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THE NATIONAL GALLERY
WOMEN AND THE ARTS FORUM

THE ANNUAL ANNA JAMESON LECTURE

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30 September

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ABOUT THIS LECTURE SERIES

The National Gallery Anna Jameson Lecture series, established in 2021, takes place annually and invites a guest speaker to give a lecture focused on women in the arts, past and present. The lecture series and related publication series are supported by Professor Diane Apostolos-Cappadona. The Anna Jameson Lectures form part of the lively research and events programme associated with the National Gallery's Women and the Arts Forum, also supported by Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, in honour of her mother, Stacia Apostolos. The lecture series is named in recognition of Anna Jameson (née Murphy, 1794–1860), who is often identified as the first English female art historian. An early scholar of Italian Renaissance art, she was also the author of the first systematic study of Christian iconography in English.

SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHY



Initially engaging with English art of the Romantic era, Adele Ernstrom explored J.M.W. Turner's *Illustrations of the Poets* as her doctoral thesis (University of California, Los Angeles, 1966) and in journal articles. For British Museum Publications, she published *John Sell Cotman* (1978). Around this time stirrings of the women's movement directed the attention of Dr Ernstrom (then Holcomb) to women in the writing of art history, especially the work of Anna Jameson. Editing with Claire R. Sherman *Women as Interpreters of the Visual Arts, 1820-1979* (Greenwood Press, 1981), she contributed particularly to its account of women in the nineteenth century. Her essay on Jameson, whose study of Christian iconography

was pioneering in its British context and beyond, claimed a signal position for this self-educated writer when the institutionalization of art history had barely begun. In 1985 Dr Ernstrom held a Senior Visiting Fellowship at CASVA (Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts) in Washington, D.C. She has published on Jameson in journals including *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, *Art History*, *RACAR (Revue d'art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review)*, *Woman's Art Journal* and *Women's Writing* and in works of reference. Dr Ernstrom has both U.S. and Canadian citizenship and has held teaching positions at the State University of New York, the University of Guelph and at Bishop's University in Sherbrooke, Quebec from which she retired as Professor Emerita in 1996.

SYNOPSIS OF THE LECTURE

At a time crucial for the development of the National Gallery, Anna Jameson's *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters* (1845) played a singular role in educating the public in art and supporting the Gallery's mission. When Gallery attendance spiked with its 1838 move to Trafalgar Square, Jameson conceived her *Public Galleries* (1842) as an initiation in art for unprepared viewers. As sales of the work proved disappointing, she published in Charles Knight's *Penny Magazine* for working class readers her illustrated 'Essays on the Lives of Remarkable Painters' (1843-45). Some 40,000 purchasers of the magazine were reading her 'Essays' in 1845 when they also appeared as a book, *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters* and of the *Progress of Painting in Italy*. The work went through successive editions on both sides of the Atlantic until the end of the 19th century.

Jameson from the mid-1830s supported the National Gallery by urging the need for such an institution. Her 'Memoirs' extended support, recommending that readers see works in the collection and suggesting acquisition of works valuable for the historical character of the Gallery, then in formation. She was prescient in using (and explicitly crediting) the most original – often German – art historical research of the period, C.F. Rumohr's *Italienische Forschungen (Italian Researches)*. She did so by demonstrating the currently contested status of attributions, by rewriting the early history of art with reference to Rumohr's critique of Vasari, in handling of Vasari's stories about artists, and in practising the principle that writing about art be based exclusively on first-hand study.

Jameson wrote without condescension, clearly, accessibly and elegantly. French critic A.-F. Rio, whose work was widely read in England, asserted that the aesthetic education of Jameson's compatriots 'has been much more her work than that of all the other English writers who, in various forms, have treated the same subject.'

THE LECTURE

It is a great pleasure and a privilege to speak to you under the auspices of the National Gallery on the work of Anna Jameson relative to the formation of this distinguished collection. To Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, my thanks and admiration for her vision in enabling a series of lectures named for Jameson. I am also keenly appreciative of the work of Susanna Avery-Quash and of the institutional effort – curatorial, administrative and technical – that has made this event possible in difficult conditions. At Bishop's University I would acknowledge Willa Montague's help with images. More broadly, I wish to credit recent scholarship – much of it in the online journal *19* – which has enlarged the frame through which Jameson's role in art history, the history of collecting, religious iconography and other aspects of Victorian culture may be seen. Finally, I would honour my quite specific debt to the art historian Carol Gibson-Wood. While working on a degree at the Warburg Institute in London, she first signalled in an unpublished conference paper of 1982 the pertinence of research by the German art historian Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (1785–1843) to Jameson's *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters*.

At the time hardly anyone thought this insight important, especially as it referenced the demotic *Penny Magazine* for working class readers where the *Memoirs*, published in 1845, originally appeared as 'Essays on the Lives of Remarkable Painters'. Yet this improbable circumstance figured in a nexus critical for the Gallery's history in the early 1840s. It did so in conjunction with major demographic change and transformations in publishing that were both ideological and technical. With its recent

move to the centre of London, the Gallery's presence as a fully public institution more pointedly challenged a historic span of such *longue durée* that it can scarcely be said to have had an identifiable founding moment. This was the understanding that associated the ownership of works of art and access to them with class privilege.

