

# “Reproductions of the Christian Glass of the Catacombs”: James Jackson Jarves and the Revival of the Art of Glass in Venice

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IN 1881, THE NEWLY FOUNDED METROPOLITAN Museum of Art received a gift of nearly three hundred pieces of Venetian glass ranging in date from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The donor was James Jackson Jarves (1818–1888) of Boston, who gave the collection in memory of his father, Deming Jarves (1790–1869), owner of the Boston-and-Sandwich Glass Company and the Cape Cod Glass Company. An excellent account by Jessie McNab of the collection appeared in a 1960 issue of the *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*.<sup>1</sup> This article singles out a group of three nineteenth-century pieces made in imitation of the so-called gold-glass produced in the late Roman period.

Jarves himself wrote an introduction to his collection that was published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in February 1882.<sup>2</sup> He notes the survival of “a sufficient number of old examples to give some idea of the forms, fashions and qualities of the ancient Venetian glass, whilst its other multifarious types are admirably illustrated in the artistic reproductions of the present Salviati and Venezia–Murano companies.” The revival of interest in historic Venetian glass began about 1860; Antonio Salviati founded his company in London and Venice in 1866. By the time of the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1878, the full range of historic styles had been developed to include copies of ancient Egyptian, Phoenician, and Roman models as well as the traditional Murano forms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At that point, there were two rival factories: Salviati and the Venice & Murano Glass and Mosaic Company. Their products were rarely signed or marked, and therefore they are often indistinguishable. Jarves bought from both. The dating is equally problematic. The output of both factories remained much the same from the 1870s until well into the first decade of the twentieth century, and so it has been difficult to date their pieces within those four decades. However, the Jarves gift of 1881 presents a group of nineteenth-century Venetian glass

pieces that must have been made within the first fifteen years of the industry's revival. It is thus one of the very few datable groups outside Murano. In Jarves's words, “These serve to compare with the workmanship of the preceding centuries, and to mark the vigorous condition of the industry in our own time in the few years of revival.”

Among the categories to which Jarves devotes special praise are the “reproductions of Christian glass of the fourth and fifth centuries found in the tombs and catacombs, in the form of paterae and cups, with emblematic designs and figures of the primitive Church traced in gold inclosed between two pieces of glass in a very skillful manner . . . chiefly heads of saints and Bible stories, imbedded in the glass itself or placed in the form of medallions between two layers of different colors, which are fused together in the furnace into one compact mass.” Jarves would have been well aware that the reproduction of this long-lost technique was a recent development. Indeed, he mentions these reproductions in the context of the *Esposizione Industriale Italiana* of 1881 in Milan, which he evidently attended and where he may have purchased his gold-glass group. What is of special interest here is that the revival of Early Christian gold-glass is well documented as dating from 1878, when reproductions were first shown at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. We can therefore date Jarves's examples, exceptionally, to 1878–81.

The three examples with which Jarves chose to represent this category of work are a bowl, a plate, and a large roundel or base of a plate (Figures 1–3). Both bowl and plate are of very pale green glass with threads of contrasting color around the edge, a feature derived from Roman glass that invariably appears on nineteenth-century copies. The bowl has two small handles. In the center is a roundel depicting Jonah resting beneath the gourd vine incised in gold leaf trapped between two layers of glass (Figure 1). The plate has incised and trapped gold-leaf decoration depicting a single male figure and medallions of saints surrounding a central medallion (Figure 2). In both

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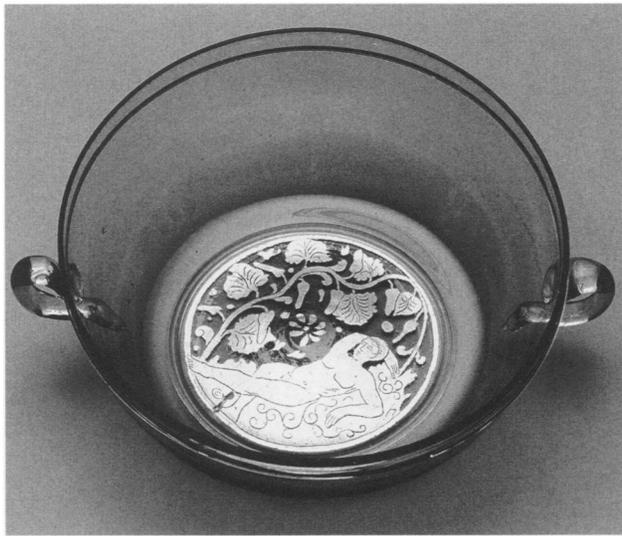


Figure 1. Glass bowl with gold-leaf decoration of Jonah resting beneath the gourd vine. Venice, Murano, 1878–81. Diam. 5 1/4 in. (13.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of James Jackson Jarves, 1881 (81.8.261)



Figure 2. Glass plate with gold-leaf medallions of saints. Venice, Murano, 1878–81. Diam. 7 7/8 in. (20 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of James Jackson Jarves, 1881 (81.8.262)

of the above, the gold leaf has been applied to a glass disk made separately and attached to the base. The large roundel is formed of two colorless glass layers; the upper one is much thicker and has been deliberately cracked. At the top the lower layer protrudes beyond it, revealing the gold leaf on the surface of the

lower layer. The scene depicts a young Christ holding wreaths above the heads of two seated saints, their names on either side (Figure 3). Around the edge can be seen the remains of an inscription, most of which has been broken away. The edges of the roundel were left rough.



