Editorial
Medieval Views – The Middle Ages through the Lenses of 19th Century Photographers

William Henry Fox Talbot chose a programmatic route when he travelled to Scotland in the autumn of 1844: His journey was to follow the traces of one of the leading novelists of the medieval revival, Sir Walter Scott (1877–1832). Talbot's itinerary comprised places where Scott had lived, monuments commemorating the writer, as well as regions that figure in his fiction. This choice of destinations can be seen as emblematic for the 19th century's lively interest in the Middle Ages and it is, as this special issue aims to show, but one example of photography's participation in 19th century medieval revival.

Figure 1
William Henry Fox Talbot,
The Tomb of Sir Walter Scott, in Dryburgh Abbey,
1844, salted paper print, 16,8 x 17,9 cm.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 2
William Henry Fox Talbot,
Loch Katrine, 1844,
salted paper print, 17,3 x 21,1 cm.
Princeton University Art Museum.

Recently, the medieval revival has been given increased attention. Several conferences addressed 19th century medievalism often leaving the well-trodden paths and looking at the fringes of its established canon. To name but two examples: The "Bildarchiv FotoMarburg" launched a conference in January 2012 that addressed the early survival of medieval art, covering the time span before 1700.[1] One year later, a symposium held at Yale University was dedicated to "Medievalism, Modernity & the Sacred in Britain and America after 1900".[2]

This issue chooses a new perspective, shifting the focus from the core of the hitherto mainly researched medieval revival in works of architecture, painting, and literature to its manifestation in photography. The stimulus for this issue was given by a panel held at the 47th International Congress on Medieval Studies that focussed on medieval themes in pictorialism.[3] From there, the idea evolved to study the differing manifestations of the medieval revival on a broader basis.

The medieval revival in photography concerns a wide range of photographic genres and is linked to many developments crucial to the history of photography in the 19th century. To return to the example of Talbot, his photographic journey through Scotland is strongly connected with the formation of landscape photography as he not only photographed physical traces of Scott including his grave (fig. 1) but also landmarks like Loch Katrine (fig. 2), that had inspired Scott's writing.[4] After his return, Talbot published this calotype along with 22

1. The two-day conference under the title "Rezeption mittelalterlicher Kunst vor 1700. Inszenierung, funktionale Umdeutung und antiquarische Interpretation." was held from 19–20 January in 2012. (http://www.fotomarburg.de/aktuelles/events/mittelalterrezeption). A publication is in preparation.
2. The symposium took place in New Haven (CT) on 23 February 2013 (http://www.yale.edu/ism/events/MedievalModern.htm).
3. This world's largest conference on medieval studies is held annually at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo (MI, USA). The panel was initiated and organized by Caroline Fuchs under the title "Medieval Views - The Role of the Medieval in Pictorial Photography".

4. Loch Katrine provides the location for a momentous encounter in Scott's popular poem *The Lady of the Lake* (first published in Edinburgh: John Ballantyne and Company/London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown and W. Miller, 1810).
5. Graham Smith, 'William Henry Fox Talbot's Views of Loch Katrine', in: *Bulletin of the Museums of Art and Archaeology, Michigan*, vol. 7, 1984/1985, 55. – While the juxtaposition of photographs and Scott's works was not unusual – together with photographs that were deemed suitable, many were delivered in several fascicles bound by the subscribers – his approach stands out from this practice as a photographic essay dedicated to Scott.

Figure 3
Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres,
Dream of Ossian, 1813, Oil on canvas.
Musée Ingres, Mountaboun.

others in his second publication, *Sun Pictures in Scotland* (1845), thereby not only producing one of the first books that includes landscape photography but also the first photographic publication dedicated to Scott.[5] This choice of subject "coincides precisely with the apotheosis of [...] Scott in Scotland"[6] with the erection of a monument dedicated to him in Edinburgh in the same year.

Scott, highly educated and knowledgeable of the past, influenced a whole generation in its engagement with the Middle Ages and was often, albeit wrongly, regarded by contemporaries as the initiator of the medieval rival.[7] In fact, the origins of this development lie deeply rooted in the 18th century with a strong focus on Britain; for instance, the publication of the pseudo-medieval *Songs of Ossian*[8] influenced a vast number of artists although their authenticity was questioned from the beginning. Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Werther*,[9] for instance, prefers *The Songs of Ossian* to the antique tales of Homer, and Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780–1867) painted *The Dream of Ossian* (fig. 3) for Napoleon Bonaparte in 1813.

