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Laura Cleaver

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George D. Smith (1870–1920),
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LAURA CLEAVER
University of London

THERE ARE FAR FEWER medieval manuscripts on the market today than there were a century ago. This is, in part, because some of the major collectors of the early twentieth century, including the Americans Henry Huntington, J. P. Morgan Jr., and Henry Walters, arranged for their collections to become permanent museums rather than returning the books to the market. The institutions named after these collectors are an

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overt reminder that the books Huntington wanted are now in California, those Walters selected are in Baltimore, and those the Morgans desired are in New York. There is a caveat to this, as despite the immense wealth of these families, they were occasionally outbid, or they missed out on a manuscript for mundane reasons (such as the mail being delayed). What is less immediately obvious is that the tastes of collectors like Huntington and the Morgans also dictated the options available to those with smaller purses and so played a part in shaping both private and public collections. Thinking about the market introduces a further factor that is often overlooked: the “book broker” or dealer. Some of these men and women handled thousands of manuscripts, playing a role in matching books with clients as well as undertaking to bid at auction on their behalf, producing catalog descriptions, and arranging transportation. This study focuses on two booksellers who played major roles in developing the trade in medieval manuscripts in the United States: the American, George Diedrich Smith, and the Briton, Bernard Alfred Quaritch (figs. 1 and 2). Neither man particularly cared about books, but both were adept at persuading others to buy manuscripts. A major theme of this essay, which considers their activities with premodern manuscripts in detail, is how the history of the book trade has been written and how the personal can shed light on the professional. The central argument, however, is that the period between 1890 and 1920, which saw Americans becoming an increasingly powerful force in the market for rare books and manuscripts, shaped how and where we now encounter many medieval European manuscripts (defined here as books believed at that time to have been produced before 1600), and that dealers such as Smith and Quaritch were influential in determining the movement of these objects.¹

The history of buying and selling rare books in the early twentieth century was initially written largely by those connected with the trade. It usually took the form of histories of particular firms, sometimes published as prefaces to sale catalogs, or biographies of individuals, typically written after their deaths. Among the former is an account of the London-based firm founded

1 On the often overlooked importance of provenance, see Gail Feigenbaum and Inge Reist, introduction to *Provenance: An Alternative History of Art*, ed. Gail Feigenbaum and Inge Reist (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 2012), 1–6.



FIGURE 1. George D. Smith (1870–1920). *Sun and New York Herald*, 1 February 1920, section 5 part 1.

by Bernard Quaritch (1819–99) written by his daughter Charlotte and published in 1947, long after both her father and brother (Bernard Alfred) were dead.² In the late nineteenth century Bernard Quaritch had coordinated the creation of *Contributions towards a Dictionary of English Book-Collectors*,

2 Charlotte Quaritch Wrentmore, foreword to *A Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts Issued to Commemorate the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Firm of Bernard Quaritch 1847–1947* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1947), v–xvii.



FIGURE 2. Bernard Alfred Quaritch (1871–1913). Photograph by Frederic G. Hodsoll, 1901. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

perhaps inspired by the contemporary *Dictionary of National Biography*.³ Quaritch's *Dictionary* included entries for some booksellers who were also collectors, but in general literature about the trade focused on collectors, rather than those who facilitated their acquisitions. Nevertheless, in 1945 another bookseller, Charles F. Heartman produced a privately printed biography of George D. Smith as "a memorial tribute to the greatest bookseller the world has ever known written by a very small one."⁴ Heartman ends his short biography of Smith with a plea for further study. He quotes an article written by Smith in the *Literary Collector* in which Smith proclaims, "When the rulers of kingdoms today have crumbled into the dust and their names forgotten of the people, the memory of a maker of a great collection will be a household name in the mouths of thousands. This is the real road to fame."⁵ Heartman believed that dealers such as Smith deserved similar recognition, although he was pessimistic that they would achieve it. Heartman may also have been hoping for a boost to his own reputation through association with Smith, despite the fact that Smith had been dead for twenty-five years.

The difference in age between Heartman and Smith and the passing of time since Smith's death meant that there was much that Heartman did not know about his subject and that Smith's surviving contemporaries apparently could or would not recall for the publication. Yet Heartman tried to present a rounded account, including comments on Smith's family life that would have been unthinkable in a project like Quaritch's *Dictionary*.⁶ In contrast, Charlotte Quaritch's narrative was silent on her brother's personal life, probably to protect the family's reputation. In what follows I have chosen to

3 Bernard Quaritch, ed., *Contributions towards a Dictionary of English Book-Collectors as also of Some Foreign Collectors Whose Libraries Were Incorporated in English Collections or Whose Books Are Chiefly Met with in England* (repr.; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1969).

4 Charles F. Heartman, *George D. Smith: G.D.S. 1870–1920; A Memorial Tribute to the Greatest Bookseller the World Has Ever Known Written by a Very Small One* (Beauvoir Community, MS: privately printed, 1945).

5 George D. Smith, "A Few Words to Non-collectors of Autographs," *Literary Collector* 1, no. 2 (1900): 49; Heartman, *Smith*, 31.

6 See Hermione Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: University Press, 2009), 68–69.

pursue a biographical and comparative approach to the lives and careers of the contemporaries George D. Smith and Bernard Alfred Quaritch (known as Alfred to distinguish him from his father). I have tried to reconstruct—however imperfectly—their lives beyond the book trade to shed light on how these men came to be involved in the business, what their motivations were, and the nature of the professional and personal networks that supported them. Official records, including documentation of births, marriages, deaths, and census returns, together with newspaper and trade publication reports, provide glimpses of both domestic and business life. However, these records still leave significant gaps, especially regarding what these men thought and felt about events. In such sources the booksellers are seen through the eyes of others, but those records can be supplemented by personal letters, as well as the catalogs produced by the sellers' firms. Bringing this material together provides insights into the workings of the book trade and a new perspective on the factors that determined where many manuscripts are to be found today.

The Making of Booksellers: Childhood and Training

Following the death of Bernard Quaritch on 17 December 1899, obituary notices appeared in the press on both sides of the Atlantic. Quaritch was described as both the prince and king of booksellers and likened to Napoleon.⁷ The *New York Times* declared that with his death “there passed from the bibliographical world probably the most remarkable man that ever entered it.”⁸ Most biographies of booksellers, and particularly obituaries, tend to cast their subjects in a positive light. Indeed, over his long career, Quaritch received little negative publicity beyond some good-natured comments on

7 See, for example, “The Prince of Booksellers,” *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 20 December 1899, 3; “The King of Booksellers,” *Daily Telegraph & Courier*, 20 December 1899, 3; [Napoleon] “Obituary,” *Times*, 19 December 1899, 6.

8 “Quaritch,” *New York Times: Saturday Review*, 23 December 1899, 896; see also Wrenthmore, foreword, xiv–xv.

the eccentricity of having allegedly worn the same hat for twenty-four years.⁹ The notable exception, to which I will return, was a series of articles published in the *Collector* in 1890 when US dealers were concerned that Quaritch was about to attempt to encroach on their territory. Overall, however, the community of buyers and sellers of rare books was small and closely connected, with an interest in preserving both the value of the books they traded and their social reputations.

