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Autor: Bradford Smith, Elizabeth

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Early American Collectors of Medieval Art: Romantics or Pragmatists?

by ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH

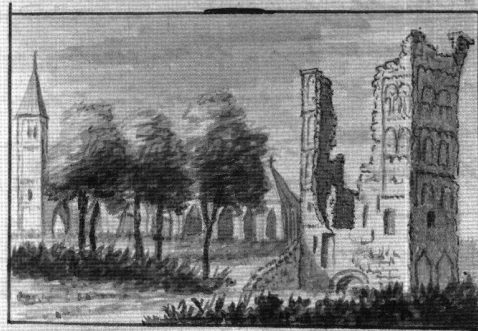
Within the context of preparing an exhibition on American collecting of medieval art, two questions which repeatedly surfaced as of primary importance were the following: Why did Americans show so little interest in the art of the Middle Ages throughout most of the nineteenth century? And what caused them dramatically to change course around 1900, suddenly becoming major buyers of medieval art on the international scene?¹ A partial answer to the first question can be found in the writings of a popular nineteenth-century American art critic, James Jackson Jarves (1818–1888).² In his book, *The Art-Idea*, published in 1864, Jarves says, «In America, the art-feeling necessarily remains in a great degree dormant, from lack of objects. Hence, when Americans are first introduced into the world of art of Europe [...] they are blinded by excess of light.»³ In other words, according to Jarves, nineteenth-century Americans didn't collect medieval (or any other) art because, owing to the lack of art in their environment, they did not possess the requisite «art-feeling» to stimulate them to purchase art nor even to appreciate it properly.

But the situation was more complex than that, especially as regards the art of the Middle Ages, for the nineteenth century was the era of the Gothic Revival in architecture and the decorative arts, of *Ivanhoe* and other historical novels by Sir Walter Scott, of Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*, and of a pervasive Romantic interest in the age of chivalry. Although all of these phenomena had originated in Europe, they were eagerly imported into America with only a slight lapse in time. Americans, therefore, though deprived of castles on the Rhine, by the 1830s were commissioning neo-Gothic villas from A. J. Davis and asking Thomas Cole, father of the Hudson River School, to include medieval castles in his painted landscapes.⁴ Some Americans, admittedly few and far between, even collected art of the Middle Ages in the first half of the nineteenth century.

One such was William Poyntell (1756–1811), a Philadelphia stationer and bookseller, who in 1803 acquired in Paris a group of stained glass panels from the Sainte-Chapelle.⁵ Poyntell apparently purchased the glass just as it was being removed under order of Napoleon so as to convert the palace chapel of Louis IX into an archival depot. Poyntell's letters written during his travels in England and on the Continent display a Romantic's appreciation for ivy-covered ruins, such as Netley Abbey near Southampton, and also for the stained glass in the cathedrals of York and



*The ruins of the castle of the counts of
Holland at Egmont-op-den-Hoef.*



*The ruins of a monastery at
Egmont-Binnen.*

Fig. 1 The Ruins of the Castle of the Counts of Holland at Egmont-op-den-Hoef and The Ruins of a Monastery at Egmont-Binnen, by Robert Gilmor, Jr., 1800. Pen and ink on paper. Baltimore, Maryland Historical Society.

Cologne, «splendid beyond imagination».⁶ It is not clear what purpose Poyntell intended for his glass, but from the special praise his letters bestow on Robert Adam's neo-Gothic interiors at Alnwick Castle, we may deduce that he planned to install it in a library window following the fashion set by Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill.⁷ The glass which Poyntell brought home was carefully handed



Fig. 2 Trinity, Book of Hours, Boucicaut Master Workshop, Ile-de-France, c. 1420, fol 176v. Washington, Library of Congress, Rare Books and Special Collections Division.

down in his family throughout the nineteenth century, a statement in itself, and some of it is visible today in the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Aside from Poyntell, I have identified only three other Americans who collected works of medieval art before the onset of the Civil War in 1860. Let us briefly look at them in turn. Robert Gilmore, Jr. (1774–1848), of Baltimore, a lifelong collector of Old Master paintings – rare enough in America at that time – was also a collector of medieval

