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THE NATIONAL GALLERY  
WOMEN AND THE ARTS FORUM

THE ANNUAL ANNA JAMESON LECTURE

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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



Hilary Fraser is Emerita Geoffrey Tillotson Chair of Nineteenth-Century Studies at Birkbeck, University of London where she was also Dean of Arts. She has written monographs on the Victorians and Renaissance Italy (where her interest in Anna Jameson began), aesthetics and religion in Victorian literature, gender and the Victorian periodical, nineteenth-century non-fiction prose, and women writing art history in the nineteenth century. Her scholarly edition of *The Renaissance*, volume 1 of *The Collected Works of Walter Pater*, will be published by Oxford University Press in 2023. She is currently working on a book on art writing, also for OUP.

## SYNOPSIS OF THE LECTURE

The lecture addresses the part played by the Anglo-Irish art historian Anna Jameson (1794–1860) in the reception of Raphael's work in the middle of the nineteenth century. It focusses on how she mediated the art of this ever-popular painter to new audiences at a time when the establishment of a national collection opened up the pleasures and the mysteries of Old Master paintings to an enthusiastic and receptive but 'uninitiated' (to use Jameson's own expression) general public.

Fraser discusses the methods used to reach audiences that included working-class, middle- and artisan-class, young, and particularly women readers and exhibition goers. Companions, compendia, handbooks, and illustrated articles in the penny press as well as learned periodicals were her chosen forms of publication. Jameson positioned herself not as a gatekeeper but rather 'on the outside, not the inside, of the door I open', poised to accompany her readers across a transformative threshold — symbolised by the newly constructed porticoes of the Gallery on Trafalgar Square.

Jameson understood the power of material culture, not only in times when 'pictures were the books of the people' but also among the unlettered of her own day, and was especially alert to the social and cultural iconography of women. She dedicated one of the five volumes of her most original and important work, *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848–64), entitled *Legends of the Madonna* (1852), to that most significant and enduring icon of ideal femininity, the Virgin Mary, the 'Woman highly blessed'. In this extraordinary taxonomy of the Madonna in art across the ages, Jameson uncovered the stories and symbols associated with the Virgin that produced such variously inflected visual representations of her at different historical moments.

For Jameson, as for many in the Renaissance and Victorian periods and in our own day, Raphael was the supreme painter of the Madonna. She particularly admired the *Madonna di San Sisto*, 'the transfigured woman, at once completely human and completely divine', which overwhelmed George Eliot when she stood before it in the Dresden Gallery, and which was worshipped by Comtean Positivists as an icon of the religion of humanity. This lecture considers Jameson's exemplification of Raphael's various depictions of the Virgin Mary in the context of her times: contemporary religious and secular debate, the Woman Question, and the Pre-Raphaelite avant-garde.

## THE LECTURE

When I first began publishing on Anna Jameson thirty years ago there were only a handful of scholars working on her, notably Adele Ernstom (who delivered the inaugural Anna Jameson Lecture last year with such distinction) and my friend and former colleague Judith Johnston (author of the first critical monograph on Jameson).<sup>1</sup> It was at that time unimaginable that this long neglected, yet in her day pioneering Anglo-Irish writer would ever be given the platform as an art historian that she deserved, despite the judgement by some of her professional peers that she had greater influence on the artistic education of the British public than any of her contemporaries, including Ruskin.<sup>2</sup> I thank the Director of the National Gallery, London and his colleagues, especially Susanna Avery-Quash, not only for inviting me to deliver this year's lecture – it is a huge honour – but more importantly, with the generous support of Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, for having the vision and commitment to establish a lecture series named after Anna Jameson and dedicated to exploring the contribution of women to art history and to the arts more generally, as part of the National Gallery's newly launched Women and the Arts Forum.

On the eve of its major exhibition on Raphael, opening on 9th April, my lecture will address the part played by Jameson in the reception of his work in the decades after the Gallery first opened its doors onto Trafalgar Square in 1838. It will focus on how she mediated this ever-popular painter to new audiences at a time when the establishment of a national collection was opening up the pleasures and the mysteries of Old Master paintings to an

enthusiastic and receptive but 'uninitiated' (to use Jameson's own expression) general public. It is particularly timely to revisit nineteenth-century initiatives towards the democratisation of knowledge as both the National Gallery and my university (Birkbeck, University of London) approach the 200th anniversaries of their establishment as institutions with a foundational mission to bring culture and learning to the people. I will mainly concentrate on Jameson and the reception of Raphael in a Victorian context. But in so doing I will raise questions about the development of nineteenth-century feminism and about art and its communication in our own world.