Quaritch and his family were successful in concealing details of his personal life from future biographers, not least the circumstances of his children's births. However, elements of the early years of his son Alfred's life can be reconstructed from the official records of the nineteenth century. Having left his native Prussia and settled in London, on 2 June 1849, Bernard Quaritch married Helen Gellan at Saint Marylebone parish church, Westminster. The couple appear to have had no children, but in 1865 and 1867 Bernard and Charlotte Quaritch baptized two daughters: Charlotte (known as Nannie) and Gertrude Annie.¹⁰ In 1869 the girls were followed by a boy, named Bernard Lindsay, whose mother's name was given on his birth certificate as Charlotte Quaritch, née Rimes. This evidence has prompted researchers to conflate two separate women.¹¹ However, in the 1861 census Charlotte Rimes was the housemaid in Bernard and Helen Quaritch's household.¹² A decade later, Charlotte Rimes was living with three children, using the name Charlotte Bernard and describing herself as the wife of a commercial traveler, presumably to explain long absences on the part of her children's

9 See, for example, "Mr. Quaritch's Hats," *St James's Gazette*, 23 April 1885, 5–6; "A Great Book-Dealer's Career," *Westminster Gazette*, 19 December 1899, 8.

10 Charlotte Quaritch was baptized at Holy Trinity, Marylebone on 9 June 1865, and Gertrude Annie in the same place on 7 February 1867. Gertrude Annie was born the previous year on 15 September 1866.

11 Adalbert Brauer, "Der bedeutendste Antiquariatsbuchhändler des 19. Jahrhunderts und seine Familie," *Archiv für Sippenforschung* 52 (1973): 262–85; Arthur Freeman, "Quaritch, Bernard Alexander Christian," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), accessed 16 December 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/22943>.

12 National Archives, 1861 England Census, Class: RG 9, Piece: 792, Folio: 91, Page: 34, GSU roll: 542701, 3 Southwood Terrace, Hornsey.

father.¹³ By that time, Bernard Lindsay had died and been buried in a plot in Highgate Cemetery that would later hold his father. Another son, Bernard Alfred, was born on 13 January 1871, and the three surviving children were with their biological mother in an arrangement presumably funded by their father.

On the other side of the Atlantic, on 1 June 1870, another future bookseller was born. Heartman claims that all that was known of George D. Smith's origins was that he was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1870, and Heartman passes over Smith's early life with the remark, "It does not particularly matter."¹⁴ It is now possible to reconstruct more of Smith's origins. He was the eldest of three sons born to Frank Theodore and Meta Schmidt, both of whom had come to the United States from Germany.¹⁵ Frank had a drug store, but he died in 1880 at the age of just forty.¹⁶ This probably explains Heartman's claim that Smith's "schooling was negligible, and never finished."¹⁷

Both Alfred Quaritch and George D. Smith (who anglicized his name at an early date) had challenging childhoods. At some point, probably before 1876, the Quaritch children went to live with their father. How the children were integrated into the Quaritch household is unclear, but the simple fact of their treatment as legitimate seems to have ensured their social standing. Although it is possible that this transfer happened when Alfred was too young to remember his mother in later life, his older sisters would have had some memory of the era before they joined their father's household, and strikingly Helen is never mentioned in the correspondence between father and son, although she lived until 1899. In the 1881 census, Bernard, Helen,

13 National Archives, 1871 England Census, Class: RG10, Piece: 207, Folio: 64, Page: 46, GSU roll: 824594, 14 St George's Road, St Pancras.

14 Heartman, *Smith*, 3.

15 1870 United States Federal Census, Brooklyn Ward 22, Kings, New York, dwelling 390; Washington, DC, National Archives and Records Administration, Passport Application, George D. Smith, certificate 137397.

16 Death certificate for Frank T. Schmidt, Kings, New York, no. 6608.

17 Heartman, *Smith*, 3.

and the girls were in one household, but Alfred was absent, presumably away at school.¹⁸ He attended Charterhouse school from 1885 to 1887, before departing for a period in Germany in which to study the book trade and think about his future.¹⁹ From an early date Alfred's father seems to have intended that his son would follow in his footsteps, and Bernard's letters to his teenage son are full of information about the book trade and advice. The letters do not always paint a positive picture of his trade. In August 1886 he advised his son, "Be happy, my boy, whilst you may. If you become a bookseller you will have plenty of long and tedious work. No people are more troublesome than book-buyers,—unless it is book-vendors. So either way you are worried."²⁰

In New York, Smith's education was very different. In 1914, when he had achieved international fame, a widely circulated account of his history claimed:

He didn't select his future line of action, any more than the average boy charts out a calling for himself when he goes out looking for a job. He merely knew that he needed the money—and needed it regularly, at the end of each week. It happened that a member of the firm of Dodd, Mead & Co. attended the Brooklyn church which received the juvenile Smith each first day. This limited juxtaposition held a hunch for Smith. "Please, sir," said he, "I am looking for work."²¹

This story is suspiciously reminiscent of *Oliver Twist* or the works of Horatio Alger and attributes great confidence to the young Smith. Although it may be true, it removes the rest of his family from the story. Smith's mother and

18 National Archives, Kew, London, England, 1881 Census, Class: RG11, Piece: 170, Folio: 64, Page: 57, GSU roll: 1341037, 3 Haverstock Terrace, Hampstead.

19 For Bernard Alfred Quaritch at Charterhouse, see the *Carthusian*, October 1913, 171.

20 Oxford, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. c. 435, fol. 8.

21 For example, "Fortunes in Old Books," *Kansas City Times*, 20 May 1914, 5, but this was probably not the original source and the story was widely reproduced in other papers.

brothers seem to have remained close (his brother Frank later worked for Smith, and his youngest brother Theodore was a witness to his first marriage), and there is no reason to assume that Smith's mother, or indeed other members of their community, did not play a role in securing him work they deemed suitable. The importance of the church congregation is further suggested by Heartman's claim that Smith "was librarian of a Sunday school library," though this may have been a misunderstanding on his part.²² A George D. Smith was elected assistant librarian of the Advent Sunday school, Sandy Hill, in 1893, but this may not be the same man.²³ Heartman's version of Smith's start in the business, derived from reminiscences by Belden Day, differs from the 1914 account, claiming that "in 1883, a poor lad of thirteen, short-trousered, unfinished in school, not too well nourished, he started working for Wiley and Son," before moving to Dodd, Mead and Company the following year.²⁴ Whatever the truth, Smith started at the bottom of the book trade, motivated by a need to earn money.

Both Wiley's and Dodd's firms began as publishing houses. After Moses Dodd's retirement in 1870, Dodd, Mead and Company was formed by Moses's son Frank Dodd and his cousin Edward Spencer Mead.²⁵ In the 1880s the company issued catalogs of books other than their own publications for sale, including a small number of medieval manuscripts, mostly Books of Hours. In 1884, Mead was one of the founding members of the Grolier Club, which was intended for "the literary study and promotion of the art pertaining to the production of books."²⁶ The club's first president, the printing press manufacturer Robert Hoe III, was a cousin of both Frank Dodd and Edward Mead, and both Hoe and the vice president, Brayton Ives, were collectors of manuscripts. Collectors such as Hoe and Ives bought some of their books in Europe, but growing demand encouraged dealers including the brothers

22 Heartman, *Smith*, 3.

23 *Post-Star* (Glens Falls, NY), 30 December 1893, 4.

24 Belden L. Day, "Anecdotes of G. D. Smith," *Publishers' Weekly*, 10 April 1920, 1179; Heartman, *Smith*, 3.

25 Edward H. Dodd Jr., *The First Hundred Years: A History of the House of Dodd, Mead 1839–1939* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1939), 15.

26 *Grolier Club: Constitution, Officers, By Laws, Members* (New York: Grolier Club, 1884), 13.