manuscripts.⁸ He began to acquire manuscripts as a young man shortly after returning from a year and a half on a Grand Tour of Europe, during which he had visited many monuments of the Middle Ages and even sketched some of them. Two of Gilmore's drawings (Fig. 1) depict the ruins of a castle and a Benedictine monastery at Egmont in the Netherlands, which had attracted his eye precisely because they were ruins, «tottering and decayed», as he described them in his journal.⁹ Gilmore's choice of subject reveals a Romantic sensitivity which may also have motivated his first purchase of an illuminated manuscript. All we know in this regard, however, is what he wrote in the flyleaf of a Book of Hours (Fig. 2), now attributed to a follower of the Boucicaut Master: «An Old Roman Breviary splendidly illuminated, supposed to have been written in the Fourteenth century. Purchased at Charleston, South Carolina in the year 1807 by Robert Gilmore Jr.»¹⁰ From then on, throughout his life, Gilmore continued to upgrade his small manuscript collection, sometimes via intermediaries, which is how he acquired a thirteenth-century English Bible, bought in 1832 from a London bookseller in whose catalogue he had no doubt been attracted by the mention of «70 curious illuminated capitals».¹¹ Sometimes he purchased manuscripts directly at auction in Baltimore itself, where a small group of manuscript collectors apparently bought from (and sold to) each other.¹² When he died in 1848, Gilmore's library of over 2000 books included twelve medieval manuscripts.¹³ Gilmore admitted that he collected art for his own pleasure. Nevertheless, he hoped that both his books and his paintings would one day enrich a library and a museum, but circumstances dictated instead that they be dispersed.¹⁴

Like Gilmore, Thomas Jefferson Bryan (1802–1870) also concentrated his collecting energy primarily on Old Master paintings. However, unlike Gilmore, who lived all his life in Baltimore, Bryan spent most of the years between 1822, when he graduated from Harvard, and 1852 in France.¹⁵ During this time he assembled a collection of some 230 paintings. Bryan seems to have viewed his collection primarily as a teaching tool, a guide to the history of the arts. To this end, in 1851 he had purchased many works by so-called «primitifs» at the sale of the famous collection of Alexis-François Artaud de Montor in Paris.¹⁶ One of the paintings Bryan acquired at this sale was the Madonna and Child with Saints reproduced in Artaud's 1843 catalogue (Fig. 3), where it was attributed to Guido of Siena and dated to the thirteenth century, an attribution Bryan accepted.¹⁷ In 1852 Bryan returned to the States and apparently attempted to present his collection in turn to the cities of Philadelphia and New York. Both refused his offer, considering his «rare old pictures [...] unworthy of house-room», to quote Jarves once more.¹⁸ Bryan then installed his collection in a house in New York and opened it to the public as the Bryan Gallery of Christian Art, complete with a Companion Guide written with the help of Richard Grant White.¹⁹ Armed with this guide, visitors were meant to trace, as they went through the gallery, «the rise and

progress of each of the great schools, the Italian, the German, the Flemish, the Dutch, and the French [...] in all the stages of their development».²⁰ As the guide proudly states, this «historical character» endowed Bryan's gallery with «an importance not possessed by any other ever opened to the public in this country».²¹ This was indeed true. But the public does not seem to have appreciated the importance of Bryan's museum any more than did the city fathers. Only the occasional art student came to study and make sketches. Eventually, Bryan closed his gallery and in 1864 presented his collection, by then totalling over 300 paintings, to the New-York Historical Society.²²

Although many of Bryan's paintings were wrongly attributed, they were not fakes or daubs. Like his so-called Guido, a splendid altarpiece now attributed to Nardo di Cione, they were generally of high quality.²³ Why then did his collection fail to attract interest? A partial explanation is once more supplied by Jarves, who himself had put together a collection of Italian primitives in the late 1850s and who also had considerable difficulty in arousing interest in his paintings among the American public. Writing in *The Art-Idea*, Jarves makes the point that the «sensuous proclivity of art is its chief snare».²⁴ This was surely a serious consideration in Protestant America. Protestantism was also responsible for Americans' mistrust of the obviously Catholic nature of most of the art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Throughout the nineteenth century, American travellers to Europe repeatedly expressed their shock at the religious practices they encountered.²⁵ When Bryan opened his gallery, Americans were going through an especially virulent period of anti-Catholicism coupled with nativism, or anti-foreign tendencies. These sentiments found their most extraordinary embodiment in the Know-Nothings, a political party which was extremely popular for a brief period in the 1850s.²⁶ Although the Know-Nothings aimed chiefly to prevent further immigration of Irish Catholics into the United States, their anti-European stance tainted much of American public opinion at that time. By this token, Americans were not only predisposed against popish art, they were also predisposed against art that was foreign.