That understanding had indeed been contested in principle with the National Gallery's founding in 1824, in its provision for a collection of paintings administered by government on behalf of the nation. With its purchase of the pictures of John Julius Angerstein (1735–1823) as the nucleus of a collection, joined soon afterwards by significant private donations, Parliament created the National Gallery. Frederick Mackenzie's watercolour of 1834, *The Principal Room of the Original National Gallery*, represents the paintings' hang as they appeared in Angerstein's former residence in Pall Mall.¹ In this setting the pictures maintain the character of a private gentleman's collection. When the Gallery in 1838 gained its first purpose-built facility on the upper boundary of a public square, the choice of location held high symbolic importance. 'The strangeness of a place like that in the middle of London,' marvels a Zimbabwean visitor to the Gallery in Namwali Serpell's recent novel *The Old Drift*.²

This relocation from privileged neighbourhood to the 'Commons' of Trafalgar Square contributed to a spectacular rise in Gallery attendance. From 130,000 visitors in 1835, attendance increased to 768,244 between October 1839 and October 1840. Newly

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represented in the influx were artisans and factory operatives, including working women, many of them first time visitors to a picture gallery of any kind. This massive and sudden increase in attendance posed a question: should – or could – such a socially heterogeneous and unprepared public be educated in the history and appreciation of the major schools of European painting?

One who took the issue to heart was Anna Jameson (1794–1860). We encounter her likeness in a portrait drawn in 1839 by Carl Vogel von Vogelstein (1788–1868), painter and professor of drawing at the Dresden Academy (fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Carl Vogel von Vogelstein (1788–1868), *Portrait of Anna Jameson*, 1839, pencil on paper, 37.4 x 24.8 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, C 3117 (Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. Photo: Andreas Diesend)

For Jameson, the future of the National Gallery was implicated in the project of institution building for the nation. From early youth Jameson, born in 1794, revered the example of Madame de Staël (1766–1817) as a woman and as a thinker (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Marie-Éleonore Godefroid (1778–1849), *Anne-Louise-Germaine Necker, Baronne de Staël-Holstein*, about 1810, oil on canvas, 116 x 83 cm, Propriété de l'Etat, Versailles, Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, inv. MV4784 (Photo © Photo Josse / Bridgeman Images)

Though Jameson did not have the philosophical formation Staël exemplified – she was self-educated in another tradition – she shared profoundly Staël's concern with social provision for what the elder writer called *tous les arts d'imagination* ('all the arts of the imagination') as an essential condition of civil society.

Jameson understood the stakes for the National Gallery in the light of Staël's *De la littérature*, published in 1800. In words of the book's recent editors, with this work Staël, in place

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of Napoleon, inscribed her Swedish name on the pediment of the revolutionized nineteenth century.³ 'Eloquence', Staël wrote, 'the love of letters, and of the fine arts and philosophy, are alone capable of making a territory into a native land [*patrie*], in giving to the nation that inhabits it tastes, customs and sentiments in common'.⁴ English society differed from that of France, needless to say, but in the context of agitation around reform, and a very active fear of revolution, it faced a similarly urgent need to form institutions through which the country might cohere as a nation.

Before the National Gallery's spike in attendance, Jameson sought to influence attitudes towards the institution's character and purpose. In 1834 when plans for the new building were generating lively debate, she published *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad*. Her travel narrative of two recent tours of Germany explores the interest of German collectors such as the Boisserée brothers of Cologne in 'early' (late Medieval) art and the rethinking in Germany of the organization and function of picture galleries. Without proposing it as a model, Jameson invites consideration of the plan, arrangement by schools and chronology, as well as decor of the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. She calls the just completed structure by Leo von Klenze (1784–1864) 'a national picture gallery' – national, that is, for Bavaria. Frescoes by Peter von Cornelius (1783–1867) were then nearing completion in domed compartments of the Alte Pinakothek's east corridor. The programme of the Italian section, she says, opens with an allegory of the union of religion and the fine arts. Depictions of epochs in the history of

art follow, beginning with Giovanni Pisano's designs for the Campo Santo of Pisa and leading to Raphael's *Stanze* in the Vatican. Implicitly exemplary, the Pinakothek's frescoes affirm the institution's rationale, that art has a history, one that is progressive in nature.

Jameson's attraction to Germany had other parallels in early to mid-nineteenth-century England. But she was exceptional in writing about art as a self-defined amateur – an amateur in the original sense of lover of art – joining close study of the works to acquaintance with the literature and the emerging discipline of art history. From this standpoint she interrogated institutional support for the fine arts, including the elevated modes of fresco and monumental sculpture, and issues of patronage. Her discussion of the Alte Pinakothek suggests that for museums and galleries the new history of art implies public investment. In connection with Johann Heinrich Dannecker (1758–1841), she addresses the lack of relief for artists whose work was not readily marketable. As court sculptor to the monarchy of Württemberg, Dannecker encountered near crippling obstacles to the realization of his *Ariadne on the Panther* from clay bozzetto (1803) to marble completion in 1814.⁵ Jameson sees his experience as characterizing the vagaries of royal patronage. Balancing this criticism, she celebrates the public-mindedness of private donors such as Canon Wallraf of Cologne, who gifted a mask of Medusa to his city, and whose collection was foundational for what became the Wallraf-Richartz Museum.