Henry and Benjamin Franklin Stevens and Joseph Sabin and his sons to export manuscripts from Europe to the United States.²⁷

Smith did not stay long with Dodd, Mead and Company. In 1884 he went to work for William Evarts Benjamin when Benjamin left Dodd to set up his own business at 744 Broadway.²⁸ In 1888, Benjamin launched a magazine, entitled the *Book-Lover*, which offered reflections on books and the book trade. The issues for October and November 1889 addressed the transatlantic trade, observing that

no book importer can shut his eyes to the fact that the English book dealers and the America book buyers are yearly getting closer together. The English rare book dealer has the advantage over his American competitor in having the best market at hand to supply demand and less expense of conducting business. The American dealer has the client at hand, an apparent advantage which is largely discounted by the glamour which attracts the collector who proudly boasts he “gets his books direct from London.”²⁹

In the November issue, Benjamin argued that good English and French books could be obtained more cheaply in the United States than in Europe and that no lesser seller than Bernard Quaritch was buying books from US dealers and selling them to US customers. He added, “Quaritch alone is an Atlas supporting the rare book world abroad and has lately written to *The Book-Lover* that he has invested \$600,000, about £120,000, in rare literary

27 On the early nineteenth-century trade, see Scott Gwara, “Peddling Wonderment, Selling Privilege: Launching the Market for Medieval Books in Antebellum New York,” *Perspectives médiévales*, 41 (2020), <https://journals.openedition.org/peme/20441>.

28 *Publishers’ Weekly*, 7 June 1884, 669; *Publishers’ Weekly*, 28 June 1890, 851; Heartman, *Smith*, 4. Benjamin may have initially worked with his brother Walter, who specialized in autographs. In 1887, Benjamin formed a partnership with William Hayward Bell: “Literary Notes,” *New York Times*, 14 February 1887, 3; see also F. M. Hopkins, “George D. Smith, the World’s Greatest Bookseller: Career and Characteristics of the Foremost Dealer in Rare Books and Manuscripts,” Book Review, *Evening Post* (New York), 13 March 1920, 2.

29 William Evarts Benjamin, *Book-Lover* 1, no. 9 (October 1889): 1.

material.”³⁰ Quaritch’s letter was probably prompted by the claim in the previous issue that he was in financial difficulty, but it caused the *Book-Lover* to observe, “We don’t believe there is a stock in this country kept by any one firm exceeding \$75,000 in cost value.” The United States was an emerging market, but the trade in medieval manuscripts was still small in comparison with that in Europe.

Bernard Quaritch intended for his son to start at the bottom of his famous business. A letter to Alfred in January 1888, when he had just turned seventeen, declares, “You have asked me: what you will have to do when you come to my business. You will first enter the porter, & collector & packing department. In other words you will begin at the bottom.”³¹ He adds, “A true bookseller must understand every part of his business.” This does not seem to have appealed to Alfred, who responded by inquiring about the business’s finances. Passing time and Bernard’s poor health probably helped him toward a compromise. In April 1888, Bernard wrote, “I begin to want you not seriously in Piccadilly,” though he added, “but mind, when you enter my service, you must turn over another leaf.” That section of the letter concludes, “It is your time now to go into harness. You will have one pound a week to begin upon, and free lodgings.”³² Following his return from Germany in the autumn of 1888, Alfred did join the firm, but rather than starting as a porter, he replaced one George Jennings, whose responsibilities had included working on catalogs, although his father still warned, “there will be much work and little play for the first year or two.”³³

One of Alfred’s early tasks was to take an exhibition of books, including thirty medieval manuscripts, to the United States.³⁴ He was accompanied by Henry Gosden, a more experienced bookseller, but one without the famous

30 William Evarts Benjamin, *Book-Lover* 1, no. 10 (November 1889), 1.

31 Oxford, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. c. 435, fol. 10v.

32 Oxford, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. c. 435, fols. 34–35.

33 Oxford, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. c. 435, fol. 63v.

34 John Paul Bocock, “Book World Wonders,” *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, 26 January 1890, 4; Leslie A. Morris, “Bernard Alfred Quaritch in America,” in “150th Anniversary of Bernard Quaritch,” special issue, *Book Collector* (1997): 180–97 (184); Richard A. Linenthal, “‘The Collectors Are Far More Particular Than You Think’: Selling Manuscripts to America,” *Manuscripta* 51, no.1 (2007): 131–42.

Quaritch name.³⁵ The first stop in January 1890 was New York, where the men set out their stock at the Albemarle Hotel, Madison Square. The exhibition received some positive press coverage, notably an article by John Paul Bocock in the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*. Bocock claimed that “such parchments and vellums and missals and psalters were never seen before” in America. The star manuscript exhibit, the Golden Gospels of Henry VIII, an early medieval book later owned by the Tudor monarch, priced at \$12,500/£2,500, was declared by Bocock to be “the most famous manuscript in existence” and one of only ten known manuscripts on purple vellum.³⁶ Predictably, US dealers were less enthusiastic about Alfred’s arrival. An article in the *New York Times* quoted multiple dealers and concluded that “the general opinion among booksellers here is that Quaritch has brought nothing to this country which he could sell in England.”³⁷ The *Collector* ran a series of articles criticizing Bernard Quaritch. In December 1889, it warned, “People who would come to see him and buy of him will not patronize his representatives.”³⁸ In January, it printed an ad hominem attack, claiming that Bernard was

noted among book buyers for the lowest degree of civility and the highest scale of prices in the trade. His vocabulary is a cross between that of a mate on a packet ship and a Montana mule driver’s. It is not at all unusual, when you see him spraddling about his shop, to hear him openly stigmatize a customer who does not purchase as freely as he imagines he should, as an “ignorant ass,” and “hogs,” “swine” and “chuckelheaded donkeys” are common and pet phrases with him in the same application.³⁹

The article also alleged that the items for sale were “dead stock” that he had failed to sell elsewhere and urged US collectors to support US sales. This

35 Morris, “Quaritch in America,” 182.

36 The manuscript is now New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.23.

37 “Quaritch’s ‘Rare Books’: Some Sharp Opinions from New-York Dealers,” *New York Times*, 26 January 1890, 14.

38 “Mr Quaritch’s Mistake,” *Collector*, 15 December 1889, 26.

39 “Milking the Cow,” *Collector*, 1 January 1890, 39.

prompted a response from Quaritch in which he sought to turn the criticism to his advantage, pointing out, “that which is best in every kind is also the costliest; and it will hardly be denied that I have always sought for the best.”⁴⁰ Although he claimed that the assertion that he was sending “the weeded refuse of my stock will scarcely appear more than laughable to anyone who glances over the catalogue,” many of the manuscripts had been in his hands for several years. Moreover, a more measured article in the *New York Times* identified other problems that Alfred was likely to encounter. James Osborne Wright is quoted as saying, “There are more American book buyers who are ignorant of what they buy than those who have a knowledge of books,” observing that “if the Quaritch sales should be successful there might be a boom in this peculiar trade. Whether it will be successful or not is a question.”⁴¹

In New York, Alfred immediately made sales of printed books to two of his father’s existing customers: Brayton Ives (who had previously bought medieval manuscripts from Quaritch) and William Augustus White (who also owned manuscripts).⁴² Two days later, he reported having sold a third folio Shakespeare and other printed books to Marshall Lefferts, who he described as “a very nice man.”⁴³ However, it quickly became apparent that the US visit was not proving as successful as Alfred had hoped. Clarence Bement came to the exhibition and considered buying the thirteenth-century illuminated Huntingfield Psalter, but like many others, he was careful about expenditure in order to have funds for the auction of the library of Samuel L. M. Barlow, which took place in New York in February.⁴⁴ In June, as Alfred

40 “Mr. Quaritch’s Detractors,” *Collector*, 1 February 1890, 54.

41 “Quaritch’s ‘Rare Books,’” 14.