Finally, Americans also largely preferred art that was «truthful», that «exhibited a scientific correctness», as Jarves put it.²⁷ Even Jarves, who also collected medieval art – such as a thirteenth-century panel of the Madonna and Child with Saints (Fig. 4) – didn't really like it.²⁸ He was, in fact, especially repelled by what he termed the «grossness» of medieval paintings which attempted to represent Christ or the angels, a task he considered impossible.²⁹ Jarves collected primitives only as foils, to show the great progress made by artists of succeeding generations. Perhaps the best characterization of nineteenth-century-American reactions to medieval art is given by novelist Henry James, in his childhood memoir. He tells of being taken as a boy to visit Bryan's gallery, where he was appalled by the «worm-eaten diptychs and triptychs, the angular saints and seraphs, the black Madonnas and obscure Bambinos».³⁰ In short, for the

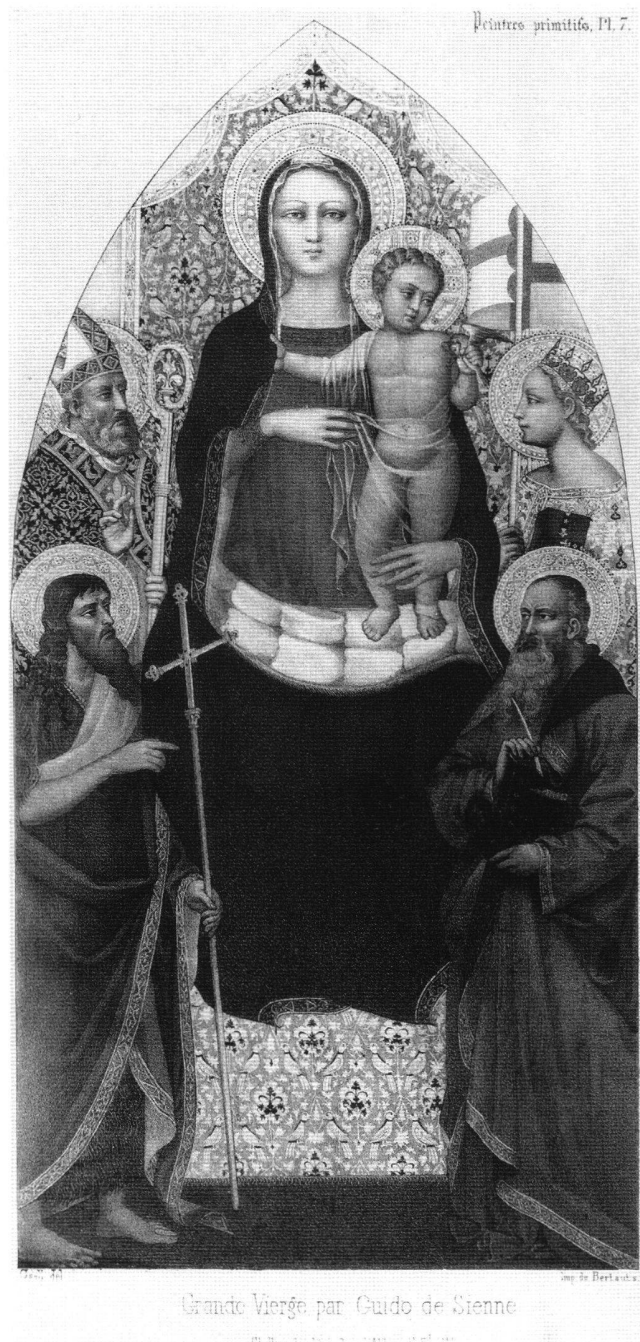


Fig. 3 Madonna and Child with Saints, engraving after the painting by Nardo di Cione, Florence, c. 1350 (from Artaud de Montor, *Peintres primitifs*, Paris, 1843, pl. 7, as by Guido di Siena).

young James, medieval art was too religious, too unnatural, and simply too old.

Gilmor, Bryan and Jarves, carefully building their collections for the ultimate benefit of the public, no doubt saw

themselves as pragmatists, providing Americans with the foundation for a general education in the arts. But their plans did not come to fruition as they had hoped, largely because their contemporaries failed to recognize the value of their achievement. As a result, we may now look back on them as Romantics, as somehow out of touch with the reality of American taste in art, at that time clouded by

against the rise and progress of the art of later centuries, but for its own intrinsic qualities.