In the wide sense, the foundations of the medieval revival lie in a growing interest in the past accompanied by the establishment of the academic historic sciences that Stephen Bann calls "the rise of history".[10] The reasons for its concentration on the Middle Ages are manifold and complex. On a broader level, the medieval revival of the 19th century can be seen

6. Smith 1984/1985 (reference 3) 51.
7. As Mark Girouard puts it in his concise study on the medieval revival and its influence on 19th century English gentlemen: "By his writing Scott encouraged aristocrats and country gentlemen to build castles and cram their halls with weapons and armours; he made young girls thrill to the thoughts of gallant knights, loyal chieftains and faithful lovers; he spurred young men on to romantic gestures and dashing deeds in both love and war. He so glamorized the clans and the Jacobites that he virtually created the tourist industry of the Highlands..." (Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot. Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, New Haven/London: Yale, 1981, 30).

8. James Macpherson published *Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands of Scotland* in 1760. The authenticity of this collection of allegedly translated ancient Gaelic poetry that centred on the bard Ossian was heavily debated from the start. While opinions still differ about the evaluation of MacPherson's work, it is clear that his publication is a mixture of translation, adaptation and creation.
9. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers,* first published in 1774.
10. Stephen Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History*, New York, NY [u.a.]: Twayne, 1995, 3.

Figure 4
Stephen Ayling, *Westminster, Henry VII Chapel Exterior and Westminster Hall*, 1867, albumen print, 41,5 x 55,5cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Ayling's photograph shows two buildings in the same style but from different periods. In the foreground, the Henry VII Chapel built in the early 16th century and, in the background, the Palace of Westminster, designed by Charles Barry and A.W.N. Pugin, construction of which began in 1835. This building has become iconic of Gothic Revival architecture.

as a counter-reaction to the enlightenment. Mostly ignored by the age of reason, the Middle Ages formed a suitable – and seemingly untouched – projection surface for 19th century ideas and ideals. While international in its scope, this medieval revival was often encouraged by nationalist ambitions. In an attempt to find one's own cultural roots, European countries turned to their medieval past often idealizing it as a time of pureness, simplicity and honesty. To some extent the end of the Napoleonic Wars, during which French troops had conquered vast parts of Europe and shipped their national heritage to the Louvre, spurred a national-istic wave when the Congress of Vienna established new national boundaries in Europe in 1815. In most countries, the Middle Ages stood for the people's genuine past as opposed to an antiquity closely associated with the Roman subjugation of one's own barbaric ancestors and the Renaissance and more recent Classicism that seemed too closely linked to the Napoleonic Empire.[11] One consequence of this reversion was the rise of national philologies as opposed to the study of classics. In some countries – Italy and Germany for instance – the Middle Ages were regarded as a time of much-longed-for national unity. The subsequent idealisation of the Middle Ages is often tangible within the works of the medieval revival. One paradigmatic example can be found in the writing of the German poet Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853) who in the prologue to his collection of Swabian Minnelieder of the Middle Ages describes this era as "felt to be a sacred, unknown realm, waiting to be discovered, that all deeply moved and fervent souls had augured".[12]

The various forms of the medieval revival, which only achieved its full scope in the 19th century when it became an international phenomenon with deeply intertwined

11. In this context, it is crucial to note that Napoleon Bonaparte himself was an admirer of the *Songs of Ossian*, hence Ingres' painting mentioned above that was intended for his bed-chamber in Rome. Still the Napoleonic era and the accom-panying "Empire" style were closely connected to Antiquity (Egyptian, Roman and Greek).

12. "heiliges unbekanntes Land zu ahnden und endlich zu entdecken, von dem alle gerührten und begeisterten Gemüther geweissagt haben" Ludwig Tieck, *Minnelieder aus dem Schwäbischen Zeitalter*, 2nd edition, Berlin: 1803 [1803], 1. Tieck adapted medieval poems by keeping the original wording and at the same time altering the text to fit with contemporary reading habits.

Figure 5
Julia Margaret Cameron,
The Parting of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere,
illustration to Tennyson's Idylls of the King,
c. 1874, albumen print
from a glass negative, 35 x 28 cm.
Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

manifestations and reached the public at large, are just as manifold as the reasons for its beginning and development. In architecture, the Gothic revival broadened into an internationally acclaimed style, often placing new structures next to their models (fig. 4). Medieval themes and styles governed a large part of the century's painting from the Lukasbund[13] established by German painters in Vienna to the illustrations of the Kelmscott Press (see below). In literature, the historic novel, often set in the Middle Ages, became most popular through Scott's early works; in particular, his Waverly novels that were translated into many languages soon after their publication.