42 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Bernard Alfred Quaritch to his father, 27 January 1890; Carl Leslie Cannon, *American Book Collectors and Collecting from Colonial Times to the Present* (repr.; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 147–50, 329–31; Donald C. Dickinson, *Dictionary of American Book Collectors* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 179–80, 335–36; Morris, “Quaritch in America,” 186–87.

43 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Bernard Alfred Quaritch to his father, 29 January 1890; Cannon, *American Book Collectors*, 152–54; Dickinson, *Dictionary*, 199; Morris, “Quaritch in America,” 187.

44 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Bernard Alfred Quaritch to his father, 5 February 1890; Dickinson, *Dictionary*, 35–36.

was about to sail home, Bement did buy a Book of Hours from him for \$1,500 (£300) (fig. 3).⁴⁵ However, during his first stay in New York, Alfred's letters to his father document frustration at the limited sales and the damage done by the Barlow sale and negative publicity. Alfred continued to meet collectors who owned manuscripts, including Robert Hoe, who, he reported to his father, "said he couldn't see why you sent the books here for sale, as they had mostly been bought against the collectors here."⁴⁶ In addition, he met Norton Quincy Pope, whose wife, Abbie, had an impressive library, and who Alfred hoped might buy the Huntingfield Psalter.⁴⁷ Alfred's customers in February also included Beverly Chew, who would become a collector of manuscripts.⁴⁸ However, on 21 February, Alfred reported that trade was so poor that he was skipping lunch, grumbling that "my ambition is to make plenty of money, but this trade certainly doesn't seem to promise it."⁴⁹ Like Smith, Alfred seems to have been interested in the economic potential of the trade, rather than the books themselves, from the outset.

In March, Alfred moved on to Boston, where he sold drawings by William Blake for £1,000 as well as a small number of books but also had some books stolen.⁵⁰ From there, he went on to Chicago, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh (which he described as "a hole"), and Philadelphia, where he seems to have met Carl Edelheim.⁵¹ As Alfred struggled, his father's letters offered encouragement,

45 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Bernard Alfred Quaritch to his father, 10 June 1890; the manuscript is now San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 1104.

46 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Bernard Alfred Quaritch to his father, 19 February 1890; Cannon, *American Book Collectors*, 157–69; Dickinson, *Dictionary*, 160–62; Morris, "Quaritch in America," 189.

47 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Bernard Alfred Quaritch to his father, 8 and 12 February 1890; Dickinson, *Dictionary*, 262–63; Morris, "Quaritch in America," 188.

48 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Bernard Alfred Quaritch to his father, 13 and 19 February 1890; Cannon, *American Book Collectors*, 142–44; Dickinson, *Dictionary*, 64–65.

49 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Bernard Alfred Quaritch to his father, 21 February 1890.

50 "Mr. Quaritch Victimized," *Collector*, 1 June 1890, 123; "Mr. Quaritch's Good Luck," *Collector*, 1 September 1890, 146; Morris, "Quaritch in America," 191.

51 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Bernard Alfred Quaritch to his father, 22 May 1890 (Pittsburg) and 2 June 1890 (Philadelphia); Dickinson, *Dictionary*, 103; see also Norman Kelvin, "Bernard Quaritch and William Morris," in "150th Anniversary of Bernard Quaritch" special issue, *Book Collector* (1997): 118–33, at 132.

although he was firm about not allowing discounts. Bernard Quaritch took the long view, declaring, “Do not be low-spirited; if we do not sell the books now, we sell them later on.”⁵² In March, he urged Alfred, “persevere, my dear boy, you are sowing now seed for future harvests.”⁵³ While the 1890 trip was not immediately lucrative, Quaritch was right to see it as laying foundations for the future, and at least eleven of the thirty manuscripts that crossed the Atlantic with Alfred in 1890 can now be found in US collections.⁵⁴

At the end of the trip, Alfred made an important manuscript sale, when Theodore Irwin bought the Golden Gospels of Henry VIII, with a small discount.⁵⁵ Despite Bocock’s claim that such things had never been seen in the United States, Irwin, like Brayton Ives, was an established collector, who already owned medieval manuscripts.⁵⁶ In 1900, Irwin sold his library through George Richmond to Frederick K. Trowbridge, for about \$200,000, with the manuscripts sold on to J. P. Morgan.⁵⁷

I have found no evidence that Smith was among the visitors to the Albemarle Hotel exhibition, but it seems plausible that professional curiosity would have taken him there. Strikingly, his name does not appear in the list of US collectors and dealers that Alfred Quaritch began on this trip (though Benjamin’s does), but in 1890 Smith was taking steps to develop a business

52 Oxford, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. c. 435, fol. 88.

53 Oxford, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. c. 435, fol. 106.

54 Los Angeles, CA, J. Paul Getty Museum, MS Ludwig IX 20; New Haven, CT, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, MS 402; New York, Columbia University, Plimpton MS 111; New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.8, MS M.23, MS M.43, MS M.95, MS M.125, MS M.179, MS M.946; San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 1104.

55 Morris, “Quaritch in America,” 194.

56 *Catalogue of the Library and Brief List of the Engravings and Etchings Belonging to Theodore Irwin* (New York: privately printed, 1887); Morris, “Quaritch in America,” 194.

57 See “\$200,000 for Irwin Books: The Great Oswego Collection Comes to New York,” *Sun* (New York), 29 March 1900, 2; “Close of the Daly Sale,” *Sun* (New York), 30 March 1900, 3; “Theodore Irwin’s Library Sold,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 31 March 1900, 661; “John Pierpont Morgan Buys the Irwin Library,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 14 April 1900, 808.

of his own.⁵⁸ In June 1890, while Alfred was preparing to return to Britain, the *Publishers' Weekly* reported:

A. J. Bowden, for some time with Sotheran & Co. London, and lately with W. E. Benjamin, and George Smith, for six years with W. E. Benjamin, have combined forces and opened a bookstore at 8 Astor Place, the name of the firm will be Bowden & Smith. They will make a speciality of old and rare books, autographs, and other literary curiosities. . . . We feel confident that the new firm will speedily make a name for itself in the American book market for intelligent service and enterprise.⁵⁹

Benjamin's shop was at 6 Astor Place, so the new venture was probably intended to benefit from passing trade, but later in the year Bowden & Smith combined forces with John J. Mitchell and relocated to 830 Broadway, now trading under the name Mitchell's.⁶⁰ Bowden and Smith had a notable early success, obtaining Martha Washington's Bible at a sale in Philadelphia for \$760 and selling it on for \$5,000.⁶¹ The pair were ambitious and in November, the *Publishers' Weekly* reported that they had sent an agent to London and Paris and intended to establish offices there.⁶²

It is as Mitchell's that there is the first evidence of Smith's direct involvement dealing in medieval manuscripts. In March 1891, the firm bought a manuscript Book of Hours (lot 625) for \$235 at the sale of Brayton Ives's collection, which included twenty-three medieval manuscripts.⁶³ They may have bought a second manuscript as both this and another Book of Hours from Ives's sale were later in the possession of Marshall Lefferts (not all the buyers are recorded in the press coverage). In 1901, Lefferts sold his collection,

58 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., *American Customers Book*.

59 *Publishers' Weekly*, 28 June 1890, 851.

60 *Publishers' Weekly*, 8 November 1890, 677.

61 *Publishers' Weekly*, 20 December 1890, 990; *Publishers' Weekly*, 27 June 1891, 902.

62 *Publishers' Weekly*, 8 November 1890, 677.