The collections of the two magnates, J. Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913) and Henry Walters (1848–1931), begun at the same time, are in some ways parallel.³⁴ Both contain a disproportionate quantity of the sumptuary arts, of liturgical objects crafted in precious materials. There are differences

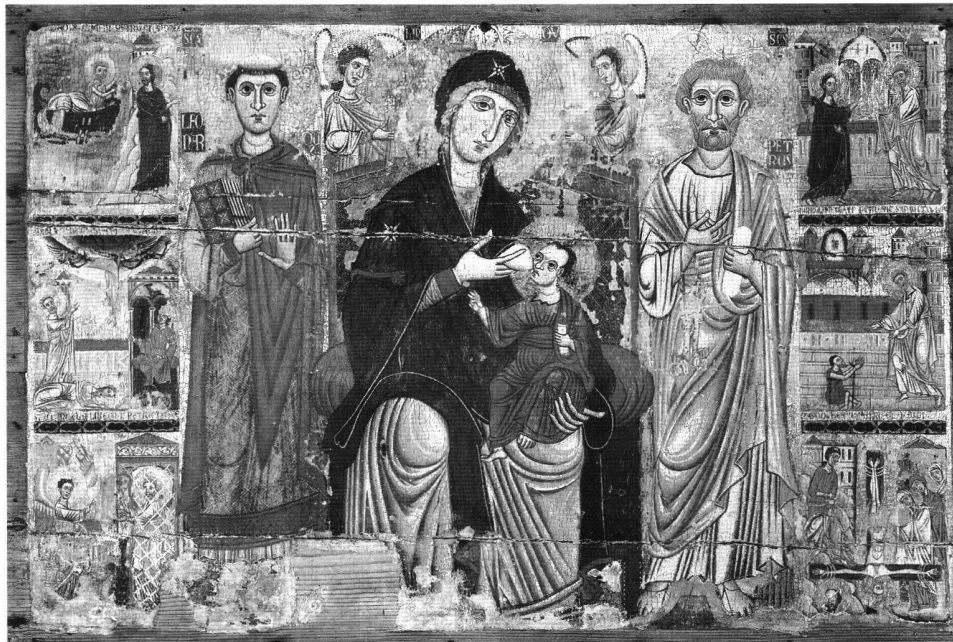


Fig. 4 Madonna and Child with Saints, «Magdalen Master», Florence, c. 1270. New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery (University Purchase from James Jackson Jarves).

what Jarves termed a «density of ignorance and prejudice.»³¹ In 1924 Edith Wharton published a tale of an American collector who foolishly brings back Italian primitives in hopes of inspiring the New York public of the 1840s. With striking acuity, Wharton called her novella, loosely based on the experiences of Bryan and Jarves, *False Dawn*.³²

The real dawn would come only at the turn of the century – after the teachings of Ruskin had percolated through the middle class; after the plaster casts and electrotypes of the masterpieces of all ages placed on view in the newly established municipal museums of the post-Civil-War era had alleviated some of that ignorance and prejudice which had hobbled American perceptions of European art; and after more Americans than ever before had gone to Europe to see firsthand the major monuments of Western culture.³³ It was only then, around 1900, that J. P. Morgan, Henry Walters, and George Grey Barnard began to buy medieval art in great quantity, not as «primitive» art, to set

between the two collections, however, the most obvious being that Morgan's collection was much larger, the result of purchasing «en bloc» a number of important collections, such as the Hoentschel Collection, whereas Walters generally acquired his objects one at a time. The distribution of the works in their respective collections has been used as an indication of the taste of these two enigmatic men, neither of whom cared to let posterity know much about their private personas. For example, Morgan's collection includes numerous boxes, a fact which some have linked, with dubious methodology, to his profession as a banker. On the other hand, it can be established that Walters had a fondness for ivories, since they constitute approximately 30% of his medieval collection. In fact, the first medieval work of art purchased by Walters was an ivory statuette of the Virgin and Child bought at auction in Paris in 1901.³⁵ He also showed a special interest in enamels, which make up another 30% of his medieval holdings. Unless new archival material comes to light, we will remain

largely in the dark regarding the wellspring of Morgan's and Walters' taste in art. It can be postulated, however, that as they both spent a significant amount of time abroad in their youth, Walters in France and Morgan in Switzerland and Germany, this early exposure to the monuments and culture of Europe may have had an impact on their futures as collectors of medieval art.

fact, precocious, and it was this that allowed him to purchase such fine examples as the cloister of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert without a great outlay of money.³⁷

It was Barnard's intention to sell in New York for a large amount the collection he had amassed in France for so little. He was unable to do this, however, and so, to achieve his purpose – in a way like Thomas Jefferson Bryan sixty



Fig. 5 Barnard's Cloisters, Washington Heights, New York, general view of interior in 1926.

