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Book Review: Medieval Art in Motion: The Inventory and Gift Giving of Queen Clemence de Hongrie

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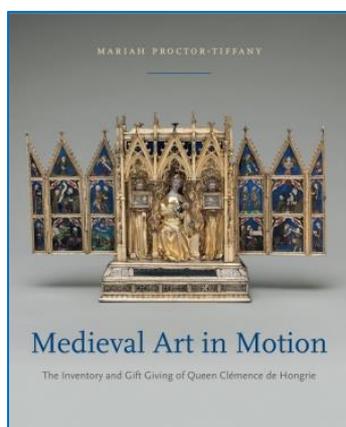
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Review Mariah Proctor-Tiffany, *Medieval Art in Motion. The Inventory and Gift Giving of Queen Clémence de Hongrie* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), 232 pp, 28 color/30 b&w illustrations/5 maps ; \$89.95 ; Hardcover Edition, ISBN: 978-0-271-08112-0

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Clémence de Hongrie (1293-1328) is not the most famous of French queens. First, her husband Louis X, king of France died less than a year after their marriage in 1315, changing drastically her situation. Second, within the short space of her marriage, she failed to give a male heir to the crown, her son Jean I living only a few days. Finally, in contrast to other dowager queens in the 14th century, Clémence de Hongrie is not associated with any emblematic work of art, such as the Virgin reliquary of Jeanne d'Evreux. Moreover, her testament is quite brief compared with the extensive descriptions found for instance in that of Blanche de Navarre. However, the inventory made after her death (published in 1874 by Louis Douët-d'Arcq) is an exceptional document which records more than 700 items that were sold to different buyers. By focusing on this document, *Medieval Art in Motion*

is a worthy successor to Margaret Keane's *Material Culture and Queenship in 14th-Century France* (2016) which discussed Blanche de Navarre's possessions through her testament, contributing decisively to the history of French queenship.

In the first chapter, Mariah Proctor-Tiffany considers the lineage and dowager status of Clémence de Hongrie, who belonged to the Angevin branch of Capetians. Raised in Naples by her grandmother, Marie de Hongrie after the death of her parents, Clémence de Habsbourg and Charles Martel d'Anjou, Clémence de Hongrie had the responsibility of keeping the Angevin memory alive in the French Kingdom. Artistic patronage offered to her the perfect way to promote her lineage and demonstrates her agency. In 1326, she commissioned a funerary sculpture of her great-grandfather, Charles I d'Anjou, had conquered Naples and Sicily, for the church of the Jacobins in Paris. Proctor-Tiffany argues that the queen worked to commemorate her family "and to keep herself, again, in the public eye" by ordering the tomb effigy of her son Jean I, and an image showing her with her deceased husband and son for the chapel of Saint Louis (the brother of her great-grandfather) at the abbey of Saint-Denis. Having outlined the more familiar topic of the queen's patronage Proctor-Tiffany moves on, in Chapter 2, to explore the queen's possessions through her inventory.

This second chapter is very stimulating. It focuses on the posthumous inventory of Clémence de Hongrie, which also constituted the sale of queen's belongings for a total of 21,083 Parisian pounds. Thus, whereas the pages dedicated

to the mapping of non-Western materials such as ivory or precious stones is interesting, the process of the sale itself is even more fascinating. Proctor-Tiffany



Marble tomb effigy of Clémence de Hongrie, first third of the 14th century, Paris, Saint-Denis basilica. Photo: Geneva Kornbluth.

explores the human web hidden behind objects which are not only listed, but which were also appraised and sold to different buyers such as collectors, their representatives, and dealers. Artists were also involved in drawing up the inventory: famous goldsmiths, such as Simon de Lille who worked for kings Charles IV and Philippe de Valois, weighed and valued the objects. Furthermore, the executors ensured that buyers paid immediately for the objects chosen. This process was intended to maximise the chances that the queen's debts would be paid off after her death. Proctor-Tiffany shows that, whereas scholars have long noted that auctions existed as early as the 17th century, they also occurred during much earlier periods. She remarks that several lots were sold above their estimated value and that not even men who bought queen's belongings for King Philippe de Valois could avoid paying over the appraised price.

Chapter 3, which analyses the queen's possessions, is more descriptive and could have usefully come earlier in the book. But, among the gold crowns mounted with precious gems, ruby rings worth one thousand pounds, a reliquary of the True Cross, impressive *hanaps* and *salières*, or silk clothes demonstrating the royal identity of Clémence de Hongrie, Proctor-Tiffany cleverly highlights those fashionable objects that were in the queen's possession. The presence in the inventory of a *portepais* or a fork, which were new in France at this time, underlines Clémence's high rank. This rank is further indicated by her ownership of horses, an animal that, under the sumptuary laws of Clémence's father-in-law, King Philippe IV, could only be owned

by the nobility. Even though more than half of Clémence's belongings were metalwork objects, Chapter 4 focuses entirely on manuscripts. Since the pioneering article by Susan Groag Bell in 1982, devotional manuscripts are first and foremost associated with female material culture. Among the forty-four books in Clémence de Hongrie's library, Proctor-Tiffany considers the three books which are still extant to offer an overview of a queen's reading material at the beginning of the 14th century: the *Peterborough Psalter* offered to the queen by Pope John XXII and then bought by Philippe de Valois before being identified in the Charles V's library; an *Ovide Moralisé* commissioned by Clémence from the Fauvel Master and the oldest extant copy of the poem; and a compendium of different encyclopaedic texts, including the first known surviving French-language astronomical compilation.

The last three chapters examine the gift-giving of Clémence de Hongrie. With reference to existing literature, Proctor-Tiffany first points out the need for a queen like Clémence to appear as a charitable figure. She then treats the legacy of Clémence, demonstrating how she asserted her identity through the circulation of her belongings, such as the sculpture of her Angevin uncle Saint Louis of Toulouse that she bequeathed to Philippe de Valois to remind him to protect Naples. It is not only gifted and received objects which demonstrate the queen's participation in a European network of object exchange that are analysed, but also the staging of her donations. In 1318, to cure the sufferings of the population due to disease and a series of natural disasters, a nocturnal procession was organised through the streets of Paris for the offering of a new reliquary in silver-gilt to house the bones of Saint

Magloire. With other royal women, Clémence de Hongrie was involved in that event: she deposited an enamelled clasp and silk textiles on the altar of the church of Saint-Magloire. Through this public procession, Proctor-Tiffany analyses the demonstration of queen's piety and generosity and underlines another way for her to assure her financial protection by King Philippe V (at that time, she owed money to the Bardi banking family), who could then appreciate her social concern for the Parisian population.

Despite the disappearance of the majority of the queen's possessions, Proctor-Tiffany takes great care to provide visual examples to complement her analyses; the book also contains multiple charts, maps and appendices (testament and inventory are reproduced) which add to the usefulness and richness of this publication. With *Medieval Art in Motion*, Mariah Proctor-Tiffany modifies scholarly approaches to aristocratic women by pointing out the economic components of their collections and the consequences of the circulation of luxurious objects. Her analysis demonstrates the importance, for female patrons, of the inventory, a document usually associated with men. 🐼