63 "Costly Books at Auction," *Sun* (New York), 7 March 1891, 3.

including at least eleven medieval manuscripts, to the dealer George Richmond (who had bought Irwin's library the year before). Richmond issued a checklist of items in the Lefferts collection, with the instruction that "full particulars with prices will be given of any book or books on the check-list which may interest collectors."⁶⁴ It appears that among those interested was Henry Walters, as ten of the manuscripts were not sent to auction with the rest of the Lefferts collection in 1902, and at least nine of these (of which eight were Books of Hours or similar prayer books) found their way into Walters's library in Baltimore.⁶⁵

Following Benjamin's example, in December 1892, Bowden and Smith launched a journal called the *American Athenaeum*. In the second issue, published in January 1893, Mitchell's advertised another manuscript Book of Hours, which they claimed was made in France around 1520, for \$650.⁶⁶ Books of Hours were often a gateway item for collectors, who were encouraged to expand their libraries from early printed books to manuscripts via such highly decorated and readily available books of the same era. These purchases may therefore represent Bowden and Smith testing the market to see if they could attract any collectors who might be interested in buying such material. Yet the Ives sale demonstrated that the US market for rare books and manuscripts was still in its infancy. The press reported that the whole library had raised \$124,366.25, well short of the estimated \$160,000 that Ives had spent on the books.⁶⁷ In particular, the Pembroke Hours (a lavishly illuminated fifteenth-century Book of Hours owned in the sixteenth century by the first earl of Pembroke), which sold to Dodd, Mead and Company for \$5,900, had

64 *A Check-List of The Library of Mr. Marshall C. Lefferts . . . Purchased and for Sale by George H. Richmond* (New York: Richmond, 1901), 2.

65 Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Museum, W.153, W.192, W.223, W.267, W.356, W.432, W.434, W.437, W.458; see Seymour de Ricci, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, 3 vols. (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1935–40), 1:228, 231, 276, 318, 329, 337, 354, 360, 371; Lilian M. C. Randall, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery*, 3 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989–1997), 2:1, 216, 2, 436, 3:1, 234, 2, 494. The manuscripts have Lefferts's bookplate (his initials on an open book).

66 "Some Rare and Interesting Books," *American Athenaeum* 1, no. 2 (January 1893): 63.

67 "Some Costly Books," *Buffalo Commercial* (New York), 10 March 1891, 7.

cost Ives \$10,000 (fig. 4).⁶⁸ Moreover, in May, the *Publishers' Weekly* reported, "Some of the Ives' books are being offered at a considerable reduction from the auction prices."⁶⁹ The same article reported that "young Mr. Quaritch" had returned to America with "a very choice lot of books." Alfred's visit in 1891 was shorter than that of the previous year and again not a great success, though Hoe (who bought the *Pembroke Hours* from or through Dodd) was induced "to keep all the MSS but one."⁷⁰ On Alfred's departure, the *New York Tribune* reported, "Mr. Quaritch's visit to this country in company of some of his rarest books was not a successful one and he has returned to London with nearly all of them."⁷¹ Alfred made another short visit to the United States in 1898, but for most of the remainder of the nineteenth century, his trade with Americans was conducted in London, leaving the field clear for US dealers to develop their businesses.

Independence

Smith's business underwent further change in the early 1890s. The *American Athenaeum* appears to have been short lived, and in 1893 Mitchell retired and the firm returned to using the name Bowden & Smith. In 1895, the *Publishers' Weekly* reported that "George D. Smith, formerly of Bowden & Smith, has opened a book-store at 69 Fourth Avenue," while Bowden rejoined Benjamin's firm.⁷² In July that year, the *Collector* referred to Smith as "a local autograph dealer," but by 1896, his name appeared in press reports listed as one of the main booksellers.⁷³ However, medieval manuscripts were not yet a major part of his business, in line with the overall market in the United States.

68 "Costly Books at Auction," 3. The manuscript is now Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1945-65-2.

69 "Old Book Chat," *Publishers' Weekly*, 16 May 1891, 682.

70 Oxford, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. c. 435, fol. 157.

71 *New York Tribune*, 19 July 1891, 14; Morris, "Quaritch in America," 195.

72 *Publishers' Weekly*, 13 April 1895, 635.

73 *Collector*, 1 July 1895, 259; "The Sewall Book Sale," *Sun* (New York), 1 December 1896, 5.

From the 1894–95 season, Luther S. Livingston began to compile lists of books sold at auction in the United States, published annually as *American Book-Prices Current*. The early volumes were incomplete, but even so they give an impression of the size of the market. In 1894–95, nine medieval manuscripts were noted, the following year there were just three, and in 1896–97 thirteen. No medieval manuscripts were recorded in the volume for 1897–98 (although some were, in fact, sold at auction), and nine featured in the record for 1898–99. The manuscripts listed in *American Book-Prices Current* 1894–99 included twelve volumes identified as Books of Hours or the Office of the Virgin and nine described as missals (altogether 62 percent of the total manuscripts). The size of the market suggests very limited demand for manuscripts, and although Hoe had been among the buyers at the Ives sale in 1891, most US collectors continued to obtain their manuscripts from Europe.

Indeed, in the late 1890s, Alfred Quaritch's US visits were beginning to yield a harvest in London. In the firm's commission book for 1895–99, Hoe and White are regular customers, and his US clients include Lefferts, General Rush C. Hawkins (who wrote his own entry for Quaritch's *Dictionary*), Henry Folger, and Junius Morgan (nephew of J. P. Morgan). At the sale of the socialist and designer William Morris's library in 1898, Quaritch bought manuscripts on commission for Hoe, and shortly afterwards one of Quaritch's purchases was in Edelheim's collection.⁷⁴ The US trade was still a small part of the business, but the Quaritches were sending a steady trickle of manuscripts across the Atlantic.

Bernard Quaritch tried to dictate the future of his business as his health deteriorated. In a note to his son of May 1899, he declared, "Spanish books must always remain a feature of my business, even after my death."⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Bernard's will made provision for the business to be sold if Alfred so wished. Alfred chose to continue with his trade, placing notices in newspapers in March 1900 stating:

74 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Commission Book March 1895–April 1899; Luther S. Livingston, *American Book-Prices Current* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1900), 513 (n. 8876); the manuscript owned by Edelheim is now New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, M.968.

75 Oxford, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. c. 468, fol. 39v.

Notice is hereby given that the BUSINESS of a BOOK-SELLER and DEALER in RARE BOOKS and MANUSCRIPTS formerly carried on by the late Mr. Bernard Quaritch, will in future be CARRIED ON under the trade name of BERNARD QUARITCH exactly as heretofore by his son, Mr. Bernard Alfred Quaritch, at the business premises, No. 15, Piccadilly, London, W.⁷⁶

Yet despite this statement of continuity, there were changes to the business, including the resumption of trips to the United States, which from February 1901 became annual events.

As Alfred was taking control of his father's business in London, Smith was continuing to develop his reputation and client list in New York. In 1900, he bought a large number of books at the sale of Augustin Daly's library.⁷⁷ Although the Daly sale included no medieval manuscripts, it was important for the book trade because it was hailed by the US press as proof that New York was now "a better market than London."⁷⁸ It also broke the record for the highest price paid for a book at auction in the United States, which had been set at the Ives sale in 1891. However, Smith struggled to sell his purchases in New York, prompting him to issue a catalog and organize exhibitions in other cities, all of which helped to further raise his profile.⁷⁹ 1900 also saw a major event in Smith's personal life as in August he married Margaret Conway, presumably now believing that his trade could support a family. Heartman claimed Smith's "early marriage was a serious mistake," but Smith was thirty and his bride twenty-seven.⁸⁰ In 1900, Smith also returned to publishing a journal, this time entitled the *Literary Collector*. The first issue contained an article by John Boyd Thacher on the subject of

⁷⁶ *Times*, 23 March 1900, 1.

⁷⁷ Heartman, *Smith*, 8.

⁷⁸ "Daly Book Sale Results," *Sun* (New York), 22 April 1900, 17.

