choir is raised, and it also has a rood screen. Another feature of the east choir is a nice set of 14th century stained glass windows. Because of the change in floor level and the rood screens at both ends, the cathedral does not have the grand vistas seen in many others.

If the east choir of Naumburg is high Gothic, the interior of Freiberg Cathedral might be called higher Gothic. It was built between 1490 and 1501. What gives it such a delightful feel is a tracery gallery which circles the interior about half the way up. The gallery swings around the wall pillars and contrasts with the verticality of the rest of the interior. The light and airy feeling is accentuated by the simple painting. The walls are white while the stones in the pillars, ribs and tracery have been left a natural color. Only the apex of the vaults has been painted. The net vaults form an elaborate pattern that has little structural function but adds to the delightful effect.

Preaching is done from the 1638 Miner's Pulpit which in many churches would be the main feature. In Freiberg, though, it is overshadowed by the medieval Tulip Pulpit right next to it, now used only for special occasions. The Tulip Pulpit is a fantastic work which is sort of a tree of life. There are miners, prophets, and angels peering out of, and supporting, botanical forms.

Another, older, sculptural highlight is outside, where it is now well-protected by a porch. The Goldene Pforte, a Romanesque entrance dating from 1230, was saved from the previous cathedral and incorporated into the side of the late Gothic structure. It is one of the earliest step portals in Germany. Ornamental carving alternates with statues on the entry columns, tympanum, and archivolts.

In both Naumburg and Freiberg, tourism for now seems geared to other Germans. Town and cathedral tours were in German. The best books haven't been translated into English yet. However, the basic information is available in English guides and pamphlets, and many people we encountered spoke at least a little English. Anyone, like readers of this newsletter, with at least a basic knowledge of cathedral architecture can fill in many of the information holes. One big advantage is that there are not hordes of tourists. When people found out we were from California, they were intrigued and eager to talk with us. The curiosity and openness of the local people, combined with the newly renovated sights, make both Naumburg and Freiberg good destinations.

Book Reviews by Elaine Kriegh

Mayflower Bastard

When I think of the Pilgrims, Plymouth Rock, and the Mayflower at this time of the year, I usually have a pretty idealistic picture in mind, something along the lines of *The First Thanksgiving* as painted by Wyeth. So when I saw the word, “Bastard” linked with “Mayflower” in a book title I was intrigued. Having now read *Mayflower Bastard*, by David Lindsay, I have a new perspective on those first colonists and the problems they encountered in creating a new society.

Lindsay’s book is a memoir of his ancestor Richard More, whose mother was a descendent of Malcolm III of Scotland. At age five, Richard More, along with three of his siblings, were dumped on the Mayflower as the solution his “legal” father chose to end an embarrassing family situation.

Richard, his two sisters, and his brother, were bound to William Brewster, Edward Winslow and John Carver—all prominent members of the Pilgrim enterprise. Of the four siblings, only Richard survived the first year at Plymouth. He was to become one of the longest lived First Comers (as the original Mayflower passengers were called), dying in 1694 at about age 80.

Richard More’s life was not as one would expect from a Mayflower passenger. Since he was not a Pilgrim or “Saint,” he was always considered a “Stranger.” Never particularly religious: he had questionable morals. Being clever and ambitious got him into trouble with both civil and religious authorities. New England society considered him a “black sheep,” as they were unable to reconcile his reputation with the fact that he had been on the Mayflower. However, he was a First Comer, and should have been honored as such, but he simply did not fit into the mystique they wished to create of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Mayflower Bastard provided me with a fresh look at how Saints and Strangers alike struggled with settling into New England. The book has giving me a much more realistic picture - one that I will bring to my own Thanksgiving dinner this year.

God’s Secretaries

The King James version of the Bible is considered by many to be the greatest work in English prose ever published. In *God’s Secretaries*, by Adam Nicholson, the author looks at all the currents of Jacobean society that came together to produce this work. There is King James himself, his fifty or so translators, as well as the political and religious climate in which they all worked.

The amazing thing is that these rather ordinary men were able to come together to produce this extraordinary work. Nicholson believes that only under the special circumstances of James’ early years as King of England would this have been possible. The King wanted to project himself as a deliverer of peace to Europe – its unifier. The Bible translation, while it was to be for the use of everyone, was also to underline the majesty of the sovereign – as in the divine right of kings!

