

The New Middle Ages

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I have set myself two tasks on the occasion of this anniversary meeting of the Southeastern Medieval Association. The first is to reflect on the history of medieval studies in the twentieth century and in particular on the meaning of newness when we lay claim to that term to describe recent developments in our field. The second is to look at data about medievalists in North America: who are they and where are they trained?

PART 1: THE NEW MIDDLE AGES THEN AND NOW

MAKE IT NEW

We like to call things new. *New* is good. It signifies not merely temporal sequence, but progress. To avoid any possible ambiguity, the language of advertising gives us "new and improved," but *new* alone is usually sufficient to carry the semantic weight. Change is for the better. A new dispensation succeeds the old,¹ and no one doubts which regime is to be preferred. *New* is free, unfettered, fresh, vital, original.

Hold on, you say. In America we may understand ourselves to be brash upstarts who are not intimidated by tradition, but this is true only when it comes to material culture. At a more profound level precisely the opposite is true. We may be eager to pave paradise and put up a parking lot,² but the parking lot will have a pseudo-colonial fence, and the subdivision down the road will be full of dream houses built in "Tudor" style. Give us Beethoven, not Babbitt, Rembrandt, not Rothko. In the realm of high culture Americans are poorly educated about the past and insecure about the present. When it comes to the new, we are hopelessly middlebrow and conformist.

This description of the American cultural situation is, of course, a cartoon. And I ought not have used a geographical qualifier, as if to imply that the themes I am hinting at are irrelevant to Europe. European bourgeoisies have often enough reacted vehemently against the provocations of the new, disdaining works that are now securely included in the canon of cultural masterpieces. We share with Europe a culture whose attitudes

toward tradition and cultural change are often profoundly ambiguous, if not directly contradictory. To be sure, there are noteworthy differences between the cultures of Europe and America in general, and the scholarly cultures in particular. But my focus is not on this topic.³ Rather I have in mind recent claims to newness by medievalists in North America—in some cases to newness of such a substantial order that it amounts to a decisive break with the past.

THE NEW MEDIEVAL STUDIES IN 1999

Postmodernism is a name used widely (and carelessly) to indicate a proposed cultural divide occurring ca. 1985–1990 (?) in many fields of scholarship, including medieval studies. Behind its use as a term referring to scholarship, especially to theoretically oriented literary studies, is its use in the arts, especially architecture—where, it must be noted, postmodernism as a movement has already been declared dead. And lurking behind the use of postmodernism to describe changes in aspects of high culture one often finds vague presumptions that we are undergoing broader historical and social changes such that “modern” is no longer a comfortable fit. This slippage in terminology from one realm to another, from cultural movement to historical era, is bothersome. Are we postmodern, or merely postmodernist? What phenomena are we describing, and how broad is their reach across disciplines and genres?

“Modern” is itself a problematic term. In one well-established sense we have been modern since 1500—or is it 1517, when Luther may or may not have nailed his theses to the church door in Wittenberg? Since we were medieval for a thousand years before that, we should perhaps not be hasty to proclaim the end of the modern historical era after a mere half-millennium. By most accounts we are still modern according to this grand scheme, and I know of no epoch-making changes in the 1980s that would justify the setting of a new marker there.

Against this greater modern we commonly mark off a lesser modern—a set of social, political, and economic changes beginning somewhere in the nineteenth century, associated especially with industrialization and less easily defined as a cultural movement. Thus two different and in part overlapping historical periods have come to be called modern. Furthermore, we also have a strong urge to use modern to mean “new” and “contemporary,” which contradicts the attachment of “modern” to any historical era but our own, whether we believe our era began yesterday or a century ago. This semantic untidiness may one day be remedied. Until that happens, the only

way to avoid conceptual confusion is to be very careful always to specify which modern we mean when the context is ambiguous.