Figure 3. Glass roundel with gold-leaf decoration of Christ crowning saints. Venice, Murano, 1878–81. Diam. 10 1/4 in. (26.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of James Jackson Jarves, 1881 (81.8.233)



Figure 4. Gold-glass roundel depicting Christ giving the martyr's crown to Saints Peter and Paul. Probably Rome, ca. 350. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1911 (11.91.4). The fragment is still embedded in mortar. It is inscribed "Worthy among thy friends" and "Joyful in Christ"



Figure 5. Base of an Early Christian bowl of the 4th century, copied in the bowl shown in Figure 1 (photo: after R. Garrucci, *Vetri ornati di figure in oro trovati nei cimiteri dei cristiani primitivi di Roma* [Rome, 1864], pl. 4, no. 5)

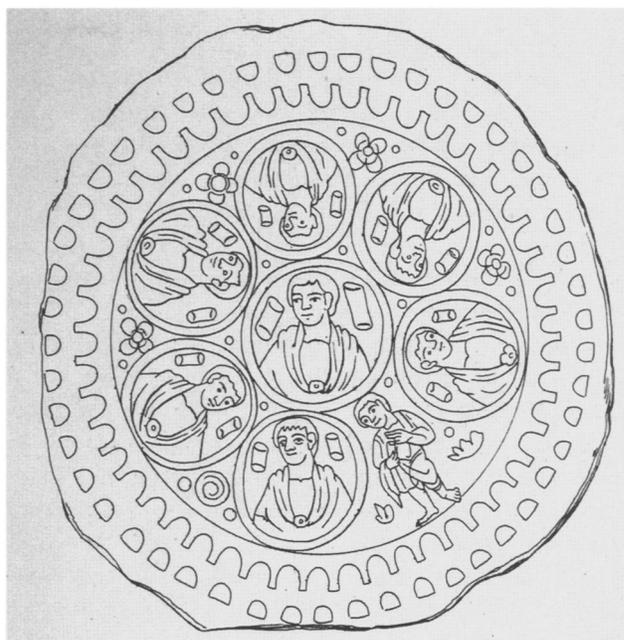


Figure 6. Base of an Early Christian bowl of the 4th century, copied in the plate shown in Figure 2 (photo: after R. Garrucci, *Vetri ornati*, pl. 18, no. 3)



Figure 7. Base of an Early Christian bowl of the 4th century, copied in the roundel shown in Figure 3 (photo: after R. Garrucci, *Vetri ornati*, pl. 20, no. 3)

The technique of applying gold leaf to the surface of glass or sandwiching it between two layers of glass seems to have been practiced from the Hellenistic to the late Roman period. But it was in fourth-century

Rome that glassmakers exploited it to the full with a series of roundels, either made as medallions in their own right or set at the bottom of bowls, known as “gold-glass.” These roundels depict portraits, deities, genre scenes, animals, and, above all, Christian motifs, and were usually produced by the sandwich technique. The gold leaf was incised with designs, often enhanced with painted or enameled details, then trapped between two layers of colorless glass. The German term *Zwischengoldglas* (gold between glass, or gold sandwich glass) is thus most accurate for this type of work. The fourth-century roundels with Christian scenes were found mainly in the catacombs of Rome, having been purposely broken away from their vessels and mortared into niches, perhaps to mark individual burials (Figure 4). Some display a variant of the technique, in which gold leaf was trapped beneath blobs of blue and green glass applied to a colorless glass base. Few complete vessels survive.

Antiquarian interest in glass from the catacombs goes back to the early eighteenth century, with Filippo Buonarroti’s study published in 1716.<sup>3</sup> However, the first illustrated survey was not published until 1858, Raffaele Garrucci’s *Vetri ornati di figure in oro trovati nei cimiteri dei cristiani primitivi di Roma*, with a second enlarged edition in 1864. Garrucci’s detailed lifesize line drawings were copied unaltered on countless Venetian reproductions. Jarves surely knew that all three of his pieces were direct copies of Early Christ-