In fact I will begin with an article on Raphael that appeared in *The Times* a few weeks ago.<sup>3</sup> Raphael died suddenly and in mysterious circumstances in 1520 at the age of 37, and his death has been subject to lurid speculation ever since the sixteenth-century artist and author of the influential *Lives of the Artists*, Giorgio Vasari, suggested that the cause was misdiagnosis and treatment of a severe fever brought on by 'an unusually wild debauch'.<sup>4</sup> One persistent theory is that he was poisoned by a jealous rival. Under the heading 'Raphael's last secret draws closer', *The Times* article reports on how 'Art historians want to open the Renaissance genius's tomb for a clue to possible foul play'.

It is illustrated by a large colour image of *The Last Moments of Raphael*, painted in 1866 by Henry Nelson O'Neil (fig. 1). Below is a picture of Raphael's tomb in the Pantheon, surmounted by an altarpiece containing the

## MADONNAS 'FOR THE MILLION': ANNA JAMESON, RAPHAEL, AND THE DEMOCRATISATION OF ART

Professor Hilary Fraser, Emerita Geoffrey Tillotson Chair of Nineteenth-Century Studies at Birkbeck, University of London

The Annual Anna Jameson Lecture, No. 2, 10 March 2022



Fig. 1 Henry Nelson O'Neil (1817–1880), *The Last Moments of Raphael*, 1866, oil on canvas, 121.1 x 182.3 cm, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, K250 (© Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives. Given by Walter Melville Mills, 1911. Bridgeman Images)

bronze sculpture of the *Madonna del Sasso* (*Our Lady of the Rock*) by Lorenzo Lotti, commissioned by Raphael himself – an apt memorial to an artist whose name is so associated with the representation of the Madonna and Child (fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Lorenzo Lotti, known as Lorenzetto (1490–1541), Raphael's Tomb with the statue *Madonna del Sasso*, about 1520–4, bronze, Piazza della Rotonda, Pantheon, Rome (© 2022. Photo Scala, Florence)

What does this piece about Italian art historians and scientists applying to have Raphael's body exhumed in 2022 have to do with Jameson? It struck a chord for a number of reasons.

First, the main image selected is a Victorian painting, reflecting the fact that the Renaissance as we know it was largely a nineteenth-century invention in which Jameson played her part.

O'Neil depicts the dying painter, his gaze fixed on the unseen figure of Christ in his last great painting, *The Transfiguration*, as he prepares for his own final journey. The fascination with the lives, and the deaths, of Renaissance artists, which began in the Renaissance itself with Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, was reignited in the nineteenth century by painters such as O'Neil and the young Frederic Leighton, writers such as Robert Browning and George Eliot, and art historians, sometimes dubbed by their contemporaries 'Modern Vasaris'.

Among this last group was Anna Jameson (1794–1860) (fig. 3), whose 'Essays on the Lives of Remarkable Painters', published as an impressive series of 47 articles from 1843–5 in the widely circulating *Penny Magazine*, were collected, virtually unaltered, as *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters and of the Progress of Painting in Italy* (1845). An important influence on the revival of interest in medieval and early Renaissance 'Christian Art' at this time, the book not only went into several editions on both sides of the Atlantic but remained in print throughout the century – a record that few of her contemporaries writing about art history matched.<sup>5</sup>

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Fig. 3 David Octavius Hill (1802–1870) and Robert Adamson (1821–1848), *Anna Brownell Jameson (née Murphy)*, 1843–47, carbon print, 20.5 cm x 14.7 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG x15274 (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

Her 'Lives' included, of course, an essay on Raphael, which addresses the mystery of the painter's death. Jameson writes: 'There was a vulgar idea at one time prevalent that Raphael was a man of vicious and dissipated habits, and even died a victim to his excesses'. She dismisses this, asserting (too optimistically, as it turns out): 'this slander has been silenced for ever by indisputable evidence to the contrary, and now we may reflect with pleasure that nothing rests on surer evidence than the admirable qualities of Raphael'.<sup>6</sup> Jameson describes how, upon the artist's death, 'The body was laid on a bed of state, and above it was suspended the last work of that divine hand, the glorious Transfiguration', before the bier was taken in a great procession to the Pantheon, where his remains were laid.<sup>7</sup>

Her essay does not end with Raphael's dignified interment. Rather, she recounts a story even more extraordinary and macabre than *The Times'* report on the recent application to dig up the painter's remains. She describes how in her own time his sepulchre was disturbed to ascertain that the bones were indeed Raphael's. This earlier disinterment was widely reported, and was memorialised by contemporary artists, such as Penry Williams, in his drawing of *Raphael's Tomb in the Pantheon, Rome (when opened)* and Francesco Diofebi, in *The Opening of Raphael's Grave in the Pantheon 1833* (1836) (figs. 4 and 5).