We have been *modern* since 1500 or since 1850, depending on the context, but we have been *modernist* only since 1913 (the date of the Armory Show in New York).⁴ The dominant artistic and intellectual culture of most of the twentieth century was modernism. If we are now defining a before and an after in our cultural history, the before is modernism, not modernity, and its successor culture deserves to be named postmodernism (with emphasis on the *-ism*). The achievement of this much semantic clarity is a helpful first step, but we are still not home free. There is a substantial literature about the culture of modernism, but it is contradictory, and in any case revaluations of the recent past may require us to rewrite the history of the preceding era.⁵

Medieval postmodernism (postmodernist medievalism?) is a mouthful, and in fact it is not in our vocabulary, despite its appealing bipolarity. Nor has the "New Middle Ages" of my title entered the language, as far as I can discover. Our instincts tell us that we have lately been hearing a lot about what we are doing differently and new in medieval studies. There are many manifestations of what might be called a heightened self-consciousness in the field, accompanied at times by worries about whether there is a future for medieval studies and medievalists.⁶ Yet a look at the titles in the Books Received section of *Speculum* in the last several years, while it turns up a fair number of *new approaches*, *new perspectives*, and *new readings*, not to mention *inventings* and *reinventings*, does not provide us with many claimants for the name of the era in which we now find ourselves. Only two, first the New Philology and then the New Medievalism, appear to have been in serious contention. The defining essays are by Stephen Nichols: on the New Philology in the January 1990 issue of *Speculum*; and on the New Medievalism in a collection of essays under that title, published in 1991, of which he was a co-editor.⁷

The New Medievalism is put forward by Nichols as a term "of recent coinage" specific to a movement in Romance medieval studies, but with the presumption I dare say that other medievalists would or should pay attention to its "resolutely eclectic yet relatively consistent" concerns and presuppositions. By the end the first paragraph of his essay, from which I have been quoting, Nichols is already referring to "the discipline of medieval studies broadly conceived."⁸ When reviewing *The New Medievalism* in *Speculum*, Paul Zumthor read the collection in light of such larger claims. The authors, he said, position themselves (and successfully so) at the critical vantage point between "modernity and postmodernism,"

which as he understands it is a platform not restricted to scholars of the medieval Romance languages.⁹

The newness of the New Medievalism is presumptively good, representing the freeing of medieval studies from "the generic and linguistic taxonomies imposed by the invention of the discipline in the nineteenth century."¹⁰ And it is a good different in kind from the more famous New Historicism of early modern studies, which Nichols sees as a rather circumscribed methodology. The New Medievalism is a "predisposition to interrogate and reformulate the assumptions about the discipline of medieval studies," to interrogate "the nature of medieval representation in its differences and continuities with classical and Renaissance mimesis."¹¹ I am not sure I am able to follow Nichols when he reasons that the New Medievalism somehow mimics in its procedures qualities specific to the medieval period as opposed to those of the Renaissance. Nor do I believe that "medieval studies" was invented in the nineteenth century. Nor do I understand how any new movement of recent vintage can presume to act as the successor to all of "modernity." Unless I misread Nichols, he does indeed make this kind of claim, and I am unable to account for his inattention to the succession of modern cultures between 1500 and 1985.¹²

I do believe that something new is happening in medieval studies, much of it positive in its impact on scholarship, and we may well have crossed a boundary on this side of which we are doing something that deserves a new name or names. What I find doubtful in the New Philology/New Medievalism nexus is the presumption that methodological and historical issues of a single discipline, French philology, can stand in for the whole of medieval studies. Part of the newness of the present may be a splintering of the disciplines in medieval studies into distinct tribes speaking their own dialects, so that communication between them will become more and more difficult. The interdisciplinary ideal, when soberly analyzed, has in any case been an ideal more enunciated than realized. Shall we have done with it and declare the end of medieval studies? What historical sense can we make of the newness of some medieval scholarship in the 1990s as compared with the newness of the very concept of medieval studies in the 1920s and 30s?

MODERNISM AND THE NEW MIDDLE AGES OF THE 1920S

A few moments ago I said with tongue in cheek that modernism began in 1913. Now it is time to own up to the unease I feel when venturing to speak of modernism, which is a remarkably malleable term. All the same, in my innocent historian's way I would like to know what modernism is under-

stood to be before I listen to the presumptions of postmodernism. And I would like to see a discussion of the history of medieval studies that takes note of the parallels between its career and that of the culture of modernism.

