Twitter Thread by Kathleen E. Kennedy

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So I mean, what's stopping us from making it Medievalism Studies?

I mean, hell, even Greenblatt's beloved Poggio was just looking for something earlier to cosplay.
The fact that the humanists grabbed earlier medieval sources for art and script wasn't an oopsie. It was "earlier than Arthur."

If you have a young Edward III literally setting up a joust where everyone dresses as Arthurian characters in order to kick off what he hopes will be a genuine real-life chivalric order of the Round Table (we got the Garter instead. best laid plans, etc) you have cosplay.

And it keeps going. They're editing Chaucer and Langland, etc by the 16thc, and continuously if you consider scribal interventions. And they keep editing Chaucer.

The legal side invents a Middle Ages almost continuously, and pretty self-consciously, as they go, and it gets reinvented and enshrined in colonial law by the 18th (but the theorization begins as early as the 16th).

The Victorians go absolutely bonkers reinventing the Middle Ages and throw BANANAS bank at it, building or renovating nearly TEN THOUSAND churches in 'gothic' style w/in a span of decades, and take that penchant global too.

(and ofc every sort of art and fashion imaginable. They really fall HARDDD for medieval. Tolkien's sort of an apotheosis of this really, right down to colonial roots.)

And allllll the document editing and cataloguing that kicks off in the 19thc, w/o which we'd have SHITE access to the records, the records that "make" Medieval Studies as it is today.

Related mess happens over in lang/lit ofc, as they try getting sciency w/language, invent philology, and eventually try to be Very Serious Really about literature. All medieval. No Fun Here.
All the while merrily declaring what was and was not medieval out of whole cloth.

So, I mean, why not make it Medievalism Studies. Throw the emphasize on the making and remaking. The desire for medieval. The contingent. The slipping. The revision.

We can launch a con. Crafting the Middle Ages. We run the usual scholarly sessions. We also run sessions w/histfic writers and heritage professionals. Bc it's medievalism allllla way down. Like Dr*goncon but for medievalists. All of us.