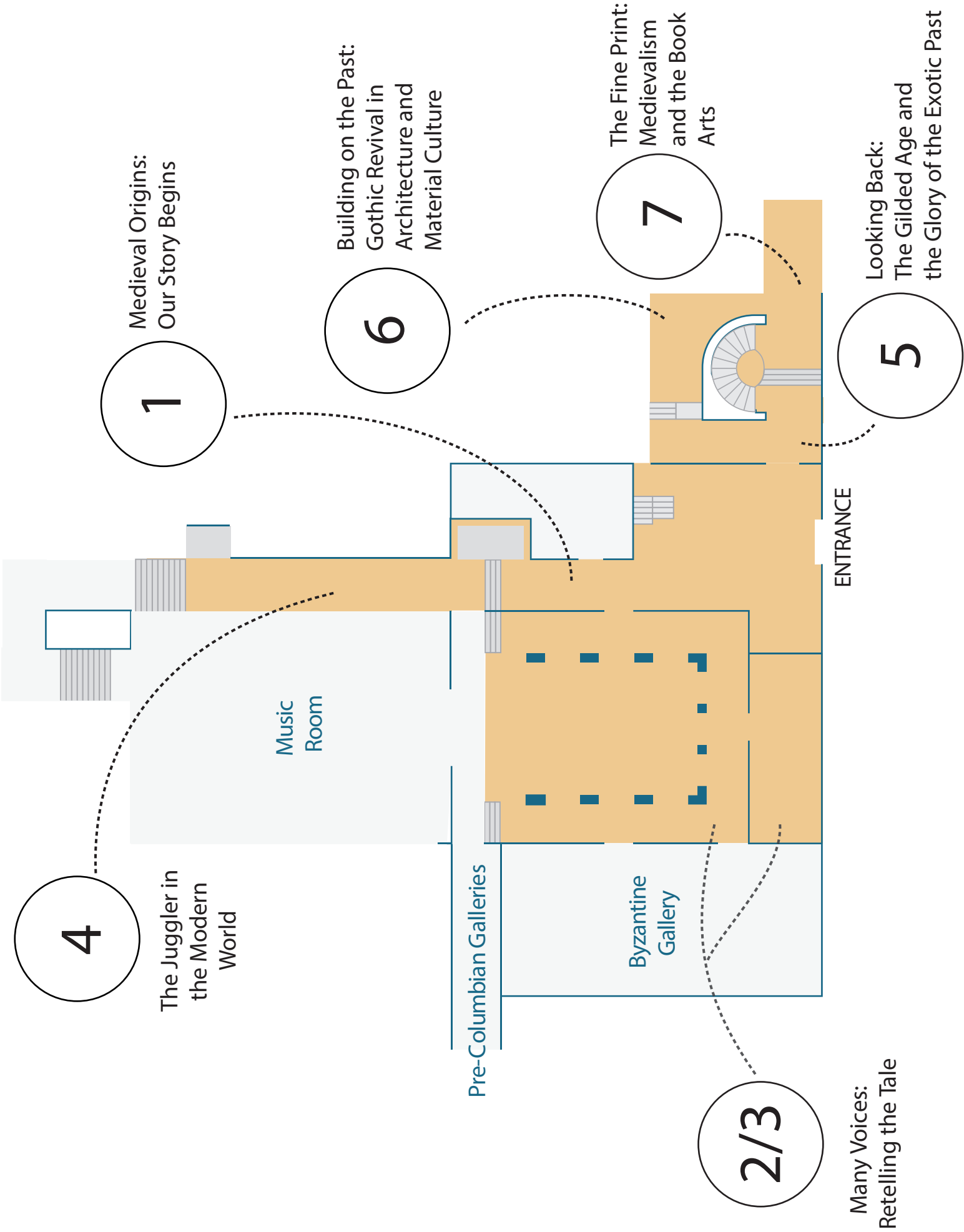


JUGGLING
THE MIDDLE AGES

Large Print Guide

Dumbarton Oaks
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JUGGLING THE MIDDLE AGES

The tale of *The Juggler of Notre Dame*, created in the Middle Ages and rediscovered in the modern era, offers a fascinating bridge between the past and present. Each retelling of this story — and the story of this story — offers fresh insights into questions of faith, love, art, giving, and our complicated relationship with the medieval world.

Atelier Miller

Stained glass studio started in Paris in 1985 by Jeffrey Miller (Princeton '78)

Collaboration with Paris-based artist/daughter Sarah Navasse (American University MFA '11) and Jeremy Bourdois, master craftsman (Sorbonne, Master's in Stained Glass Conservation '17)

Medieval Origins: The Story Begins

The Middle Ages ran, many would agree, from the 5th century through the 15th. Though often cast today as a “dark” age, the medieval period was also a time of deep faith and spirituality. Our tale begins in this context. The story of the juggler first appears in manuscripts of the 13th century, in two different forms: an anonymous French poem and a Latin exemplum, a short narrative for preachers to use in sermons. Briefly, the story is as follows:

A successful minstrel relinquishes his worldly possessions and enters a monastery but is unfamiliar with the liturgy. Frustrated by his inability to pray, he stumbles upon a statue of the Virgin Mary and venerates her the only way he knows — through performance. The other monks judge his elaborate

gymnastics routine to be profane, but when the performer completes his devotional feat, a miracle occurs: the Virgin comes to life and wipes away his sweat with a cloth. She subsequently grants him entry to Heaven for his devotion.

Portion of a Pilaster with an Acrobat (Lyon)

c. 1150-1170

Limestone

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters
Collection, 1947 (47.101.25)

A jongleur – a “juggler” – bends backwards in a gymnastic “bridge” as he performs, much like the entertainer in the illustration nearby. This limestone sculpture from 12th-century France formed the capital atop a pilaster, or decorative column.

Miniature from a Medieval Manuscript

Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arsenal 3516, fol.
127r

(13th Century) Miniature

Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

The only known illustration of the juggler story that survives from the Middle Ages, this manuscript miniature

accompanied an early version of the story written in French verse.

Vielle and Bow

20th Century

The juggler of the Middle Ages would likely have been multi-talented, sharing music and song in addition to physical performance. A vielle, the medieval forebear of the violin, appears in the medieval illustration of the juggler in this case.

Season of Giving: Lessons from the Juggler

The juggler's tale is inextricably linked to the holiday season. In part, this is because this time of year is also the season of giving, not just for Christians but among many faiths and traditions. As the juggler reminds us, sometimes the most precious presents can't be found in any gift shop. By giving of himself and offering the only thing he has to share, the juggler encourages us all to consider what it means to give.

What can you give?

What is your greatest gift?

What do you gain by giving?

"...When the others sang their psalms, [the entertainer] began to dance and leap for joy, and when asked why he did such things, replied, 'I see everyone serving God in

accord with his faculty, and for that reason I wish to celebrate God in accord with mine, as I know how.”

■ 13th-Century Latin Exemplum

Leon Guipon (American, 1872–1910)

“Lightly Down from the Dark Descends the Lady of Beauty” in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* (December 1907), p. 231

Then and Now: A Medieval Tale, Retold

The juggler's story would have resonated with medieval audiences. In the 13th century, the Virgin Mary was reaching her peak of popularity as a focus of religious devotion, and the idea that a layman ignorant of Latin and liturgy could achieve salvation would have been compelling to many.

By the 15th century, the story had vanished from written records. After being forgotten for five hundred years or so, it was brought to light again in the late 19th century. Its rediscovery then coincided with a new fascination with the Middle Ages. Many subsequent retellings of the juggler story celebrated its medieval heritage while reinterpreting the narrative through modern visual, literary, and performance idioms.

Linen Cloth

21st Century

Linen, made from the flax plant, was the most common material for towels and other such textiles in the Middle Ages.

Jacob Matham (Dutch, 1571-1631)

After Abraham Bloemaert (Netherlandish, c. 1566-1651)

Veronica with the Sudarium, 1605

Dutch, 17th century

Engraving

Sheet: 39.1 x 30.4 cm (15 3/8 x 11 15/16 in.)

Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Norman Leitman in honor of Robert M. Light

According to Catholic tradition, when Saint Veronica — her name suggests both “victory” and “true icon” — wiped Jesus’s blood and sweat with her sudarium (sweat-cloth), his face became imprinted on the fabric. Mary’s actions in the juggler story would have recalled this famous legend for medieval audiences.

Glyn Warren Philpot R.A. (British, 1884-1937)

Le Jongleur de Notre Dame (1928)

Oil on canvas

Collection of Ömer M. Koç

The composition of Glyn Warren Philpot's 1928 painting gestures to the story's origins, with the medieval-seeming stained-glass windows and French fleur-de-lis pattern in the floor. It even echoes aspects of the medieval manuscript illumination to your left, while conveying the narrative in a style evocative of the Pre-Raphaelites of the late 19th century.

Many Voices: Retelling the Tale

The Juggler of Notre Dame emerged from lonely hibernation in the late 19th century — and almost immediately attracted the spotlight. His story became the basis for short stories, operas, children’s books, movies, and art. Modern audiences found relevance in the medieval juggler’s struggle, and his tale was interpreted and reinterpreted many times over.