While this movement is often associated with the arts of painting, architecture and literature, it is not confined to these realms. Scientists discovered the medieval legacy, artists of all media and genres explored it for their creations, and medieval monuments became a popular destination of excursionists and tourists; in short, the medieval revival became a governing zeitgeist of the century including photography. How interwoven the single manifestations of this movement were, can be seen in Talbot's example. His journey did not rely on truly medieval sources; instead, he followed the traces of a medievalist of his parent's generation, whose writings had an enormous influence on 19th century culture and commerce.[14] This interrelatedness can be found in many other examples. Tieck's Swabian Minnelieder, for instance, were illustrated by one of the leading painters of Romanticism in Germany, Phillipp Otto Runge (1777–1810). Spurred by the pseudo-medieval poetry of Ossian, Tennyson and other poets turned to the Middle Ages. Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* telling the story of King Arthur were, in their turn, illustrated by photographer Julia Margaret Cameron (fig. 5). Her vision of a medieval story mediated

13. Founded in Vienna in 1808 on the initiative of Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789–1869) und Franz Pforr (1788–1812), the Lukasbund is part of the Nazarene movement. The Nazarenes turned to artists of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance for inspiration seeking models for a renewed (Christian) spirituality in art.

14. It has often been noted that Scott's novels and poems started tourism in Scotland.

Figure 6
Franz von Seitz, *Figurines to the World premiere of „Tristan und Isolde" in Munich*, Watercolour (reproduced in black and white). Austrian National Library, Vienna, Picture Archives and Graphic Department.

through romantic poetry is a tender one, focussing on love and loss. This emotional charge of the medieval epics that is strongly altered to match the ideals of the Romanticists can also be found in other interpretations such as Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (fig. 6), a story similarly descending from the Middle Ages but heavily changed and transformed into a libretto and opera by the German composer that walks a fine line between adaptation and new creation.

While often associated with Romanticism, the interest in the Middle Ages does not cease with the end of this period. While Romanticism and the Gothic revival begin to lose ground in the 1870s, new movements, in particular the Arts and Crafts Movement, incorporate the medieval legacy in their own way. One of its most prolific proponents, William Morris, founded the Kelmscott Press in 1891 that modelled its book design on medieval manuscripts and published texts by medieval revival authors including Tennyson (fig. 7). All these examples show that medieval elements inform 19th century's culture, even if the recurrences to the Middle Ages are motivated by different ideas and ideals and therefore vary in their appearance.