I have so far only some scattered facts and not a connected story. When the Medieval Academy was founded in 1925, medieval studies did not exist. The program enunciated by the founders of the Medieval Academy is the program of medieval studies that we now take for granted: namely, research into all aspects of the chronological period of the Middle Ages without regard to disciplinary boundaries. I cheat a bit in putting the matter this way, since in fact literary issues were paramount for the founders as they described their intentions in early programmatic statements and the "official" histories.¹³ They wanted to make sure that scholarship would not lose from sight the role of medieval Latin in the development of the vernacular European languages. But instead of an Academy of Medieval Latin Culture, as first proposed, they founded a Medieval Academy, reciting as its turf the full scope of medieval society and culture.¹⁴

Classics aside, with due consideration for the limits of that field as practiced in the 1920s, no program in any other field offered a model that might have inspired the developments that transpired with remarkable speed between John Matthews Manly's lecture to the MLA in 1922 about the importance of medieval Latin literature and the founding of the Medieval Academy in 1925.¹⁵

Why this should have happened, in the 1920s and in the United States, is a fascinating historical puzzle. To the best of my knowledge no one has attempted to uncover in depth the cultural context for the founding of the Medieval Academy, with its uniquely expansive program of cross-disciplinary medieval studies. Is it a coincidence that the founding of the Medieval Academy happened when modernism was in its first decade in North America? We are not accustomed to speak of medieval studies and modernism in the same breath, but the near coincidence of their origins deserves a closer look.¹⁶

I would not have thought of the question in these terms had I not discovered that one of the speakers at the first annual meeting of the Medieval Academy in 1926 entitled his remarks "The Medieval Academy and Modern Life," in the course of which he spoke of the "New Medievalism." He was Ralph Adams Cram, more famous as an architect than as an amateur medievalist, but he was indeed an important figure among the founders of the Medieval Academy. Furthermore, in 1934, when he was president of the Academy, he entitled his presidential address "The New Middle Ages."¹⁷

Ralph Adams Cram is a curious figure, whom one might now and again wish to disown as a forebear. In some guises he appears to be little more than a crank or a crackpot, giving rise to wonderment that he should have been chosen to head the architectural department at MIT and the Planning Board of the city of Boston. (In the latter capacity he proposed to build an Ile-de-le-Cité in the middle of the Charles River between Cambridge and Boston, complete with a Neogothic cathedral, a new city hall, and an open-air theater.) At times he sounds very much like a “hide-bound conservative,” but in reality he was a “flaming rebel,” or so his fellow founders of the Academy—John Nicholas Brown, George R. Coffman, and E. K. Rand—would have it in the memoir in *Speculum*.¹⁸

The intellectual lineage of medievalism in America in some recent treatments is regarded as an embarrassment, thought to have been concocted out of a dubious mixture of fraudulent Anglo-Saxon and Germanic pride, patrician haughtiness, religious conservatism, anti-modernization, and opposition to democracy. Cram in one of his aspects seems to fit this profile all too well, as the memoir writers suggest, but as a young man in the 1890s he was part of the self-conscious literary avant-garde in Boston, and we ought to think twice about how we categorize him. He had not become *merely* a spokesman for privilege and the status quo when he lectured to the Medieval Academy in 1926 and 1934 on the New Medievalism and the New Middle Ages. But it is true that in those lectures, as in his autobiography from the same period, Cram was unsparing in his denunciation of modernism. The newness he sought in the Middle Ages was the rediscovery and revitalization of “enduring and durable” standards and values of the sort he found exemplified in the Middle Ages but woefully absent in the culture of modernism.¹⁹

I do not want to make too much of Ralph Adams Cram, who was an important architect, a self-important social critic, and a great admirer of certain aspects of medieval civilization, but not a medieval scholar. All the same, had he been a convinced modernist, I would not have hesitated to exploit him to propose some tidy links between the culture of modernism and the origins of medieval studies. But that turned out to be wishful thinking.