ian gold-glass roundels in the Vatican Museums, and as a serious glass collector, he likely knew the motifs were taken directly from Garrucci's pioneering publication (Figures 5–7). The gold-glass roundels in the center of the Jarves bowl and plate are executed to virtually the same size as the illustrations in Garrucci, and the glass craftsman who made them simply completed their vessels. But the large roundel, at 10½ inches across, is almost three times the size of the illustration, which measures about 3¾ inches in diameter, and is a tour de force. Had the craftsman completed the vessel, the resulting dish would have measured at least 14 inches in diameter, a scale unheard-of in Roman glass. It must have been much more difficult to execute a gold-glass roundel of this size—the larger the area, the greater the risk that the gold leaf would slip out of place when the two glass layers were fused. Its exceptionally large size suggests that it was made as a show-piece to demonstrate the skill with which the Roman technique could be reproduced. Interestingly, the outer inscription survives complete on the original roundel in the Vatican. The edges of the Murano copy may have been broken away because the gold leaf misfired, but the most likely answer is that it was done deliberately to suggest antiquity. Although virtually illegible on the nineteenth-century copy, the inscription is clear from Garrucci's illustration: "DIGNITAS AMICORUM VIVAS CUM TUIS FELICITER" (The worth of friends. May you live happily among your friends and relations). The motif of Christ crowning saints, usually Peter and Paul, is a common subject in Early Christian gold-glass roundels. In this instance, the figure on the right, labeled "ISTEFANUS," is Saint Stephen. The left-hand figure is likely another saint, mistakenly labeled "CRISTUS" by the craftsman.

There is much evidence that ancient gold-glass was becoming fashionable among collectors by the mid-1860s. One might therefore expect that historicist copies would have appeared simultaneously. However, while some imitations were being passed off as the real thing, it was years before imitations were promoted as modern reproductions worthy of note in their own right. This evolution had much to do with the personalities behind the revival of interest in glassmaking in Venice and the course that revival took. The two key figures were Antonio Salviati (1816–1890), a lawyer of Vicenza, and the Englishman Henry Layard, who had made his name as a youthful archaeologist in the 1840s with his discoveries in ancient Assyria. He then turned politician and diplomat but maintained a life-long interest in the arts of Italy.

Salviati initially became fascinated with mosaics and got to know the few glassmakers in Venice still able to make glass tesserae to replace those in the dilapidated



Figure 8. Glass bottle with enameled and gilded coat of arms of the Bentivoglio family. Venice, 1878–81. H. 14¾ in. (37.5 cm). Copy by the Venice & Murano Glass and Mosaic Company of one of a pair of 15th-century glass bottles in the Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of James Jackson Jarves, 1881 (81.8.223ab)

mosaics of San Marco. To assist with their restoration, Salviati set up a mosaic workshop in 1859. At the International Exhibition of 1862 in London, Salviati exhibited his workshop's mosaics to such acclaim that he received immediate commissions for prestigious buildings such as Saint Paul's Cathedral and Windsor Castle. In Venice, meanwhile, with Layard's support, the antiquarian Father Vincenzo Zanetti founded in 1861 a school for glassmakers, and an associated museum, the Museo Artistico Industriale del Vetro (later the Museo Vetrario), was set up in 1864. Zanetti had single-handedly assembled a collection of historic glass that served as models. This prompted Salviati to turn his attention to blown glass, and with the financial support of Henry Layard and two of Layard's

associates—Lachlan Mackintosh Rate and William Drake—he founded a new concern, Salviati & Company, in 1866. It had premises in St. James's Street, London, and Campo San Vio, Venice. Layard's support continued, and he became in effect an agent for the promotion of Venetian glass: he ensured a place for Venetian glass at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867, where every piece in Salviati & Company's display sold, and arranged displays at the Workmen's International Exhibition in London in 1870. In 1869 Zanetti sent him a guidebook he had written on the occasion of an exhibition of Murano glass in Venice, asking Layard to have it translated into English and noting, with a certain amount of flattery, "you will be delighted to hear that the most beautiful and brilliant part of the exhibition belongs to your company."<sup>4</sup>

At the insistence of its English backers, Salviati & Company's name was changed in 1870, at the time of the Workmen's International Exhibition, to the Venice & Murano Glass and Mosaic Company Ltd. In 1877 Antonio Salviati left the Venice & Murano Company to form two independent glassworks: Salviati & Company for mosaics, and Salviati Dott. Antonio for art

glass, each with its own premises in Venice, near San Gregorio on the Grand Canal, and a London shop in Regent Street. He was underwritten by another Englishman, W. H. Burke, and the new firm was advertised in London as Salviati, Burke & Co. The Venice & Murano Glass and Mosaic Company continued to practice under that name at St. James's Street and under its Italian name, the Compagnia Venezia-Murano, in Campo San Vio.<sup>5</sup> Its new artistic adviser was Alessandro Castellani (1824–1883) of Rome, antiquarian, dealer, and partner in his father's celebrated goldsmithing firm. Castellani had his own family collection of ancient Roman glass, which became a rich source of inspiration for the Compagnia Venezia-Murano. The two concerns exhibited separately at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1878, with considerable rivalry. The Compagnia Venezia-Murano was awarded the *diplôme d'honneur* and two gold medals for its contribution. Salviati appealed and was assigned the *diplôme* instead, provoking the Compagnia Venezia-Murano to bring a counterappeal. In the end, the prize was given to the city of Venice!<sup>6</sup>

