

ABEGG-STIFTUNG

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15 SEPTEMBER TO 12 NOVEMBER 2023
OPEN DAILY FROM 2 P.M. TO 5.30 P.M.



TEXTILE TREASURES FROM SAINTE-FOY ABBEY IN CONQUES

Year after year, Santiago de Compostela is overrun by thousands of pilgrims. While numbers have surged following the recent pandemic, this is no modern phenomenon. Even in the Middle Ages, millions of people took on the long and arduous trek to the tomb and relics of the Apostle James. Their route led past Sainte-Foy Abbey in Conques, one of the most important pilgrimage sites in France. The motivation for a pilgrimage may have changed, but there can be no doubt that it is the veneration of relics we have to thank for the preservation of many precious textiles from that period.

Relics, the mortal remains of canonized individuals, were a church's most prized possession. Credited with special powers, they were wrapped in exquisite fabrics and painstakingly preserved. Many such medieval textiles have survived solely for this reason, including those at Sainte-Foy Abbey. There, contained in the church treasury, are numerous fragments of silks dating from the eighth to the eleventh century, among them the magnificent purple-coloured fabric from Byzantium in which the skull of Saint Faith herself – sainte Foy – was wrapped. This silk, along with thirty other textile treasures, was entrusted to the Abegg-Stiftung for conservation/restoration in 2019. A selection of these textiles is now to go on show in a special exhibition in Riggisberg from 15 September to 12 November.

Both press release and photo are available as e-mail attachments.

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Caption:

The relic wrapping of Saint Faith (detail), silk, Byzantium, 10th century;

Conques, Trésor de l'abbatiale Sainte-Foy, inv. no. 4

The special exhibition «**LAST GARMENTS. GRAVE FINDS FROM THE ASSI EL-HADATH CAVE IN LEBANON**» will remain open until 12 November 2023.