

Sophie Harwood, University of Leeds  
Research Trip to the Vatican Apostolic Library  
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My doctoral research is on women and warfare in three twelfth-century French texts known collectively as the *Romans d'Antiquité* (the *Roman d'Enéas*, the *Roman de Thèbes*, and the *Roman de Troie*). An important component of my work is on the manuscripts in which these texts appear: I look at the commissioners of these manuscripts, their readers, the ways in which they were illustrated (if at all), or annotated, and any other texts that might be collected together with the *Romans*. There are thirty-six extant manuscripts containing at least one of the three, though the *Roman de Troie* is by far the most popular (the *Enéas* exists in nine, the *Thèbes* in five, and the *Troie* in thirty). Thanks to the digitisation of the majority of these manuscripts, as well as previous research trips to Paris, Milan, Venice and Nottingham, I had managed to see all but three of these manuscripts, and one of those three was in the Vatican Apostolic Library. I had read a description of the manuscript that referred to the fact it included over two hundred illustrations, but very little detail beyond this was given. There is no digitised copy available and so my only option was to see it in person. Analysis of the illustrative tradition of the *Romans d'Antiquité* is a major



component of my thesis, so I was truly grateful and very pleased when *Medium Aevum* agreed to fund a trip to Vatican City so that I could examine the manuscript up close and personal.

I had never worked in the Vatican Apostolic Library before and it was quite a rush! Getting into the library was an adventure in itself – passing Vatican City guards dressed in velvet and carrying guns, leaving my passport at the *ufficio immigrazione* on the ‘border’ between Italy and Vatican City, registering with the library and being issued a futuristic library card that can unlock lockers, doors, gates and elevators, and finally getting to sit in the beautiful historic reading room. When I had the manuscript itself in front of me I was genuinely moved. It was exquisite – filled with colour, gold illumination, and a few cheeky doodles by previous readers. Photography of any kind is not allowed inside the library, so I spent three days taking diligent notes and making my own sketches of the illustrations that are most important to my research. There were exactly two hundred and fifty illustrations in total, some of them completely unique within the illustrative tradition of the *Troie*. I will use this work not only in my thesis, but am basing two forthcoming conference papers around my findings, too. It was a genuine privilege to work in the Vatican, and I greatly appreciate the support of *Medium Aevum* to allow this to happen.