Fig. 4 Penry Williams (1798–1885), *Raphael's tomb in the Pantheon, Rome (when opened)*, 1833, drawing, pen and brown ink and sepia wash on paper, 14.1 cm x 16.9 cm, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 2419662 (© Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge)

According to Jameson, after due permissions were obtained, on 14 September 1833, 'the remains of Raphael were discovered in a vault behind the high altar, and certified as his by indisputable proofs. After being examined, and a cast made from the skull and from the right hand, the skeleton was exhibited publicly in a glass case, and multitudes thronged to the



Fig. 5 Francesco Diofebi (1781–1851), *The Opening of Raphael's Grave in Pantheon*, 1833, 1836, oil on canvas, 54.9 x 70 cm, Thorvaldsen Museum, Copenhagen, B73 (Hans Petersen © Thorvaldsens Museum)

church to look upon it'.<sup>8</sup> (Last year, incidentally, scientists made use of this nineteenth-century cast of Raphael's skull to confirm once more that it was indeed his).<sup>9</sup>

The whole episode as Jameson describes it, at once earnestly scientific and wildly gothic, seems emblematic of the Victorians' historicist passion for resurrecting the past, particularly the Renaissance past, itself founded upon the literal and metaphorical resurrection of ancient Greek and Roman cultural remains. She recounts how on 18 October 1833, 'a second funeral ceremony took place. The remains were deposited in a pine-wood coffin, then in a marble sarcophagus, presented by the pope ... and reverently consigned to their former resting-place, in presence of more than three thousand spectators, including almost all the artists, the officers of government, and other persons of the highest rank in Rome'.<sup>10</sup>

Jameson herself was not one of the spectators (fig. 6). From the year of the re-interment in

1833 to 1836 she spent most of her time in Germany, where she included among her close friends Goethe's widowed daughter-in-law Ottilie von Goethe.<sup>11</sup> However, with four books to her name, all about historical or fictional women, she was beginning to turn her attention seriously to art – seriously but with a view always to making it accessible to all – a popularising aim not to be confused with dilettantism.

Which brings me to a further reason why the recent *Times* article brings Jameson to mind. Its circulation of an image of a little-known Victorian painting and a story about current research on Raphael to a non-specialist audience recalls Jameson's appreciation of the power of the popular press, and particularly of the new, cheap illustrated journals, to reach



Fig. 6 Richard James Lane printed by Graf & Soret, after Henry Perronet Briggs, *Anna Brownell Jameson (née Murphy)*, 1836, lithograph, 34.2 cm x 27 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG D21874 (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

new audiences for art so that, as she put it, 'the *Penny Magazine* [could] place a little print after Mantegna at once before the eyes of fifty thousand readers'.<sup>12</sup> It was a medium that she herself used to full advantage in her programme to democratise art.

Mrs Jameson (fig. 7), as she is often unthreateningly designated, might seem today a quaint irrelevancy, a mere populariser, to those who know her only through grainy photographs of a frumpy looking Victorian matron in a lace cap, or as the woman contemptuously dismissed by Ruskin for knowing 'as much of art as the cat'.<sup>13</sup>



Fig. 7 David Octavius Hill (1802–1870) and Robert Adamson (1821–1848), *Anna Brownell Jameson (née Murphy)*, 1843–1847, calotype, 20.6 cm x 15 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG x26045 (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

In what follows I will endeavour to reintroduce her as, on the contrary, an astute and original art historian who was highly respected by expert contemporaries, such as the first Director of the National Gallery, Sir Charles

Eastlake and his wife Elizabeth Eastlake, Gustav Waagen, Director of the Berlin Gallery, J. D. Passavant, Director of the Frankfurt Gallery and author of an influential book on Raphael, and French art historian Alexis-François Rio. She counted Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning among her closest friends, and at the height of her fame in the early 1850s was a friend and mentor to a younger generation of women writers and artists. Mary Ann Evans (the future George Eliot) took detailed notes from *Sacred and Legendary Art* and drew on Jameson's expertise in her own writing.<sup>14</sup> The Pre-Raphaelite painter William Holman Hunt claimed to have 'learned "not a little" from Jameson's articles in the *Penny Magazine*', which suggests that her writing as well as Ruskin's informed Pre-Raphaelitism's attraction to early Christian art in its formative years.<sup>15</sup> Insofar as she was a populariser, it was because as a writer Jameson made it her business to engage with public audiences that included working-class, middle- and artisan-class, young, and particularly women readers and exhibition goers in ways that model best practice for modern galleries.

I will address three questions. First, I will consider how Jameson developed her distinctive voice to reach new constituencies, and the subjects she made her own. Jameson understood the power of material culture, when 'pictures were the books of the unlettered'. Believing that 'we must at least understand the language in which they are written', she was keen to provide modern viewers with interpretative tools to unlock the iconography of historical art and appreciate its relevance.<sup>16</sup> She was especially alert to the

social and cultural iconography of women. She dedicated one of the five volumes of her most original and important work, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, which began to appear in 1848 and was completed posthumously in 1864, to the most significant and enduring icon of ideal femininity, the Virgin Mary.