I still do not know whether modernism is directly pertinent to the historical project I am talking about. Another line of inquiry that I pursued was similarly unproductive. To answer the question whether canonical modernist authors with an interest in medieval literature had an impact on medieval studies in the 1920s and 1930s, I conducted a search using the electronic version of *Speculum* in JSTOR. No books by Ezra Pound or T.

S. Eliot were reviewed in *Speculum*. Eliot was cited in articles published in 1947 and 1949, but the first mention of Pound, the more interesting name to invoke in this context, was in 1965. So much for the *Zeitgeist* of modernism among the literary scholars who had a part in the making of the Medieval Academy and *Speculum*.

Not that this answers the question once and for all. I am still not prepared to abandon the quest for connections between medieval studies and modernism, in part because I find the possibility of cross-fertilization between the two chronologically contiguous movements so appealing, and in part because I would like to be able to offer the New Medievalists of the 1990s something modernist to place before their postmodernism.

I am being playful and serious about this, as I hope you will understand. I do not wish to rob the New Medievalists of the 1990s of their (neo-) modernity. There is nothing disreputable about the desire to swim comfortably in the intellectual currents of one's age. It is one defense against the anxiety of being found irrelevant or obsolete, and I would eagerly embrace evidence I have yet to find that this was happening among medievalists who invented medieval studies in the twenties and thirties. We may not be able to orchestrate the fate of medieval studies by means of an insistent focus on methodological novelty. But we may revitalize our work by being scholars *and* intellectuals, if we have the aptitude for it—sufficiently attuned to developments in cognate fields to identify and use the new tools that will benefit our own work.

WHAT IS MODERNISM?

Having invoked modernism so frequently, I thought I should finish this segment of my talk by sketching in brief compass what I understand by the term, beginning perhaps with Virginia Woolf's lapidary statement that "on or about December 1910, human character changed."²⁰ Or with Peter Gay's confident assertion that modernism "utterly changed painting, sculpture, and music; the dance, the novel, and the drama; architecture, poetry, and thought."²¹ But this is a very complicated piece of intellectual history. Peter Gay's modernism, for example, begins uncertainly somewhere in the mid-nineteenth century, and its essential tenor is elitist and conservative; it is the modernism that stands in opposition to modernity.

Other historians disagree entirely with such imputations.²² Art historians in particular have tended to see modernism as a positive and even triumphant movement, representing a steady advance toward the realization of the essential natures of painting and sculpture.²³

In short, modernism varies enormously according to the teller and the subject matter. Positioning medieval studies within this context will be the work of much more than this morning's piece of a lecture.

PART 2: MEDIEVALISTS: WHO ARE THEY? WHO TRAINS THEM?

We did not begin to collect professional data about the members of the Medieval Academy until 1992. The data I have to draw upon are thus not of long standing, and their reliability and usefulness varies depending on the subject one would like to address.²⁴

As a preamble, let me say that the number of members of the Academy has been more or less steady for the last twenty years; when the bumps are smoothed out, the average range is 3,800–3,900. On the upward side, the all-time high was 4,141 in 1995, but the real boom period was the two decades prior to 1980, when membership more than doubled. Those of us who entered graduate school in the early 1960s were experiencing the beginning of the boom period, and if we took too long getting our degrees we discovered that there were too many of us for the available teaching jobs. The leveling off of the numbers since 1980 is perhaps surprising; one might rather expect a decline, given the fact that the job market seemed to have settled in for a long run of stagnation, and no one I know of who does educational projections is now predicting anything better.

The membership of the Academy to be sure does not encompass all medievalists. At a guess our "penetration of the market" has remained steady, absent drastic measures to recruit new members. But we cannot be sure of that, and no one has undertaken to collect alternative data. Our efforts to make the Medieval Academy accessible in fact and perception to anyone interested in medieval studies may have had some success, which would have the effect of tilting the data—that is, our numbers while remaining the same could represent a larger percentage of a smaller field. This caveat and the manner of its expression will be enough, I hope, to alert you to the fact that I am not a statistician.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT

The most important demographic shift in medieval studies is the dramatic increase in the percentage of women entering the field. This happened much sooner and to a much greater extent than in other humanities fields.