For the sculptor George Grey Barnard, his years studying at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the 1880s were without a doubt formative ones. It was surely there, in the shadow of Alexandre Lenoir's Musée des Monuments Français, that Barnard developed a taste for medieval sculpture, and it was in the course of travelling through France in these years that he came to realize just how much of it was available for sale.³⁶ Unlike Morgan and Walters, who had enormous sums of money to spend, Barnard had practically none. And unlike Morgan and Walters, whose collections, rich in ivories and goldsmithwork, echoed those of European princes of an earlier era, Barnard concentrated on sculpture in the humbler media of stone and wood. Finally, Barnard's collection, largely put together between 1906 and 1911, is distinct because it contained monumental works of the Romanesque era. In this, Barnard's taste was not only different from that of Morgan and Walters – it differed from that of most Europeans as well. Barnard's appreciation for the Romanesque was, in

years before, albeit to a more commercial end – he set out to educate and form the taste of the people of New York by opening his own museum. Barnard's Cloisters (Fig. 5), a pseudo-monastic environment created for his medieval collection, opened in December 1914, and was an instant and resounding success with the general public and with the professional members of the artistic community. Not only did it inspire Americans to begin to collect the monumental sculpture of the Romanesque and Gothic eras, it also spawned in the museum world an entire generation of reduced copies of his Cloisters.³⁸

Interestingly, in that same year, 1914, the Metropolitan Museum of Art had placed on view, also to great acclaim, J.P. Morgan's vast collections of medieval art, as part of the Morgan Loan Show (Fig. 6). As with Barnard's Cloisters, the Morgan Loan Show influenced the future direction of institutional collecting in America. For example, William Milliken, whose first curatorial position had been at the Metropolitan at the time of the Morgan show, would pur-

chase for the Cleveland Museum of Art nine of the most precious objects from the Guelph Treasure when it came up for sale in 1930. Milliken would also help to arrange the Guelph Treasure Travelling Exhibition throughout the United States in the following year, with the result that a number of American museums acquired liturgical objects from the Guelph Treasure.³⁹ But what of the average

the general public familiar with an almost uncalculable number of works of art of all nations, so medieval art no longer seemed so alien. For another, the increasing secularization of twentieth-century society may have made the Catholic nature of medieval art less objectionable to American viewers. Finally, these years had seen the genesis of «modernist» art, the non-representational art of the



Fig. 6 Loan Exhibition of the J. Pierpont Morgan Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1914. Gallery 12, Gothic Period.

museum-goer in 1914? In one year, with the opening of the Morgan show and Barnard's Cloisters, an unprecedented amount of medieval art was made available to the New York public, and this time the public was entranced.

Why? What had caused this change of heart between 1853 and 1914? Besides the documented factors mentioned earlier – the influence of Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts movement, the education provided by plaster casts and increased European travel – there were surely other, less obviously related reasons. For one, photography had made

European avant-garde. Examples of this had been exhibited in New York at the Armory Show of 1913, where they may well have taught Americans to disregard subject matter in favor of form and helped them to be more receptive to those distortions of medieval art which Jarves and his contemporaries did not like because they were not truthful. In sum, throughout most of the nineteenth century, the average American had not been ready for medieval art; by 1914, for a variety of reasons, he welcomed it with open arms. A new era was about to begin.