With regard to fresco, and history painting generally, she writes that 'we have not in

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England any historical painters who have given evidence of their genius on so grand a scale as some of the historical painters of Germany have recently done. We know that it is not the genius, but the opportunity which has been wanting'.⁶ In such an appeal, Jameson anticipates the brief of the 1841 Select Committee to consider grants for the study of fresco technique in connection with decoration of the new Houses of Parliament. Yet Jameson was not an enthusiast of all things German. She rejected the Nazarenes' revivalist project of virtually re-creating early Christian art.⁷ And all the while she was learning. Encountering Melchior and Sulpiz Boisserée's collection of early German (including Flemish) painting, then about to enter the Alte Pinakothek, she records her utter amazement before two purported Van Eycks. One of them was almost certainly *The Adoration of the Magi*, the central panel of the Saint Columba Altarpiece, now attributed to Rogier van der Weyden.⁸

Along with seriousness of purpose, *Visits and Sketches* is informed by the warmth of Jameson's interactions with the wide range of persons she met. What may be said, one may ask, of her affective life? From age sixteen she worked as a governess, helping to support her parents and four sisters. Anna's father, Denis Brownell Murphy (1763–1842), practiced as a miniature painter with scant success in an overcrowded field. An example of his work is his watercolour portrait of Norwich painter John Sell Cotman (1782–1842), possibly a friend's offering.⁹ Murphy faced disappointment with royal patronage when, after Princess Charlotte promised to buy his miniature versions of Lely's 'Windsor Beauties', her widower Leopold of Saxe-Coburg declined

to honour the claim. Anna's near decade of service as a governess ended in 1825 with her marriage at age 31 to Robert Jameson, a barrister from Westmorland, Misgivings she had harboured were soon justified. In a letter of 1836 to her husband, then newly appointed Attorney-General of Upper Canada, she stated that 'a union such as ours is, and has been ever, is a mockery of the laws of God and man'.¹⁰ I take this to say, as clearly as was likely at the time, that the marriage had not been consummated. Subsequently, Anna Jameson's emotional life centred on intense friendships. One was with the sculptor Henry Behnes Burlowe (1802–1837), about which we know only that she was stricken with grief when he died in 1837 of cholera in Rome. Her attachments were mainly with women, with actress Fanny Kemble (1809–1893), the American writer Catharine Sedgewick (1789–1867) and with Lady Byron. But the most passionate and long-lived of these friendships was with Ottilie von Goethe (1796–1872), seen here in a portrait drawing of 1817 (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Julie von Egloffstein (1792–1869), *Portrait of Ottilie von Goethe as a Bride*, 1817, pencil and graphite with black pen and grey wash, outlined in brown pen on paper, 13.8 x 10.4 cm, Goethe-Nationalmuseum, Weimar, KHZ1993/00202 (Photo: Klassik Stiftung Weimar)

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Ottolie was the widowed daughter-in-law of the great man of German letters. At one time Jameson imagined living with her in Weimar and collaborating with her on a book about women in the arts who had earned a livelihood through their professional practice, but the publication never came to fruition.¹¹

In 1836 Jameson travelled to Canada to reach a resolution of her ambiguous marriage. She described the account of her German studies in Toronto as letters to a friend, that is, Ottolie. Upon concluding a legal settlement with Robert Jameson, the now formally separated Mrs Jameson undertook a summer tour to the Anishinaabe people who lived, and continue to live, at what she calls 'the further extremity of Lake Huron'.¹² Jameson's etching of 1837 represents her passage by canoe to Manitoulin Island, where she witnessed the presentation of gifts on behalf of the Crown to native allies of the British (fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Anna Jameson (1794–1860), *Voyage down Lake Huron, in a Canoe, Augt. 1837*, etching on paper, 1837–1838, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 960.176.10 (Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum, ©ROM)

In communities she visited, the labour of indigenous women struck Jameson as 'rational' relative to its material context. The argument of her book turns on an Enlightenment view

that societies evolve in stages from savagery to civilization, as measured by their treatment of women. Implicitly, she attacks racist assumptions that index the supposed drudgery of Indian 'squaws' to ideas of their societies' degradation. Explicitly, Jameson contrasts the arrangements of native societies to those of Europe; idleness there falls to an elite few with extremes of exploitation to working women. Europe's claim to epitomize civilized values is thus thrown into question.¹³

Now all of this may seem remote from Jameson's concern with picture galleries in Europe. But the resounding success in 1838 of *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* established Jameson as a sage, or public moralist in the term of Benjamin Dabby's *Women as Public Moralists in Britain* (2017). Assuming authority on a momentous social issue, Jameson in her book addresses not only the initially specified women, but the public at large. Reception of the work strengthened her position in critical esteem and in her relations with publishers. And at a time when specialist credentials did not exist as they do today, this shift in literary stature enabled Jameson to set her subsequent course as an authority on art and art history. Returning to London in March of that year, she arrived in time for the Gallery's Trafalgar Square opening on 9 April. Jameson then faced a juncture in which, soliciting the interest of publisher John Murray, she made what she thought an important change of publisher. Confidently promoting with Murray her plan for the projected *Public Galleries*, she squarely refused a proposed collaboration with either the antiquarian Dawson Turner (1775–1858) or the painter Thomas Phillips (1770–1845). Her assumption of

full responsibility for accuracy of the strenuous research involved has been valuably explored by Susanna Avery-Quash, who also evokes the companionate persona Jameson presents to her readers.¹⁴ When the contract was signed in 1840 and Murray stipulated that she include the royal collections at Windsor and Hampton Court, the definition of public galleries was implicitly stretched beyond Jameson's criterion, i.e., institutions founded with some provision for admitting the public. By the same stroke, her work was much augmented; the 'Handbook' became two volumes and publication delayed till 1842.¹⁵