We have occasional snapshots of the percentage of women in the membership of the Academy. Currently women are still in the minority, at

45%. They were at 35% in a count that was done in 1983. A 10% increase in fifteen years would probably not warrant the claim of a dramatic shift. Much more striking is the evidence taken from that portion of the membership for whom we have professional data. To be specific, we have among our members a set of 1,541 individuals whom we know to have earned the Ph.D. degree since 1960. When we look at those who earned their doctorates between 1960 and 1979, 33% are women. When we look at those who earned their doctorates between 1980 and the present, 57% are women. The rate of growth for women recipients of the doctorate was in fact greatest from 1970 to 1980. Women achieved parity with men ca. 1980–81, and their percentage has continued to increase since then, although the rate of increase is less rapid. Another sign of the same phenomenon is the fact that 57% of current student members are women.

In the humanities as a whole, the figures show that women did not approach parity in the awarding of Ph.D.s until 1996, whereas in medieval studies this point was reached fifteen years earlier, in 1981.

If the present trend continues, women will gradually approach parity with men among active professional medievalists as a whole, by which I mean those who have earned doctorates and who are employed in academic positions in colleges and universities. The situation changes with the deaths and retirements of each passing year. At a rough guess, parity will be achieved in another ten years, and after that women will move to a majority position.

A backward look, with the help of *Progress in Medieval Studies*, suggests that in 1926, when the Medieval Academy was founded, some 90% of active medievalists were men.²⁵ Twenty-five years later, in 1951, that percentage was still almost 90%. Women were better represented among graduate students in this period (ca. 20% in the samples I have counted), but advancement to academic careers did not follow for them in like measure.

Why have women made the gains that I have sketched out? The simplest answer is the increased opportunities for graduate study and academic employment that were part of the boom in higher education in the sixties and seventies. Men and women alike were affected by this, but women responded in greater numbers, and, eventually, their advancement in higher education was actively encouraged by the social and political changes which they helped to bring about by their presence.

Why it is that for nearly twenty years women have conspicuously outnumbered men in the pursuit of graduate training and academic careers in medieval studies is a question for which I have no ready answer. We lack evidence, and the guesses one is tempted to make (focusing, say, on career

considerations—many other fields offering shorter apprenticeships and better pay scales) ought to affect all humanities fields in more or less the same way. What is needed is an explanation for the exceptional status of medieval studies within its companion fields.

It will be interesting to see what changes in higher education are wrought by the increasing participation of women, who are making their presence felt across the board in academia, in administrative positions as much as in the professoriate. I will make no predictions, but I suspect that the changes will be less weighty than the rear-guard fears and the *avant-garde* hopes.

Since medieval studies appear to be a statistical oddity with regard to the participation of women, one must ask bluntly whether the statistics are indeed reliable. It would certainly be possible and desirable to expand the inquiry and to survey a larger sample, but in this case I really do have a good bit of confidence in the numbers.²⁶

As a footnote, I ought to mention that women are playing an increasing role in the Medieval Academy itself. Among the Academy's elected officers in the last decade, women have filled 51% of the positions, as compared with 38% in the previous decade.

PH.D. PRODUCTION

Ph.D. production in medieval studies has remained relatively constant since the late sixties, but the distribution of students among universities has been far from constant.

Despite the ups and downs in the job market, there is little indication in the numbers available to me that universities as a whole have succeeded in regulating Ph.D. production in medieval studies. Our sample shows rather little fluctuation in the numbers of Ph.D.s awarded annually from 1967 to 1998. Some universities certainly have restricted the admission of graduate students in periods when the prognosis for academic employment has been gloomy, but those students are evidently going elsewhere rather than abandoning graduate study altogether.

Here, too, medieval studies appears to be eccentric. In the humanities as a whole, Ph.D. production dropped sharply from 1974 to 1985; thereafter, from 1986 to 1996, there has been enough growth to reverse the decline and, in 1996, to reach a new high.

In our sample, the leading producer of medieval Ph.D.s in 1960–79 was Harvard, with no very close rivals; the others in the top five, in descending order, were Yale, Columbia, Berkeley, and Toronto. In 1980–97, Toronto tops the list, followed by Berkeley, Yale, Harvard, and Cornell. Harvard's

production drops by about one-half from the first period to the second, as does Columbia's. Wisconsin, Johns Hopkins, and Pennsylvania were in the top ten in 1960-79, but not in 1980-97.