The display of modern Murano glass at the 1878



Figure 9. Glass shown by the Venice & Murano Glass and Mosaic Company at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1878. In the center is a copy of the Bologna bottle similar to that shown in Figure 8 (photo: after *Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Paris International Exhibition* [London, 1878], p. 126)

exhibition in Paris received widespread critical acclaim. Most accounts credit Salviati with the revival of glassmaking in Venice but say far more about the works shown by the Venice & Murano Glass Company. The reason, according to the German critic H. Frauenberger, was that Salviati's reduced means limited his production: "The Murano Company . . . possesses all the marvelous techniques rediscovered by Salviati, together with the excellent workmen that Salviati trained, but because they have so much English capital at their disposal, have come with larger, more impressive works than those shown in the display of Dr Salviati, who, having just set up his own factory, has to train new workmen."<sup>7</sup> So the Compagnia Venezia-Murano was in a better position to begin with. Moreover, it had trumped Salviati by publicizing its display with a privately printed catalogue in French and English, the English edition entitled *The Venice & Murano Glass and Mosaic Company. Catalogue of a selection from the articles exhibited by the Company at the Paris International Exhibition of 1878*.<sup>8</sup> It included seventy-nine entries for enameled and blown glass, followed by chandeliers, glass mosaics, and mural decorations. The blown glass included copies of antique pieces in the Murano museum and other Venetian collections; the Bologna museum; the Naples museum; the Vatican Museums; Saint Petersburg; the collection of Carl Disch in Cologne; the Castellani collection in Rome; and no fewer than seventy items copied from the famous collection of ancient and later glass that Felix Slade had bequeathed to the British Museum in 1868.<sup>9</sup>

The Murano revival had hitherto concentrated on copies of historic Venetian glass from the fifteenth century on, mostly based on originals in Venetian or at least Italian collections. Some are easily identifiable with pieces in the Jarves gift. For example, number 24 is described as a "Gourd-shaped vase with four handles, in straw-coloured glass, enamelled in dull gold colours, bearing in the centres two escutcheons of noble Roman families. Height 16 in. *After an original in the Bologna Museum.*" There is no doubt that this description corresponds to a bottle in the form of a Renaissance pilgrim flask in the Jarves gift to the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 8).<sup>10</sup> Further evidence that the Jarves piece is the work of the Venice & Murano Company is provided by the *Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Paris International Exhibition* (London, 1878), which devoted three whole pages to the Venice & Murano Company—perhaps not surprising, since it was in effect an English firm. The page in question is captioned "recent reproductions, and for the most part copies of antiques, specimens of which abound in Italy and in the collections of English connoisseurs" (Figure 9). In the center is a bottle of iden-

tical form but with a different coat of arms. The "original in the Bologna Museum" is in fact a pair of fifteenth-century Murano flasks, each bearing on either side the coat of arms of the Bentivoglio family and the Sforza family. They may have been made as a marriage gift or for some other commemorative purpose and are extremely rare survivals.<sup>11</sup> The version illustrated in the *Art Journal Catalogue* shows the Sforza arms, a serpent devouring a child. Both coats of arms appear on the Metropolitan Museum's flask, as on the originals. Both the originals and copy are of virtually colorless glass.

What was new in 1878 was the huge number of copies of ancient Roman or Early Christian glass. The sources for these copies were to be found, as has been noted, in collections throughout Europe. It is perhaps of interest that one of these ancient originals, from the collection of Alessandro Castellani, survives in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: a gold-banded skyphos, or two-handled vase. It was included in the sale of Castellani's effects held after his death in 1884 and subsequently owned by Edward C. Moore, art director at Tiffany & Company, who bequeathed it to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1891. Copies of this skyphos by the Venice & Murano Company are in the Corning Museum of Glass and the Museo Vetrario in Venice.<sup>12</sup>

Despite his smaller display, Salviati had also introduced copies of ancient Roman glass, including gold-glass reproductions. The *Gazette des beaux-arts* remarked on his "Christian vessels with designs in gold between two layers of glass."<sup>13</sup> If only the catalogue produced by the Venice & Murano Company in 1878 had been illustrated, we might be able to say with certainty which factory made the three gold-glass pieces from the Jarves gift. (None of the *Art Journal* pages illustrates copies of gold-glass either.) In the catalogue section headed "Christian and other 'Sgraffito' [scratched] glass," number 74 is listed as "PATERAE, ornamented with medallions in etched gold leaf, enclosed between two layers of glass. *These are imitations of the famous 'Christian' glass preserved in the Library and in the Christian Museum of the Vatican at Rome.*" Numbers 77 and 78 were "Dishes, with feet and etched gold-leaf ornaments, in the style of the VI century," and "Various pieces of the same style and character of work." Fortunately, however, pieces of gold-glass shown by the Venice & Murano Company at the 1878 exhibition survive, as they were purchased by some of the great decorative arts museums of Europe: the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin, the Museum für angewandte Kunst in Vienna, and the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Zurich. All are very close in conception and execution to the Jarves group.<sup>14</sup>