The translators were, to say the least, a rather mixed bag that included present and future Archbishops of Canterbury, Puritan scholars, one cuckolded dean, a self-admitted pornographer, a linguist who knew fifteen languages, and even one buccaneer.

Together they managed to create a working system of committees that tackled the Old Testament (two committees), the New Testament (three committees), and the Apocryphal books as well. In order to perfect their translations they worked individually, as well as in groups. They drew from many other translations, especially the Geneva Bible and the Bishops’ Bible.

Nicholson shows that it was possible for this magnificent work to be assembled not only by a committee (probably the only time this would ever work!), but in spite of the political, social, and religious conditions that soon would plunge England into the Civil War of the 1640s. He feels that this amazing enterprise succeeded because of the unprecedented cooperation of this extremely varied group of men, who found themselves working as God’s secretaries.

Notes on the Sarum Seminars for 2003-2004

Welcome to the Sarum Seminar! The Sarum Seminar is an ever-evolving program for enthusiasts of Gothic cathedrals and medieval life. It began with a course on Salisbury Cathedral taught by Robert Scott through Stanford University's Continuing Studies Program. Our seminar topics range from art and architecture to social history. Our speakers have included prominent medievalists from all over the world as well as members of our own organization. We have an exciting program lined up for this year. Check out the separate sheet that summarizes topics, locations, and dates. It's formatted for posting on your refrigerator so you won't forget.

The next seminar on **Tuesday, October 28, 2003**, will feature several of our own members speaking on topics related to medieval warfare. R. Bruce Paschal will talk about swords and chain mail. The 12th and 13th centuries were the heyday of chain mail, and Bruce will bring a suit of chain mail that is circa the late 1190s. He will also bring examples of swords modeled after historical types – as defined by Edward Oakshott – that were common in the 11th, 12th and up to the mid 13th century. Bob Nyden will share his trebuchet model. We'll finish with Elaine Kreigh speaking on castle fortifications.

On **Monday, November 17, 2003**, we'll return for a third year to the Special Collections Department, Green Library, Stanford University with host John Mustain. This has been a very popular session the last two years. Attendees get a close look at several of the fantastic books in the collection. Having the opportunity to turn the pages and thoroughly examine these old books is a rare treat.

On **Saturday, January 10, 2004**, we will repeat another popular session from last year. Bill Mahrt will lead Singers Seminar which will be followed by a potluck. The gathering will be a reunion for many of us who have participated in singing trips, but other early music singers are also invited. For those of us who've made the trip to Salisbury, Bill promises some familiar songs (as well as something new). The singing starts at 3, we'll take a break at 5, then we are inviting non-singers for a seminar/mini-performance at 5:15pm. **Then we'll cap the evening with a potluck.**

Jacqueline Jung, who has recently joined the faculty of UC Berkeley's Art History Department, will talk to us on **Thursday, February 26, 2004** about French and German Choir Screens. Jackie gave a fascinating lecture at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds last summer titled "Movement, Emotion and the Beholder's Share: The Wise and Foolish Virgins of Magdeburg and Erfurt Cathedrals."

In March we will feature Nicola Coldstream. She taught medieval art history for many years before becoming a deputy editor for the Grove Dictionary of Art, with responsibility for medieval architecture. She then edited the Soundtrack Gallery Guide at the National Gallery, London. Her books include *Masons and Sculptors* (1991) and *The Decorated Style, Architecture and Ornament, 1240-1360* (1994). She has published many articles on medieval architecture, decoration, and furnishings. She is now an independent scholar and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. She will present "Making Public Monuments in Thirteenth-Century England: The Tomb and Memorials of Eleanor of Castile" to us on **Tuesday, March 23, 2004**.

We're still working on April and May seminars. Tentative dates are **Monday, April 19, and Tuesday, May 18**. We have a definite date for our spring potluck: **Saturday, May 8, 2004**, at the home of Bob Scott and Julia Fremon.

A Subscription Form is included in this mailing. The deluxe package deal has been reduced to \$60 for an individual or \$110 for a couple. Basic membership remains \$20 for email and \$25 for snail mail or both. We are lowering the drop-in (per seminar) fee to \$10. The seminars are free to full-time students. We are also offering a "first time free" feature for those who would like to try this. This also means that if you have house guests, you are welcome to bring them along to a seminar at no extra cost.

I hope to see you throughout the year.

Your Head Nag Hag,

Ann Jones