According to the *Progress of Medieval Studies*, 17 universities had students writing doctoral dissertations in 1926. In 1951 the number of institutions with doctoral students was 42. We do not have comparable numbers since the sixties, but the number of institutions awarding doctorates in our member sample was 140 in 1960-79, and 178 in 1980-97 (which amounts to a 27% increase from the first period to the second).

There is no question, then, but that the production of Ph.D.s in medieval studies, as in other fields, has become increasingly dispersed over a larger and larger range of granting institutions. Harvard and Columbia in the last twenty years have become much less dominant than they once were. Toronto jumped from fifth place before 1980 to first place after 1980, doubling its Ph.D. production even while Harvard and Columbia were cutting theirs in half.

For the sake of continuity in the profession, one would prefer to have a relatively steady progression of students entering graduate school, earning Ph.D.s, and taking teaching positions in the colleges and universities. Surprisingly enough, the supply of Ph.D. recipients in medieval studies appears to have been remarkably constant, meeting this standard, even while the demand for teachers has been inconstant. One has to conclude that the adjustments required in this equation have been forced upon the Ph.D. recipients. But we lack data to tell us about the employment status of medieval Ph.D.s, and many of you will have anecdotal sources as good as or better than mine.

The hiring freezes and cutbacks and the much-discussed financial constraints that have had such a major impact on American higher education have not, I think, hit medieval studies or the humanities with greater severity than other fields. These phenomena are taking their toll across the board. And while they will make medieval programs harder to sustain in many institutions, part of good citizenship for medievalists has always been support for colleagues and positions in departments other than one's own. This support has simply become a more urgent necessity.

CONCLUSION

Let me now come full circle and raise again the possibility that the change or changes in medieval studies in the 1990s, whatever they eventually come to be named, will mean the end of medieval studies. That is, the end of

medieval studies as an idea invented in the 1920s to express the notion that commonalities among students of the Middle Ages are a force stronger than disciplinary divisions. Splintering could reopen fault lines between the medieval disciplines. Or another, more complicated fracturing could occur on something like ideological lines within several disciplines.

My passing reference above to scholars and intellectuals was a shorthand way of referring to certain habits of thought that might best be regarded as positions on a continuum ranging from antiquarian fact-grubbing on one extreme to untrammelled theorizing on the other. Quarrels between factions defined by their relative distance from each other on this continuum occasionally produce tremors, but so far they have not been severe enough to cause a major earthquake. We do sometimes see signs of remarkable intolerance on the part of individuals who refuse to recognize the value of work that does not mirror their own. In response we need to insist that good and useful work comes in a variety of guises, and that no work is good and useful if it does not rest on a solid foundation of exacting scholarship. This not to save "medieval studies" but to save scholarship.

One of the things we are in danger of losing is a belief in the value of our traditions, both the cultural traditions that we study and the scholarly traditions in which that study is grounded. It is not a bad thing to reconsider inherited attitudes that have become thoughtless and entrenched, but I think I am not guilty of empty nostalgia if I regret current trends toward treating the objects of our study and our disciplines themselves as little more than sets of cultural pathologies to be dissected and lamented.

Not too long ago it was possible for Ernst Curtius to view the Western literary tradition from Homer to Goethe without irony as a repository of ecumenical values to be studied and preserved in the face of barbarous political and cultural nationalisms. Our world offers us less drastic challenges than his, but I hope we will not entirely discard the generosity of spirit with which he approached the study of the Middle Ages.

The Medieval Academy

NOTES

- 1 The allusion is to St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 3.7-11 and elsewhere.
- 2 Joni Mitchell, "Big Yellow Taxi," in *The Complete Poems and Lyrics* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 1997) 56: "Don't it always seem to go / That you don't know what you've got / Till it's gone / They paved paradise / And put up a parking lot."