One is tempted to wonder why it was that both the

Venice & Murano Company and Salviati introduced reproductions at the Paris exhibition of 1878, given that examples of Early Christian gold-glass had been available and well published over the previous twenty years. Left to their own devices, the Venetian glassblowers would probably have continued to produce traditional Venetian forms. But with Alessandro Castellani's appointment as artistic adviser to the Venice & Murano Company in 1877, when Salviati went off on his own, a new intellectual impetus was provided. Henry Layard was no doubt behind this appointment, having been closely acquainted with Castellani since the 1850s.<sup>15</sup> Contemporary accounts leave little doubt that Castellani was the driving force behind the use of Roman and other models from antiquity. Julius Lessing, then director of the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin and Germany's most influential art critic, purchased a number of pieces for his museum and in a report on the 1878 exhibition wrote: "The production of Venetian glass has seen a new activity since Dr Salviati, who has run the excellent Venice & Murano Glass Company so successfully, has withdrawn from the company and set up his own workshops. The old factory continues and has received a new artistic stimulus through the collaboration of the celebrated Alessandro Castellani, whose radical influence is brilliantly demonstrated in the exhibition."<sup>16</sup> Castellani's own account explains his role in encouraging new sources of inspiration:

The occasion of the Paris Exposition spurred the Company to give a more traditional and artistic impulse to its products. They invited me to come to Venice and offer suggestions for improvement. Once there, I reviewed the technical procedures then in use on Murano, and saw that there was no reason to choose models only from the recent past. Rather, I felt, the challenge of studying and reproducing the most beautiful examples of ancient Graeco-Roman glass should be boldly met, in an attempt to recover the shapes, glass paste and colours of the originals. I suggested that they also reproduce the glass vessels found in early Christian tombs, following the methods described by Theophilus the monk. . . . The craftsmen of Murano, realising the validity of my ideas, which I propounded, explained, and illustrated with examples of antique glass from my own collection, set to work. . . . In a short time they were able to reproduce the Early Christian prototypes as well as Arab-Byzantine pieces, including the famous goblet in the treasury of St Mark's. Some of the more perfect examples were mounted in silver and gilt-silver in the style of the beautiful vases in this treasury.<sup>17</sup>

Not only did Alessandro Castellani suggest that the Venetian glassmakers copy Early Christian gold-glass; he also directed them to the twelfth-century treatise *Schedula diversarum artium* by Theophilus so that they could work out how to do it. In his passage on "Glass Goblets which the Byzantines Embellish with Gold and Silver," Theophilus describes the process in detail:

They take gold leaf, and from it shape representations of men or birds, or animals, or foliage. Then they apply these on the goblet with water, in whatever place they have selected. This gold leaf must be rather thick. Then they take glass that is very clear, like crystal, which they make up themselves, and which melts soon after it feels the heat of the fire. They grind it carefully on a porphyry stone with water and apply it very thinly over the gold leaf with a brush. When it is dry, they put the goblet in the kiln in which painted glass for windows is fired. Underneath they light a fire of beechwood that has been thoroughly dried in smoke; and when they have seen the flame penetrating the goblet long enough for it to take on a slight reddening, they immediately throw out the wood and block up the kiln until it cools by itself. This gold will never come off.<sup>18</sup>

By studying Theophilus, the Venice & Murano Company discovered the ancient method of making gold-glass, enabling far greater accuracy than in previous reproductions. This is confirmed by the German critic Frauenberger, quoted earlier: "For some time now, much effort has been made to produce every glass technique that has come down to us from antiquity: such as figures on gold grounds within the glass, yet the gold cannot be felt on the surface, being beneath a layer of glass and so no one knew how it was made. Now this time the Murano Company in Venice have exhibited successful copies of these ancient vessels."<sup>19</sup> As for Salviati's gold-glass reproductions, Murano is a small place. He must have been aware of the experimentation taking place in the rival workshop.

It is highly likely that Jarves was personally acquainted with Castellani or Layard, but his references to them are few, and one can only speculate. He mentions them both in his 1882 article and in a letter to General Luigi di Cesnola, director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, dated January 7, 1881. (The Layard papers in London contain no letters from Jarves.) His letter to Cesnola suggests he knew Layard, at least in the realm of discussing antiquities, and viewed Castellani as a formidable competitor in snapping up archaeological discoveries. He also writes of Etruscan objects being found in excavations, including the contents of a child's tomb which he "bagged, as Castellani was after them." Despite their rivalry, Jarves bought directly from Castellani. A later letter

mentions Mrs. Castellani as perhaps willing to lower the price of some antiquities because Castellani was in poor health.