⁷⁹ *A Catalogue of Rare Books, Original Drawings, Extra Illustrated Works and Other Interesting Literary Material Chiefly from the Library of the Late Augustin Daly* (New York: George D. Smith, 1900); "Priceless Books in St. Louis," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 8 June 1900, 5; Hopkins, "George D. Smith," 2; Donald C. Dickinson, "Mr. Huntington and Mr. Smith," *Book Collector* 37, no. 3 (1988), 370.

⁸⁰ Heartman, *Smith*, 14.

who might emerge in the book trade as the late Quaritch's successor.⁸¹ Strikingly, Thacher chose to argue the merits of the Italian Leo Olschki, rather than an American or Alfred Quaritch.

Alfred Quaritch's visits to the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century were, in part, the result of a relationship with a new client. At the urging of Junius Morgan, and following his purchase of the Irwin library in 1900, J. P. Morgan began to build a collection of rare books and manuscripts, almost always with extensive decoration. Between 1900 and the end of 1906, Quaritch sold twenty manuscripts to Morgan at a total of £15,554 (or \$77,770) as well as many printed books.⁸² These books did not immediately depart for New York, as Morgan had a house in London and his library in New York was still under construction. In addition, Quaritch facilitated the cataloging of the library of Richard Bennett after it was acquired by Morgan in 1902, which contained over a hundred manuscripts.⁸³ Bennett had bought William Morris's library en bloc in 1897, and although he had sent many of those books to auction, the Huntingfield Psalter was among those he retained.⁸⁴ Following the completion of the Morgan Library building in 1906, therefore, the manuscript taken to the United States by Alfred Quaritch in 1890 returned to New York.

Fame and Fortune

The new century did not bring an immediate increase in the number of manuscripts appearing at auction in the United States. Following Edelman's death in 1899, his executors sent his library, with at least two medieval manuscripts, to auction in New York in 1900, but Irwin and Lefferts both

81 John Boyd Thacher, "The Successor to Quaritch," *Literary Collector* 1, no. 1 (October 1900): 19.

82 New York, The Morgan Library & Museum Archive, "List of Books MSS. Autographs etc supplied to Mr J Pierpont Morgan, New York from 1900 (Oct. 2) to January 1 (1907)," ARC 1310 MCC Quaritch I.

83 Richard William Pfaff, *Montague Rhodes James* (London: Scolar Press, 1980), 194.

84 See Frank Hermann, *Sotheby's: Portrait of an Auction House* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1980), 120.

chose to sell their libraries en bloc, perhaps remembering the low prices of the Ives sale in 1891. Against this backdrop, in 1903, Smith (who had moved to 50 New Street—at the southern end of Manhattan, near Wall Street) produced a catalog that included six medieval manuscripts, the largest number that I have been able to place in his hands at any one time to date.⁸⁵ Moreover, the manuscripts were diverse in their contents: a fourteenth-century Aristotle, a fifteenth-century Bible from Poland, a fifteenth-century Book of Hours from Flanders, a fourteenth-century copy of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Meditations on Christ's Passion in Italian, and a fifteenth-century missal from Italy. Smith evidently thought that there was now a market for these books. It is unclear whether he had a particular client in mind, but one emerged as four of the volumes (the Aristotle, Bible, *Sentences*, and missal) next appear in the library of the stockbroker Henry W. Poor.⁸⁶ Unfortunately for Smith, Poor's collecting was short lived, as following financial disaster in 1907, he was forced to sell his library, including twenty-one medieval manuscripts, which went to auction in New York in 1908 and 1909. (Heartman claimed that Smith also gambled on the stock market in this period.)⁸⁷ At the Poor sales, Smith bought back at least three of the manuscripts he had owned in 1903 (the Aristotle, Bible, and missal), perhaps to reinforce the value of items that had passed through his hands but also because he now had another client interested in manuscripts: Henry Huntington. Six of Poor's manuscripts passed into Huntington's collection, and at least two of those were bought by Smith.⁸⁸ At the same time, not all the manuscripts Smith bought at the Poor sale went to Huntington, suggesting that Smith had multiple clients he thought would be interested in such books. Nevertheless, Huntington became Smith's major client for medieval manuscripts, as well as other rare books. In 1911, Huntington bought the library of Elihu Dwight Church from Smith, with nine medieval manuscripts, including the Book of Hours that Bement bought from Alfred Quaritch in

85 George D. Smith's *Illustrated Catalogue of Fine Books* (New York: Smith, 1903).

86 For Poor see Dickinson, *Dictionary*, 262.

87 Heartman, *Smith*, 11.

88 San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 1033, 1039, 1048, 1052, 1129, 1155; "More Record Prices," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 9 December 1908, 10.

1891 (fig. 3).⁸⁹ However, that purchase was eclipsed a few months later by the start of the sale of the library of Robert Hoe, who died in 1909.

Hoe's executors decided to hold the sale of his enormous library in New York, much to the frustration of European dealers. In advance of the first sale, Quaritch wrote to the Parisian dealer Édouard Rahir, "I hope that the books will not sell high, so that in future they may send their libraries to Europe for sale."⁹⁰ He, along with many other European booksellers sailed to New York, but his hopes were to be disappointed. The first selection of Hoe's manuscripts was sold on 1 May 1911. The New York *Sun* reported, "In less than forty minutes ancient manuscripts had been sold for over \$100,000. Six manuscripts brought over \$10,000 apiece and eleven aggregated \$136,000."⁹¹ The most expensive manuscript was the Pembroke Hours, which had featured in the Ives sale in 1891 (where it raised \$5,900), and which now sold for \$33,000 to Hoe's son Arthur, with Smith as the underbidder (fig. 4). The press reports identified Smith (who by now was trading from premises on Wall Street and at 547 Fifth Avenue) as the buyer of at least sixteen of the fifty-three medieval manuscripts, but eighteen items in the Huntington Library are identified as having been purchased by Smith at that sale.⁹² Quaritch obtained at least four lots, including one for Morgan and another for William White.⁹³ Having missed out on a Gutenberg Bible, which Smith bought for Huntington for \$50,000, Morgan's librarian Belle da Costa Greene expressed her frustration at the disruption of the old order: "Buyers have come from all over Europe and are getting nothing. Things have been raised

89 Dickinson, "Mr. Huntington," 372; the manuscripts are now San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 1104, 1128, 1141, 1142, 1154, 1163, 1172, 1173, 1179.

90 London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Hoe Sale Letters, B. A. Quaritch to É. Rahir, 6 April 1911.

91 "\$42,800 for 'Morte d'Arthur,'" *Sun* (New York), 2 May 1911, 1.

92 "All Book Records Fall," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 2 May 1911, 3; San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 49, 50, 60, 115, 160, 1031, 1038, 1054, 1064, 1069, 1084, 1086, 1099, 1100, 1126, 1134, 1140, 1144.

93 These are now New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.448; Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Typ 104; see New York, Morgan Library & Museum Archive, ARC 1310 MCC Quaritch III, Bernard [Alfred] Quaritch to Belle da Costa Greene, 2 May 1911; Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Am 2087 no. 5.



FIGURE 3. Annunciation with marginal scenes of the Life of the Virgin, from a Book of Hours, France, early 15th century, with later additions ca. 1490. San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 1104, fol. 21r.



FIGURE 4. Christ in the garden of Gethsemane and Annunciation, from a Book of Hours and Gallican Psalter (The Pembroke Hours), Netherlands, ca. 1465–70. Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1945-65-2, fols. 27v–28r.

to a fictitious value.”⁹⁴ Once again, the publicity was good for Smith, but Quaritch also benefitted from Huntington’s decision to invest in manuscripts, as he became Huntington’s London agent. Other Americans, notably Henry Folger, also continued to send commissions to Quaritch for London auctions. At the sale of part of the library of Henry Huth and his son Alfred in June 1913, Huntington’s commissions occupied almost eleven pages of Quaritch’s commission book, while Folger’s and White’s demands each occupied about a page and a half.

