

INTERNATIONAL STUDY DAY ON THE MOSAN METALWORK FRAGMENTS FROM PÉTERMONOSTORA

20 NOVEMBER 2026

ROYAL MUSEUMS OF ART
AND HISTORY, BRUSSELS

CINQUANTENAIRE PARK 10




WYVERN
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE



ROYAL MUSEUMS OF ART AND HISTORY
KONINKLIJKE MUSEA VOOR KUNST EN GESCHIEDENIS
MUSÉES ROYAUX D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE

INTRODUCTION

The Royal Museums of Art and History are hosting, for six months, an exhibition featuring two large Mosan enamel plaques discovered during excavations at Pétermonostora (Hungary), a monastery destroyed during the Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1241. Presented to the public in the Treasure room, alongside emblematic Mosan works, these enamelled fragments regain their full historical and artistic significance. Complementing the exhibition, a study day bringing together international scholars and specialists will be devoted to this extraordinary discovery. The event will provide an opportunity to clarify the place of these enamels within Mosan metalwork, to present a range of previously unpublished findings, and to share a wealth of material data collected during laboratory examinations. This monographic approach to the Pétermonostora enamels will also enable scholars to reassess the question of the artistic, religious, and cultural relationships linking the Mosan region and Central Europe during the medieval period.



International Study Day on the Mosan Metalwork Fragments from Pétermonostora
Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels
10 Parc du Cinquantaire
20 November 2026

9:00 Welcome / Coffee

- 9:30 - 9:45 Welcome address by Director **Géraldine David** and presentation of the study day's programme by **Sophie Balace**, curator of the metal collection
- 9:45 - 10:30 **Sophie Balace** (Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire): *Les fragments orfèvres de Pétermonostora et l'art mosan. Mise en perspective*
- 10:30 - 11:15 **Bernát Rácz** (Central European University, Vienna) and **Szabolcs Rosta** (Katona József Museum of Kecskemét): *New Research on the Mosan Fragments from Pétermonostora*

Coffee break: 15 minutes

- 11:30 - 12:15 **Zita Szikszai, Zsófia Kertész** (ATOMKI, Laboratory for Heritage Science, Debrecen) and **Bernát Rácz**: *Technical Examination and Archaeometric Analysis of the Mosan Artefacts from Pétermonostora*

Conclusion of the morning and discussion: 15 minutes

Lunch & free discussion

Moderated by **Benoît Van den Bossche** (Université de Liège)

- 13:30 - 14:15 **Nicholas Paul Tayler** (University of Debrecen): *Networked Relations Between the Meuse Valley and Hungary in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*
- 14:15 - 15:00 Abbot Wiric of St. Trudo's Abbey and Pétermonostora:
Kevin Schmidt (Université de Liège): *Une place au Paradis ? Wiric de Stapel et la querelle du Sacerdoce et de l'Empire*
Willem Driesen (Trudonium – Historical and archeological society, Sint-Truiden): *Wie was Wiric?*
- 15:00 - 15:45 **Aleuna Macarenko** (Pächt-Archiv – Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Universität Wien): *Romanesque Manuscripts from Sint-Truiden and a View of the Pétermonostora Side Cover from the Perspective of Twelfth-Century Book Decoration*

Discussion. Free visit of the exhibition
Last exit: 17:00

Sophie Balace (Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire)

Les fragments orfèvres de Pétermonostora et l'art mosan. Mise en perspective

Découverte archéologique aussi surprenante que significative, les plaques émaillées de Pétermonostora font partie de ces artefacts porteurs d'histoires multiples.

Ultime vestige d'une orfèvrerie de type rhéno-mosan détruite lors du sac de l'abbaye par un raid Mongole, au XIIIe siècle, ces émaux sont intimement liés à l'histoire de la Hongrie médiévale et du monachisme en Europe centrale. Elles témoignent également du déploiement à grande échelle, à la faveur du canal monastique, de réseaux complexes d'échanges économiques, intellectuels, culturels et artistiques.

Cet exposé entend inaugurer cette journée d'études par un examen détaillé de ces plaques et des fragments orfèvres retrouvés sur le site. Leurs affinités avec le corpus mosan et septentrional seront précisées et illustrées. L'approche sera à la fois stylistique, iconographique, technique et typologique.

Bernát Rácz (Central European University, Vienna) and **Szabolcs Rosta** (Katona József Museum of Kecskemét)

New Research on the Mosan Fragments from Pétermonostora

The excavations of the monastic complex at Pétermonostora have, over the past sixteen years, revealed several artefacts connected to the Meuse Valley. Many of the archaeological finds have already been published in Hungarian and English, but as their number has increased and research has expanded, new results have continued to emerge – supported by a growing recognition of the importance of these objects.

This paper examines what the Pétermonostora plaques contribute to the study of Mosan art and how they represent a crucial point in the artistic development of the region. In addition to the results of traditional art-historical analysis, it presents the findings of industrial CT-scan examinations of the plaques, which revealed inscriptions beneath the enamel layer of the Washing of the Feet plaque. Among these complex inscriptions, a certain Wiricus is named, suggesting a potential connection to St Trudo's Abbey (Sint-Truiden), while additional inscriptions further refine this interpretation and reveal the content of the reliquary.

