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Abstracts

LUCIO RICCETTI, L'«infanzia del gusto». Il collezionismo di ceramica medievale e rinascimentale in America fra Otto e Novecento. Un'introduzione

This article, supported by extensive bibliographic references, presents a particular moment in the development of a collecting sensibility focused on Italian medieval and Renaissance maiolica in the United States, an subject little explored in scholarly literature. The argument is treated with a broad focus, considering a wide range of issues that characterize the phenomenon of collecting in the later 19th and early 20th century, including *primitivism*, market dynamics, the rule of Cantagalli manufactures and the figure of the dealer (and not only European dealers), taking into account the rise of the first museums of “applied arts”. The author focuses on some particularly unexplored aspects which form the two cardinal points in the argument: (a) the role of Boston, with the early formation of private collections of ceramics and the first collections linked to the Boston Athenaeum and the Museum of Fine Arts and (b) the exhibition of the Castellani Collection at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 and subsequently in New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art) in 1877. Previously little known figures emerge, including Elizabeth Chapman Lawrence, while better known figures like James Jackson Jarves, early collector of Italian Primitives, is shown also to have collected maiolica. The background for this argument is formed by the famous collectors who characterize the early 20th century in America: Martin A. Ryerson of Chicago, Henry Walters of Baltimore, and, above all, J. P. Morgan in New York. This reading creates a broad and lively discussion, centered around these ceramic objects, which articulates the definition of a new cultural sensibility.