- ¹ The present article is based in part on research for the exhibition catalogue by ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH et al., *Medieval Art in America: Patterns of Collecting 1800–1940*, The Palmer Museum of Art, University Park, PA 1996.
- ² The most extensive study of Jarves is the biography by FRANCIS STEEGMULLER, *The Two Lives of James Jackson Jarves*, New Haven 1951.
- ³ JAMES JACKSON JARVES, *The Art-Idea*, John Harvard Library Reprint, ed. Benjamin Rowland, Jr., Cambridge, Mass 1960, p. 44. A second edition appeared in 1865 and a third and fourth in 1866 and 1877.
- ⁴ A fuller description of this situation is in ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH, *The Earliest Private Collectors: False Dawn Multiplied*, in: ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 1), p. 23–33, and nos. 3–8, p. 66–79.
- ⁵ Three medallions belonging to Poyntell are now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (30–24–1, 2, and 3). On Poyntell as collector, see, most recently, ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH, *Between the Enlightenment and the Know-Nothings: William Poyntell (1756–1811), Early American Collector of Medieval Art*, in: *Memory and Oblivion* (= Acts of the XXIXth International Congress of the History of Art, Amsterdam, forthcoming).
- ⁶ WILLIAM POYNTELL, *Extracts of letters from an American gentleman traveling in Europe to the Editor of this Gazette*, in: Relf's Philadelphia Gazette, April 22, 1803.
- ⁷ On Walpole as collector, see CLIVE WAINWRIGHT, *The Romantic Interior. The British Collector at Home 1750–1850*, New Haven/London 1989, p. 71–108; for his use of medieval stained glass, see fig. 70.
- ⁸ The most comprehensive study of Gilmor to date is ANNA WELLS RUTLEDGE, *Robert Gilmor, Jr., Baltimore Collector*, in: *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 12, 1949, p. 19–39. – On his interest in the Middle Ages, see ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 4), p. 24–26.
- ⁹ ROBERT GILMOR, JR. to William Gilmor, Letter 20, July 28, 1800, Gilmor Letterbook no. 2, Robert Gilmor, Jr. Papers, MS 387, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.
- ¹⁰ Library of Congress, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, MS 56. See SVATO SCHUTZNER, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Library of Congress: A Descriptive Catalogue*, vol. 1, Washington, D.C. 1988, p. 339–344, pl. 24; and PAMELA HEMZIK, in: ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 1), no. 9, p. 80–87.
- ¹¹ The best study of Gilmor's Bible (Princeton University Library, Garrett MS 28) is ADELAIDE BENNETT, *The Place of Garrett 28 in Thirteenth-Century English Illumination*, PhD. dissertation, Columbia University, 1973. The reference to the illuminated capitals is from the now-lost flyleaf as recorded by Bennett on p. 5.
- ¹² PAMELA HEMZIK, *A Circle of Manuscript Collectors in Early Nineteenth-Century Baltimore*, in: *The Fortune of Medieval Art in America*, ed. SUSAN SCOTT and ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (=Papers in Art History from The Pennsylvania State University, vol. 13, forthcoming).
- ¹³ PAMELA HEMZIK (cf. note 10), p. 84.
- ¹⁴ ANNA WELLS RUTLEDGE (cf. note 8), p. 20.
- ¹⁵ R.W.G. VAIL, *Knickerbocker Birthday, A Sesquicentennial History of the New-York Historical Society 1804–1954*, New York 1954, p. 126–128. – ANNETTE BLAUGRUND / R. J. M. OLSON, *The History of the Thomas Jefferson Bryan Collection*, exhibition leaflet, n.d., New-York Historical Society. – See also SCOTT SCHAEFER, *Private Collecting and the Public Good*, in: Important Old Master Paintings the Property of the New-York Historical Society, Sotheby's Sale 6653, January 12, 1995; and ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 4), p. 26–28.
- ¹⁶ On Artaud de Montor, a French diplomat who collected his primitives in Italy during the Napoleonic era, see GIOVANNI PREVITALI, *La fortuna dei primitivi, dal Vasari ai neoclassici*, 2nd ed., Turin 1989, p. 177–179, 221–222.
- ¹⁷ M. LE CHEVALIER ARTAUD DE MONTOR, *Peintres primitifs, collection de tableaux rapporté d'Italie*, Paris 1843, p. 28, no. 24, pl. 7.
- ¹⁸ JAMES JACKSON JARVES (cf. note 3), p. 18.
- ¹⁹ THOMAS JEFFERSON BRYAN, *Companion to the Bryan Gallery of Christian Art ... with an introductory essay, and an index by RICHARD GRANT WHITE*, New York 1853.
- ²⁰ THOMAS JEFFERSON BRYAN (cf. note 19), p. IV.
- ²¹ THOMAS JEFFERSON BRYAN (cf. note 19), p. IV.
- ²² On the fate of Bryan's collection, see ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 4), p. 29, especially note 50.
- ²³ On Bryan's Nardo, put up for auction at Sotheby's in 1995, see the sale catalogue (cf. note 15), lot 130. It is now in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum. Regarding its current assessment, see MARCO GRASSI, *Art and Alchemy*, in: *Art and Auction* 17, no. 11, June 1995, p. 88–91, 122; see especially p. 91, where the Nardo is referred to as «a significant work of early Italian art».
- ²⁴ JAMES JACKSON JARVES (cf. note 3), p. 41.
- ²⁵ For a review of American reactions to Europe at this time, see CHERYL SNAY, *Medieval Art in American Popular Culture: Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Travellers in Europe*, in: ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 1), p. 34–40.
- ²⁶ On the anti-foreign and anti-Catholic tendencies in the United States during the nineteenth century, the basic study remains RAY ALLEN BILLINGTON, *The Protestant Crusade 1800–1860. A Study of the Origins of American Nativism*, New York 1938; Gloucester, MA, 1963; for the Know-Nothings, see p. 380–436.
- ²⁷ JAMES JACKSON JARVES (cf. note 3), p. 42.
- ²⁸ Now Yale University Art Gallery 1871.3. For a twentieth-century assessment of Jarves as a collector, see *Italian Primitives. The Case History of a Collection and its Conservation, An Exhibition Celebrating the Centenary of Yale University's Acquisition of the Jarves Collection*, Yale University Art Gallery, April–September, 1972.
- ²⁹ JAMES JACKSON JARVES (cf. note 3), p. 108.
- ³⁰ HENRY JAMES, *A Small Boy and Others*, New York 1913, p. 268–269.
- ³¹ JAMES JACKSON JARVES (cf. note 3), p. 19.
- ³² EDITH WHARTON, *False Dawn*, New York 1924.
- ³³ For a discussion of Ruskin and other agents of change at work on American attitudes to medieval art, see KATHRYN MCCLINTOCK, *The Classroom and the Courtyard: Medievalism in American Highbrow Culture*, and *The Earliest Public Collections and the Role of Reproductions (Boston)*, in: ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 1), p. 41–54 and 55–60, respectively.
- ³⁴ On Morgan and Walters as collectors of medieval art, see R. AARON ROTTNER, *J.P. Morgan and the Middle Ages*, and MARSHALL PRICE, *Henry Walters: Elusive Collector*, in: ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 1), p. 115–126 and 127–132, respectively, and nos. 33–41, p. 148–161.
- ³⁵ On the ivory statuette (Walters Art Gallery 71.153), see also RICHARD H. RANDALL, JR., *The Golden Age of Ivory: Gothic Carvings in North American Collections*, New York 1993, no. 15, p. 40.