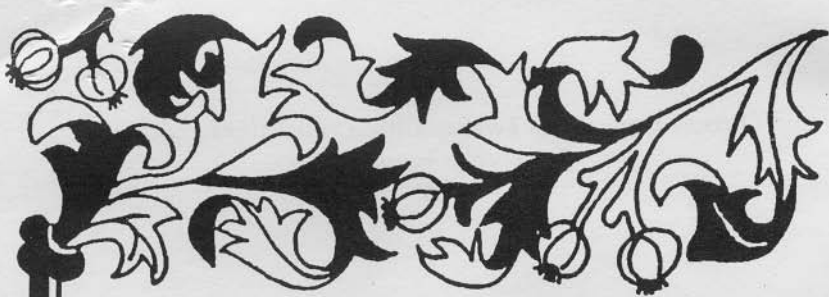
- 3 Two trans-Atlantic perspectives: Herwig Wolfram, "'Medieval Studies in America' and 'American Medievalism,'" *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 11 (1977): 396–408; and Giles Constable, "The Many Middle Ages: Medieval Studies in Europe as Seen from America," *Bilan et perspectives des études médiévales en Europe*, Actes du premier Congrès européen d'études médiévales (Spoleto, 27–29 mai 1993), ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, *Textes et Etudes du Moyen Age* 3 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Etudes Médiévales, 1995) 1–22.
- 4 No single event can mark the beginning of a cultural movement, but the changes in American art at about this time do indeed seem remarkably abrupt. See Meyer Schapiro, "The Introduction of Modern Art in America: The Armory Show," written in 1952 and reprinted in *Modern Art: 19th and 20th Centuries. Selected Papers* (New York: George Braziller, 1978) 135–78: "About 1913 painters, writers, musicians, and architects felt themselves to be at an epochal turning-point corresponding to an equally decisive transition in philosophical thought and social life" (138). A more circumstantial account of the Armory Show is provided by Milton W. Brown, *The Story of the Armory Show* (New York: The Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation, [1963]). Abraham A. Davidson's *Early American Modernist Painting, 1910–1935* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981) offers a clear-headed look at the wider context of American art in this period.
- 5 Daniel Joseph Singal, "Towards a Definition of American Modernism," *American Quarterly* 39.1, Special Issue: Modernist Culture in America (1987): 7–26.
- 6 A partial bibliography will serve to indicate what I mean. The collection of essays entitled *Medieval Studies in North America*, eds. Francis G. Gentry and Christopher Kleinhenz (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1982) could be seen as an early manifestation of the phenomenon, but its emphasis was descriptive rather than prescriptive. In addition to the titles cited below, see Keith Busby, ed., *Towards a Synthesis? Essays on the New Philology* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993); William D. Paden, *The Future of the Middle Ages: Medieval Literature in the 1990s* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1994); John Van Engen, ed., *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies* (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1994); and William Gentrup, ed., *Reinventing the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Constructions of the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998).
- 7 "Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 1–10; and "The New Medievalism: Tradition and Discontinuity in Medieval Culture," in Marina S. Brownlee, Kevin Brownlee, and Stephen G. Nichols, eds., *The New Medievalism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991) 1–26. See also R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols, eds., *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996), which despite its title is not about the modernism that developed as a cultural movement early in the twentieth century but about French philology and the other "new" philologies of the nineteenth century.
- 8 "The New Medievalism" 1.
- 9 *Speculum* 68 (1993): 112–13.
- 10 Nichols, "The New Medievalism" 2.
- 11 "The New Medievalism" 1–2.
- 12 Both the "New Philology" and the "New Medievalism" are problematic names quite apart from the definitions attached to them. See Richard Utz, "Resistance to (The New) Medievalism? Comparative Deliberations on (National) Philology, *Mediävalismus*, and *Mittelalter-Rezeption* in Germany and North America," in *The Future of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Problems, Trends, and Opportunities for Research*,

