

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library by R. A. B. Mynors and R. M. Thomson

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the beginning of the nineteenth century and earlier. He restricts the argument to Britain without making comparisons with potentially revealing developments on the Continent; just as his proposition that the Tate was intended primarily for a middle-class public underplays the huge and enthusiastic working-class audience for museums and galleries in late Victorian Britain.

The essay by Colin Trodd on the formation of the National Gallery raises many interesting issues, notably the confrontation, within the space of a 'public' area of educational leisure provided by a museum, between classes which had never previously met in such circumstances. For the present writer its bleak conclusion that 'while the cultural institution needs the concept of a public, given the economic management, social discipline and cultural organisation of the capitalist state, this public can never be realised' (a thesis supported by a convenient quotation from Sir Robert Peel, a quotation which again does duty in the following essay but is not supported by an extensive contemporary literature) gives insufficient attention to the complexity of philanthropic and religious traditions in early nineteenth-century Britain and fails to make potentially illuminating comparisons with contemporary conditions in Germany or France. Professor Pointon herself enters the lists, once again, against the dangerous institution of the National Portrait Gallery, this time the one in Washington – though one might question such points as her dashing definition of the original purpose of the Royal Society.

In attacking past hegemonies, the editor seems to create present hegemonies of her own, with which she is quite content. A little self-deconstruction would add depth to this provocative tome.

GILES WATERFIELD
Dulwich Picture Gallery

Publications Received

Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library. By R.A.B. Mynors and R.M. Thomson, with a contribution on the bindings by Michael Gullick. 158 pp. with 45 col. pls. and 107 b. & w. ills. (D.S. Brewer, Cambridge, 1993), £120. ISBN 0-85991-390-2.

This admirable work, begun by Sir Roger Mynors and completed by Rodney Thomson after Mynors's death in 1989, provides detailed descriptions of the 229 western manuscripts in the Hereford Cathedral Library (together with two in the Dean and Chapter Archives), dating from the eighth to the sixteenth century, which since 1991 have been in the care of the Hereford Mappa Mundi Trust.

The books at Hereford are still kept chained in the presses erected in 1611, and this rare survival has ensured the library's fame. There is no surviving medieval library catalogue: our view of the library's growth must be based primarily on the evidence of the books themselves. In fact only about half the surviving manuscripts were already at Hereford before the Reformation; the remainder arrived between the

Reformation and the early seventeenth century. Nearly half the collection consists of twelfth-century books. The modest total is not untypical of an English secular cathedral. The overwhelming impression is of a practical reference library for the canons: patristics and more recent theology, Biblical studies, and canon law. Despite the known scientific interests of scholars at Hereford in the twelfth century, not one of the books probably surviving from the library at that time contains texts which reflect those interests. We must assume that the canons owned other books in a personal capacity, or that they found them in monastic houses elsewhere. Thus the library provides only limited evidence for the intellectual interests of the medieval community at Hereford.

This is one of the issues discussed in the introduction, which surveys the history of the library and of its donors. The catalogue presents a mass of concise but detailed information – codicological, textual, palaeographical, and historical – for each manuscript, arduous for the cataloguer to compile, but easy for the reader to take for granted. The descriptions of the bindings are based on those of Michael Gullick, who has contributed a survey of the bindings to the introduction. The plates have been chosen to provide sample illustrations of the library and its furniture, bindings, ex-libris notes (of individuals and institutions), script, and decoration.

For the art historian the pickings are modest: the late eighth-century Gospel book (P.I.2) assigned to western England or Wales, a less sumptuous version of the great Insular illuminated Gospel books, is well known, as are some of the more elaborate romanesque productions (such as O.I.8, the St. Albans Gospel book with the miniature of a lion-headed St. Mark). But there are also several less well-known romanesque books with decorated initials, some probably of local origin, and a number of illustrated books of canon and civil law given by Richard Rudhale and Owen Lloyd in the fifteenth century. No clear evidence emerges of a cathedral scriptorium. The authors are cautious with regard to dating and localisation: it is for others to draw further conclusions from the evidence put before them.

MARTIN KAUFFMANN

Shakespeare in American Painting. A Catalogue from the Late Eighteenth Century to the Present. By Richard Studing. 170 pp. incl. 27 col. pls. + 64 b. & w. ills. (Associated University Presses, London and Toronto, 1993), £52. ISBN 0-8386-3408-7.