For Jameson the challenge of catalogue entries on the scale demanded stood sharply at odds with her practice to date as essayist or memoirist. Beyond the catalogue's technical aspect, her grace and skill as a writer found scope in criticism of works on which she found it important to comment. First in the order of institutions Jameson treats, the National Gallery is introduced with a history of collecting in England that serves to preface the work as a whole. Jameson constructs a tradition, a course marked by such vicissitudes as failure to benefit from the dispersal of the Orléans Collection in the early nineteenth century. She expresses regret at losses and gratification with works acquired privately that might be imagined as a national inheritance. In relation to historian Linda Colley's critique of such belief as mystification,¹⁶ Jameson's position may be seen as aspirational. Thus, she gives pride of place in her narrative of the Gallery's founding to Sir George Beaumont (1753–1827). Implicitly a model as a private collector, so committed was he to the public interest as to donate in his lifetime important

works, reserving only till his death one he couldn't bear to part with, Claude's *Hagar and the Angel* (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Claude (1604/5–1682), *Landscape with Hagar and the Angel*, oil on canvas mounted on wood, 1646, 52.2 × 42.3 cm, National Gallery, London, NG61 (© The National Gallery, London)

Jameson's *Public Galleries* enjoyed a critical success but a disappointing return commercially. At 12 shillings the guide was priced far beyond the reach of working people, while persons with a developed interest may have found its didactic aspects superfluous. From an edition of 2000, Murray's ledger in 1843 showed a sale of only 658 copies.¹⁷ As owner of its copyright, Murray attempted to recoup his loss by issuing what was claimed to be another edition, unchanged but for an additional index. However disappointing the outcome from the standpoint of public education, Jameson lost no time in identifying another platform for her project and on this

occasion it was clearly adapted to its target audience. She turned to a publisher very different from Murray, engaging with Charles Knight (1791–1873) to write for his *Penny Magazine* a series entitled 'Essays on the Lives of Remarkable Painters'. Chief publisher of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, Knight had founded on his own account in 1832 a penny weekly he conceived in conversation with the reformer and MP for Hull, Matthew Davenport Hill (1792–1872). On 31 March of that year, the *Penny Magazine's* launch preceded by two months passage of the Reform Bill and promptly reached a sale of 50,000 copies. Its zenith of over 200,000 sales came in the mid-1830s. New technologies beginning with steam printing underwrote the *Penny Magazine's* meteoric success. With stereotype casting of a frame combining text and image, the metal cast – the stereotype – became the matrix of printing. This method of production made possible a far larger print run than that possible with a type-set frame. In addition, the casts were exportable throughout the world.¹⁸

As an experiment in cheap literature for working people, the *Penny Magazine's* reception was vitally enhanced by wood-engraved illustration. In his youth, Knight frequented the royal collections at Windsor, recording his admiration for Raphael's *Cartoons*, paintings by Quentin Massys and Murillo. To make fine art available to the widest possible public figured centrally in his mission, one implicated in the financial risk Knight assumed with the *Penny Magazine*. He took pains to find works available for

reproduction. To that end a cohort of wood-engravers would cut segments of an image on blocks to be bolted together for printing in time to meet a deadline. An instance for which wood-engraver John Jackson receives main credit is this print after Raphael's *Miraculous Draught of Fishes* (fig. 6). This was at a time when art publications normally appeared with costly copper plate engravings. Jameson, who would later reach an impasse with Murray over illustration to *Sacred and Legendary Art*, evidently valued the chance to see her work illustrated accessibly and in association with Knight's concern for quality, and this despite the *Penny Magazine's* decline in sales by the late 1830s and Knight's bankruptcy in 1841.



Fig. 6 John Jackson after Raphael, 'The Miraculous Draught of Fishes', *The Penny Magazine*, 8 June 1883, p. 220. (*The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* <https://archive.org/details/s1id13415200>)

Subsequently, the weekly resumed publication as a 'new series ... of a higher character' to which Jameson's 'Essays', issued from 1843 to 1845, were advertised as attesting. For her 'Lives of Remarkable Painters', Jameson drew on the framework of biography with description of works that Giorgio Vasari

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introduced in his sixteenth-century *Vite*. The *Vite* had not been published in English until Mrs Jonathan Foster's translation appeared in 1850.¹⁹ But though this was a landmark, Vasari's density of reference to localities, patrons and commissions, none of them illustrated, could not easily have initiated mid-nineteenth-century English readers to its subject. And yet biography, equated with history by Thomas Carlyle in the lives of great men from Odin to Napoleon,²⁰ enjoyed the highest prestige. Jameson, who later criticized Carlylean 'Hero-Worship', admired the *Kunstlerroman*, the genre recently developed in Germany, with its celebration of artists' difficult yet mainly peaceful lives. But most distinctive in Jameson's adoption of the artist's life as template was the critical vantage she honed through acquaintance with Carl-Friedrich Rumohr's (1785–1843) critique of

Vasari's founding work. Rumohr appears in this portrait drawing from the time of his principal publication, *Italienische Forschungen* (1827–31) (fig. 7).

