

‘Historic libraries and the historiography of art’: a series of articles arising from sessions held at the 107th College Art Association Annual Conference, New York, 13-16 February 2019 and the 108<sup>th</sup> College Art Association Annual Conference, Chicago, 12-15 February 2020

Guest edited by Jeanne-Marie Musto

**Introductory Remarks**

Historic libraries are coming into their own as resources for interpreting intellectual history. Analyzing how libraries, understood as curated collections, have shaped art histories, art criticism and their audiences has opened new paths for exploring art historiography. Whether book and manuscript collections survive intact, perhaps in their original locations, or are known only through bibliographies or inventories, they yield information that broadens established narratives of the discipline. What is more, such collections are ideally suited to documenting art history’s evolving relationship with social, intellectual and geo-political trends.

The following essays have their origins in two sessions on the theme of libraries and the historiography of art that were held at the 2019 and 2020 annual conferences of the College Art Association. Several more essays that originated in these sessions are forthcoming; their publication has been delayed due to the pandemic. The six essays presented here may be loosely grouped under two headings: those addressing the contents and constituencies of influential art libraries, and those addressing the history behind the ownership and organization of several equally influential print and manuscript collections.

Addressing the first theme poses new questions, encourages new methodologies, and draws previously untapped collections into art historiographical analysis. New questions include, for example, Karolina Łabowicz-Dymanus’s analysis of the distribution and impact of ‘official’ vs. ‘unofficial’ resources in the Communist-era library of the Polish Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Art. New methodologies include data visualizations of the readership of an art library given to the University of Paris in 1918; the visualizations, analyzed by Claire Dupin de Beyssat, incorporate both quantitative and prosopographical data. Previously untapped libraries include that of Charles Eastlake, which served him in his several roles, including as Director of the National Gallery, London. Eastlake’s collection is currently the subject of a research project by Katie Lissamore under the

direction of Jonathan Franklin, Librarian of the National Gallery. Comparative analysis of Eastlake's library with those of precursors and contemporaries underlines how readily analysis of any one library aids and encourages analysis of others.

Competing demands for the broad range of materials that art libraries often encompass come to the fore when addressing the second theme of these papers, that concerning print and manuscript collections. Susan Dixon underlines the vagaries of where such collections have come to be housed in her discussion of Rodolfo Lanciani's documentation of Roman archaeological finds. Lanciani refused to leave these manuscripts with his employer out of spite. Competing demands for another collection were more rationally, if also unsuccessfully, debated in the attempt to move the Ortalli Print Collection from Parma's royal library to its museum, as investigated by Silvia Massa. Finally, Jesse Feiman elucidates the origins and implications of the organizational system used by most print collections today, through analyzing the work of Adam von Bartsch (1757-1821) for the print cabinet of the Imperial Court Library in Vienna.

Taken as a whole, these papers highlight how libraries have not only informed but also shaped the relatively young and still restive discipline of art history.

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