The circumstances of the acquisition of the Jarves collection by The Metropolitan Museum of Art are interesting for what they reveal about Jarves's activities in Italy and his passionate wish to fill American museums with European art. Jarves had lived in Italy, mostly in Florence, for long periods since the early 1850s. It was during the 1850s that he assembled his collection of Italian primitives, for which he is best known and which was purchased by Yale University Art Gallery in 1868. From 1877 he was vice-consul in Florence. He continued his own collecting but was also instrumental in advising other American collectors in their purchases of Italian art. In 1880 Jarves persuaded Cornelius Vanderbilt, then a trustee of the Museum, to purchase from him a collection of old master drawings and present it to the Metropolitan Museum. These arrangements put him in contact with Cesnola. At the end of March 1881 Jarves again wrote to Cesnola from Florence, this time offering his collection of Venetian glass: "I have been preaching to others to give to the Museum, & now would like to practise in a humble way, if but as the widow's mite, what I wish I was able to do on a large scale. Recalling to you what I wrote March 15th regarding the collection of about 200 pieces of old Venetian glass, & the offer of a gentleman to buy it for 50,000 francs to give to the Museum, I would now state that I propose to make it my own personal gift." This suggests that Jarves had earlier hoped to sell the glass to Vanderbilt, who would then give it to the Museum, as had been done with the drawings. Jarves's letter goes on to say that the gift is offered on the conditions that it be kept together by itself; be known as the Jarves Gift; be the "inalienable" property of the Museum; and be arranged in locked cases, as far as possible according to styles and epochs; and that he should be permitted to "add to it as I find opportunity."

This official letter was followed by one marked "confidential," in which Jarves said: "By all rules of Yankee prudence I cannot afford to give it, as I have no fixed income and still have debts to pay in Boston before my real-estate is cleared of encumbrances made by an unfaithful agent. But my wife and children beg me to do it, & are willing to economize much & trust to providence in the future, that I may have the satisfaction of *doing what I preach to others* [the italics are his]."

A few months earlier, Cesnola had been accused by the French dealer Gaston Feuardent of having induced the Museum to buy supposedly forged Cypriot antiquities—the celebrated Curium trea-

sure—so Cesnola suspected Jarves of being a similarly unscrupulous dealer who might have ulterior motives. Cesnola wrote to the president of the Museum, John Taylor Johnston, for instruction, enclosing Jarves's official letter, noting that the collecting of glass was said to be worth \$20,000, and recommending that it be accepted as soon as possible. To this he added a private note:

I do not know personally Mr Jarves and I correspond with him only since Mr CV bought from him the drawings now in the Museum. I am afraid, between us, that Mr Jarves is somewhat of the same stamp as Mr Feuardent, wishing to make use of our Museum as a *lever* to make money for themselves; with this difference that Mr Jarves knows this country better than the Frenchman and Jarves finds rich Americans in Europe and makes them purchase his wares for the Museum. This donation from him direct to the Museum may be a smart move in some other direction on his part. However, we have no right to consider his donation in any other light but that of a generous contribution to our museum. I have heard a great deal of the said glass collection and though it may not have cost Mr Jarves \$5000 to secure it, there is no doubt that it is worth much more and could not be secured in France or England for double the amount.

Please let me know what answer I have to send to this Mr Jarves.<sup>20</sup>

The Museum accepted the glass. On July 3, 1881, Jarves wrote to tell of the packing and dispatch of the glass from Livorno. By this time the collection had grown significantly; it is clear that once his offer had been accepted by the Museum, Jarves was determined to make the collection as representative as possible. Correspondence between Jarves and Cesnola in the Museum archives indicates that between January and July 1881, it grew from 80 to 280 pieces. On January 7 he wrote that he had secured "about 50 pieces, but hearing of some remarkable specimens near Rimini I went further. I now have 80 very choice pieces. I got them mostly direct from first hands needing money." The assumption is that all 80 pieces were historic and that he had acquired the first 50 of them while in Florence, between 1877 and 1880. When he offered the collection in March he made no mention of modern examples, even though the collection had by then grown to 200 pieces. In June he wrote to Cesnola, "there are about 50 pieces of the modern Salviati glass," and as an afterthought inserted "Venezia-Murano etc." (Because Salviati was so closely associated with the Murano revival, "Salviati glass" had become a generic term for all modern Venetian glass, as Jarves recognizes in his addition here of the second

factory name.) On July 3 he writes that the collection numbers 280 pieces. This sequence indicates that the modern pieces were added in the last six months before the collection arrived in the Museum. We can probably be even more precise: In his 1882 article for *Harper's*, Jarves noted that the rival glass companies "both have made extraordinary progress, as the Exposition at Milan of 1881 of Italian industrial art clearly showed." The Milan exhibition ran from the end of April through May 1881. Knowing that the future of his collection was assured, Jarves must have gone to the Milan exhibition specifically to bring his collection up-to-date. This would explain the appearance of the modern pieces between March and June 1881.