³⁶ Basic studies of Barnard as collector are: HAROLD E. DICKSON, *The Origin of «The Cloisters»*, in: *Art Quarterly*, summer 1965, p. 252–274. – J. L. SCHRADER, *George Grey Barnard: The Cloisters and The Abbey*, in: *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 37, summer 1979, p. 3–52. – See also WILLIAM H. FORSYTH, *Five Crucial people in the Building of The Cloisters*, in: *The Cloisters, Studies in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary*, ed. ELIZABETH PARKER, New York 1992, p. 51–62. – ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH, *George Grey Barnard: Artist/Collector/Dealer/Curator*, in: ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 1), p. 133–142.

³⁷ The most recent discussion of Barnard and the cloister of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert is in DANIEL KLETKE, *Le cloître de Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert au musée des Cloîtres de New York*, in: *Études héraultaises* 26–27, 1995–1996, p. 85–104, especially p. 91–93.

³⁸ For a review of the reception and influence of Barnard's Cloisters, see ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 36), p. 135–138.

³⁹ HEATHER MC CUNE BRUHN, *William H. Milliken and Medieval Art*, and *The Guelph Treasure: The Travelling Exhibition and Purchases by Major American Museums*, in: ELIZABETH BRADFORD SMITH (cf. note 1), p. 195–198 and 199–202.

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Fig. 1: The Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.

Fig. 2: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Fig. 3: Author.

Fig. 4: Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

Fig. 5, 6: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

SUMMARY

Nineteenth-century American collecting of medieval art was characterized by a series of false starts. As early as 1803, fine works were acquired, but no major collections were formed. In the 1850s and 1860s, Thomas Jefferson Bryan and James Jackson Jarves exhibited Trecento paintings to a largely uninterested public. Although Americans had embraced the Gothic novel and Gothic Revival architecture, most did not approve of the Roman Catholic nature of medieval art. By 1900, thanks to Ruskin, there was a change of attitude among the educated élite, and the next twenty years saw the growth of three of the largest collections of medieval art ever assembled in the United States. With the opening of the Morgan Loan Show and Barnard's Cloisters in 1914, New York gained access to the full gamut of medieval art. By then, a more positive view of medieval art, fostered in part by the Arts and Crafts Movement, and perhaps also by the non-representational art in the Armory Show of 1913, had trickled down to the man-in-the-streets, and medieval art could enter the mainstream of American culture.