The second part of my lecture will focus on Jameson's book, entitled *Legends of the Madonna*, which was published in 1852. I will explore the principles that inform this extraordinary taxonomy of the Madonna in art in which Jameson uncovers the stories and symbols associated with the Virgin that produced such variously inflected visual representations of her at different historical moments. I will consider how in her book she complicates established conceptions of Mary as the meek and mild model for femininity and reframes the Virgin as a powerful, Christ-like figure.

Finally, I will turn to what Jameson had to say about Raphael who for many in the Renaissance and Victorian periods and in our own day was the supreme painter of the Madonna. Her approach was inevitably framed by her own times: by Victorian religious and secular debate, by the Woman Question, and by aesthetic questions raised by the Pre-Raphaelite avant-garde. Nevertheless, Jameson's work, I suggest, speaks to modern concerns. I will finish by asking how her approach might inform our experience of Raphael's Madonnas today.

In March 1849 Anna Jameson published a commissioned article in the *Art Journal* with the

title 'Some Thoughts on Art, Addressed to the Uninitiated'. Over the previous decade she had established herself as an authority on art with the publication of four books, including the aforementioned *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters* (1845), which the *Athenaeum* hailed as an 'indispensable' guide to 'that many-headed ignoramus, the Million', teaching them the 'rudiments of connoisseurship'.<sup>17</sup> She had previously written a *Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and near London* (1842) and a *Companion to the most Celebrated Private Galleries of Art in London* (1844). Her most recent book, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, was based on a series of essays first published in the *Athenaeum*, and had just come out in late 1848.

'Some Thoughts on Art' is an opinion piece in which she reflects on the current environment for art, and her responsibilities as an art writer. She aspires, she explains, 'to place myself between the public and the artist as a sort of interpreter in an humble way, not to discuss critically the beauties of the art or the merits of the artist ... but rather to point out and to explain some of those common-place difficulties and popular mistakes which seem likely to arise in the present state of things'. For, she continues 'the patrons of Art are not now like the *Dillettanti and Cognoscenti* of the last century, to be counted as the select few; they are the many – the million; – we are to have Art it seems for THE MILLION'.<sup>18</sup>

The phenomenon Jameson observed in art was part of a gradual democratisation of culture and learning in mid-nineteenth-century Britain in the context of a massive growth of



the reading public, particularly reflected in the expansion of the periodical market.<sup>19</sup> The pros and cons of this revolution in reading were hotly argued in the periodicals that stoked the engines of change, and Jameson's piece was part of this debate. There is no doubt she favoured opening up art and letters to 'the million'. She writes: 'I am not one of those who believe that excellence will become less excellent by being diffused, or that the sense of the true, the beautiful, the pure, will become less valuable, by being rendered more familiar'.

In her view, 'No popularising of Art, will ever equalise the power to feel and to judge of Art; but we may hope that the multiplication and diffusion of objects through which the taste is exercised, will tend to facilitate comparison and quicken sensibility'. '[W]here Art is concerned', she maintains, 'the faculty of seeing becomes in itself an ART!' And it is an art that must be taught. Accordingly, she declares, 'what I would inculcate by every means in my power, is that a knowledge of the just theory of the Imitative Arts might well form a part of the education of the young, and particularly, I think, of young women'.<sup>20</sup>

Jameson applied herself to the aesthetic education of 'the million', interpreting visual language for the 'uninitiated' by providing the information and tools needed to develop their own art of seeing. She paid attention to how new audiences could most effectively be addressed, and to the skilful creation of a sympathetic authorial identity. The forms in which she published – her *Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art*, her *Companion to the Most Celebrated Private Galleries of Art*,

articles in the penny press as well as learned journals – deliberately create the persona not of an elite scholar but of a helpful guide. The unassuming, inviting tone of her address, her refusal to preach, lecture or speak down to her audience, is a hallmark of her style calculated to draw in initiates. At the end of her introduction to *Sacred and Legendary Art*, in an arresting figure, she describes herself as a child who has rushed ahead of her playmates, glimpsed a paradise, and 'runs back and catches its companions by the hand and hurries them forward to share the new-found pleasure, the yet unexplored region of delight'. In such ways Jameson positions herself 'on the outside, not the inside, of the door I open', not as a gatekeeper, but as a friend, accompanying her readers across a transformative threshold – we might imagine the newly constructed porticoes of the National Gallery.<sup>21</sup>