The next part of the Hoe sale took place in January 1912. Quaritch returned to New York for the sale, which included a further fifty-eight medieval European manuscripts. Although prices were again high, the sale

94 “J. P. Morgan’s Librarian Says High Book Prices Are Harmful,” *New York Times*, 30 April 1911, 13.

did not quite live up to expectations. Among the reasons put forward by the *New-York Tribune* was the absence of Smith, who was represented by an assistant.⁹⁵ In Smith's absence, Quaritch paid the highest price (\$9,200, for a Book of Hours) and bought at least eleven of the manuscripts.⁹⁶ The New York trip presumably also allowed Quaritch to visit the Morgan Library and other US clients, but he did not return for the third portion of the Hoe sale in April. This may, in part, have been due to his health. In 1911, while in the United States, he caught influenza, from which he never fully recovered.⁹⁷ Quaritch's absence from the third part of the Hoe sale left the field clear for Smith, who bought at least sixteen of the twenty-two medieval European manuscripts sold.⁹⁸ Once again, the majority (thirteen) went to Huntington.⁹⁹

The fourth and final part of the Hoe auction was staged in November 1912. Quaritch did not attend in person, sending one of his staff, Frederick S. Ferguson, who reportedly engaged Smith in a "battle royal" for manuscripts.¹⁰⁰ As the sale ended, the *New York Times* reported that the auction of 14,592 lots over the four sales had raised \$1,932,060.60, with Smith having purchased about half the collection.¹⁰¹ The paper estimated that Smith had spent approximately \$1,000,000 and ranked the other buyers for the final part, with Quaritch placed second. Smith had established himself as the preeminent US bookseller, and manuscripts were now selling for prices as high as in Europe, but their prices were still eclipsed by those for some early printed books, with the Gutenberg Bible raising the highest sum of the sale.

95 "Errors as to Hoe MSS," *New York Tribune*, 17 January 1912, 4.

96 "Hoe Manuscripts Bring High Prices," *New York Times*, 17 January 1912, 14; the Book of Hours is now Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Inv. LA 135.

97 Wrentmore, foreword, xvi.

98 "Hoe Manuscripts Sell Well," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 23 April 1912, 9.

99 San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 1088, 1102, 1123, 1127, 1130, 1136, 1153, 1158, 1160, 1164, 1165, 1168, 1174.

100 "Hoe Sale Total Takes Big Jump," *New York Times*, 20 November 1912, 8.

101 "Hoe Book Sale Ends; Total, \$1,932,060.60," *New York Times*, 23 November 1912, 5.

Mortality

On 10 April 1913, Alfred Quaritch wrote to Belle Greene “to express my sympathy with you all in the great loss you have sustained by the death of Mr. Morgan.”¹⁰² On 29 July, one of Quaritch’s staff, Edmund Dring, reported to Greene that “Mr. Quaritch is not very well just now,” and Alfred died on 27 August.¹⁰³ In response to Greene’s telegram of condolence, Dring explained that he had been handling most of the business, as “during the last 6 or 9 months he [Alfred] was practically incapacitated from any lengthy discussion or train of thought,” and that Dring intended, if possible, to continue the business.¹⁰⁴ Dring added, “I do not know whether Mr. J. P. Morgan [Jr.] is in a buying frame of mind, but there are two or three things in stock which I think would be desirable acquisitions for the library.” While the Morgan Library and the Quaritch firm had to adjust to the loss of their namesakes, the relationship between the two institutions continued to be extremely important to both.

Alfred’s will, made on 7 April 1911, the day before he left England for the first Hoe sale, divided his estate between his sisters, who became trustees of the business. The will also included bequests to Dring and to Ada Johnson. A codicil added five days before his death increased the legacy to Johnson “in recognition of her most faithful devotion to me for the past eleven years.” This correlates with records of “Mr and Mrs Quaritch” staying in Brighton hotels in 1902 and 1903.¹⁰⁵ By 1905, “Mrs Quaritch” was living in Hove and in the 1911 census, “Ada Quaritch” claimed to have been married for eight years.¹⁰⁶ Alfred also sometimes claimed to be married, for example, listing his wife as his next of kin on a voyage to New York in January 1909, though

102 New York, The Morgan Library & Museum Archive, ARC 1310 MCC Quaritch V, Bernard [Alfred] Quaritch to Belle da Costa Greene, 10 April 1913.

103 New York, The Morgan Library & Museum Archive, ARC 1310 MCC Quaritch V, E. H. Dring to Belle da Costa Greene, 29 July 1913.

104 New York, The Morgan Library & Museum Archive, ARC 1310 MCC Quaritch V, E. H. Dring to Belle da Costa Greene, 3 September 1913.

105 For example, “Fashionable Movements,” *Brighton Gazette*, 10 July 1902, 3.

106 National Archives, 1911 England Census, Class: RG14, Myrton Lodge New Church Road, Hove, Sussex.

he spent census night, 1911, in a hotel where he was recorded as single.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, Alfred's will makes clear that Ada was a spinster and left her no part of the business. In a remarkable coincidence, in the 1915 US census, Smith also appears to be living with a woman, Mary, who was not his wife.¹⁰⁸ By 1910, he had separated from Margaret, and they had lost a child in the decade since their marriage.¹⁰⁹ For Smith, professional success had coincided with personal tragedy.¹¹⁰

The death of Alfred Quaritch may have encouraged Smith to expand his activities into London's auction rooms. In addition, in 1913, Montague Barlow of Sotheby's had approached Smith about the sale of parts of the Duke of Devonshire's library, which Smith secured for Huntington at a cost of \$750,000 (or about £150,000), although this was inflated in some press reports.¹¹¹ The transaction was supposed to be kept private, but it appears that Smith, well aware by now of the value of publicity, leaked the news.¹¹²

On a passport application made in 1919, Smith claimed that he had been in London from June to October 1914 and made trips "several times each year prior to the war."¹¹³ Pinning down Smith's movements is difficult, both because George Smith is a very common name and because purchases made by representatives of the firm would be recorded under his name. Smith appears as a buyer of manuscripts at the Sotheby's sale on April 6, 1914. There his firm bought, among other things, a copy of "Leicester's Commonwealth" for £1, 15s, and two manuscript Books of Hours, for £25 and £120.¹¹⁴ These were

107 National Archives, 1911 England Census, Class: RG14, Piece: 510, Queens Hotel, Leicester Square, London.

108 Albany, New York State Archives, State Population Census Schedules, 1915, Election District: 06, Assembly District: 15, City: New York, County: New York, Page: 72.

109 1910 United States Federal Census, 1910, Manhattan Ward 12, New York, Roll: T624_1023, Page: 4B, Enumeration District: 0589.