RÉSUMÉ

En Amérique, la collection d'œuvres d'art du Moyen Âge commença au 19^e siècle par une série de débuts ratés. En 1803 déjà, on constate quelques acquisitions excellentes, mais aucune grande collection n'est réalisée. Dans les années 1850 et 1860, Thomas Jefferson Bryan et James Jackson Jarves exposèrent des peintures italiennes datant du 14^e siècle sans pouvoir susciter l'intérêt d'un grand public. Bien que les Américains se soient approprié le style architectural du gothique nouveau, ils refusèrent l'art du Moyen Âge portant l'empreinte du catholicisme romain. Grâce à Ruskin, l'attitude de la classe supérieure changea vers 1900, et les trois plus grandes collections d'œuvres d'art datant du Moyen Âge prirent naissance au cours des vingt années suivantes. Avec l'ouverture de la *Morgan Loan Show* et des *Cloisters* de Barnard en 1914, New York s'ouvrit au large spectre de l'art médiéval. Favorisé peut-être par les objets exposés dans la *Armory Show* de 1913, un jugement plus favorable l'emporta dans la plus large partie de la population ce qui eut pour effet que l'art du Moyen Âge entra enfin dans le mouvement général de la vie culturelle.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Sammeln von mittelalterlicher Kunst in Amerika im 19. Jahrhundert begann mit einer Reihe von Fehlstarts. Bereits 1803 wurden einzelne ausgezeichnete Stücke gekauft, doch kamen noch keine grösseren Sammlungen zustande. In den 1850er und 1860er Jahren stellten Thomas Jefferson Bryan und James Jackson Jarves Gemälde aus dem italienischen Trecento aus, ohne aber ein weiteres Publikum dafür interessieren zu können. Obwohl auch die Amerikaner sich den Architekturstil der Neugotik zu eigen machten, lehnten die meisten die römisch-katholische Prägung der mittelalterlichen Kunst ab. Dank Ruskin änderte sich gegen 1900 die Haltung der gebildeten Oberschicht, und während den nächsten zwanzig Jahren entstanden die drei grössten Mittelaltersammlungen Amerikas. Mit der Eröffnung der Morgan Loan Show und den Cloisters von Barnard im Jahre 1914 erhielt New York Zugang zum weitgefächerten Bereich der Kunst des Mittelalters. Begünstigt teilweise durch die Kunstgewerbe-Bewegung (Arts and Crafts Movement) und vielleicht auch durch die in der Armory Show von 1913 gezeigten Gegenstände, setzte sich auch in breiteren Bevölkerungskreisen eine positivere Beurteilung durch, so dass die mittelalterliche Kunst schliesslich auch im allgemeinen Kulturbetrieb Amerikas Eingang fand.

RIASSUNTO

Una serie di false partenze caratterizzò gli inizi delle collezioni d'arte medievale nell'America del XIX secolo. Alcune singole opere di eccezionale valore furono acquistate già nel 1803, ma tali acquisti non gettarono alcuna base per grandi collezioni. Nel ventennio del 1850-1870, Thomas Jefferson e Bryan e James Jackson Jarves esposero dipinti del Trecento italiano, senza però riuscire a suscitare l'interesse di un largo pubblico. Nonostante il fatto che anche gli americani fecero proprio lo stile architettonico neogotico, la particolarità cattolica-romana dell'arte medievale fu dai più respinta. Attorno al 1900, grazie a Ruskin, l'atteggiamento dei ceti superiori istruiti cambiò, e nei due decenni che seguirono nacquero le tre maggiori collezioni americane di arte medievale. Con l'apertura della Morgan Loan Show e dei «Cloisters» di Barnard nel 1914, New York ebbe accesso all'esteso settore dell'arte medievale. Favorito in parte dal movimento per l'arte e l'artigianato (Arts and Crafts Movement) e, forse, anche dagli oggetti esposti nell'Armory Show del 1913, un atteggiamento più aperto si diffuse fra la popolazione. Ciò permise all'arte medievale di accedere ai circuiti culturali americani più comuni.