In her preface to a new edition of *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters* published fourteen years after they first appeared, she notes: 'The references to examples have been made, wherever it has been possible, to our National Gallery'. Her use of the possessive 'our' quietly affirms that the Gallery's collection belongs to the people. She continues: 'the number of valuable early pictures which have been lately added to our collection has rendered these references and descriptions much more intelligible and interesting to the young student than they were a few years ago'.<sup>22</sup> Rather than assuming her readers will have the resources to make journeys to Continental Europe to see the Old Masters in situ, she is careful to refer them where possible to art in public collections in the UK, especially in and around London, and

to give information in extensive notes about the best prints, engravings and photographs to consult if the original under discussion is not accessible. Introducing the first edition of *Sacred and Legendary Art*, which went into ten editions and remained in print until the early twentieth century, she refers to the 'little sketches and woodcuts' with which she herself illustrates her discussion. Jameson had enlisted her young niece Gerardine to help prepare these illustrations (fig. 8). Suggestively, to bring her readers into active dialogue with her book, she proposes they themselves could collect a portfolio of prints to illustrate the subject and effectively turn it into an extra-illustrated volume, thereby making the subject their own.

Explaining her object in writing *Legends of the Madonna*, Jameson says her book 'really aims at nothing more than to render the various subjects intelligible'. She adds, 'if attention and interest have been excited — if the sphere of enjoyment in works of Art have been enlarged and enlightened, I have done all I ever wished

— all I ever hoped, to do'.<sup>23</sup> She understands the value of aligning her 'various subjects' to gain the sympathetic attention of her audience, particularly female readers. In earlier books, before she began writing seriously on art, she had written on subjects designed to appeal to women: *The Loves of the Poets* (1829), *Memoirs of the Celebrated Female Sovereigns* (1831), *Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical and Historical* (1832). When she turned to art, she included information about the role of women – mothers, wives, lovers, patrons – in the lives of the Old Masters that she anticipated would be of interest to female readers. In her life of Raphael, for example, she wrote of the women who nurtured and launched him in his early years: his mother Magia, who died when he was eight; his stepmother Bernardina, who 'well supplied her place, and loved him and tended him as if he had been her own son', and saw to his education after the death of his father; and Giovanna, Duchess of Sora, who wrote a warm letter of recommendation when the young artist first went to Florence.<sup>24</sup>

Although no female artists were included in her 'Lives', Jameson did not altogether neglect them. Indeed, in 1840, she wrote to Otilie von Goethe that she had begun work on a 'Biography of female Artists, and their social position philosophically and morally considered', a 'work of a far more important nature', she claimed, than any other on which she was engaged, and a project which she had 'been meditating for some years'.<sup>25</sup> Regrettably, this was never realised. Nevertheless, discussion of women artists in her published work, tantalisingly brief though



Fig. 8 Anna Jameson (1794–1860) and Gerardine Bates after Raphael (1483–1520), *The Angels who visit Abraham* (illustration for *Sacred and Legendary Art*, London, 1848, vol. 1, p. 31), 1848, wood engraving (© National Gallery, London)

it is, gives some indication of the direction her book might have taken. A section of her *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad* (1834), for example, includes what she calls a 'tirade' on female artists. She refers to several painters active in Renaissance Italy, such as the three Anguissola sisters, especially Sofonisba, whose 'most lovely works' she describes as 'glowing with life like those of Titian', and who painted some remarkable domestic interiors, among them a striking painting of her sisters playing chess (fig. 9).



Fig. 9 Sofonisba Anguissola (1532–1625), *The Chess Game (Portrait of the Artist's Sisters playing Chess)*, 1555, oil on canvas, 72 x 97 cm, National Museum, Poznań, Poland (© 2022. Album/Scala, Florence)

She admired the Baroque painter Elisabetta Sirani, of whom she notes 'Madonnas and Magdalenes were her favourite subjects' (fig. 10). All these artists were, Jameson maintains, 'women of undoubted genius; for they each have a style apart, peculiar, and tinted by their individual character'.<sup>26</sup> But, as her preferences suggest, she had firm views on what were suitable subjects. With an essentialism characteristic of early Victorian feminism, she regards them as '*feminine painters*', who 'succeeded best in feminine portraits ... when they painted history, they were only admirable



Fig. 10 Elisabetta Sirani (1638–1665), *Virgin and Child*, 1663, oil on canvas, 86.4 cm x 69.8 cm, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay. Conservation funds generously provided by the Southern California State Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts (Photo: Lee Stalsworth)

in that class of subjects which came within the province of their sex'.<sup>27</sup> Bound by this gender codification, Jameson asserted: 'You must change the physical organization of the race of women before we produce a Rubens or a Michael Angelo'.<sup>28</sup>

Among women artists of the period, Jameson found Artemisia Gentileschi (whose *Self Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria* the National Gallery has recently acquired) to have 'most power', but she does not regard her as a '*feminine*' painter, describing her as 'a gifted, but a profligate woman', presumably because of her alleged affairs (fig. 11).