Jameson seems not to have known Rumohr except through his research, although two prominent figures in Germany were acquaintances in common: August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845) and Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853). In England Charles Eastlake (1793–1865), Keeper of the National Gallery from 1843, had met Rumohr in 1816 through his connection with the German colony in Rome.

Rumohr had studied philology and the history of art at the University of Göttingen with Johann Dominik Fiorello (1748–1821), who in 1813 became the first full professor of the history of art – anywhere.²² With respect to Vasari, Rumohr thought that existing critiques of information claims in the *Vite*, including those of his professor Fiorello, were insufficient. Rumohr insisted that the critical examination of documents relative to an artist's practice, a method rooted in philology, be brought together with first-hand study of the works themselves. He started by scrutinizing the sources of Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Commentaries*, the authority on which Vasari chiefly relied.²³ For his *Italian Researches*, Rumohr in Florence soldiered through guild and convent documents, in Siena the Cathedral archives, in Rome the Vatican Library and so on. He associated philology's painstaking rectitude in research with exploration of the conditions of an artist's production and its wider cultural context. In this process he would form an idea



Fig. 7 Carl Vogel von Vogelstein (1788–1868), *Portrait of Carl Friedrich Rumohr*, 1828, pencil on paper, 27.5 x 22.3 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, C3364 (Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. Photo: Herbert Boswank)

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of artistic personality through characteristic habits seen in the artist's work. Loth to make positive attributions when no documents could be found, Rumohr remained alert to evidence of all kinds, however inconclusive for attribution. Assessing, for example, the resonance of Giotto's reputation, he cited an encomium of 1390 – more than a half century after the painter's death – asserting that Giotto, not Cimabue, was 'first to hold the mirror up to nature'.²⁴ Rumohr based his conception of Giotto's work on such traditionally accepted examples as the *Death of Saint Francis* in Santa Croce, Florence, despite the absence of documentation for them.

Rumohr's refusal to offer any form of description or criticism not grounded in his own personal observation of a work may seem an elementary principle, but it was not generally honoured at the time. Jonathan Richardson (1667–1745), for example, assigned to his son the task of writing descriptions of works in Italy to be incorporated in the father's authorial corpus. The German art historian Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1794–1868), well-known in England, appropriated in his study of Rubens descriptions of Rubens's paintings in the Prado by Caroline von Dacheroden (Mme Wilhelm von Humboldt, 1766–1829) for what he considered an adequate reason: inability to travel to Madrid. The practice was not properly citation, nor was it seen as plagiarism.

How then did Jameson's 'Essays' register an understanding of Rumohr's work? Her series in the *Penny Magazine* came to an end in 1845. Charles Knight then published the 'Essays', as they had originally appeared, in a

one shilling book titled *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters and of the Progress of Painting in Italy. From Cimabue to Bassano*. For the sake of convenience, my discussion refers to the 'Essays' as they appear in the book. Jameson invokes Rumohr most explicitly with reference to contested attributions. In her chapter on Cimabue, she notes that Cimabue's credit for frescoes in the Upper Church of San Francesco in Assisi 'has been disputed by a great authority'.²⁵ A note to this statement cites Rumohr's *Italienische Forschungen*. Secondly, she refers to the agreement of both Franz Kugler (1808–1858) and Luigi Lanzi (1732–1810), following Vasari, in attributing to Cimabue works in vaults of the Upper Church. Conditionally, she considers that 'if these are really by the hand of Cimabue, we must allow that here is a great step in advance of the formal monotony of his Greek models'.²⁶ Jameson draws on Rumohr's research in calling discredited Vasari's claim that the thirteenth-century mosaic worker, Andrea Tafi, 'learned his art from the Byzantines'.²⁷ When she affirms the importance of the Siennese master Duccio, 'whose influence on the progress of art was unquestionably great',²⁸ she quotes Eastlake, who was himself in Rumohr's debt. Duccio was generative for the development of thirteenth-century Florentine painting in the argument of Rumohr's study.

'We know', Rumohr writes in his *Italienische Forschungen*, 'how little Vasari's information regarding older things is to be trusted'.²⁹ The point had not been taken on by Stephane Pinta of Cabinet Turquin, Paris, who was interviewed in September 2019 on CBC in connection with the find in France of a panel, *The Mocking*

of Christ, believed to be by Cimabue. Pinta echoed Vasari in claiming Cimabue introduced in Italian painting 'the modern style ... which changed everything'.³⁰ In her Cimabue 'Essay', Jameson elegantly reframes Rumohr's critique of this assessment. 'To Cimabue', she notes, 'has been ascribed the merit, or rather, the miracle, of having revived the art of painting when utterly lost, dead and buried – of having by his single genius brought light out of darkness'.³¹

Following reference to painters active before 1240 – Guido da Siena and Giunta Pisano are instances – she traces a continuum reaching back to early Christian art. From what Jameson calls 'the shell of ancient art remaining', artists formed allegories such as the ship as figure for the church, allegories which survived over the centuries in Byzantine as well as western



Fig. 8 Harriet Clarke (d. 1866), *Portrait of Masaccio*, wood engraving for Anna Jameson's *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, London, 1845, vol. 1 (© The National Gallery, London)

Christianity. In this legacy she locates the tradition of typology that relates Old Testament subjects to prefigured themes in the Gospels. From such precedents as Saint Augustine's alignment of the Sacrifice of Isaac with the Crucifixion, there emerges an extended continuance of type and anti-type. Her account is a tour de force of historical understanding and the historian's art.

