

Owning Gothic Ivories: Buying, Giving, Circulating (London, 25–26 Oct 24)

London, British Museum & Victoria and Albert Museum, Oct 25–26, 2024

Michaela Zöschg, London

Conference: "Owning, Gothic Ivories: Buying, Giving, Circulating", at the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Organised by Manuela Studer-Karlen (University of Bern), Naomi Speakman (British Museum, London) and Michaela Zöschg (Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

This conference is supported by the project "Love and War. Secular images on Gothic ivories", funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

Over the last three decades, research on Gothic ivories has seen a significant shift from studies concerned with stylistic attribution and classification towards the investigation of their materiality, iconography, function, and – last but not least – patronage. Although we now have a much better understanding of the social, devotional, and cultural contexts in which especially religious ivories were commissioned and produced, overall, we still know comparatively little about the owners of Gothic ivories. This is especially true for the secular sphere, where it has not yet been possible to link any surviving fourteenth-century carving to its first owner.

This conference aims to return to the question of the ownership of Gothic ivories, an area which offers great potential for further discoveries, particularly (but not only) through the combination of art historical object analysis with evaluations of contemporary written sources such as inventories, wills, and other documents. Illuminating the stories of historic owners, be they individuals or institutions, and their Gothic ivories is the first aim of this two-day conference, while the second is to shed light on the later life of these objects, and on their transition into new ownership contexts and uses.

PROGRAMME

DAY 1:

FRIDAY, October 25, 2024 at the British Museum, Stevenson Lecture Theatre, Great Russell Street, London

10.00 - 10.30 Registration and coffee

10.30 - 10.40 Welcome (Manuela Studer-Karlen & Naomi Speakman)

10.40 - 11.00 The Ivories Study Group (Neil Stratford and Paul Williamson, London)

11.00 - 12.30

SESSION 1: Religious Owners (Chair: Catherine Yvard)

11.00 Was There a Franciscan Patronage of Gothic Ivories? (Charles Little, New York)

11.20 Reading Sources on Prelates as Owners of Gothic Ivories (13th-14th centuries) (Michele Tomasi, Lausanne)

11.40 Navigating the Anticlerical Laws Storm: Circulation and Art Market Dynamics of the Certosa di Pavia Ivories between the 18th and 19th Centuries (Flaminia Ferlito, Lucca)

12.00 Discussion

12.30 - 13.30 Break

13.30 - 15.00

SESSION 2: Objects in Focus (Chair: Michaela Zöschg)

13.30 Reflecting on Memory: Donors, Owners and Exemplars (Iris Ippel, Leiden)

13.50 The Lives and Afterlives of the Ivory Crozier of Archbishop Walter de Gray (Sophie Kelly, Bristol)

14.10 Write, Pray, Love – Owning an Ivory Booklet Throughout the Centuries (Svea Janzen, Jena)

14.30 Discussion

15.00 - 15.20 Coffee Break

15.20 - 16.50

SESSION 3: Networks and Mobility (Chair: Lloyd de Beer)

15.20 About Lost Objects: Gothic Ivories at the Court of Savoy According to the 'Comptes de l'hôtel' and the Castle Inventories (Simonetta Castronovo, Turin)

15.40 Quest for Ivory in the Kingdom of Bohemia: Imports, Substitutes, and National Historiography (Milan Matejka, Zurich)

16.00 'Let them pass freely when they go and come back to us': The Florentine Merchant Baldassare degli Ubriachi and the Circulation of Gothic Ivories (Joanne Morice, Melbourne)

16.20 Discussion

16.50 - 17.00 Closing Remarks Day 1

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DAY 2

SATURDAY, October 26, 2024 at the Victoria & Albert Museum, Hochhauser Auditorium, Cromwell Road, London

10.00 - 10.30 Registration and coffee

10.30 - 10.40 Welcome (James Robinson & Michaela Zöschg)

10.40 - 12.40

SESSION 1: Collectors in Focus (Chair: James Robinson)

10.40 The Ivory Collection of Nicole Gilles and Marie Turquam, a Parisian Bourgeois Couple, c. 1500 (Sarah Dyer Magleby, Kansas)

11.00 Collecting Gothic Ivories in the Time of Production: Queen Clémence of Hungary's Ivories (Paula Mae Carns, Illinois)

11.20 Staging Ivories in 19th-century Paris: the Spitzer Collection (Paola Cordera, Milan)

11.40 Prince Władysław Czarotoryski (1828–1894) as a Collector of Gothic Ivories (Elżbieta Musialik, Krakow)

12.00 Discussion

12.30 - 13.30 Break

13.30 - 15.00

SESSION 2: Displaying Gothic Ivories (Chair: Naomi Speakman)

13.30 'Your ivories attracted a great deal of attention': Display of the Mayer Collection of Ivories from 1850 to the Present (Nicola Scott, Liverpool)

13.50 Love & Reproduction: The Visual Biography of a Gothic Ivory Mirror Back (Tom Nickson, London)

14.10 From Gothic to 'Medieval Style': Perceptions of Fakery in Gothic Ivories, 1915-1930 (Marian Bleeke, Cleveland)

14.30 Discussion

15.00 - 15.20 Coffee Break

15.20 - 16.50

SESSION 3: Later Interpretations (Chair: Manuela Studer-Karlen)

15.20 Beyond Late Antique Diptychs. Re-reading the 'Thesaurus' by A. Francesco Gori in Search of Gothic Ivories (Benedetta Chiesi, Milan)

15.40 Gothic Ivories in the Treasures of Saint-Étienne d'Auxerre and Saint-Étienne de Sens: Medieval Artefacts and 19th-20th Century Scholars (Chloé Cazalet, Auxerre)

16.00 The Biography of a Fictile Collection (Jack Hartnell, London)

16.20 Discussion

16.50 - 17.00 Closing Remarks Day 2

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VENUE

25th October: The British Museum, Stevenson Lecture Theatre, Great Russell Street, London

26th October: Victoria and Albert Museum, Hochhauser Auditorium, Cromwell Road, London

REGISTRATION

Online registration for this in-person event will open soon via the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum websites. Please note that attendees will need to book a separate ticket for each day. If you would like to receive a notification when booking is activated, please email Michaela Zöschg at m.zoschg@vam.ac.uk

Reference:

CONF: Owning Gothic Ivories: Buying, Giving, Circulating (London, 25-26 Oct 24). In: Arthist.net, Sep 17, 2024 (accessed Sep 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/42639>>.