Jameson's interest in women artists and her attempts to grapple with the gendered

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Fig. 11 Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1654 or later), *Self Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, about 1615–17, oil on canvas, 71.4 x 69 cm, National Gallery, London, NG6671 (© National Gallery, London)

inflections of artistic production were well ahead of her time in the 1830s, even if her essentialist categories now seem to us outdated and ideological.<sup>30</sup> But her writing over the next two decades reached new levels of sophistication, culminating with *Sacred and Legendary Art*, an original, ambitiously comprehensive, and deeply learned study of the legends represented in Western art of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. It embraces angels and archangels, the Evangelists, the Apostles, monastic orders, and saints, including Mary Magdalene, and devotes an entire volume to the Madonna. Jameson had become more politically engaged with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Convention and escalating debates on the 'Woman Question' as it came to be called. Concurrently with the development of her interest in art, she began to lecture and publish on "'Woman's Mission" and

'Woman's Position', to borrow the title of one of her pieces, to move in feminist circles, and advocate the extension of women's rights.<sup>31</sup> She had her own experiences of being a governess, of an unhappy marriage, and of the necessity of earning her living independently without the economic and social advantages of her male peers. She supported not only herself but members of her immediate family: parents, sisters and niece. Her immersion in feminism in Germany and England brought a more strategic and informed perspective on the Woman Question to her art writing. It made her think about the construction of gendered archetypes, and the role of art, particularly sacred art, in the establishment of social, religious and cultural norms.

A fascinating letter to her friend Lady Byron (estranged wife – by then widow – of the poet) is quite explicit. Writing from Rome in 1847 as she was preparing *Sacred and Legendary Art* for publication, Jameson, who remained a staunch Anglican, describes the city as the place where 'one can best understand how people have become Roman Catholics – but of all places in the world ... the place where one is least tempted to turn Roman Catholic'. She goes on to explain how 'the study of art by enabling me to trace all the steps by which imaginations became representations & allegories & symbols became facts, lays bare a good deal of the construction of this religion Roman Catholicism'. Her analysis of the iconography of art reveals to her how ideologies and dogmas are made to seem true. She distinguishes between belief and its effects: 'I see how certain things have been built up in

men's belief – and while I am farther, than ever before in my life, from all capability of entering into this belief, I have more & more sympathy with its effects – more & more comprehension of its past and present power – a deeper & deeper conviction that this power, must, like the ancient mythology merge into poetry'. Like many of her contemporaries, Jameson was fascinated by the relationship between aesthetics and religion, and between sensibility and faith, driven to divide and to reconnect them under the aegis of 'poetry'. She promises her strictly Anglican friend: 'You will see this, I think, all thro the book I am now writing – it may – if I succeed, do something for the cause of true art – but certainly it will not aid the cause of superstition'.<sup>32</sup>

In her introduction to the published volume, Jameson is more circumspect about her own beliefs, but her explanation of the book's rationale is consistent with her private communication with her friend: 'we ought to comprehend, and to hold in due reverence, that which has once been consecrated to holiest aims, which has shown us what a magnificent use has been made of Art'; but we should not confound 'the eternal spirit of Christianity with the mutable forms in which it has deigned to speak to the hearts of men, forms which must of necessity vary with the degree of social civilisation, and bear the impress of the feelings and fashions of the age which produce them'. Distinguishing thus between universal transhistorical principles and historically changing forms is a characteristic Victorian manoeuvre. She counsels her readers, in her typically inclusive way, 'while we respect those time-consecrated images and types, we

do not allow them to fetter us'.<sup>33</sup> To be sure, Jameson is strategically negotiating treacherous territory writing about Roman Catholic art towards the close of a decade when anti-Catholic feeling was particularly virulent. She carefully distances herself from any taint of so-called 'Popery' by emphasising in the titles of both *Sacred and Legendary Art* and, more crucially still, *Legends of the Madonna*, that she is dealing in legend. But her primary motivation for writing about both the mythical and the historically inflected iconography of sacred art, especially that of the Madonna at a time when art practice was radically evolving, was to interrogate their implications for women.<sup>34</sup>

'I have heard the artistic treatment of the Madonna styled a monotonous theme', writes Jameson in her introduction to *Legends of the Madonna*, but she sets out to show that 'beyond the visible forms, there lies much that is suggestive to a thinking mind — to the lover of Art a higher significance, a deeper beauty, a more various interest, than could at first be imagined'.<sup>35</sup> By contrast with some of her contemporaries who drew on imagery of the Virgin exclusively for a domestic feminine ideal which saw Woman (with a capital W) as the Madonna of the Hearth, or the Angel in the House, Jameson insists upon the range of her personae, the variety of her manifestations and her representativeness, as 'the WOMAN highly blessed', of womankind.<sup>36</sup> A whole section of the Introduction is devoted to the many and various titles and attributes accorded the Madonna.