Masaccio's (supposed) portrait, reproduced by Harriet Clarke, a wood-engraver recruited by Jameson, accompanies her Masaccio essay (fig. 8). At the time, the sorting out of Masaccio's hand from that of Filippino Lippi in completion of the Brancacci Chapel frescoes had only just been taken up. Inevitably, this wood-engraving of *The Raising of the Son of Theophilus*, in which both hands had been identified, cannot explain conclusions based on close observation of the fresco, comparisons with other works, etc. What it does achieve with its accessible presentation is a demonstration of what connoisseurship, then in its infancy, could achieve (fig. 9).

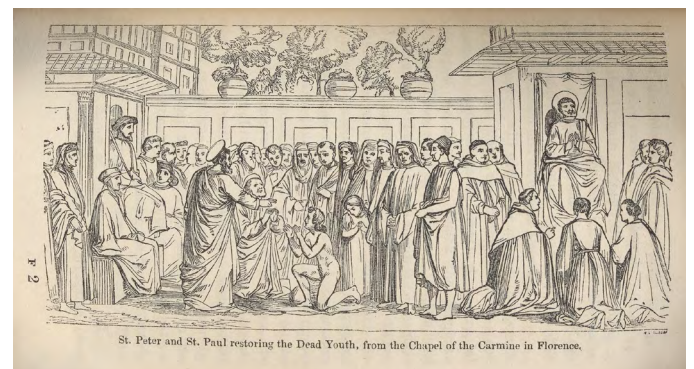


Fig. 9 Harriet Clarke (d. 1866), after Masaccio, completed by Filippino Lippi, *The Raising of the Son of Theophilus*, fresco, about 1425/1481–85, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence; wood engraving for Anna Jameson's *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, London, 1845, vol. 1 (© The National Gallery, London)

In doing so, Jameson demonstrates that art history engages an ongoing process of knowledge. Stating in this connection that 'the accuracy of German investigation has perhaps finally settled the distribution',³² she both respects German scholarship and, in her 'perhaps', hints also at the difficulty of such issues. Engaging stories had long been central to the appeal of Vasari's *Lives*. As we might expect, Rumohr handled such anecdotes severely. Vasari's account in which Cimabue discovers the ten-year-old Giotto scratching on a stone the image of a sheep suffers dismissal by Rumohr as 'too beautiful to be true'.³³ Jameson took a more lenient view of these fables, either regretting that they had to be abandoned or finding ways to use them to make a point. A Vasarian legend that still has admirers today is that of Leonardo's death in the arms of the King of France, Francis I. It was a subject treated by several nineteenth-century painters, including Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres in 1818.³⁴ Jameson qualifies Vasari's account as 'beautiful', allowing that, as the painter Henry Fuseli maintained, it would have been an honour to the king had he thus presided.³⁵ Unfortunately, she says, this is extremely unlikely as the court's presence that day is recorded at St-Germain-en-Laye, whence royal ordinances were issued, while Leonardo died at a distance in Amboise.

With regard to critical judgments on works of art, Jameson observes the practice of first-hand observation that Rumohr stipulated. When she writes of *The Raising of the Son of Theophilus*, 'All the figures are half the size of life, and quite wonderful for the truth of expression, the variety of character, the simple dignity of forms and attitudes',³⁶ she is giving her own assessment. When she refers to works she has

not seen, she cites and credits the judgment of others. Thus, with regard to Giotto's frescoes in Padua which, like Rumohr, she had not seen, she recommends to readers a pioneering English publication of 1835, *Description of the Chapel of the Annunziata dell'Arena* by Maria Callcott (1785–1842), with wood-engraved illustrations by her painter husband Augustus Wall Callcott (1779–1844). In this way, Jameson signals the importance of the cycle, 'likely to perish in a very few years ... from neglect' Maria Callcott warns, while Jameson refrains from any descriptive comment. More generally, she refers readers to English publications on Italian art whenever possible, while promoting visits to works of art in and near London. She urges her *Penny Magazine* or *Memoirs* readers to see for themselves at Hampton Court Raphael's *Cartoons* and Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar*, here illustrated in a wood-engraving published with her Mantegna 'Essay' (fig. 10).