What gives a story like his staying power? What makes it stick? Although the juggler’s story was born in a particular historical and religious context, the themes and characters tapped into a deeper vein of human experience. Some audiences identified with the protagonist—a simple man giving of himself in the only way he knew how. Some connected with the object of his giving, the compassionate

and merciful Madonna. Others derived meaning and comfort from the transcendent power of humility or merely sought escape in the story's miraculous setting. The seemingly simple tale belied a complexity that allowed for constant reexamination and redefinition.

Jack of All Trades: Who Is the Juggler?

Although in English we often call him the “juggler” of Notre Dame, the protagonist of the story has at various times been portrayed as a tumbler, dancer, musician, gymnast, and jester. In the early French and Latin versions of the story, he is described by the related words “jongleur” and “ioculator,” which more accurately capture the character’s original conception. These words connote a performer of broader talents — what we might call today a wandering minstrel, whose repertoire would likely have included song, dance, and comedy, as well as feats of physical skill. Modern representations, however, often more narrowly reflect the contemporary understanding of the term “juggler.”

“The Jongleur of the middle ages was minstrel, juggler, tumbler, jester, dancer, in one. The best the translator can do is to give the word its literal translation, juggler,

although the name does not suggest to-day the character of those wandering men-of-all-arts whose programs foreshadowed the modern Vaudeville.”

- From the English score for Massenet’s opera *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, 1908

1. Bernard Maybeck (American, 1862–1957)

The Juggler of Notre Dame (1907)

Pencil and watercolor

Bernard Maybeck’s pencil-and-watercolor drawing shows the juggler lobbing balls in the air before the statue of the Madonna. A prominent Arts and Crafts architect, Maybeck also highlights the architectural setting of the story in the soaring vaults of a Gothic cathedral.

2. Leon Guipon (American, 1872-1910)

“Sprinkling the World with His Merriment” in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* (December 1907), p. 223

3. Gautier de Coincy (French, 1177–1236)

Bibliothèque royale Albert 1, MS 10747, fol. 3r (1260–1270)

Miniature

Image courtesy of Bibliothèque royale Albert I, Brussels.

Irene Sutton Wellington (British, 1904-1984)

Del tumber Nostre Dame (1942)

On loan from The Newberry Library (MS folio ZW 945 .W45).

In 1942, calligrapher Irene Sutton (later Wellington) and illustrator Sax R. Shaw crafted a manuscript of the juggler story with the text as written in the original medieval French. The volume is a late example of bookmaking inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, an artistic tradition founded on principles of simplicity and inspired by medieval and folk decoration.

"Our Lady" : The Dame in "Notre Dame"

The "Notre Dame" in *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* does not refer to the church in Paris of that name. In French it means literally "Our Lady," and denotes the Virgin Mary herself – the object of the jongleur's affection. Then, as today, Mary was frequently the focus of veneration.

Devotees honored her image and even ascribed miracles to her – a sudden apparition or a guiding hand in our lives.

Although many today are still just as moved by her presence as the juggler was, today the Virgin's shining visage may appear on a mug or bumper sticker as well as in a church chapel.

"He knew of no way to worship Our Lady except to juggle before her image. And so, when no one was looking, he did his few tricks and turned a somersault..."

- Poet Wallace Stevens, from a letter to his fiancée, 1908

1. “Cap y Pota” Doll

c. 1850-1900

Often used in processions or home altars, Santos (“Saints” in Spanish) cage dolls originated in Spain and proliferated during the 17th and 18th centuries. Spanish colonists brought this form of popular religious art, featuring Madonna mannequins of many sizes, to the Americas to help convert newly-colonized indigenous populations.

2. F. Didot (French)

"Miracle de la Vierge au Mont Saint Michel" (1880), Paris

The Virgin Mary performs a miracle in this 19th-century print based on a 15th-century grisaille: with angels around her, she rescues a woman who holds the newborn to whom she has given birth while crossing the bay near Mont-Saint-Michel in Normandy. At the bottom the mother's companions thank the Virgin.

3. "Minor Miracle: Our Lady of the Latte"

20th Century

Ceramic

This “miracle” mug treats its user to an “apparition” of the Virgin, who appears on the surface when hot liquid is poured in. The promotional material suggests: “Take it as a sign – caffeine is GOOD. Don’t you think every day should start with a Minor Miracle?”

4. Virgin Mary Miracle Mug

20th Century, Germany

Ceramic

"Holy Toast!" Miracle Bread Stamp

2014, New York

Food apparitions have experienced a heyday in the age of the Internet, but such images belong to an ancient tradition of similar showings. This product makes Mary “appear” on a piece of toast.

5. Small Madonna Statuette (1997)

This small, mass-produced Madonna was meant for adoration. The back of the box instructs users how to “experience divine intervention” through the Blessed Virgin Mary, “the ‘Patron Saint of Miracles™.’”

Painted Mary and Child Sculpture

Early 20th Century, St. Augustine Church,
New Mexico

From the late Middle Ages to the present, most Catholic parish churches have had Madonnas — effigies of the Virgin Mary as Mother with Jesus. As is often the case, here she is crowned as Queen of Heaven and mantled in a heavenly blue. Although American, this statue resembles ones that have long been common throughout Catholic Europe.

Beyond the Juggler: Related Legends and Tales

The Juggler of Notre Dame draws on universal themes, and the tale has many analogues across cultures. While the particulars of the various narratives differ, they all revolve around main characters who use their unique talents to worship God in nontraditional or unexpected ways. These analogous legends and tales tap into the principal elements of the juggler's story to explore the mysteries of faith, the association between talent and gift-giving, and the power of humility, especially in the common person's relationship to the elite.

1. "Drummer Boy Waterglobe"

(San Francisco Music Box Company, 1995-1998)

2. Little Drummer Boy

(Hallmark Keepsake Christmas Ornament, 1993)

3. King David Dancing

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vindobonensis
2554, fol. 44r (13th century)

Miniature

This intricate illustration from a 13th-century picture Bible depicts a story relayed in 2 Samuel. In the story, King David — much to the disdain of his wife Michal — is moved to dance before the Ark of the Covenant as it is carried to Jerusalem.

4. W. M. Otto, illustrator

“The Little Drummer Boy” (Famous Artists Studios,
20th century)

American composer Katherine Kennicott Davis wrote *The Little Drummer Boy* — originally called *The Carol of the Drum* — in 1941, reportedly based on a traditional Czech carol. The song tells the story of a young boy who witnesses the birth of Jesus but has no gift for him. The

boy plays his drum for the infant King and wins the approval of the Virgin Mary.

5. Richard Walters

The Simple Shepherd: A Baal Shem Tov Picture Story
(CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2008)

This story has been attributed to the Baal Shem Tov, an 18th-century Jewish religious leader and the founder of Hasidism. In the story, an illiterate shepherd manages to reach God through the sheer conviction of his wordless prayers. In a related version of the tale, a young boy is moved to play the flute on Yom Kippur and succeeds in opening the gates of heaven through the purity of his supplication.

6. *Fripounet*, no. 52

(December 28, 1983 - January 4, 1984)

Mireille Nègre, a French ballerina who became a nun, once proclaimed, “I dance for God.” This French children’s

weekly recounts Nègre's attempts to meld her two passions.

‘Tis the Season: Christmas and the Juggler

Although intended to embody core Christian values, the original juggler story was not specifically a Christmas tale. Yet in many modern retellings, the yuletide season has taken center stage. One version even ties the protagonist’s juggling balls to the tradition of decorating Christmas trees with round ornaments.

Both the theme of giving and the centrality of the Virgin Mary likely contributed to the story’s association with Christmas. The connection between the juggler and Noel may also relate to the nostalgia that has imbued the season since the 19th century. In holiday cards and elsewhere, the festivities of Christmas and New Year have often been epitomized by the supposedly jolly innocence of the Middle Ages.

1. Christmas Cards

Late 19th and Early 20th Century

The world changed quickly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Disconcerted, people embraced the idea of the Middle Ages as the good old days of innocence and simplicity. Christmas was especially a time of nostalgia for “Ye Olde” medieval good cheer, as evident in this collection of Christmas cards and postcards.

2. Kurt S. Adler

Christmas Jester with Instrument

Ceramic ornament

3. Articulated Juggler Ornament

(Hallmark Holiday Jester, 1984)

Plastic, with movable arms and legs

4. “Hallmark Gifts of Love: The Juggler”

(Hallmark Cards Inc., c. 1970)

This Christmas card not only tells the juggler's tale but even suggests that it explains the bulb shape of many Christmas ornaments. Supposedly they recall the balls the little boy juggled!

5. Marcy Ramsey, illustrator; Dick Dudley, paper engineer

The Little Juggler: A Dial Stockingstuffer Pop-Up

(Dial Books for Young Readers, Compass Productions, 1991), New York

This movable book ties the juggler story to Christmas by making the infant Jesus the object of the juggler's devotion. Mary is replaced by a female angel, who kisses the orphan juggler's forehead and allows him to make the monastery his home.