Jameson begins her survey of the iconographical tradition of the Madonna by

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looking at images of the Virgin without the Child, venerated not because of her maternity, but as the Virgin in Glory, the Crowned Virgin, Our Lady of Mercy, the Mother of Sorrows, and the Queen of Heaven. Her decision to introduce us to the Virgin in majesty gives precedence to the idea of God's mother as all powerful rather than merely domestic. The 'one prevailing idea' bequeathed to us by medieval and Renaissance art, she explains, is that of 'an impersonation in the feminine character of beneficence, purity, and power, standing between an offended Deity and poor, sinning, suffering humanity, and clothed in the visible form of Mary, the Mother of our Lord'. She consolidates Mary as a figure of strength by emphasising her 'decision and prudence of character', her 'unusual promptitude and energy of disposition', her 'fortitude', and above all that she was 'gifted in mind, and deeply read in the Scriptures' with 'intellectual power'.<sup>37</sup>

She points to the representation of Mary in Raphael's *Disputa* in the Stanza della Segnatura of the Vatican, 'familiar, it may be presumed, to most of my readers, though perhaps they may not have regarded it with reference to the character and position given to the Virgin'. Of this celebrated fresco she writes, 'The Virgin is exhibited, not merely as the Mother, the Sposa, the Church, but as HEAVENLY WISDOM'.<sup>38</sup> She presents readers who have not considered how variously the character of the Virgin has been portrayed in the fine arts with a learned, powerful woman, the female equivalent, indeed, of Christ.<sup>39</sup>

Jameson's own drawing of the *Enthroned Madonna attended by Choral Angels* after

Nicolò Alunno serves as a frontispiece to the first edition of *Legends of the Madonna*.<sup>40</sup> For the second and subsequent editions, she reinforces her representation of Mary as a learned woman by replacing this with an etching of *The Virgin Mary Studying the Scriptures in the Temple* from a fresco by another early Renaissance artist, Pinturicchio (fig. 12).<sup>41</sup>



Fig. 12 Anna Jameson (1794–1860) after Pinturicchio (active 1481; died 1513), *The Virgin Mary studying the Scriptures in the Temple* (frontispiece to *Legends of the Madonna*, 2nd edn, London, 1857), wood engraving, National Gallery, London © National Gallery, London)

The reader encounters an image of the Virgin removed from her traditional domestic environment engaging in activity which suggests intelligence rather than maternity. In her first chapter Jameson discusses representations of *the Virgo Sapientissima* (the most wise Virgin) such as the early fifteenth-century Van Eyck altarpiece in Ghent, which shows 'the Virgin seated on the right hand of her Son in glory, and holding a book' (fig. 13).<sup>42</sup>

As she points out, the book is an attribute of the Virgin as one of her titles is 'Seat of Wisdom'. The book, she explains, may



Fig. 13 Anna Jameson (1794–1860) after Nicolò Alunno, *Enthroned Madonna attended by choral Angels* (frontispiece to *Legends of the Madonna*, 1st edn, London, 1852)

have one of two meanings when it is in the Madonna's hands: 'When open, or when she has her finger between the leaves, or when the Child is turning over the pages, then it is the Book of Wisdom, and is always supposed to be open at the seventh chapter. When the book is clasped or sealed, it is a mystical symbol of the Virgin herself'.<sup>43</sup>

Maternity is shown to be perfectly compatible with wisdom and learning in paintings with a book. Several of Raphael's most beautiful Madonna and Child groups draw on this iconography. In his early work known as the *Solly Madonna*, for example, in the Berlin Gemäldegalerie, the Virgin Mary is reading a book, as she is in the *Madonna Colonna* in the same collection. We find the same motif in the *Madonna and Child* now in the Norton Simon Museum. In her *Life of Raphael*, Jameson expressed her admiration for the painter's *Madonna del Cardellino* (Madonna of the Goldfinch) in the Uffizi, where the book in Mary's hand reads *Sedes Sapientiae* (The Throne of Wisdom). And she describes the *Ansdei Madonna*, purchased by the National Gallery in 1885, in which the Virgin draws the Christ Child's attention to a passage in the book, as 'full of beauty and dignity' (fig. 14).<sup>44</sup>

Interestingly, though, in *Legends of the Madonna* Jameson does not choose works by Raphael to exemplify the learnedness of the Virgin. Rather, she categorises paintings such as the *Madonna Conestabile*, in which, she writes, the Virgin 'holds the book, and the infant Christ, with a serious yet perfectly childish grace, bends to turn over the leaf', as belonging to the genre of the *Mater Amabilis* (Mother Most Lovable). It was here, Jameson declares, that 'Raphael shone supreme: the simplicity, the tenderness, the halo of purity and virginal dignity, which he threw round the *Mater Amabilis*, have never been surpassed – in his best pictures, never equalled'. Paintings such as the *Madonna Conestabile*



Fig. 14 Raphael (1483–1520), *The Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Nicholas of Bari (The Ansidei Madonna)*, 1505, oil on canvas, 216.8 x 147.6 cm, National Gallery, London, NG1171  
(© National Gallery, London)

are, for Jameson, ‘the most remarkable for sentiment’.<sup>45</sup> Sentiment and learning, it seems, were not incompatible.