This extremely useful reference book (would that a similar work existed for British painting) is essentially a catalogue listing over 980 works by 372 artists covering the period from the late eighteenth century to 1989. The carefully compiled indexes (to individual plays, characters and even owners of the works listed) allow the reader to use the volume with ease. About two hundred works are illustrated (twenty-seven in colour) from key works by eighteenth century artists of the Boydell generation like Benjamin West and Mather Brown to the leading artists of the next generation such as Washington Allston, Thomas Sully and C.R. Leslie. These are considerably less surprising than the more abstract flights of fancy by Man Ray and other twentieth century painters represented here.

BRIAN ALLEN

Catalogue of Paintings in British Collections: English Heritage: Audley End; Battle Abbey; Boscombe House; Brodsworth Hall; Chiswick House; the Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood; Marble Hill House; Ranger's House; Walmer Castle. Geffrye Museum; the Guildhall Art Gallery; Royal Holloway College; Thomas Coram Foundation (London). By Celestine Dars with T. Watkinson, Suzanne Green and Timothy Lord. 618 pp. incl. 1761 b. & w. ills. (Visual Arts Publishing, London, 1993), £90. ISBN 0-9514166-2-6.

The indefatigable Celestine Dars, stepping in where

institutions fear to tread, has already assembled and published a similar catalogue of the pre-twentieth-century British paintings in the Tate Gallery, supplementing the basic information already available in a Tate Gallery publication with an illustration of each work. This new volume, covering the somewhat ill-assorted collections listed in the title given above, follows the same pattern, though in most cases the information given about each work is considerably fuller. In addition there are small introductory sections on each collection. The result is a most useful tool giving the full contents of what up to now have been, in most cases, largely unknown and inaccessible collections. Even in the case of collections that one did think one knew, such as Kenwood, there are revelations, such as the collection of twenty-seven fragments of the decorations in the Music Room by J. C. Ibbetson. The artistic interest is not always very high but the catalogue does include works by Rembrandt, Vermeer and the leading Dutch landscape painters of the seventeenth century, Turner, Constable, and such Pre-Raphaelites as Millais, Rossetti and Holman Hunt, to say nothing of Frith's *Railway station*.

In some ways this catalogue is frustrating in that so many of the collections are difficult of access. For instance the Guildhall Art Gallery was destroyed in the last war; a new, specially built gallery is planned to open late in 1996. The collection at Royal Holloway College can be seen only by appointment. Here, however, there is an additional threat to access, the disposal against the wishes of the original testator of certain of the pictures. In the entry for no. 1629, no. 24 in this particular collection, are the words 'This painting may now be sold'; it has indeed been disposed of. In the running numbers of the complete catalogue there is no gap between 1680 and 1681 but in the numbers of the Royal Holloway collection there is a sinister gap between 75 and 77; this represents Turner's *Van Tromp, going about to please his Masters, Ships a Sea, getting a Good Wetting*, now in the Getty Museum. Only a very perverse art-historian could argue that this did not fall within the Victorian period of most of the collection. One hopes and trusts that the collection of the Thomas Coram Foundation is in more responsible hands.

MARTIN BUTLIN

The Cultures of Collecting. Edited by John Elsner and Roger Cardinal. 312 pp. + 59 ills. (Reaktion Books, London, 1994), £25. ISBN 0-948462-50-7.

In recent years the history of collecting has grown into a subject of central interest to historians, curators, antiquaries and the art trade, quite apart from sociologists and psychologists. The subject even has a periodical devoted to it, the excellent *Journal of the History of Collecting*. Aspects of the history of collecting are even included in the growing number of courses devoted to that non-subject, Museology, in an attempt to relieve what would otherwise be a tedious diet of lectures on collection management.

This book contains twelve diverse essays, only two of which take a broad view of the subject. They are Jean Baudrillard on 'The System of Collecting', first published in 1968, and Mieke Bal's short essay 'Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting'. The other essays include studies of Freud as a collector, the Austrian Habsburgs as collectors, the Soane Museum, Cook's Pacific voyages, Schwitters and his collages and the Opie collection of packaging. As is usual with books of essays the quality varies and though the standard here is generally very high, John Windsor's slight essay 'Identity Parades' comes to no real conclusions about a diverse range of collections including those of Swatch watches, lavatory paper and airline sickness bags. This diversity is good in principle, allowing each author a space to develop his or her theme, but a more comprehensive and analytical introduction than the six pages allotted by the editors to their own essay would have pulled the whole book together more effectively.

I am sceptical about the tendency – largely kept in check here but all too often a feature of writing on this subject – to find all collectors and types of objects equal