- ed. Roger Dahood, *Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 2* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998) 151–70.
- 13 E. K. Rand, "Editor's Preface," *Speculum* 1 (1926): 3–4; George R. Coffman, "The Mediaeval Academy of America: Historical Background and Prospect," *Speculum* 1 (1926): 5–18; Ralph Adams Cram, "The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1925–1935," printed copy of the Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the Medieval Academy (Medieval Academy files) 11–14; George R. Coffman, "The Mediaeval Academy: Evaluation and Reevaluation," *Speculum* 22 (1947): 446–57; and Luke Wenger, "The Medieval Academy and Medieval Studies in North America," in Gentry and Kleinhenz, *Medieval Studies in North America* 23–39.
 - 14 Wenger 27 and n.11.
 - 15 Plans for the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto were being developed during this period. It would be interesting to explore whether the program of the Pontifical Institute influenced the founders of the Academy or vice versa.
 - 16 For an introduction to the importance of modernism in American intellectual history, see David A. Hollinger, "The Canon and Its Keepers: Modernism and Mid-Twentieth-Century American Intellectuals," in his collection of essays, *In the American Province: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ideas* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985) 74–91.
 - 17 Cram's 1926 lecture is unpublished. A handwritten draft among the Cram papers in Boston Public Library bears a different title, "Medievalism and Modern Life." Reports of the lecture, with extensive quotations, appeared in *The Boston Evening Transcript* 24 Apr. 1926 and *The Boston Herald* 25 Apr. 1926. The presidential address of 1934 was published privately, and a copy is in the files of the Medieval Academy.
 - 18 *Speculum* 18 (1943): 288.
 - 19 *My Life in Architecture* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969); on 263 he refers to modernism as "the nervous fad for abnormality" that "came over from an exhausted and disillusioned Europe." See also Douglass Shand-Tucci, *Boston Bohemia, 1890–1900. Ralph Adams Crams: Life and Architecture* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1995); the second volume of this excellent study is forthcoming.
 - 20 *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown* (London, 1924) 4.
 - 21 *Freud, Jews, and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York, 1978) 21–22.
 - 22 Singal 3 and elsewhere.
 - 23 Kirk Varnedoe, *A Certain Fine Disregard: What Makes Modern Art Modern?* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990) 14. The heroic view of American art history is well represented by Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).
 - 24 The tallies of Medieval Academy data are my own, but much of the data collection was done by Lin Garber. Assistance in analyzing the data was provided by Jacqueline Brown.
 - 25 *Progress of Medieval and Renaissance Studies in the United States and Canada* (the original title was slightly different) was published at the University of Colorado from 1923 to 1960, first by James Willard and then by S. Harrison Thomson. To the best of my knowledge the historical data in this bulletin have yet to be exploited.
 - 26 The data I am using were compiled before the completion of the survey that was conducted in preparation for the 2000 directory of Academy members. With regard specifically to the awarding of Ph.D.s, new and better information will also be forthcoming from Roger Dahood's survey of Ph.D. recipients from 1995 to the present,

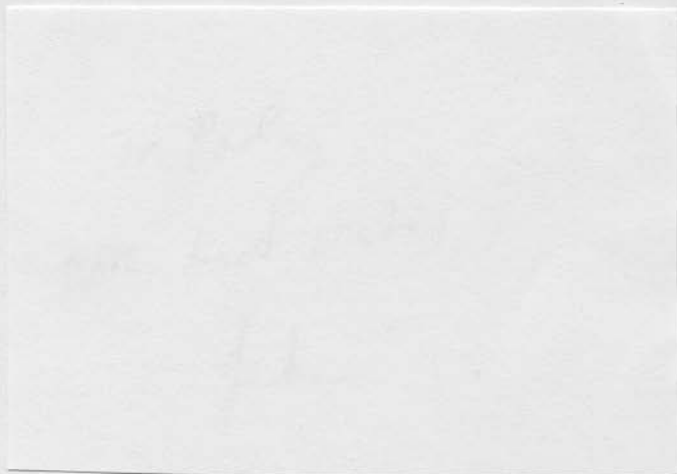
undertaken with the support of the Medieval Academy and its Committee on Centers and Regional Associations.

- 27 Peter Monaghan, "Medievalists, Romantics No Longer, Take Stock of Their Changing Field," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 30 Oct. 1998: A15-A17.





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A decorative floral element at the bottom left of the title, featuring stylized leaves and circular motifs.

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