While the medieval revival forms a strong cultural movement in the 19th century, this century is at the same time characterised by the invention of photography. As a medium that played an important role in the century's visual culture, photography is as much a part of the widespread engagement with the Middle Ages as any other cultural manifestation of its time. But its dealings with this phenomenon are, of course, guided by its own paradigms and discourses. On the one hand, its alleged accuracy rendered it ideal as a tool for recording, with mechanical preciseness, monuments of the past that appeared – or were indeed – threatened with being lost for posterity. The French *Missions Héliographiques* (from 1851) that were dedicated to record the nation's landmarks and later served restorers like Eugène Violet-le-Duc can be seen in this context as can the photographic documentation of *Old Paris* by Eugène Atget (1857–1927), a project he started in 1898 capturing pre-revolutionary parts of the city threatened by modernisation. On the other hand, photography's inherent concurrence of the past and the present was perfectly suited for an exploration of the past that oscillated between its idealisation, the longing to
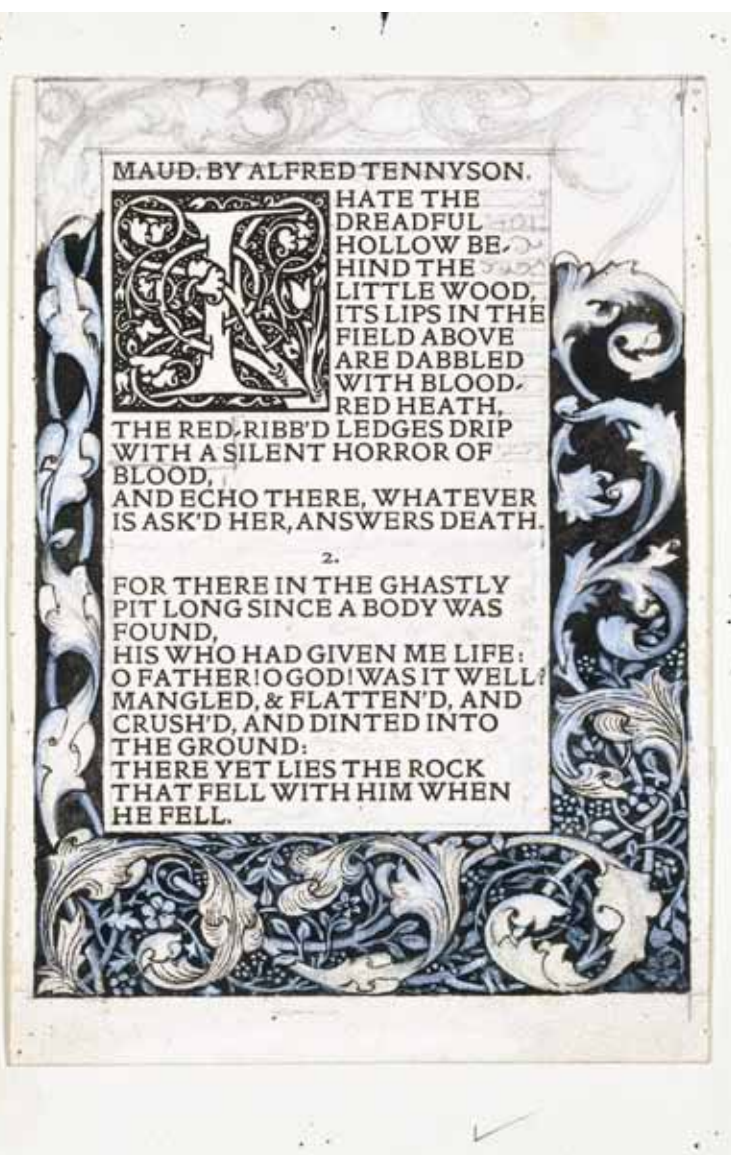
relive it (as tangible in Tieck's prologue) and the reflection on the inconsistencies accompanying any such project. Again, Talbot's *Tomb of Sir Walter Scott, in Dryburgh Abbey* (fig. 1) can be taken as representative for these aspects. At first glance, this photograph depicts a medieval ruin in its state at the time and can be regarded as a document of its condition. But the second glance reveals an iron gate barring one of the abbey's pointed arches. The viewer is confronted with the coincidence of a deserted medieval structure and a rather new addition. To contemporary observers familiar with the medieval revival and the antiquarian culture of their time, this addition was recognizable as the grave of Scott, who befittingly wished to be buried within the remains of this derelict Gothic abbey. Talbot's photograph, therefore, forms a liaison between the medieval past and 19th century adaption of this era. It condenses a double reference to the Middle Ages that plays on the medium's own strengths and characteristics, using its simultaneity of present and past to depict the coincidence of medieval structures and their contemporary adaptation represented by Scott's grave. Such ambiguous referentiality can be discovered in many examples discussed in this issue and the reader is encouraged to trace the characteristics described above in the following essays and let them generate the varied field of the medieval revival in photography during the 19th century.

The so-called "long 19th century" offers a sensible time frame for exploring any aspect of that century's medieval revival. As many studies have shown, the broadening of this century's boundaries to span the time between the French Revolution and the First World War provides a useful frame for the analysis of many phenomena occurring during this period. The term as coined by Eric Hobsbawm[15] has become an established point of reference for historical studies as it concurs with several political and cultural changes.[16] As the essays in this journal – three of which deal with the period around or shortly after 1900 – show, the sphere of photography is no exception and demonstrate that the century's cultural phenomena did not cease with the centennial. Starting with photography's introduction, the medium's engagement with the Middle Ages ceases with the end of the medieval revival in the 1910s. While the nationalist propaganda of the First World War still relied on ideas of medieval chivalry and heroism (fig. 8) profiting from the Romantic idea of the fight for a right cause,[17] the realities of war too-well-known to the Europeans in 1918 ended such reveries and rendered all ideas

15. The British Historian Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012) is best known for his trilogy of publications covering this era: *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (1962), *The Age of Capital: 1848–1875* (1975), and *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914* (1987).
16. While the beginning of the long 19th century is undisputed, the end is more flexible. Hobsbawm saw the outbreak of the war in 1914 as its ending point,

others have preferred 1917 as the year in which the United States entered the conflict, thus converting it into a world war, and the Russian Revolution took place (Franz J. Bauer, *Das "lange" 19. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 2004, 14).
17. This idea is also described by Girouard (Girouard 1981 (reference 3) 276) as is figure 8.