Jarves obviously believed the inclusion of the modern pieces was important but saw no need to describe them in detail or to distinguish those made by Salviati from those made by the Venice & Murano Company. The old pieces, by contrast, all had labels "indicating appropriately their epochs by centuries, as given by the best experts. I have been assisted by Professor Zanetti, Director of the Museum of Murano, from whom I procured some of the oldest and most interesting examples, duplicates of the types in that Museum." Jarves goes on to say that he also had valuable aid from the glass expert Alexander Nesbitt in London<sup>21</sup> and recommends that the catalogue prepared for the glass in the South Kensington Museum (later the Victoria and Albert Museum) would be a good model to follow, if the Metropolitan Museum were to consider issuing a catalogue.

As an expression of the Museum's gratitude, Jarves was elected a patron, at the suggestion of Cornelius Vanderbilt. When the glass was installed, Vanderbilt wrote him that it looked "superb." Jarves supported Cesnola throughout the attacks against the Cypriot collection, which went on until 1884, and they continued to correspond. Jarves assisted the Museum with the acquisition of art objects abroad, as well as purchasing items for the private collections of Vanderbilt and another trustee, Henry Marquand. Jarves was preoccupied with obtaining art treasures for America to the end of his life. In 1886 he wrote to Cesnola from Italy that the duke of Monte de Marigliano was asking for the hand of his daughter, Italia Jarves: "[The duke] has a buried city on his property which he means to excavate. This touches me in my weak spot; & if the probation ends well & marriage takes place, I shall keep a sharp eye on that city for our museums." By that time, any suspicions that Cesnola had had must have been conquered.

Quite apart from his collecting activities, Jarves wrote at length on art and on museums.<sup>22</sup> Space does not permit an examination of his ideas on those

subjects, but some of them are as resonant today as they were upon publication. It seems appropriate to close this account with Jarves's own words: "In a cooperative, well-directed plan, first class museums might be speedily built up in our large cities on comparatively small endowments for running expenses, and supporting a competent corps of experts in the different departments to catalogue, decide and care for the objects. Should American legislators ever adopt the European idea as to the importance of museums in an educational sense, they may then follow the example of the older civilizations, and give them as prominent a place in their financial budgets as they do elementary and superior education in general. Until they do, however, our museums must subsist and increase by voluntary support."<sup>23</sup>

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Many members of the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum have helped in various ways. I am especially indebted to Jessie McNab, who provided information about the gold-glass pieces and kindly read the Jarves correspondence in the Museum's Archives for me; her detailed notes have enabled me to summarize it here. James David Draper (who first encouraged me to write about the Jarves Gift), Jeffrey H. Munger, and Stephanie Post have answered numerous queries.

## NOTES

1. Jessie McNab, "A Species of Creation," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* n.s., 19 (November 1960), pp. 91-100.
2. James Jackson Jarves, "Ancient and Modern Venetian Glass of Murano," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 64 (February 1882), pp. 177-90. This article was reprinted in Jarves's *Italian Rambles: Studies of Life and Manners in New and Old Italy* (London, 1883), but without illustrations.
3. Filippo Buonarroti, *Osservazioni sopra alcuni frammenti di vase antiche di vetro ornati di figure trovati nei cimiteri di Roma* (Florence, 1716).
4. Letter from Zanetti to Layard, June 18, 1869, in the British Library Layard Papers, Add. MSS 38996, fol. 288. For Zanetti's role in the Venetian glass revival, see *Vincenzo Zanetti e la Murano dell'Ottocento*, exh. cat. (Venice, 1983).
5. In the absence of a much-needed monograph on Salviati, I have taken the information about the firm from various sources. The most recent is Aldo Bova's chapter, "Alcune notizie sui protagonisti e le ditte muranesi dell'800," with its detailed biographies, in *Draghi, serpenti e mostri marini nel vetro di Murano dell'800*, exh. cat., Galleria Antiquaria s.a.s. di Aldo Bova (Venice, 1997),