Fig. 10 Harriet Clarke (d. 1866) after Mantegna, 'The Captives' from the *Triumph of Caesar*, about 1490, Hampton Court Palace; wood engraving for Anna Jameson's *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, London, 1845, vol. 1 (© The National Gallery, London)

Readers' attention is directed to casts of Ghiberti's *Baptistry Doors*, a gift from France to the British government's new School of Design, 'sole specimens' she says, 'of Ghiberti's skill that can be seen in England.'³⁷ And Jameson gestures throughout to what readers might see, or not see, in the National Gallery. It should be borne in mind that in the early 1840s, the National Gallery had no regular acquisitions budget; it had purchased through Parliamentary grant no work from the Continent before 1842. In calling attention to Giovanni Bellini's portrait of Doge Leonardo Loredan, she singles out one of the Gallery's few distinguished acquisitions and one seen as an 'early' work at the time (fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Giovanni Bellini (about 1435–1516), *Doge Leonardo Loredan*, oil on poplar, about 1501–2, 61.4 x 44.5 cm, National Gallery, London, NG189 (© The National Gallery, London)

When the collection as it exists today was on the threshold of its formation, Jameson seized the occasion to suggest what might be needed. In the *Memoirs* she laments that the Gallery possesses no example of the work of Giotto or his followers. When in 1856 the Gallery acquired its 'earliest' work, it was one then and for fifty years afterwards given to Giotto: *Two Haloed Mourners* (fig. 12).



Fig. 12 Spinello Aretino (1345–52–1510) *Two Haloed Mourners*, fresco, about 1387–91, 51.3 x 51.3 cm, National Gallery, London, NG276 (© The National Gallery, London)

Jameson urged the acquisition of 'small works' by Fra Angelico and in 1860, the year of her death, the predella *Christ Glorified in the Court of Heaven* entered the collection (fig. 13).



Fig. 13 Fra Angelico (active 1417; died 1455) *Christ Glorified in the Court of Heaven*, egg tempera on wood, about 1423–4, 31.7 x 73 cm, National Gallery, London, NG663.1 (© The National Gallery, London)

Jameson's history of early Italian painting helped prepare public acceptance in 1857 of Margarito of Arezzo's thirteenth-century *Virgin and Child enthroned with Scenes of the Nativity and Lives of Saints*, the purchase of which Eastlake as Director was at pains to justify on historical grounds (fig. 14).



Fig. 14 Margarito d'Arezzo (documented 1262), *The Virgin and Child enthroned with Scenes of the Nativity and Lives of Saints*, retable, about 1262 (?), egg tempera on wood, 92.1 × 183.1 cm, National Gallery, London, NG564 (© National Gallery, London)

Repeatedly she points to gaps, not only with respect to 'early' but also to later periods; she promoted the acquisition of 'any portrait' by Titian, otherwise represented in the Gallery in five instances of his power in the conception and execution of mythological scenes. She would surely have been gratified to see Titian's *Portrait of a Man* on the Gallery's walls (fig. 15).

In the introduction to his *Italienische Forschungen*, Rumohr uses the expression *Haushalt der Kunst* ('Household of Art') to suggest an interplay of elements in an economy of artistic production through which serendipitous discoveries are grasped and given form in representation. Jameson constructed a domestic economy in which persons who in the main had never heard of Giotto, Masaccio or Raphael were offered an entry to their work, to its imaginative spaciousness, its beauty



Fig. 15 Titian (active about 1506; died 1576), *Portrait of Gerolamo (?) Barbarigo*, about 1510, oil on canvas, 81.2 × 66.3 cm, National Gallery, London, NG1944 (© The National Gallery, London)

and its historical resonance. How may the effectiveness of her work be measured? The question raises a notorious problem of book history, that of accessing reader response in a more than anecdotal way. But the sheer extent to which Jameson's work was accessible and acquired over time is incontrovertible. When in 1843–45 her 'Essays' appeared in the *Penny Magazine*, its circulation had dropped to less than one fourth the publication's high point of the mid-1830s. Still, the weekly's 40,000 purchasers represented a substantial readership. Of far wider scope was Knight's publication of the series as a book in 1845. As *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters*, it went through multiple editions on both sides of the Atlantic to the end of the nineteenth century. Her sole chance to revise the work, in light of new developments, came in 1859 after contesting its reissue by Murray, who

now owned copyright but had not consulted her. Jameson's assiduity in suggesting how the National Gallery's collection might take shape involved neither a recipe nor a directive. Before and after Charles Eastlake assumed the directorship in 1855, it was rather a matter of engaging public sympathy for a course on which Jameson and Eastlake were in quite close agreement. As a book in print for over half a century, it's probable the *Memoirs* was accessible to more middle-class persons than working-class readers. Either way, the reach of her work has to be counted vital in building support for an institution that first in England affirmed the principle of national ownership of an artistic patrimony.

