



**MUSÉE DE CLUNY**  
le monde médiéval

**PRESS  
RELEASE**

## A RENAISSANCE

Art between Flanders and Champagne, 1150-1250.

From 17 April to 15 July 2013

Unsuspected treasures of a 'Renaissance' ahead of the times : The new exhibition presented at the musée de Cluny will shed light on the original art form which blossomed between Flanders and Champagne at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Illuminations, pieces of goldsmith, seals, enamelled objects, glass-work, ivories and other sculptures will unveil the exceptional artistic vitality which was characteristic of these regions.

### Wealth creating centers

The fairs taking place in Champagne and Flanders coupled with the prestige of cloth-manufacturing cities ensured that the Northern and Eastern regions of Europe formed a true international trading hub. Flanders, Picardy, Artois, Champagne as well as the Mosan region were strategically located between the northern countries and the Mediterranean Sea and were well served by an advanced road network. They attracted merchants and craftsmen who created a dynamic relationship network over the course of their repeated journeys. The numerous abbeys also helped forge tight religious and intellectual bonds, thus connecting cities like it was the case for Saint-Omer and Liège.

### A 'Renaissance' ahead of the times

This economic and spiritual vitality had a positive impact on art commission and on the birth of a new artistic form. Usually called 'Style 1200', it was neither Roman, nor was it Gothic and was characterised by a renewed interest in patterns borrowed from Antiquity, as well as for nature and mankind. Artists based their work on the observation of the human figure through the careful examination of Antique vestiges, paying particular attention to the Classical Greek statuary which provided a great source of inspiration due to the beauty and smoothness of its drapery folds.

The versatility and mobility displayed by artists was one of the reasons why this singular style was able to develop. For instance the visible Mosan inspiration in the treasury of the Troyes Cathedral is a proof of these vibrant exchanges, also exemplified by the numerous connections between fellow artists across regions, collaborations involving different workshops, and master-student knowledge transmission. The exhibition will lay particular emphasis on all these crossed influences as well as on the circulation of the works of art and of the models who travelled along with the men. The choice of the geographic area for this exhibition will allow a fresh perspective on the 'Style 1200'. By presenting pieces with a shared aesthetics, it refutes the idea that this form of art was a merely transitional one, with the great Virgin Mary's reliquary casket kept in the treasury of the Tournai Cathedral and executed by Medieval Master Nicolas de Verdun as a most striking illustration.

### The promise of Heaven

A typically Northern form of art especially noticeable for its religious production, 'Style 1200' is highly indebted to its benefactors. Clergymen, counts as well as women of the aristocracy counted as the members of a circle of enlightened patrons. Their devotion was materialised through luxurious objects which dazzled with their quality, a proof of their ambition to secure a prominent position once in Heaven. Among them, Wibald de Stavelot, who headed the Imperial Abbey located in the Diocese of Liège stood out as the sponsor of the now lost retable of Saint-Remaclus, of which only two precious enamel plaques representing angels with very delicate facial expressions survive.

However princes like the Counts of Flanders and of Champagne also strongly contributed to encourage creation, as well as some of their wives, among whom Countess Sibylla of Flanders, Eleanor, Countess of Vermandois or Marie of Champagne. Spiritual and material wealth were not conflicting notions in the medieval era. The splendour displayed by some works of art meant to honour the Lord as it allowed to reach the invisible with the help of tangible objects, hence the use of precious materials, sparkling Oriental gems and elaborated and refined techniques. For goldsmith work, enamels, Niello, filigree and 'verniss brun' were often used, sometimes on the same piece, as is shown by the sumptuous reliquary cross of Clairmarais.

### From Paris to Saint-Omer

Beyond the exhibition in Paris, the visit will continue in Saint-Omer at the musée de l'hôtel Sandelin, where visitors will discover the second part of the exhibition in the heart of the very places where this 'Renaissance' took place.

### Exhibition Curators

Christine Descatoire, Main curator at the musée de Cluny, Paris

Marc Gil, Lecturer at the université Charles de Gaulle-Lille 3, Institut de Recherches historiques du Septentrion (UMR-CNRS)

### Practical information

#### Musée de Cluny

musée national du Moyen Âge  
6, place Paul Painlevé  
75005 Paris  
Tél: 01 53 73 78 16  
www.musee-moyenage.fr

#### Open every day except Tuesday from 9.15 to 17.45.

Last Admission 17.15.  
Exhibition closed on 25 December, 1st  
January and 1<sup>st</sup> May

#### Bookshop/shop:

9.15 – 18.00, free access  
Tél. 01 53 73 78 22

#### Getting there:

Metro Cluny-La-Sorbonne / Saint-  
Michel / Odéon  
Bus n°21-27-38-63-85-86-87  
RER: B and C line, stop at Saint-  
Michel – Notre-Dame station

#### Admission:

8, 50 €, concession 6, 50 €, includes  
entrance to the permanent collec-  
tions.  
Free entrance for people under 26  
years (from or residing in the EU) and  
for all on the first Sunday of each  
month

#### Publication:

Exhibition catalogue, Éditions  
RMN-GP, 2013 – 208pp, 34 €.

 [twitter.com/museecluny](https://twitter.com/museecluny)  
Comment and share on Twitter

### Press contacts at Musée de Cluny

#### Claire Valléry

Press Officer  
claire.vallery@culture.gouv.fr  
Tél: 33 (0) 1 53 73 78 25

#### Claire Séguret

Deputy Communications Officer,  
in charge of Sponsorship  
claire.seguret@culture.gouv.fr