6. Thomas J. McCabe, author; Raymond Lufkin, illustrator

An Adaptation of the Story of Our Lady's Juggler

(Adeline and Raymond Lufkin, 1951), Tenafly, NJ

Dated "Christmas 1951," Thomas McCabe's small octavo volume sets the juggler's great performance before the Virgin on Christmas Eve.

French Gothic Revival Benches

Late 19th century

Oak

These are magic benches! They can transport you to medieval realms and faraway lands. To operate, simply sit down, get comfortable, open a book, and let your imagination run free.

Gothic revival furniture like this imitates Gothic architecture, with pointed arches, clover-like ornaments, and features similar to gargoyles.

**Arman [Armand Pierre Fernandez, Armand P. Arman]
(French-American, (1928-2005))**

Jongleur de Notre Dame (1994)

Sliced antique statue, lamps, bronze

By combining an antique-style bronze statue with modern lamp fixtures, the French-born American artist Arman created what he called “transculpture” — a blending of found objects with a dismembered replica of classical statuary. The work reflects the place of the juggler in the late 20th-century world: at once antique and modern, light-hearted and thoughtful.

Silver Screen: The Juggler on Film

The retelling of the Juggler story on film allowed the protagonist to perform his incredible feats for both Mary and movie audiences. Here we feature R. O. Blechman's 1957 animated adaptation along with clips from the Fred Waring show, which included a live-action retelling of the juggler story in its Christmas specials from 1950 through 1953. Other entertainers also adapted the story for the screen. Charlie Chaplin acted out a skit for friends based on the story in 1933, but ultimately decided against filming it. In 1959, versions of the juggler story played on television screens in France, Canada, and the United States.

Portrait of Fred Waring (1900-1984)

General Electric Advertisement in Life

(April 23, 1951), p. 141

Fred Waring was well known as a musician, conductor, and television personality, as well as the creator of the world's first electric blender — the aptly named Waring Blender.

Tony Curtis as the Juggler (1960)

In 1960, Tony Curtis (1925-2010) played the title role of “The Young Juggler” in an episode of the Ford *Startime* television show.

R. O. Blechman [Oscar Robert Blechman]

(American, b. 1930)

The Juggler of Our Lady: A Medieval Legend, 1st ed.
(Henry Holt and Company, 1953), New York

R. O. Blechman [Oscar Robert Blechman]

(American, b. 1930), author; Anne Krief, translator

*Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame: Une légende médiévale
réadaptée* [French] (Gallimard Jeunesse, 2002), Paris

Written during the height of the Cold War and
McCarthyism, Blechman's proto-graphic novel poses
questions about the function of art within a mob mentality.
Blechman wrote: "I hope people won't be fooled by the
medieval setting. Cantalbert [the Juggler] is strictly a
modern man."

R. O. Blechman [Oscar Robert Blechman]

(American, b. 1930)

“It’s a Miracle!” (1996)

Lithograph

Christmas sales have an outsized effect on the book market and book creation in the US. Though Jewish, Blechman has focused on the holiday not only in *The Juggler of Our Lady* but also in *The Life of Saint Nicholas*, with which this lithograph is associated.

Step into the Story: The Juggler is You

One appeal of the juggler's story lies in the main character's innocence, humility, and vulnerability. We can see ourselves in his shoes—a fish out of water, striving for authentic connection, drawing on the unique qualities that make him different and special.

Now is your chance to step into the story. As you pose for a picture as the hero of the tale, take a moment to imagine yourself as the juggler. What does it feel like to give so fully of yourself? How would you express yourself if you were really in his place? What gifts or talents would you share?

**Left: Adapted from illustration by Helena Olofsson
(Swedish, b. 1957)**

Gycklarpojken [Swedish] (Rabén & Sjögren Bokförlag, 2000), Stockholm

What kind of Juggler are you?

Silly? Serious? Sweet?

#JugglingTheMiddleAges

Facebook: @doaksDC

Instagram: @dumbartonoaks

Twitter: @DumbartonOaks

An Offering of Appreciation: From the Director of Dumbarton Oaks

“Juggling the Middle Ages” exists through the generosity of many entities and individuals. Creators, from the nameless poet of the early thirteenth century through the stained-glass artists of 2018, devised the texts, images, and music that keep the story alive. Robert and Mildred Bliss donated the buildings, grounds, and funds that since 1940 have enabled Harvard University to provide programs of advanced research and public access in the Nation’s Capital for the humanities and arts. Museums, libraries, and private owners have granted loans that give the show its breadth and variety. Embassies and cultural organizations have joined to promote events and activities. The staff of Dumbarton Oaks, with recognition of the Museum teams and the Harvard Humanities and Postgraduate Fellows, have joined with outside firms to devise the exhibition, publications, and products that support the installation.

To one and all I extend my warmest gratitude.

— Jan M. Ziolkowski

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Barbara Cooney Porter Royalty Trust

DC Public Library

Tomie dePaola

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Kids Euro Festival 2018

Christian Kloc

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Child's Play: A Treasury of Children's Books

It's no small wonder that the juggler's tale has most often been reconfigured as a children's book. From its inception, the story was intended to be a didactic tool. It was originally included in a book of exempla — teaching lessons for medieval preachers. The story itself celebrates simplicity, humility, and generosity by zeroing in on its innocent and in some ways childlike hero. And it takes place in the Middle Ages, once considered a time of cultural innocence — when faith and belief were still possible. Modern-day children's-book writers and illustrators have reinterpreted the story in a wide variety of contexts, languages, and illustration styles.

“Like the Our Lady’s Tumbler, I want to give you something. I am sending you that which in us is most simple and persistent—childhood.”

■ Countess Anna de Noailles to the actor and director Sacha Guitry, 1931

Maryline Poole Adams and Her “Littles”

The story of the juggler inspired tiny-book maker Maryline Poole Adams to produce a very small version of the tale. In what is called a “dos-à-dos binding,” she tells the story back-to-back in both French and English. The book fits within her broader oeuvre — which includes other tiny books, known as “littles,” and other medieval-inspired works featuring woodcut illustrations.

1. Maryline Poole Adams (American)

Matryoshka (Poole Press, 1993), Berkeley, CA

**2. William Butler Yeats (Irish, 1865-1939), author;
Maryline Poole Adams (American), illustrator and
bookbinder**

The Song of the Wandering Aengus (Poole Press, 1998),
Berkeley, CA

3. Maryline Poole Adams (American)

*Good King Wenceslas: A Celebration of the Carol by
Rev. J. M. Neale, 1853* (Poole Press, 1979), Berkeley, CA

4. Maryline Poole Adams (American)

Le Jongleur de Notre Dame / The Juggler of Notre Dame
(Poole Press, 2003), Berkeley, CA

In her “little” version of the juggler tale, Adams combines two storytelling approaches: she narrates the English story in the third person but tells the French story in the first person from the point of view of the child juggler.

**1. José María Souvirón (Spanish, 1904-1973), author;
Roser Bru (b. 1923), illustrator**

El Juglarcillo de la Virgen (Difusión, 1942), Santiago de Chile

An influential Spanish writer and professor, José María Souvirón lived during World War II and afterward in Chile. The title of his version means *The Little Juggler of the Virgin*.

Finding Inspiration: Barbara Cooney

Inspiration comes from many sources. In the introduction to her 1961 children's book *The Little Juggler*, Barbara Cooney explains that she was inspired not only by the medieval illuminated manuscript, but also by a 1942 adaptation by the Spaniard José María Souviron and a radio broadcast from the 1940s.

2. Barbara Cooney (American, 1917-2000)

The Little Juggler, 2nd ed. (Hastings House, 1982), New York

**3. Barbara Cooney (American, 1917-2000), author;
Yi Mi-Rim, translator**

꼬마 꼭예사 [*Kkoma Gog-yesa*, Korean] (Benedict Press, 1987), Waegwan

Barbara Cooney's *Little Juggler* was one of many versions of the juggler story translated into multiple languages, including French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Danish, Russian, Japanese, and Korean (shown here).

4. Maryline Poole Adams (American)

Matryoshka (Poole Press, 1993), Berkeley, CA

5. Maryline Poole Adams (American)

The Song of the Wandering Aengus (Poole Press, 1998), Berkeley, CA

Violet Moore Higgins

Violet Moore Higgins was the first to turn the Juggler into a children's story, casting the protagonist as a young invalid in her 1917 children's book *The Little Juggler*. Her adaptation's brief and intense popularity is attested by the multiple versions that appeared that year — the penultimate year of World War I.

6. Violet Moore Higgins (American, 1886-1967), author and illustrator

The Little Juggler, and Other French Tales Retold
(Whitman Publishing Co., 1917), Racine, WI

7. Violet Moore Higgins (American, 1886-1967), author; Helen Chamberlin, illustrator

French Fairy Tales: The Little Juggler, The Wooden Shoe, and The Noel Candle (Whitman Publishing Company, 1917), Racine, WI

8. Maryline Poole Adams (American)

Good King Wenceslas: A Celebration of the Carol by
Rev. J. M. Neale, 1853 (Poole Press, 1979), Berkeley, CA

9. Maryline Poole Adams (American)

Le Jongleur de Notre Dame / The Juggler of Notre Dame
(Poole Press, 2003), Berkeley, CA

Tomie dePaola

For his book *The Clown of God*, American children's book author-and-illustrator Tomie dePaola drew from his own experiences with monastic life. While dePaola is known for the more than 200 children's books he has produced, he is also responsible for many examples of fine art, including a series of frescoes at the Abbey Church of Our Lady of Glastonbury in Hingham, Massachusetts.