Figure 8
Parliamentary Recruiting Committee,
Britain Needs You At Once,
lithograph poster printed by
Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd. London E. C., 76 x 50cm.
Library of Congress, Washington D. C.

and ideals associated with it out-dated. Therefore, the time span covered in this issue ends with the turn of the long 19th century, concentrating on its particular engagement with the Middle Ages that ended with the First World War. If medieval themes and topics occur after that time at all, they strike a very different note compared to their 19th century predecessors. Albert Renger-Patzsch's photographs of 13th century castles in southern Italy (fig. 9) produced at the end of his life are such a rare example, exchanging the atmospheric depictions of the 19th century for a formal appraisal of medieval structures.

The essays in this issue cover a broad methodological spectrum and discuss the phenomenon from the introduction of photography to the end of the medieval revival in the 1910s.

Paul–Louis Roubert starts with an essay focussing on the history of the terms used to describe the new invention of the daguerreotype. As he shows, the painters of the so-called Troubadour style depicting medieval genre scenes were concerned with "exactitude", the term most widely used in 1839 when the daguerreotype was invented, in their handling of form and historical detail. While this concurrence of terms does not result in a narrative manifestation of the medieval revival in French photography,[18] Italian photographers devoted themselves to such topics. **Pierangelo Cavanna**'s essay focuses on photographic records from the Piedmont area. Here, medieval villages and pageants provided photographers with a set that allowed them to explore genres associated with painting thereby creating an awareness of the artistic possibilities inherent in the photographic medium.

Another artistic approach in photography, this time born of an engagement with romantic fiction, can be found in photographs analysed by **Andrea Wolk Rager**. Her essay features Frederick H. Evans' photographs of Kelmscott Manor tracing their correspondence with a fictional journey written by the place's owner, William Morris, and exploring its relationship to the Gothic revival. While both, text and photographs, are governed by a desire for an idealised past, Evans' images of the manor also convey a sense of the failure accompanying this desire.

18. The influence of the medieval revival in photography can instead be found in the documentary projects mentioned earlier.

The inconsistency inherent in recreations of the past tangible in Evans' work is the governing theme of Hill and Adamson's photographs taken at another pseudo-medieval estate. Their self-reflexive approach to the antiquarian culture of their time is the topic of **Jordan Bear**'s essay that reveals another form of self-awareness in the relationship between photographer and model. While Hill and Adamson's early examples of the photographic engagement with the Middle Ages and the antiquarian culture of the 19th century represent an intellectual response to these currents, **Dorothea Peters**' essay deals with a much more practical endeavour to satisfy a public and specialised demand for architectural photographs of medieval buildings (which include buildings finished in their original style in the 19th century, as is the case with the Cologne Cathedral). Analysing their development in Germany during the 19th century, she focuses on the interrelation between these photographs and the emerging discipline of art history that represents one result of the above mentioned "rise of history".

Figure 9
Albert Renger-Patzsch, 'Catania, Sicily. Castell Urbino, view from southwest', 1961, in: Hanno Hahn und Albert Renger-Patzsch, *Hohenstaufenburgen in Süditalien*, München: Bruckmann, 1961, plate 64. @ Albert Renger-Patzsch / Archiv Ann und Jürgen Wilde, Zülpich / VBK Vienna und VG Bild-Kunst Bonn 2013.

The two essays completing this issue of the *PhotoResearcher* address more general consequences of 19th century engagement with the Middle Ages. **Franziska Maria Scheuer** approaches the corpus of autochromes showing medieval stained glass windows. Although both media are related through their common reliance on light to enable their perception, this coincidence does not suffice to explain the numerousness of such autochromes. On the contrary, it is much more likely that autochromists stylistically deeply rooted in pictorialism discovered this concourse of technique because medieval structures were one of the esteemed subjects for the artistic photography in the first place. A different implication of photography's engagement with the Middle Ages is outlined by **Anne Lyden**'s essay on the legacy of Frederick H. Evans' photographs of medieval churches. She traces the similarities between his photographs and the photographs of the Photo-Secession depicting the modern high-rises of New York thereby highlighting a link between the legacy of 19th century photography and the 20th century era of Straight Photography. Her essay can be regarded as emblematic for the important role photography's participation in the medieval revival played in the medium's development on the whole.

The issue at hand shall be seen as a first step to a fuller understanding of its part in the history of photography and 19th century culture.

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