- pp. 33–46 for the various Salviati companies, and pp. 30–32 and 51–21 for the Compagnia Venezia–Murano. This has a parallel English translation, but in the section on the Compagnia Venezia–Murano (CVM), the word “Salviati” appears erroneously instead of CVM, so it is less confusing to read the Italian. Equally useful is Bova’s chapter, “Il vetro di Murano alle esposizioni dell’800” in *Murrine e millefiori 1830–1930*, exh. cat., Galleria Rossella Junck (Venice, 1998). Previous literature includes Giovanni Mariacher and Rosa Barovier Mentasti, *Antonio Salviati e la rinascita ottocentesca del vetro artistico veneziano*, exh. cat., Museo Civico di Palazzo Chiericati (Vicenza, 1982), pp. 3–16, and the unpaginated artists’ biographies in Barbara Mundt, *Historismus. Kunsthandwerk und Industrie im Zeitalter der Weltausstellungen*, exh. cat., Kunstgewerbemuseum (Berlin, 1973).
6. See L. Enault, “L’Italie à l’Exposition Universelle,” *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (1878); quoted by Bova in *Murrine e millefiori*, pp. 199–200.
  7. H. Frauenberger, *Die Kunstindustrie auf der Pariser Weltausstellung 1878* (Leipzig, 1879), pp. 49–52.
  8. A copy of this rare catalogue is in The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Department of Drawings and Prints.
  9. See A. W. Franks, ed., *Catalogue of the Collection of Glass formed by Felix Slade, Esq., F. S. A. with Notes on the History of Glass Making by Alexander Nesbitt, Esq., F. S. A.* (London, 1871). The Slade collection of 944 pieces was well known before 1868 since Slade had lent pieces to a number of exhibitions in London and elsewhere. It is significant in this context that the Paris 1878 exhibition also had a section devoted to ancient art, as opposed to contemporary productions. A fine group of Roman, Venetian, and eighteenth-century glass was lent by a number of private collectors and fully described by Alfred Darcel. See Louis Gonse, *L’art ancien à l’Exposition de 1878* (Paris, 1879), pp. 276–81.
  10. McNab, “A Species of Creation,” fig. 8. Acc. no. 81.8.223.ab.
  11. For the Bologna flasks, see Renzo Grandi, ed., *Introduzione al Museo Civico Medievale* (Bologna, 1987), no. 34.
  12. For the gold-banded skyphos, see Andrew Oliver, “Late Hellenistic Glass in the Metropolitan Museum,” *Journal of Glass Studies* 9 (1967), pp. 28–29; for a more recent account, see J.-A. Page, L. Piloni, and M. T. Wypski, “Ancient Mosaic Glass or Modern Reproductions?” *Journal of Glass Studies* 43 (2001), pp. 115–39. This article illustrates a number of pieces from the Jarves gift. For the copy in the Museum Vetrario, see Rosa Barovier Mentasti et al., *Mille anni di arte del vetro a Venezia*, exh. cat., Palazzo Ducale and Museo Correr (Venice, 1982), no. 422.
  13. *Gazette des beaux-arts* 18 (1878), pp. 669–70.
  14. See Mundt, *Historismus*, no. 23, for an example in the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin; Renate Pillinger, *Studien zu Römischen Zwischengoldgläsern I. Geschichte der Technik und das Problem der Authentizität*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften, 110 (Vienna, 1984), p. 77, pl. 229, for an example in the Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna, Inv. HI 4672, Gl. 1350; Pillinger, *Zwischengoldgläsern*, p. 75, pl. 203, for an example in the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Zurich. Further examples of nineteenth-century gold-glass reproductions are discussed and illustrated in J. Rudoe, “A Venetian Goblet Made for the Paris Exhibition of 1878 with Gold Leaf Medallions of Early Christian Martyrs,” *Festschrift for David Buckton*, forthcoming.
  15. I have discussed the relationship between Castellani and Layard elsewhere. See J. Rudoe, “The Layards, Castellani and Cortelazzo: New Information from the Diaries of Lady Layard,” *Jewellery Studies* I (1983), pp. 59–82, and idem, “Alessandro Castellani’s Letters to Henry Layard: Extracts Concerning the 1862 International Exhibition in London and the Revival of Granulation,” *Jewellery Studies* 5 (1991), pp. 107–19.
  16. Julius Lessing, *Berichte von der Pariser Weltausstellung 1878* (Paris, 1878), p. 228.
  17. “Note Parigine: Dentro e fuori dell’Esposizione,” *Fanfulla* 9 (Rome, May 13, 1878), no. 130 (quoted by Bova in his chapter on “Il vetro di Murano alle esposizioni dell’800” in *Murrine e millefiori*, p. 201).
  18. *On Divers Arts: The Treatise of Theophilus*, trans. from Latin with introduction and notes by John G. Hawthorne and Cyril Stanley Smith (Chicago, 1963), p. 59.
  19. Frauenberger, *Die Kunstindustrie*, pp. 49–52.
  20. Selections from the correspondence between Jarves and Cesnola are quoted in Francis Steegmuller, *The Two Lives of James Jackson Jarves* (New Haven, 1951), pp. 276–78. The passages quoted here all come from this source.
  21. Nesbitt had also contributed to the catalogue of the Slade bequest to the British Museum; see note 8.
  22. Jarves’s works include *Art-Hints: Architecture, Sculpture and Painting* (London, 1855); *The Art Idea: Part Second of Confessions of an Inquirer* (New York, 1864); and *Art Thoughts: The Experiences and Observations of an American Amateur in Europe* (New York, 1870). Jarves also wrote on life and manners in Italy, on the art of Japan, and what has remained a standard text on the history of Hawaii.
  23. Jarves, “Ancient and Modern Venetian Glass of Murano,” p. 179.