1. Tomie dePaola [Thomas Anthony de Paola] (American, b. 1934)

The Clown of God (Harcourt Brace & Company, 1978),
San Diego

2. Tomie dePaola (American, b. 1934)

Watercolor illustrations from *The Clown of God*
(San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1978).
On loan from the Children's Literature Research
Collections, University of Minnesota Libraries,
Minneapolis.

Max Bolliger and Štěpán Zavřel

Swiss author Max Bolliger wrote over fifty books for children and young adults, including many with Biblical or Christian themes. His take on the juggler story, *Jakob der Gaukler*, featured illustrations by Czech-born artist Štěpán Zavřel and was translated into multiple languages.

1. Max Bolliger (Swiss, 1929-2013), author; Štěpán Zavřel (Czech, 1932-1999), illustrator

Jakob der Gaukler: Nach einer französischen Legende aus dem 13. Jahrhundert [German] (Bohem Press, 1991), Zurich

2. Max Bolliger (Swiss, 1929-2013), author; Štěpán Zavřel (Czech, 1932-1999), illustrator; Miyahara Tako, translator

しずかな きせき [*Shizukana Kiseki*, Japanese]
(Shinkansen, 1998), Tokyo

3. Štěpán Zavřel (Czech, 1932-1999)

Illustrations for *Jakob der Gaukler* by Max Bolliger (Zurich: Bohem Press, 1991)

Mixed media including watercolor, woodcut, tempera, silk screen printing, and papercut

© Collezione Museo Artistico Štěpán Zavřel – Spazio Brazzà, Moruzzo (Ud). Habitat Brazzà Srl – All rights reserved.

Štěpán Zavřel was a prolific painter and graphic artist and an influential children's book illustrator. His illustrations for Max Bolliger's *Jakob der Gaukler* incorporate a range of media, from linoblock and woodcut to watercolor.

Medieval Influence: Olofsson, Metternich, and Bonetto

Helena Olofsson's Swedish adaptation of the juggler story for children mimics a medieval manuscript with illuminations. Both Tatiana von Metternich's *Der Gaukler der Jungfrau Maria* and Giovanni Bonetto's *Un Giocoliere in Paradiso* also were influenced by medieval manuscripts. Notice the illuminated letters, flourishes, and medieval-style costumes in their work.

1. Helena Olofsson (Swedish, b. 1957)

Gycklarpojken [Swedish] (Rabén & Sjögren Bokförlag, 2000), Stockholm

Olofsson describes her book as a parable about the power of art. She writes:

“The jester/artist/child is creativity. Once creativity enters a system the system will change since creativity is the opposite to status quo. So when the

abbot is a bit off-guard and lets the jester into the monastery there is a true revolution, a miracle- in my version- the doors of the isolated monastery are opened; there is now empathy with the poor and vulnerable, there is charity, there is joy.”

2. Giovanni Bonetto (Italian), author; Gino Gavioli (Italian), illustrator

Un Giocoliere in Paradiso [Italian], 2nd ed. (Edizione Paoline, 1974), Rome

Founded in 1914, the Society of Saint Paul aims to spread Catholic doctrine through a range of media. Giovanni Bonetto’s retelling of the juggler story is just one iteration of many (including a Walt Disney film from 1984) through which the society seeks to share the teachings of Christ.

3. Giovanni Bonetto (Italian), author; Gino Gavioli (Italian), illustrator

Un saltimbanqui en el paraíso [Spanish] (1980; first ed. 1970), Rome

4. Helena Olofsson (Swedish, b. 1957)

Gycklarpojken [Swedish] (Rabén & Sjögren Bokförlag, 2000), Stockholm

5. Tatiana von Metternich (German [of Russian birth], 1915–2006)

Der Gaukler der Jungfrau Maria [German] (Modul Verlag, 1999), Wiesbaden

Tatiana von Metternich was born in 1915 as Russian Princess Tatiana Hilarionovna Vassiltchikova, but she and her family fled Russia after the 1919 Bolshevik October Revolution. Her adaptation of the juggler story is written in rhymed German couplets, illustrated with her own watercolors. The book emphasizes the value of giving gifts — even humble gifts — as a form of prayer.

A Modern Take: The Shannon Brothers

The adaptation of the juggler tale by Mark and David Shannon excises the Virgin Mary from the story altogether. Instead, an orphaned juggler entertains a statue of an angel, who then carries the boy away with her to heaven. The name of the protagonist, Péquelé, hints that the book follows a French version by the folklorist Henri Pourrat.

1. David Shannon (American, b. 1959)

Boy tumbling in front of monk, angel statue

Acrylic on illustration board from *The Acrobat and the Angel*.

Courtesy of David Shannon.

2. Mark Shannon (American, b. 1958), author; David Shannon (American, b. 1959), illustrator

The Acrobat and the Angel

(G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1999), New York

The Juggler in the Modern World: A Legend in Our Own Time

After the juggler story was rediscovered in the late 19th century, it became popularized against a backdrop of shifting political, cultural, and literary circumstances.

European nationalism, Gothic revivalism, global conflict, evolving religious norms, new technologies, and changing modes of expression all influenced the ways the story was told, who was telling it, and for what kinds of audiences.

As the story journeyed from Europe to the United States and around the world, it was refracted through a variety of media, from literature to theater, opera, dance, radio, television, and film. Though its core elements and lessons remained the same, the tale took on new meaning and significance in different contexts, its manner of retelling

often providing insight into particularities of time and place. Throughout the late 19th and most of the 20th century, the Juggler of Notre Dame became a screen onto which those who retold it projected their ideas, values, and visions.

The French Connection: Military Defeat and National Identity

After France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, many French citizens sought ways to rebuild their national identity and civic pride. Some looked to French history and literature from the Middle Ages as a basis for reconstructing the country's culture. French literary touchstones included the epic medieval poem *The Song of Roland* and the tale of the medieval French heroine Joan of Arc. *The Juggler of Notre Dame*, also based firmly in France's medieval tradition, would become a similarly potent symbol of the French cultural legacy.

“The poetry of the Middle Ages definitely offers genuine pleasures even to the most sensitive and cultured souls, provided that they do not refuse out of bias to accept them.”

■ Gaston Paris, 1899

Chifflart and V. Foulquier

(French), illustrators

In Leon Gautier, ed., *Chanson de Roland*, vol. 1 (Alfred Mame et Fils, 1872), Tours. Etching

Dating to the 11th century, *The Song of Roland* is a 4,000-line epic poem that tells the story of the Battle of Roncevaux Pass in 778, during the reign of Charlemagne.

“Strasbourg Cathedral” in *Harper’s Weekly* (November 19, 1870)

Strasbourg Cathedral towers over the smoldering ruins of the city during the Franco-Prussian War. Such great churches, felt to embody the French spirit, were rallying points. Mistreatment of them was tantamount to rape, and their miraculous survival was seen as a sign of the national will to survive.

Eugène Samuel Grasset

“Jeanne d’Arc” in *Les Maîtres de l’Affiche*, pl. 174 (1893)

Claiming divine inspiration, Joan of Arc was just 18 years old when she led French forces to victory over the English at Orléans. A year later, on May 30, 1431, she was burned at the stake for heresy.

Right: "Harper's War Map of France" in Harper's Weekly (December 17, 1870)

The French declared war on Prussia in July 1870. The conflict ended formally in May 1871 with a resounding Prussian victory, leading to German unification and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. This outcome helped set the stage for World Wars I and II—and for the French turn toward the Middle Ages in defining their national character.

Rediscovering the Juggler: Gaston Paris and Anatole France

The French research journal *Romania* published the first modern reprint of the medieval juggler poem in 1873. But it was not until 1888, when the leading French philologist Gaston Paris published a summary of the story in his history of medieval French literature, that the juggler's tale truly began to enjoy a renaissance. Paris's description inspired the renowned author (and future Nobel-winner) Anatole France to publish his own version of the story in the French daily *Le Gaulois* in 1890. France's retelling of *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* became the definitive version, regarded as if it were itself authentically medieval. It was subsequently republished widely and frequently illustrated by leading artists of the day.

“If it had not been for scholars working themselves blind copying and collating manuscripts, how many poems would be unavailable...and how many others full of lines

that made no sense? ...Only the scholar with his unselfish courage to read the unreadable will retrieve the rare prize.”

- W. H. Auden, *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays*, 1962

Portrait of Gaston Paris

In Joseph Bédier and Mario Roques (ed.), *Bibliographie des Travaux de Gaston Paris* [French] (Librairie Émile Bouillon, 1904), Paris

Photograph

A preeminent French medievalist and member of the Parisian elite, Gaston Paris (1839-1903) was admired internationally for his writings on the literature of the Middle Ages. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1901, 1902, and 1903.

