

10-1-1987

Review Of "Stained Glass Before 1700 In American Collections: New England And New York (Corpus Vitrearum Checklist I)" Edited By M.H. Caviness

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Recommended Citation

Michael Watt Cothren. (1987). "Review Of "Stained Glass Before 1700 In American Collections: New England And New York (Corpus Vitrearum Checklist I)" Edited By M.H. Caviness". *Speculum*. Volume 62, Issue 4. 993-994.
<http://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-art/15>

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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Stained Glass before 1700 in American Collections: New England and New York by

Review by: Michael W. Cothren

Source: *Speculum*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (Oct., 1987), pp. 993-994

Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2851827>

Accessed: 27-09-2017 19:11 UTC

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Trebizond (no. 43, p. 33). On the other hand this is one of the few exhilarating features of a book that by its very nature cannot be much fun. The inclusion of Ps.-Grosseteste's grammar on the ground of a silly colophon in one manuscript may also seem extravagant — but then the fact that anyone could compose such a silly colophon is of some interest for students of medieval culture.

One item certainly does not deserve its entry. No. 42 is an *Epistola ad Alexandrum* contained in a fifteenth-century Humanist manuscript (Vat. lat. 2876). The letter is very short and is transcribed in full. It is a translation of the letter whose Greek text Aulus Gellius quoted in his *Noctes Atticae* 20.5.12. Schmitt and Knox note that "It follows a letter said to be by Philip to Aristotle and is followed by one said to be from Alexander to Aristotle." The incipit of Alexander's letter is given; once again the Greek text can be found in Gellius (20.5.11). I would venture the guess that the letter from Philip to Aristotle is the one we find in Gellius 9.3.6. It is a little strange that the compilers have overlooked the existence of the Greek originals, for Aristotle's letter is printed both in Valentin Rose's *Aristotelis fragmenta* (1886, frgm. 662, p. 416) and in Marian Plezia's *Aristotelis privatorum scriptorum fragmenta* (1977, ep. 1, p. 28).

Most of the entries concern works on alchemy, chiromancy, and other subjects with which I am not familiar. There must be occasional errors, but the standard of reliability appears to be very high. Access to this work is from now on a must wherever research on learned manuscripts from the Latin Middle Ages is done, for it is a mine of information. It is however to be regretted that the book does not quite exhaust its subject. In cases in which a list of manuscripts has already been published elsewhere, the compilers offer only supplementary information. The preface announces a plan to publish at some future date a list of corrections and revisions. One can only hope that the decease of Charles Schmitt does not mean that the plan is shelved. If we may wish for even more, I would wish for a new edition of *Pseudo-Aristoteles Latinus* with complete information even about works that have been extensively treated elsewhere.

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Stained Glass before 1700 in American Collections: New England and New York (Corpus Vitrearum Checklist I). (Studies in the History of Art, 15: Monograph Series, 1.) Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1985. Paper. Pp. 219; black-and-white and color plates. \$25. Distributed by University Press of New England, Hanover, NH 03755.

THIS is the first installment of a projected four-volume census of European medieval and Renaissance stained glass now housed in American public and private collections. The long-overdue inventory is being prepared and published by the United States Committee of the international Corpus Vitrearum, and this volume includes contributions by Madeline H. Caviness, Jane Hayward, Meredith Parsons Lillich, Linda Morey Papanicolaou, Virginia Chieffo Raguin, and Helen Jackson Zakin. Subsequent volumes — also to appear in the Monograph Series of Studies in the History of Art — will survey glass in the remainder of the East Coast (vol. 2) and in the Midwest and West Coast (vol. 3). The fourth installment will catalogue silver stain roundels throughout the United States.

In a valuable and informative introductory essay to the series as a whole and the first

volume in particular, Hayward and Caviness suggest reasons why this major medium of painting has remained practically unstudied by American scholars until the current generation. They also outline the mission and history of the international Corpus Vitrearum and survey the history of the collecting that led to the wealth of stained glass now in American collections. The checklist itself is organized geographically by state and, within each state, alphabetically by city. The glass of a given collection or museum is listed chronologically by its date of fabrication. Each panel is illustrated in black and white, and a catalogue entry adjacent to the picture documents the subject, provenance, date, technique, size, condition, and bibliography of each example. Five particularly splendid and important pieces are illustrated with color plates.

As a preliminary step toward the eventual publication of full catalogues — which will constitute the Corpus Vitrearum proper for the United States — this inventory is enormously important. The first volume includes the extensive holdings of such well-known collections as those in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Worcester Art Museum, but it also documents and introduces stained glass in less predictable places, such as Ithaca College, the Planting Fields Foundation, and numerous churches and private collections. Among the unpublished — and virtually unknown — examples made available here for the first time are a twelfth-century panel from Troyes (p. 22) and a thirteenth-century panel from Mantes (p. 210). As a result of the enterprise long-lost thirteenth-century glass from Tours was rediscovered in Pomfret School Chapel (Connecticut), and a new panel (now in a Rhode Island private collection) was added to the corpus of dispersed survivors from the fifteenth-century glazing of the Carmelite church in Boppard on Rhine. Many readers of this checklist will be surprised by the quantity and quality of seventeenth-century Swiss stained glass in American collections as well as by the wealth of information it records concerning the personal and professional lives of the people for whom these commemorative panels were made.

The utility of this checklist for students of the history of medieval and Renaissance art and history is obvious. As the authors state in the introductory essay, making these panels available will “serve to advance scholarship on their origins, their patrons, their makers, and the programs of which they formed an integral part.” (p. 14). But as a by-product of this census we are also learning a great deal about the commerce in artifacts during the first half of the twentieth century. Patterns are emerging, and will doubtless be fleshed out with the documentation of provenance in subsequent installments of the checklist, concerning the tastes and motivations of the individual collectors and the means by which dealers met their demands through the burgeoning market in medieval antiquities.

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REINHARD STROHM, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*. New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1985. Pp. x, 273; color facsimile frontispiece, 8 black-and-white facsimile plates, 12 musical examples. \$39.95.

TITLES can be deceptive or imprecise. Some promise more than they are able to offer. Others are misleading or off the mark. *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* is far more than its modest title implies: it provides an examination of the musical culture in this important artistic and commercial city of Flanders as seen through the activities centered