110 See also Heartman, *Smith*, 14.

111 Hermann, *Sotheby's*, 125–26; Dickinson, "Mr. Huntington," 377.

112 Dickinson, "Mr. Huntington," 378.

113 Washington, DC, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Roll 0978-Certificate: 137397.

114 Leicester's Commonwealth appeared in a catalog (*Rare English Books in Fine Bindings*) produced by Smith, where it was advertised for \$150. It is now San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 90.

not sums to set pulses racing, and Smith's involvement at this sale seems to have attracted no public comment. The evidence of the April sale does, however, provide an important qualification to the idea, suggested by later press coverage, that Smith arrived in London in the summer of 1914 in a blaze of dollars.¹¹⁵

Smith was definitely in London by late June 1914 when the major auctions of the season commenced with the sale of the Earl of Pembroke's library on 25 June. This included just two medieval manuscripts: a Book of Hours bought by Smith for £600 (now San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 1101) (fig. 5) and a Ptolemy (bought by the German firm Hiersemann for £1,850). On 23 July, Smith bought seventeen manuscripts at prices ranging from 7 shillings to £345. The *New York Sun* reported that Smith spent \$494,380 (about £100,000) in a few weeks in London. Smith fueled US press interest by giving interviews to the *New York Times*. In July, he reported, "Have had a very successful trip. It was a long and hard battle, but I won out O. K.," and declared that his purchases, some of which he had exhibited in Selfridge's (together with books brought from New York), were "the choicest little lot of books ever exhibited in London by America."¹¹⁶ In this, as in other coverage, he suggested that he represented his country in a battle.

In early August 1914, the battles in the auction room were superseded by a real war. Keen to get his purchases to the United States, Smith sent \$35,000 worth of books to New York in the care of Abe Attel, a former champion boxer, once again ensuring publicity for his activities.¹¹⁷ By 1917, when the United States joined the war, the London book trade was back in full swing, and Smith was tempted back to London for the close of the summer season. Moreover, he was looking to buy another collection en bloc for Huntington, this time the Bridgewater Library of the Earls of Ellesmere.¹¹⁸ The sale of the Ellesmere collection, again through Sotheby's, reportedly

115 For example, "Pembroke Books Fetch \$194,680," *New York Times*, 27 June 1914, 3; "American Smashes London Book Ring," *Sun* (New York), 18 July 1914, 1.

116 "Smith Pleased with Books," *New York Times*, 25 July 1914, 2; see also Dickinson, "Mr. Huntington," 379–80.

117 "Abe Attel 'Books' Passage," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 August 1914, 14.

118 Dickinson, "Mr. Huntington," 387–88.



FIGURE 5. Annunciation, with inscriptions above recording the manuscript's former owners, the Earls of Pembroke, and an erroneous attribution to Jan van Eyck, from a Book of Hours, France, ca. 1440. San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 1101, fol. 1v.

for more than \$1,000,000, was announced in May. This included the famous Ellesmere Chaucer manuscript, which, with the rest of the collection, was sent to California.

In October 1919, Barlow wrote to Smith encouraging him to come to London for “the finest day’s sale we have ever held,” planned for November, and this letter is preserved with Smith’s passport application.¹¹⁹ In 1919, Smith traveled with his second wife and her sister. Margaret had died in 1916, and the following year Smith married Eleanor May Hannan. She is presumably the Mrs. Smith described in John Drinkwater’s reminiscence of happy evenings with Smith at the peak of his career: “Mrs. Smith must be found: we must all have dinner together, and a theatre—any theatre we liked—afterward.”¹²⁰ Smith’s visit to London in the winter of 1919 included the purchase of nine manuscripts at the sale of Parke Mayhew Pittar’s collection, which began on 17 December. This provides a rare opportunity to try to quantify the difference that Smith’s presence made at London auctions, because some of the collection had been offered at auction in November 1918, a week before the end of the war, when a large number of lots failed to sell. In all cases, Smith’s presence was significant because the books now did sell, and the manuscripts raised higher prices than those recorded the previous year, although the amounts varied between an additional 10 shillings and £15 (very modest sums). In addition to these relatively inexpensive purchases, Smith continued to court publicity, and as he returned to New York in January 1920, the US press rejoiced in news of yet more record prices paid by Smith on Huntington’s behalf, this time for early printed books from the Britwell Court Library.¹²¹ Two months later, on 4 March 1920, Smith died in his office, probably of a heart attack, at the age of forty-nine.¹²² Laudatory obituary notices appeared in the press, and friends and colleagues published

119 Washington, DC, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Roll #: 978, Volume #: Roll 0978 - Certificate: 137397.

120 John Drinkwater, *A Book for Bookmen* (New York: George H. Doran, 1927), 210.

121 For example: “Quaint Gems of the Printer’s Art from Britwell Court Library,” *Sun* (New York), 11 January 1920, Magazine Section, 6.

122 “G. D. Smith, Noted Book Dealer, Dies Sitting at His Desk,” *New-York Tribune*, 5 March 1920, 8; Dickinson, “Mr. Huntington,” 391.

reminiscences including, as late as 1945, Heartman's short biography, linking themselves to this famous bookseller. Yet in 1927, Drinkwater observed, "It has been said of G.D.S. that he had no care for literature, that he was concerned only with books. It is true enough, but it did not matter. He was not the only bookseller of whom it could be said, but, unlike some of the others, he made no bones about it."¹²³ In this context, it is worth noting that Smith's brother Theodore also became a salesman, dealing first in liquor and later in cars. At his death, Smith was reported to be a millionaire, but he left no will, so his twenty-eight-year-old widow applied for administration of the estate, which she estimated to be worth at least \$500,000, listing herself and his two brothers as next of kin.¹²⁴ In 1913, the gross value of Alfred Quaritch's estate was assessed at £127,299, 3s. The two men's wealth was modest compared with the wealth of the famous collectors they supplied but nevertheless remarkable for dealers.

Conclusions

Both George D. Smith and Bernard Alfred Quaritch were the sons of shopkeepers. They began learning to deal in books as teenagers, in Smith's case working in bookstores and in Quaritch's through his father's instruction. Although they worked hard to master their trade, unlike Bernard Quaritch, both men saw books primarily as commodities. They recognized the potential of the nascent transatlantic market for rare books and invested much time and effort into making it profitable. Their actions, which included taking commissions, offering books and advice to clients, publishing catalogs and works about books, sharing gossip about the market, and transporting manuscripts, contributed to the formation of their customers' libraries and by extension of the wider market. However, unlike most collectors in this period, both men became rich by making profit on books and manuscripts.

123 Drinkwater, *Bookmen*, 207–8.

124 "George D. Smith Dies," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 5 March 1920, 3; "Book Buyer Left Half a Million," *Vancouver Sunday Sun*, 4 April 1920, 32; see also Heartman, *Smith*, 29–30.

This is not to say that people such as Huntington, Morgan, and Walters did not use their own taste in creating collections. However, they were not acting in a vacuum. Instead, these libraries were built on foundations laid by an earlier generation of collectors, including Ives, Poor, Irwin, Lefferts, and Hoe. Smith and Quaritch were among the dealers who provided a link between these collectors, contributing to both the formation and dispersal of the early collections in America. In addition, they facilitated en bloc purchases from Britain, as well as the acquisition of specific items. The complete libraries of notable collectors had a particular cachet, but in the emerging US market, Books of Hours and other heavily illuminated material proved particularly popular. Part of Smith's and Quaritch's success lay in their ability to identify and recommend items they thought would be of interest to individual clients, sometimes finding homes for the same book on multiple occasions.

At the same time, dealers, and Smith in particular, helped to raise the profile of collecting, crafting narratives for the press about record-breaking sales and national rivalries. While Quaritch continued to trade on his father's reputation, Smith used his rags-to-riches story to promote his business. Some of this coverage was later used in tributes to the two men, typically written by other members of the trade. All accounts of a life must necessarily be selective. The early histories of Smith and Quaritch were of their time and echoed early accounts of collectors in focusing on individual genius and obscuring aspects of their lives that might harm their families' reputations. Nevertheless, the lives of George D. Smith and Bernard Alfred Quaritch provide a different perspective on the trade in rare books and manuscripts than that offered by histories of collectors and serve as a reminder of the many factors, including dealers' profits, that shaped modern collections of rare books and manuscripts.