Jean-Baptiste Guth, illustrator

“Anatole France – The Greatest Living Frenchman” in *Vanity Fair Supplement* (August 11, 1909)

Anatole France was the pseudonym of French author Jacques Anatole Thibault (1844-1924). A prolific writer whose work spanned literary genres, France was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1921. His entire oeuvre was banned by the Roman Catholic Church in 1922.

Vicomte Emmanuel-Raymond de Borrelli (French, 1837-1906)

Le Jongleur [French] (Alphonse Lemerre, 1892), Paris

Vicomte Raymond de Borrelli won the 1889-1891 poetry prize of the Académie française for his poem *Le Jongleur*. Borrelli's poem — especially his casting of the hero as a juggler — influenced Anatole France's retelling, though France admitted only to being inspired by Gaston Paris' version.

1. Gaston Paris (French, 1839-1903)

Aventures merveilleuses de Huon de Bordeaux, pair de France, et de la belle Esclarmonde, ainsi que du petit roi de féerie Auberon [French] (Maison Didot, 1898), Paris

19th-century Paris was a bibliopolis — a place where beautiful books dominated culture as never before or since. This work, translated into modern French by Gaston Paris, features letter design by Eugène Grasset, the father of Art Nouveau. The original medieval French text also formed the basis for Massenet's opera *Esclarmonde*.

2. Gaston Paris (French, 1839-1903)

Littérature française au Moyen Âge, 2nd ed. [French] (Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1890), Paris

In this concise history of medieval French literature, Gaston Paris included a very brief summary of the juggler tale that Anatole France later expanded into a short story.

**3. Anatole France [Jacques-Anatole-François Thibault]
(French, 1844-1924)**

L'Etui de nacre [French] (Calmann-Lévy, 1923)

This compendium of short stories by Anatole France includes his influential take on the juggler tale, titled “Le Jongleur de Notre Dame.”

Translation and Migration: The Story Spreads

As the story of the juggler made its way out of France and traveled the globe, it tapped into a late 19th-century fascination with medievalism and Gothicism, especially in the United States. In part, this turn toward the past was a reaction to the rapid evolution of the then-contemporary modern world. Bostonians, in particular, were drawn to medieval revivals during this period, and the city's vibrant publishing industry produced numerous medieval-inspired works — including several editions of the *Juggler of Notre Dame*. Historian Henry Adams, at Harvard from 1870 to 1877, included a translation of the tale in his magnum opus *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*.

“If you’ve not read ‘Our Lady’s Tumbler’ — it is rich, it is a nonesuch. I read it to my mother in bed two months ago.”

- D. H. Lawrence on the Juggler of Notre Dame, December 23, 1910

Isabel Butler (American, 1869-1935), translator

The Song of Roland (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1906),
Cambridge, MA

This edition of Isabel Butler's translation of *The Song of Roland* was a high point of American publishing at the turn of the 20th century. It was designed by the renowned American typographer Bruce Rogers.

William Notman

"Henry Brooks Adams" (c. 1885)

Harvard University Archives, W384291_1

Photograph

A descendant of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, Henry Brooks Adams (1838-1918) was an influential American writer, historian, and intellectual. Adams' best-known works include *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* and his Pulitzer Prize-winning autobiography, *The Education of Henry Adams*.

1. Isabel Butler (American, 1869-1935), translator

Our Lady's Tumbler: A Tale of Mediaeval France

(Copeland and Day, 1898), Boston

Lifelong Bostonian Isabel Butler first published her influential translation of the juggler story while she was still taking undergraduate courses at Radcliffe College. Its success kick-started her career as a translator of medieval French texts.

2. Edward S. Payson, (American, 1842-1932)

La Akrobato de Nia Sinjorino: Milcentjara Legendo

[Esperanto] (Esperantista Asocio de Norda Ameriko, 1919)

Edward Payson was a piano manufacturer and an enthusiast of Esperanto — an international language invented to help bridge linguistic, political, and religious divides. Translations of literary classics into Esperanto proliferated during the early twentieth century.

3. Henry Adams (American, 1838-1918)

Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), Boston

Framed vaguely as a travel-guide through the cathedrals of France, Henry Adams' *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* is an idiosyncratic meditation on the culture of the Middle Ages. Adams published the book privately in 1904 before the architect Ralph Adams Cram persuaded him to make it more widely available in 1913.

4. Ralph Adams Cram (American, 1863-1942)

Church Building: A Study of the Principles of Architecture in their Relation to the Church, 3rd ed. (Marshall Jones Company, 1924), Boston

American architect Ralph Adams Cram was drawn to the Middle Ages, designing not only Gothic churches but also Collegiate Gothic buildings for educational institutions across the country. His book, *Church Building*, embraced medievalism in both its content and design.

The Juggler at War: Publications of World War II

The juggler's image as a successful underdog has made his story especially resonant in times of trouble. During World War II, he became a symbol of resistance and righteous nonconformity. In France, the identity of the juggler was even adopted as a codename for spies. In the Netherlands, both Jewish and non-Jewish translators adapted the story to reflect their own experiences of hiding and persecution. In Germany, French culture (including the juggler story) was suppressed for being "dissident" and "decadent" — but after the war the story was embraced once again. Although some may have seen the medieval setting as a welcome retreat from ghastly recent events, at least one postwar German adaptation continued to propagate pernicious Nazi ideologies.

Arnold Robert Verduin (American, 1905-1960)

"Handsprings and Somersaults" in *Journal of the National Education Association* (November 1945), p. 151

The story resonated on both sides of the Atlantic during World War II. This version, published not long after the forced internment of Japanese-Americans ended, features an American gradeschooler of Japanese descent who volunteers to take on the role of the juggler in a class performance after her classmate is injured. Her teacher praises her for demonstrating the "finest American spirit."

A statue of the Virgin stands in the ruins of Le Gleize Church, Belgium, after the Battle of the Bulge.

Thomas Carr Howe Papers (1945)

Photograph

Image courtesy of the Archives of American Art,
Washington, D.C.

**1. Victor E. van Vriesland (Dutch, 1892-1974),
translator; Bob Buys, illustrator**

De Potsenmaker van Onze Lieve Vrouwe [Dutch], vol. 44
of *De Uilenreeks* (Bigot & van Rossum N. V., 1941),
Amsterdam

Vriesland's translation was the first Dutch version based on the medieval French rather than on a 20th-century German translation. This image of the juggler descending underground parallels the Jewish author's descent into hiding during the occupation.

**2. Henry Bordeaux (French, 1870-1963), author;
Antonia White, translator**

A Pathway to Heaven (Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1952), New
York

A traditionalist Catholic, prominent French author Henry Bordeaux supported the government of Vichy France during the war. His postwar novel turns the juggler's story of art-making-as-worship into one that pits art and religion

against each other. The novel culminates with the protagonist choosing the priesthood over painting and offering his destroyed canvases to the Madonna.

3. F. J. Weinrich [Franz Johannes Weinrich] (German, 1897-1978), author; Wies Moens (Belgian, 1898-1982), translator

De Danser van Onze Lieve Vrouw: Een klein Mirakelspel [Dutch] (De Sikkel, 1930), Antwerp

The first Dutch translation of this German play about the juggler was undertaken by Wies Moens, who would later participate in the founding of the Flemish Nazi party.

4. Frank Valkenier [Frans van der Ven] (Dutch, 1907-1999)

De Tuimelaar van Onze Lieve Vrouw [Dutch] (1944)

This edition of the juggler is one of many examples of “clandestine literature” published in Nazi-occupied Netherlands. “Frank Valkenier” was a pseudonym for

Frans van der Ven, who translated the tale into Dutch rhymes when he was at Haaren, an SS-run prison and interrogation camp. He notes that this volume, “black with a little bit of red,” was published “as a remembrance of the stay there.” The Cross of Lorraine on the cover symbolizes the resistance.

5. Jean-Paul Luthringer

Commemorative Medallion of Gilbert Renault (Colonel Rémy), in the French Resistance from ca. 1940–1944
1988

Gilbert Renault, known as Colonel Rémy, was a secret agent in the French underground. One of his many codenames was “The Juggler of Notre Dame.”

6. R. Elmayer von Vestenbrugg (Austrian, 1881-1970)

Vom Tod ins Leben: Ein Buch von Liebe, Tod und Jenseits [German] (Drei Eichen Verlag Hermann Kissener, 1962), Munich

Austrian Rudolf Elmayer von Vestenbrugg was a storm trooper in Nazi Germany who later adapted the story of the juggler as one of three sections of his novel, *From Death into Life: A Book of Love, Death, and the Hereafter*. In the book, the juggler and several of his loved ones meet a tragic end. The cover is marked with a Hagal rune, a symbol associated with Nazism.