Zita Szikszai, Zsófia Kertész, Máté Szarka, Anikó Angyal, Boglárka Dönczö, Enikő Furu, Enikő Ivett Papp, Mihály Braun (ATOMKI, Laboratory for Heritage Science, Debrecen) and **Bernát Rácz** (Central European University, Vienna):

Technical Examination and Archaeometric Analysis of the Mosan Artefacts from Pétermonostora

This paper will discuss the technical features of the Reliquary of Pétermonostora and analyse the material composition of its fragments. After outlining the observable technical solutions and the particular placement of the buried inscriptions, it will turn to the archaeometric data. One of the main aims of the laboratory examination was to determine how the composition of the metal and enamel relates to enamels from the Meuse Valley, the Rhineland, the greater Limoges area and Hildesheim. Particle-induced X-ray (PIXE) and gamma-ray (PIGE) emission measurements were carried out at the external microbeam of the ATOMKI 2 MV Tandetron accelerator. The results of the PIXE–PIGE analysis will be compared with micro-XRF measurements, and the differences arising from the two approaches in the characterisation of enamels will be discussed. Finally, the lead isotope analysis of the side cover and of the Washing of the Feet plaque will also be presented.

Nicholas Paul Tayler (University of Debrecen)

Networked Relations Between the Meuse Valley and Hungary in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

This paper examines the networked relations linking the Meuse Valley and the Kingdom of Hungary in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, arguing that these connections were structurally embedded within transregional ecclesiastical and economic networks. Following the crisis of 1046, several bishops appointed to Hungary demonstrably came from the Meuse–Lotharingian region and were formed within its ecclesiastical, educational, and reformist milieu, particularly that centred on Liège. Their arrival presupposed forms of economic embeddedness: the presence of agriculturalists, craftsmen, and merchants whose expertise was necessary to sustain new episcopal and monastic institutions. The arrival of such settlers is explicitly documented in a later narrative source, which preserves retrospective testimony to earlier movements. The Meuse Valley functioned as a laboratory of institutional innovation, in which canonical life, reformist monasticism, and economically viable religious communities were developed and refined. Hungary emerges not as a passive recipient of imported models, but as an early and selective adopter, notably through canonical communities in the eleventh century and, later, through diverse monastic foundations.

Abbot Wiric of St. Trudo's Abbey and Pétermonostora, I

Kevin Schmidt (Université de Liège)

Une place au Paradis ? Wiric de Stapel et la querelle du Sacerdoce et de l'Empire

Au XII^e siècle, l'abbaye de Saint-Trond, placée sous la double tutelle des évêques de Metz et de Liège, ne constituait guère un centre politique d'envergure au-delà de la sphère locale. Certes, aux Xe-XI^e siècles, quelques figures notables émergèrent, et l'abbé Raoul de Saint-Trond occupa une position centrale durant la première moitié du XII^e siècle ; toutefois, l'établissement ne rivalisait en rien avec les monastères les plus prestigieux de son temps.

Dans ce contexte, rien ne laissait présager que Wiric de Stapel, issu d'une lignée aristocratique régionale, puisse modifier cet état de fait. Pourtant, l'histoire se nourrit de contingences, et Wiric sut en tirer parti. La tension croissante entre l'empereur Frédéric Barberousse et la papauté joua ici un rôle déterminant : en 1159, l'élection simultanée de deux papes – Victor IV, soutenu par les partisans de l'Empire, et Alexandre III, représentant la majorité favorable à l'autonomie pontificale – cristallisa la division. À la demande du prince-évêque Henri de Leez, Wiric participa en 1161 à la délégation liégeoise envoyée auprès de Victor IV, en signe de reconnaissance. Loin de demeurer un abbé anonyme, il attira l'attention du pontife et noua avec lui des liens de proximité remarquables.

Cette communication se propose d'analyser la nature singulière de cette relation entre Wiric de Stapel et Victor IV, à travers les sources narratives et les rares documents diplomatiques conservés. L'attachement manifeste de la communauté trudonnaire à un pape rapidement qualifié d'« antipape » – et dont le pontificat fut éphémère (Victor IV meurt en 1164) – soulève des interrogations, tant cet épisode contraste avec la rareté des contacts entre abbés et les plus hautes sphères du pouvoir. Quelles furent les conséquences, politiques ou autres, pour Saint-Trond ? C'est à cette question que nous tenterons d'apporter des éléments de réponse dans notre conclusion.

Abbot Wiric of St. Trudo's Abbey and Pétermonostora, II

Willem Driesen (Trudonium – Historical and archeological society, Sint-Truiden)

Wie was Wiric?