NOTES

- ¹ Frederick Mackenzie, *The National Gallery when at Mr J.J. Angerstein's House, Pall Mall, 1824–34*, watercolour, 69 x 85.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; see <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1108370/the-national-gallery-when-at-watercolour-mackenzie-frederick/> (accessed 8 September 2022).
- ² Namwali Serpell, *The Old Drift*, London and New York 2019, p. 334.
- ³ Mme de Stael, *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1800); eds Gérard Gengembre and Jean Goldzink, *De la littérature*, Paris 1979, p. 7.
- ⁴ Ibid, trs. the author, p. 82.
- ⁵ J.H. Dannecker, *Ariadne on the Panther*, 1803–14, marble, Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt AM Main; see <https://www.liebieghaus.de/en/renaissance-bis-klaszizismus/ariadne-panther> (accessed 8 September 2022). See also Ellen Kemp, *Ariadne auf dem Panther*, Frankfurt 1979, pp. 11–19.
- ⁶ Anna Jameson, *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad*, 1834; 3rd edn, 2 vols, London 1839, vol. 2, p. 154.
- ⁷ Adele M. Ernstrom, "Why should we be always looking back?": "Christian art" in Nineteenth-Century Historiography in Britain', *Art History*, vol. 22, no. 3, September 1999, pp. 421–35.
- ⁸ Rogier van der Weyden, *Adoration of the Magi (Saint Columba Altarpiece)*, about 1455, oil on panel, Alte Pinakothek, Munich; see <https://www.sammlung.pinakothek.de/en/artwork/jWLP07nxKY/rogier-van-der-weyden/columba-altar-anbetung-der-koenige> (accessed 8 September 2022).
- ⁹ Denis Brownell Murphy, *John Sell Cotman*, 1809, watercolour.
- ¹⁰ Gerardine Macpherson, *Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson*, London 1878, p. 108.
- ¹¹ Adele M. Holcomb, 'Anna Jameson on Women Artists', *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 8, no. 2, Fall 1988/Winter 1989, pp. 15–24.
- ¹² G.H. Needler, ed., *Letters of Anna Jameson to Ottilie von Goethe*, London 1939, p. 89.
- ¹³ Anna Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, 3 vols, London 1838; New Canadian Library edn, Toronto 1990, pp. 512–20.
- ¹⁴ Susanna Avery-Quash, 'Illuminating the Old Masters and Enlightening the British Public: Anna Jameson and the Contribution of British Women to Empirical Art History in the 1840s', 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 2019, vol. 28, at doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.832>.
- ¹⁵ Correspondence in John Murray Archives, National Library of Scotland.
- ¹⁶ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837*, New Haven 1992, pp. 179–80.
- ¹⁷ Ms 42729 Murray Ledger D, National Library of Scotland.
- ¹⁸ On Charles Knight, see Valerie Gray, *Charles Knight: Educator, Publisher, Writer*, Aldershot 2006.
- ¹⁹ On Foster, see Patricia Rubin, 'Eliza Foster (dates unknown)', 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, vol 28, 2019, at <https://19.bbk.ac.uk/article/id/1766/> (accessed 8 September 2022).
- ²⁰ Judith Johnston observes that in her *Commonplace Book* (1854), Jameson constructs for herself a place in Ruskin and Carlyle's 'exclusive and exclusionary pantheon as men of letters' (Johnston, *Anna Jameson: Victorian, Feminist, Woman of Letters*, Aldershot 1997, p. 35). Jameson implicitly criticises Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) in her characterisation as 'Hero-Worship' the sentiment informing legendary representation in art of saints and martyrs, female and male (Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, 1848; New Impression, 2 vols, London 1905, vol. 1, p. 1).
- ²¹ Carl Vogel von Vogelstein, *Carl Friedrich Rumohr*, black chalk, 1828, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden. See C.F. Rumohr, *Italienische Forschungen (Italian Researches)*, 3 vols, Berlin & Stettin 1827–1831. The work has not been translated into English.
- ²² Anne-Marie Link, 'Art, History and Discipline in the Eighteenth-Century German University', *RACAR (Revue d'art canadienne/Canadian Art Review)* vol. 28, no.1/2, 2001–2002.
- ²³ Julius von Schlosser in preface to his edition of Rumohr's *Italienische Forschungen*, Frankfurter am Main 1920, credits Rumohr as first to explore critically Ghiberti's *Commentaries* and first art historian to valorise early Christian art.

²⁴ As Jameson (*Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 30) rephrases a line in an encomium discussed by Rumohr in which Giotto speaks, as it were: 'My art was deficient in nothing that lies within nature'; see 'On Giotto', trs. Peter Wortsman, *German Essays in Art History*, ed. Gert Schiff, New York 1988, p. 91.

²⁵ Anna Jameson, *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters, and of the Progress of Painting in Italy. From Cimabue to Bassano*, 2 vols in 1, London 1845, vol. 1, p. 17.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 25.

²⁸ *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 26. See David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World*, Princeton, New Jersey 1988, p. 177.

²⁹ *Italienische Forschungen*, trs. the author, 3 vols, Berlin & Stettin 1827–31, vol. 1, p. 337.

³⁰ Interview on 'As it happens', CBC radio broadcast, 25 September 2019; Pinta's version of Vasari's claim that Cimabue was 'first cause of the revival of the art of painting', *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, ed. William Gaunt, trs. A.B. Hinds, 4 vols, London 1927, vol. 1, p. 27.

³¹ *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 5.

³² *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 106. Here Jameson quotes from Eastlake's notes to Franz Kugler's *Handbook to the History of Painting: I. The Italian Schools*, London 1842.

³³ Rumohr, 'On Giotto', *German Essays in Art History*, p. 74.

³⁴ J.A.D. Ingres, *Francis I receives the last breaths of Leonardo da Vinci*, 1818, oil on canvas, Petit Palais, Paris, PDUT1165; see <https://www.petitpalais.paris.fr/en/oeuvre/francis-i-receives-last-breaths-leonardo-da-vinci> (accessed 8 September 2022).

³⁵ *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 26.

³⁶ *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 105.

³⁷ *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 95.