The Juggler Sings: Massenet's Opera

The beginning of the 20th century was a golden age for opera. French composer Jules Massenet, in particular, drew inspiration for his operas from medieval themes, stories, and aesthetics. In 1902, he premiered *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, based on the original juggler story and Anatole France's adaptation. The opera became a hit worldwide and was translated into many languages. A key scene was even illustrated on a postage stamp. The opera's overwhelming success in the U.S. owed largely to the renown of the player in the title role – the famed soprano Mary Garden.

Jules Massenet (French, 1842-1912), composer;

Maurice Léna (French, 1859-1928), librettist

Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame: Miracle en Trois Actes

[French] (Heugel et Cie., 1906), Paris

Massenet and librettist Maurice Léna were both drawn to medieval themes in their work. The cover page for the *Jongleur's* vocal score, designed by an unidentified artist, similarly reflects a strong influence of medieval art and iconography.

“Mr. Lucien Fugère: Boniface dans ‘Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame’” in *La Revue Théâtrale, Nouvelle Série* no. 13

Electric lights were still new to stagecraft when Massenet's opera opened in Paris in 1904. The production used novel electric lighting effects to create a bright halo that moved from the head of the Virgin to that of the jongleur.

Aimé Dupont

Mary Garden as Jean the Juggler (1909)

Photograph

Throughout her operatic career, Mary Garden played a variety of leading roles including Salome, Aphrodite,

Cleopatra, and the juggler in Massenet's *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*. Garden was an international sensation, and her notoriety was harnessed to promote perfume and other products. In *Le Jongleur*, Garden sang the tenor lead as a soprano — and despite Massenet's initial reservations (and indignation), Garden's star power helped ensure the opera's success.

Sem (French, 1863-1934)

“Portrait of Jules Massenet” in *Célébrités contemporaines et la bénédictine* (Devambes)

French caricaturist Sem (pseudonym for Georges Goursat) produced this portrait of Jules Massenet as part of an advertising campaign for Bénédictine liqueur. The quote reads: “I am sure that the Benedictines in the days of the ‘Jongleur de Notre Dame’ would drink the exquisite Bénédictine liqueur as we happily have it even today.”

Making Waves:

The Juggler on the Radio

As technology changed, the juggler changed with it. With the growing popularity of radio, the tale of the juggler moved from page and stage to airwaves. The story was adapted for the medium as both narration and music, often performed by prominent on-air personalities of the day. Because these programs frequently aired in December and incorporated yuletide themes, these broadcasts helped solidify the juggler's connection to Christmas. Transmissions also showcased a dynamic interplay among media. Printed versions of the story inspired radio shows, which were in turn published as printed scripts. Radio also introduced the story to new audiences, including the writers Barbara Cooney and Tomie de Paola, who would later craft their own versions of the tale.

Left: Cathedral Radio, Stewart Warner R-102-C, 1930s

To make the new technology seem less threatening and more beautiful, some electronics producers gave their early radios a medievalized, Gothic look. This radio plays excerpts from popular recordings of the juggler story dating to the Golden Age of Radio.

John Nesbitt

A Christmas Gift: The Story of the Juggler of Our Lady, Narration with Choir (Decca Records, no. 357, 23M Personality Series)
Record Album

A luminary in the Golden Age of Radio, John Booth Nesbitt aired his radio play of the juggler story for the first time in December 1938. Thousands of listeners wrote in requesting copies of the script. Though Nesbitt claimed to base his work on an original translation of the medieval tale, details in the script suggest that he was strongly influenced by the retellings of Anatole France and Jules Massenet.

Juggling Performance: New Modes of Expression

Over the course of the 20th century, artists and performers continued to make the story of the juggler their own, recasting and reconfiguring it in new and sometimes experimental forms of expression.

Chilean composer Juan Orrego-Salas, for example, adapted the story into a musical composition accompanied by a ballet. Ulysses Kay, a prominent African-American composer, turned the juggler into a modern operatic production. W. H. Auden's "The Ballad of Barnaby" was set to music for performance by schoolchildren. Peter Maxwell Davies composed a one-act theater piece, which called for a mime who could juggle as one of the performers.

Peter Maxwell Davies (British, 1934-2016)

Le Jongleur de Notre Dame: A Masque for Mime, Baritone, Chamber Ensemble and Children's Band
(Chester Music, 1978), London

Peter Maxwell-Davies' 1978 one-act *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* called for a juggling mime, a children's band, a baritone, and a chamber ensemble consisting of a flutist, clarinetist, and percussionist.

Juan Orrego-Salas (Chilean, b. 1919)

"The Tumbler's Prayer = El saltimbanqui: A Ballet (Opus 48) based on the Twelfth-Century Legend of 'Our Lady's Tumbler'"

Photograph

In 1953, textile artist Milly Johnson commissioned Juan Orrego-Salas to compose an adaptation of the juggler story in memory of her son, who had been killed years before in a grisly encounter with a wolf. These images are from a 1961 performance in Santiago, Chile.

1. *Ebony*, vol. 28, no. 4, (Johnson Publishing Co., February 1973), Chicago

Composer Ulysses Kay once wrote in a letter: “Opera is not the medium for our time.” Nevertheless, Kay penned an operatic adaptation of the juggler story in 1956. This article from the monthly magazine *Ebony* celebrates a 1973 performance of Kay’s work at Opera/South in Jackson, Mississippi, noting “the diversity of black talent” onstage.

**2. W. H. Auden (English-American, 1907-1973), lyrics;
Wykeham Rise School (Washington, CT), music;
Charles Turner, realization**

The Ballad of Barnaby (G. Schirmer, Inc., 1970), New York

**W. H. Auden (English-American, 1907-1973), author;
Edward Gorey (American, 1925-2000), illustrator**
The Ballad of Barnaby (1972)

English-American poet W. H. Auden wrote the lyrics for a 45-minute opera based on the juggler story — with melodies composed by a group of eleven high-school students at Wykeham Rise School in Connecticut. The students performed it for the first time in 1969.

The Next Chapter: The Once and Future Juggler

Many 20th-century audiences found meaning in the juggler's story. But by the dawn of the 21st century, the Juggler of Our Lady had fallen out of the spotlight. After decades of overexposure, audiences may have become uncomfortable with its overt religiosity or jaded with its seemingly naïve innocence.

Then again, the world of the juggler may have been displaced by a different vision of the Middle Ages. While the juggler's story is rarely heard today, the medieval period is alive and well — at Renaissance fairs, in video games, and on television. But the Middle Ages of *Game of Thrones* does not reflect the juggler's spirit of bright faith and devotion. Instead, it's a cosmos often governed by darkness and gloom.

Mark Shannon (American, b. 1958), author; David Shannon (American, b. 1959), illustrator

The Acrobat and the Angel (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1999),
New York

The Shannon brothers' 1999 version of the juggler tale, *The Acrobat and the Angel*, takes Mary out of the story altogether, changing the nature of its potential appeal to a modern audience.

Jack Gleeson as Joffrey in Game of Thrones (2011)

Production Still

Contributor: AF archive / Alamy Stock Photo.

Production Companies: Television 360, Grok! Television, Generator Entertainment, Startling Television, Bighead Littlehead.

Knights in Combat at a Renaissance Fair

Photograph

Image courtesy of [Freemages.com](https://www.freemages.com/)/Jorge Vincente.

Looking Back: The Gilded Age and the Glory of the Exotic Past

The re-emergence and renewed popularity of the medieval juggler story in the late 19th and early 20th centuries signaled a broader feature of the time: namely, the glorification of the past. From fine arts to music and architecture, the culture of the period often looked backward, even as society and technology raced toward a brave new world.

For serious art collectors like Robert and Mildred Bliss, the founders of Dumbarton Oaks, this meant a fascination with what had been called the “exotic other.” Medieval, Byzantine, and Pre-Columbian art represented an enticing long ago. The Blisses were globalists of their day who straddled the Gilded Age in the United States and the

Belle Époque in France, and their collecting habits mirrored other cultural trends, including the medievalizing and orientalizing operas of Massenet and others. The art, iconography, and literature of the Middle Ages — such as the Juggler of Notre Dame — found enthusiastic support in many circles.

Collecting the Past: Robert and Mildred Bliss

Rapid cultural development accompanied the industrial and economic boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the United States. American universities and museums sought excellence in the arts and humanities to match the nation's physical and financial resources.

In 1940, under the aegis of Harvard, Robert and Mildred Bliss established the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, which now houses their collections of Byzantine and Pre-Columbian art. Their commitment to the study of the past took shape alongside the trend that

elevated the Juggler of Notre Dame and other medieval works to popularity. Their desire to make Dumbarton Oaks an interdisciplinary “home of the Humanities” likewise reflected a respect for the same interplay between scholarship and the arts that enabled the juggler’s story to endure.

Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss

Harvard University Archives, Bliss Papers, HUGFP

76.74p, Box 10 (c. 1927)

Photograph

Robert and Mildred Bliss were married in 1908, and Robert’s work as a diplomat soon took them all over the world. The seven years they spent in Paris, from 1912 to 1919, influenced them profoundly as philanthropists and patrons of the arts.

Salon, Bliss Apartment, Paris

Harvard University Archives, Bliss Papers, HUGFP 76.74,

Box 4 (c. 1914)

The Virgin and Child statue in this case can be seen here on the mantle of the Blisses' Paris apartment.