Als telg uit de lokale notabelenfamilie Van Stapel wist Wiric te midden regionale oorlogen de 12^{de}-eeuwse laat-romaanse bloeitijd te gebruiken om zijn benedictijnenabdij in Sint-Truiden te verfraaien. Een handicap aan zijn onderbeen en voet belette hem niet te reizen naar Noord-Italië om daar de favoriete paus van keizer Frederik Barbarossa te ontmoeten en er een goede indruk te maken. Toch lag zijn interesse in Sint-Truiden.

Zijn zeer waarschijnlijke biograaf en naaste medewerker Arnulf tekende op hoe Wiric als 33^{ste} abt van de Trudoabdij niet enkel comfort-aanpassingen deed, maar ook een grafkapel liet bouwen, die 'in paleizen in de verre omtrek zijns gelijke niet kent'. Het abdijpatrimonium werd verrijkt met verluchte handschriften, tapijten, reliekschrijnen, kruisen en zijden kapmantels. Wiric liet zichzelf in steen uithouwen, vergezeld van de tekst 'Heer, ik nam de luister van uw huis ter harte'. Vooral een polychroom stukje kerkvloer in 'opus sectile' met Romeins hergebruik vormt momenteel nog een herinnering aan deze abt-bouwheer.

Aleuna Macarenko (Pächt-Archiv – Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Universität Wien)

Romanesque Manuscripts from Sint-Truiden and a View of the Pétermonostora Side Cover from the Perspective of Twelfth-Century Book Decoration

The medieval manuscripts produced and decorated at the Abbey of Sint-Truiden, now largely preserved in the Heritage Collections of the ULiège Library, offer valuable insight into the reading interests and scribal practices of this Benedictine monastery. The first part of this paper examines the production of several Romanesque codices that formed the core of the Sint-Truiden library in the twelfth century, with particular attention to their material and decorative features, and considers what these reveal about the abbey's self-image and artistic ambitions during this period. The second part focuses on the Pétermonostora side cover – originally adorned with floral motifs, seemingly akin to the ornaments favoured by miniaturists in contemporary manuscripts – and situates it within broader trends in monastic book decoration and metalwork at the time of its creation.



Sophie Balace est conservatrice aux MRAH au sein du département des arts décoratifs européens. Elle y est en charge des collections métal (art mosan et dinanderie, étains, fers, argenterie et *preciosa*, instruments de précision, armes et armures). Médiéviste de formation, elle a consacré sa thèse de doctorat à l'historiographie de l'art mosan. En dehors de ses charges muséales, ses activités scientifiques portent essentiellement sur l'étude, la promotion et la protection du patrimoine religieux et mobilier.

Bernát Rácz is a PhD Candidate at the Central European University in Vienna. He has been researching the fragments connected to the Reliquary of Pétermonostora since 2022. The results of the first phase of his research were published in 2025 as a book, titled *The Twelfth-Century Mosan Reliquary of Pétermonostora*.

Szabolcs Rosta is the director of the Katona József Museum of Kecskemét and has been leading the excavations at Pétermonostora since 2010. His main research concerns the settlements and the ecclesiastic foundations of the Kiskunság region – including Pétermonostora – which was also the subject of his dissertation (2013, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest). He is the president of the Hungarian Association of Regional Museums.

HUN-REN ATOMKI's Laboratory for Heritage Science was founded to promote research in the field of cultural and natural heritage, in collaboration with national and international partners. Information on the structure and material composition of objects over a wide range of sizes is obtained through various means that allow material examination at the microscopic level. The applied methods include ion beam analytical techniques at the Tandatron accelerator, and analytical-imaging techniques such as digital 3D microscopy, micro-XRF analysis, electron microscopy and Raman microscopy.

Nicholas Paul Tayler is a doctoral candidate in medieval history at the University of Debrecen and a graduate of Central European University (Vienna). His research focuses on the Prince-Bishopric of Liège and Lotharingia as transregional hubs of ecclesiastical, artistic, and institutional exchange between Western Europe and Central Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He has published on Lotharingian-Hungarian connections and has presented his work internationally. His current work explores Mosan networks through the lenses of ecclesiastical reform, mobility, and material culture.

Kevin Schmidt est docteur en Histoire, Art & Archéologie de l'Université de Liège. Sa thèse défendue en 2021 portait sur l'implication politique de la communauté monastique de Saint-Trond dans un contexte de tensions récurrentes entre la papauté et les souverains germaniques (XIe-XIIIe siècles). Il travaille depuis 2022 au sein de l'administration fédérale belge.

Willem Driesen is een kunsthistoricus (1980 KU Leuven) en was stadsbibliothecaris in Sint-Truiden tot 2014. Hij publiceerde over bouwgeschiedenis en lokale historische biografieën.

Aleuna Macarenko obtained a PhD in Medieval Art History in 2022 from the University of Liège, with a dissertation devoted to Mosan manuscripts of the Floreffe-Averbode group. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Pächt-Archiv of the University of Vienna, within the project Handschriften mit Bildzyklen in der frühen Inkunabelzeit. Her research was distinguished in 2017 with the Prize of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Letters and Fine Arts of Belgium.