Virgin and Child (French, Île-de-France)

Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection (BZ.1912.2) (Late 13th Century)

Wood with polychromy and gilding

Dating to the same period as the original juggler story, this French statue of the Madonna adorned the Blisses' apartment in Paris. This early Bliss acquisition was made at a time when few collectors took an interest in or appreciated medieval art.

René Lalique (French)

Théodora Program, Dumbarton Oaks Archives Ephemera Collection (AR.EP.PR.0555) (1902)

Play program

As part of the fashion for Byzantine exoticism, the Byzantine Empress Theodora took hold of popular imagination at the turn of the twentieth century. Victorien Sardou's play *Théodora* catered to and reinforced theatergoers' interest in Byzantium with meticulously detailed sets and costumes.

Necklace with Garnet Cloisonné Pendant (Olbia, South Russia)

Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection (BZ.1940.1.1) (Late 4th or Early 5th Century)

Gold, garnet

Lattice-style Necklace with Pendants (Egypt)

Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection (BZ.1938.67) (6th-7th Century)

Gold

The sort of original jewelry seen here often inspired imitations during the 19th-century Byzantine revival that peaked in the final quarter of the century.

Image: Empress Zoe Panel, Hagia Sophia

BZ. 2013.010c

Photograph of Mosaic Reproduction

This mosaic reproduction reflects the Blisses's interest in the art of Byzantium for its elegance and perceived exoticism. The same qualities that motivated them to collect Byzantine luxury objects led Massenet to compose his opera *Esclarmonde*.

Making a Spectacle: Massenet's Medievalism

The tendency toward nostalgic rediscovery also extended to purveyors of late 19th- and early 20th- century popular culture. For composer Jules Massenet, for example, interest in the Middle Ages went well beyond the tale of the juggler of Notre Dame. Medievalism was an important thread throughout his work, and medieval legends

appeared in several of his other operas, including *Le Cid* (1885), *Esclarmonde* (1888), and *Grisélidis* (1901). Nor was Massenet the only medievalizer of the time; the medievaesque cropped up in the work of numerous composers as well as painters, writers, and other artists.

“...In the capitals of Europe, where work is arid, humiliating, and painful and a person is lost in the crowd as in the most tormenting solitude, there resurfaces the wildflower of legend. The legend becomes again, even today, one of the sharpest spiritual needs, a necessity for life.”

■ Italian Scholar Ezio Levi, 1917

“Miss Mary Garden as Mélisande in Debussy’s Opera ‘Pelléas and Mélisande’” in *The Theatre Magazine* (c. 1908-1911)

**Brick Walk with Daffodils in Mélisande’s Allée,
Dumbarton Oaks Gardens**

Dumbarton Oaks Garden Archives

The popular opera diva Mary Garden starred in several of Massenet's operas. The Blissés would have known of Garden, who moved in the same circles as actress Sarah Bernhardt and ballerina Isadora Duncan. They may have seen her perform as Mélisande in Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*. In fact, Mélisande's Allée in the Dumbarton Oaks gardens takes its name from the character in that opera.

Left to right:

**“Mary Garden as Grisélidis” in The Theatre Magazine
(c. 1908-1911)**

Georges Antoine Rochegrosse (French, 1859-1938)

Poster for Massenet's *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* (1904)

Colored stone lithograph

Georges Antoine Rochegrosse designed the first poster for Massenet's *Le Jongleur* in the Art Nouveau style. The colored stone lithograph was printed in Paris in 1904.\

François Flameng (French, 1856-1923)

Poster for Massenet's *Grisélidis* (1901)

Lithograph

Based on the story of Griselda, which appears in Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, *Grisélidis* is another Massenet opera with a medieval origin. In this three-act opera, set in Provence in the 14th century, the Devil attempts to trick the shepherdess Grisélidis into betraying her husband, the Marquis.

Auguste François Gorguet (French, 1862-1927)

Poster from the Paris Premiere of *Esclarmonde* (1889)

Massenet's four-act opera *Esclarmonde* fuses a Wagnerian influence with French operatic tradition to retell a medieval legend about a Byzantine empress and sorceress. The high note in *Esclarmonde* — the highest ever sung in an operatic performance at the time — was

meant to match the height of the Eiffel Tower, which opened the same day as the opera's premiere.

Maurice Leloir (French, 1853-1940)

Poster for Massenet's *Cigale* (1904)

Cigale, French for "grasshopper," inverts the classic fable of the Grasshopper and the Ant. The grasshopper is portrayed sympathetically as a female entertainer, while the serious and hard-working ant rebuffs her kindnesses. The ballet premiered in 1904 and has occasionally been performed as a curtain-raiser for Massenet's *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*.

Building on the Past: Medieval Revival in Architecture and Material Culture

The medievalism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries appeared in architecture as a return to medieval styles and influences. Many American buildings — from universities to religious structures to public institutions — incorporated Gothic elements, including towering stone spires, pointed and elongated arches, and dramatic decorative flourishes. Gothic features were also incorporated into smaller home furnishings and consumer items. They were even ascribed to natural settings: mountains, rocks, caves, and trees were part of America's Gothic.

While the turn of the 20th century saw forward-looking progress, it was also a time of uncertainty. People took comfort in evoking the past. Gothicism in particular resonated in the U.S. Gothic ideals fitted into the cultural narrative Americans were telling about themselves — simultaneously historically-influenced and innovative. Often, Gothic design merged with industrial elements to create a uniquely modern vision of the past.

Medieval DC

Evidence of turn-of-the-20th-century Gothic revival is still visible in 21st-century Washington, DC. Several Romanesque- and Gothic-inspired buildings dot our city's landscape, including such architectural gems as the National Cathedral, the Old Post Office, and Georgetown University's Healy Hall.

Healy Hall, Georgetown University

○ St NW & 37th St.

The architects John Smithmeyer and Paul Pelz, who also designed the Library of Congress, created Georgetown University's Healy Hall between 1877 and 1879. The elaborate Romanesque exterior is matched by a lavish interior featuring grand spaces, intricate ceiling paintings, and coats of arms.

National Cathedral

3101 Wisconsin Ave. NW

Construction on the National Cathedral, the second largest cathedral in the country, began in 1907 but wasn't completed until 1990. Its design features assorted Gothic elements, from flying buttresses and pointed arches to stained glass windows and over 1,200 stone gargoyles and grotesques.

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National Shrine, Catholic University

400 Michigan Ave. NE

Although originally conceived in the French Gothic style, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception was ultimately built to reflect a combination of Romanesque and Byzantine influences. Architect Charles D. Maginnis sought to create a “distinctively American” church not imitative of any of the world’s great historical basilicas.

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Old Post Office Building

1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

Willoughby J. Edbrooke’s grand post office building opened in 1899 after seven years of construction. The Romanesque edifice was the first in the city to incorporate electrical wiring into its design and to have a steel-frame structure.

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Alban Towers

3700 Massachusetts Avenue NW

With Gothic arches, gargoyles, and window tracery adorning its main entrance, Alban Towers has many features that echo the medieval look of the National Cathedral on nearby Mount Alban. The largest apartment-hotel in the city when it opened in 1929, the building fell into disrepair by the end of the 20th century. Recent renovations have made it once again fashionable.

Postcard depicting Alban Towers, Washington, DC
(Yonkers, NY: Herbert C. Kahn Studios)

Smithsonian Castle

1000 Jefferson Dr. SW

James Renwick's design for the Smithsonian castle, for which he won the 1846 competition, incorporated

12th-century Romanesque and Gothic features, including vaulted ceilings and rose windows. In 1859, Renwick would be commissioned to design another iconic Washington, DC, building—the art gallery now known by his name.

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Waterbury Clock Company

Waterbury Gothic Mahogany Bracket Clock (1914)

Mahogany

Bracket clocks were so named in the 17th and 18th centuries, when they had to be mounted on walls to provide enough room for their hanging weights. Later spring-driven clocks could sit on tables or mantles, but the name persisted.

Cathedral Bottles

Late 19th and early 20th Century

Glass

At mass-manufacturing breweries of the late-19th century, decorative nods to the quaint and old-fashioned contrasted with new developments in brewing and distillation. Bottles like these are part of what has been referred to as “the enchantment of technology,” where the Gothic met the industrial.

Souvenir Statue of Notre-Dame

Although the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris was initially completed in 1345, many of its “medieval” features, such as its lion-headed chimeras, date from its 19th-century restoration. This Notre-Dame souvenir is sized for travelers to take home with them—though the real building looms 300 feet high at its tallest point.

Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879)

Histoire d'un hôtel de ville et d'une cathédrale [French]

(J. Hetzel et Cie., 1878), Paris

Viollet-le-Duc saw the Middle Ages as an important touchstone for French culture in the wake of France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Though known for his renovations of medieval cathedrals, including Notre-Dame de Paris, Viollet-le-Duc was also working as an engineer at the dawn of the era of skyscrapers. He fused a modern taste for height with design elements from the Middle Ages.

Victor Hugo (French, 1802-1885)

Notre-Dame de Paris (Eugène Renduel, 1836), Paris

The leather binding of this edition of Victor Hugo's classic 1831 novel, known in English as *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, highlights the story's focus on the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. The book cover depicts a cathedral full of windows and arches.

“Can’t Sleep? Pabst Milwaukee” in Harper’s Magazine Advertiser, p. 94

“Straight from the Shoulder. Pabst Milwaukee” in Life (February 6, 1896), p. 92

Medieval imagery also found its way into advertising during this period.

Right: Leon Guipon (American, 1872-1910)

“The Fair Crowning the Brave” in *Woman’s Home Companion*

(The Crowell Publishing Company, October 1910), New York

The American monthly *Woman’s Home Companion* typically featured contemporary women or children on its covers, so this medieval design was a notable departure. French-American illustrator Leon Guipon, who illustrated this cover, also provided the illustrations for a 1907 adaptation of Anatole France’s *Le Jongleur*.

The Fine Print: Medievalism and the Book Arts

The culture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries — when the juggler story re-emerged — also favored the production of medievalizing books. Gothic revivalism meant that interest in medieval manuscripts grew, even as the Middle Ages retreated further into the past. Luckily the ability to mass-produce books meant greater access to volumes that looked handwritten even if they weren't. Heavily illustrated, limited-run artists' books were common, often drawing on medieval and medievaesque influences. This burgeoning book market let consumers purchase their own slice of the Middle Ages — a time when it seemed that life was simpler, faith abundant, and humanity more innocent.

Anatole France's juggler story lent itself naturally to such medievalesque experimentation. Because it was short, the juggler story could be reproduced in small volumes or collections of medieval tales. Although *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* focuses on lofty ideals of asceticism, these publications often paid unconscious homage to materialism: many were lavishly adorned with medievalesque features and flourishes.

Illuminating the Juggler: Early Editions

Anatole France's adaptation of the Old French juggler story inspired a range of illustrators, all of whom devised their own distinctive medieval styles. French publisher François Ferroud produced two notable illustrated versions of France's translation: Henri Malatesta's 1906 version featured hand-colored medievalesque engravings, while Maurice Lalau's 1924 edition revealed Art Deco traits. In Britain and the U.S., publishers relied on English translations by Philip Wicksteed, Isabel Butler, and Alice

Kemp-Welch. These editions frequently featured medieval flourishes as well, sometimes even incorporating antique elements into the physical design of the books.

“It is only by entering into this spirit of human intimacy that we can in anywise appreciate what such miracle-stories meant to the simple folk of the Middle Ages, with whom religion and daily life went hand in hand.”

■ Alice Kemp-Welch, 1908

1. Anatole France [Jacques-Anatole-François Thibault] (French, 1844-1924), author; Henri Malteste (French, 1870-1920), illustrator

Le jongleur de Notre-Dame [French] (F. Ferroud, 1906), Paris

On loan from Houghton Library, Harvard University

Henri Malateste, also known as Malatesta, specialized in medievalesque illustrations and calligraphy. His hand-colored engravings in this edition of Anatole France’s *Le*

Jongleur, while stunning in their own right, also reveal the delicacy with which he was able to integrate image and text.

2. Anatole France [Jacques-Anatole-François Thibault] (French, 1844-1924), author; Maurice Lalau (French, 1881-1961), illustrator

Le jongleur de Notre-Dame [French] (F. Ferroud, 1924), Paris

Although Maurice Lalau built his career on illustrations of modern French translations of medieval texts, his drawings for this edition of the juggler story reflect the Art Deco style more than the medievaesque.

Old Is New: Gothic Influences in 20th-Century Publishing

The early 20th century was a fertile time for the book arts. Many illustrators incorporated medieval themes and

decoration into deluxe volumes produced for bibliophiles who were willing to splurge for the extravagance. Other artists drew on more “modern” styles such as Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts movement — both of which also had roots in the tradition of medieval craftsmanship. And it wasn’t only the design of the books that harked back to earlier days; the interest in the Middle Ages frequently influenced the choice of subject matter as well.

“Upon my word, I am paid three times over for that article by the receipt of your beautiful copy of *The Song of Roland*. Beautiful is the only word to describe it. It is awfully nice of you to have sent it to me. Incidentally, I am proud as an American that such a bit of work should be done in America.”

■ Theodore Roosevelt, in a letter to *Song of Roland* publisher George H. Mifflin, 1907

**1. Philip Wicksteed, (British, 1844-1927), translator
Our Lady's Tumbler: A Twelfth Century Legend (Early
20th Century)**

Crafted from handmade paper and bound in octavo, this edition of Wicksteed's translation was fashioned to resemble an illuminated manuscript. Its creator is unknown, though it may be the work Mary O. Kneass, who signed the front free endpaper. Women made up a significant percentage of amateur and independent medievalists at the time.

2. Philip Wicksteed, (British, 1844-1927), translator

Our Lady's Tumbler: A Twelfth Century Legend (Thomas B. Mosher, 1906), Portland, Maine

Thomas Mosher's aesthetic sensibilities were inspired by British Pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts movement. As a publisher, he prioritized inexpensive and aesthetically-pleasing books, making over 730 titles available at relatively low cost to his customers.

3. Philip Wicksteed, (British, 1844-1927), translator

Our Lady's Tumbler: A Twelfth Century Legend (Privately printed for Stanford Briggs Inc., 1923)

Five hundred copies of *Our Lady's Tumbler* were privately printed for Stanford Briggs Inc., an advertising service and commercial art studio based in New York City. The company may have distributed the volume to potential customers as an advertisement for their design work.

4. Alice Kemp-Welch, translator

Of the Tumbler of Our Lady and Other Miracles (Chatto and Windus, 1908), London

An independent scholar of the Middle Ages, Alice Kemp-Welch translated many medieval French texts, and her work showed a marked empathy for the period. This edition of her translation of the juggler story is bound in leather with brass clasps in the style of medieval manuscripts.

1. Anatole France, *Frère Joconde*, illustrated by Léon Lebègue (Paris: A. Ferroud -- F. Ferroud, 1923)

Luxuriously bound in embossed red leather with a two-part fitted case, this edition of *Frère Joconde* features pages of hand-colored second-state printings following a text by Anatole France. Illustrator Léon Lebègue's simple line work reveals a medievalesque flair.

**2. Honore de Balzac (French, 1799-1850), author;
Edmond Malassis (French, 1874-1944)
La Belle Impéria. Conte drolatique (Louis Conrad, 1903),
Paris**

Edmond Malassis was another artist who specialized in medievalesque calligraphy and illustration. With its gilt edges and lavish illustrations, this edition of Balzac's *La Belle Impéria* showcases the extravagant medievalizing efforts of such artists as well as the considerable expenses borne by bibliophiles.

3. Charles Gillot (French, 1853-1903), editor; Eugene Grasset (French-Swiss, 1841-1917), illustrator

Histoire des quatre fils Aymon: Tres nobles et tres vaillans chevaliers [French] (H. Launette, 1883), Paris

Known as the father of Art Nouveau, Eugene Grasset was inspired by the Middle Ages. Here his art helps tell the story of the Four Sons of Aymon, a heroic tale that dates back to 12th-century France.

4. Alfred Lord Tennyson (British, 1809-1892), author; Alberto Sangorski (British, 1862-1932), illustrator

Morte d'Arthur (Chatto & Windus, 1912), London

Alfred Lord Tennyson based his poem *Morte d'Arthur* on Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, which in turn was based on Old French tales compiled in the late 15th century. With its heraldic imagery and medieval manuscript-inspired decoration, this illustration of Tennyson's poem transports us to a time of quests, battles, and armored knights.

Isabel Butler (American, 1869-1935), translator

The Song of Roland (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1906),
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Translated by Isabel Butler, who also produced one of the first English translations of the juggler story from the medieval French, this edition of *The Song of Roland* combines French Gothic-style script with illustrations inspired by the stained glass of Chartres Cathedral. The magnificent volume is hand-printed and bound in antique vellum.

Henri Malteste (French, 1870-1920)

“La Ceinture”

Postcards

Written and illustrated by Malatesta, this series of postcards tells a comic story involving a chastity belt (“la ceinture”) in verse. Like his illustrations for Anatole

France's *Le jongleur de Notre-Dame*, these cards drew heavily from medieval imagery and costume.

**Eugène Grasset (French-Swiss, 1841-1917) and
Edouard Monnier & Cie.**

"Les Fêtes de Paris" in *Les Maitres de l'Affiche*, pl. 50
(March 26, 1886)

Lithograph

This poster by Art Nouveau innovator Eugène Grasset advertises Les Fêtes de Paris ("the Festival of Paris"), a medieval-themed festival held at the Opéra National in 1886. By linking medieval and modern France through poster commissions such as this, the French government of the Third Republic sought to legitimize its rule.

Henry Adams (American, 1838-1918)

Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres (1904), Washington, DC

This is one of only a hundred first-edition copies of Henry Adams' opus, which he self-published for his nieces, both

real and honorary. In it, this great-grandson of John Adams contrasts the 13th and 20th centuries. He pays close attention to the juggler story.