‘Expression’, Jameson declared, ‘is the great and characteristic excellence of Raphael more especially in his Madonnas’.<sup>46</sup> In *Legends of the Madonna* she discussed a number of Raphael’s renditions of Marian subjects, both devotional (as mysteries) and representing details from the Virgin’s life, such as her marriage to Joseph and the Annunciation, and her Coronation as Queen of Heaven after her death.<sup>47</sup> But it was his portrayals of the Madonna and Child that most touched her heart. According to Jameson,

Raphael left about 120 pictures of the Virgin and Child, ‘all various’, she declares, ‘only resembling each other in the peculiar type of chaste and maternal loveliness which he has given to the Virgin, and the infantine beauty of the Child’.<sup>48</sup> For Jameson, as for many, Raphael’s expressive paintings of Mary and her baby son represent the pinnacle of Renaissance art.

As *Legends of the Madonna* makes clear, Jameson was particularly drawn to the Marian traditions that unfolded between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries. Significantly for our theme of the democratisation of culture, this was the period when painters, she argues, for the first time sought to address the feelings of the viewer, and in particular their passionate devotion for the Madonna. Intriguingly, she views the aesthetic developments that characterise early Renaissance painting as driven, even produced, by human emotion. ‘Men’s hearts’, she wrote, ‘throbbing with a more feeling, more pensive life, demanded something more like life, – and produced it’. She finds it ‘curious to trace in the Madonnas of contemporary, but far distant and unconnected schools of painting, the simultaneous dawning of a sympathetic sentiment – for the first time something in the faces of the divine beings responsive to the feeling of the worshippers’. She speculates that this, rather than mere technical achievement, ‘made the people shout and dance for joy’ when they first saw Cimabue’s famous Madonna (now attributed to Duccio): ‘Compared with the spectral rigidity, the hard monotony, of the conventional Byzantines, the more animated eyes, the little touch of sweetness in the still, mild face, must have been like a smile out of





Fig. 15 Frederic Leighton (1830–1896), *Cimabue's Celebrated Madonna is Carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence*, 1853–5, oil on canvas, 222 x 521 cm, RCIN4014 (Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022)

heaven'.<sup>49</sup> Frederic Leighton's painting of 1855, *Cimabue's celebrated Madonna is carried in procession through the streets of Florence*, on long term loan to the National Gallery from the Royal Collection, captures the scene of popular celebration to which Jameson refers, and enjoyed its own success (fig. 15). Queen Victoria bought it for her husband on the first day of its exhibition at the Royal Academy, as Albert was so taken with it.

This new ascendancy of feeling characterised the religious and chivalrous worship of the Virgin in the fourteenth century, Jameson argues, when 'The title of "Our Lady" came first into general use, for she was the lady "of all hearts," whose colours all were proud to wear. Never had her votaries so abounded.'<sup>50</sup> Representations of the Virgin in this period were also shaped, she notes, by Dante's 'Paradiso', with its 'glorification of Mary, as the "Mystic Rose" (*Rosa mystica*) and Queen of Heaven, – with the attendant angels, circle within circle, floating round her in adoration,

and singing the Regina Coeli, and saints and patriarchs stretching forth their hands towards her.'<sup>51</sup> In Jameson's view, 'that early conception of some of the most beautiful of the Madonna subjects – for instance, the Coronation and the Sposalizio – has never, as a religious and poetical conception, been surpassed by later artists.'<sup>52</sup> With the exception, that is, of Raphael, whose 'beautiful' painting of the *Sposalizio* (The Marriage of the Virgin Mary to Joseph) she admired as the 'most celebrated of all his pictures painted in the school of Perugino' early in his career.<sup>53</sup> The painting has, she observes, 'something of the formality of the elder schools'.<sup>54</sup>

Jameson found in Raphael the 'full fruition' of this early Renaissance tradition and the supreme painter of the Madonna in her newly articulated power and glory.<sup>55</sup> One reason for his achievement was, she suggests, his ability to represent a wholly ideal image of the Virgin. 'Of the numerous Virgins painted by Raphael', she writes, 'not one is supposed to have been

a portrait: he says himself, in a letter to Count Castiglione, that he painted from an idea in his own mind'.<sup>56</sup> It was this commitment to idealism that made Raphael the symbolic villain of the avant-garde Victorian art movement Pre-Raphaelitism launched in 1848, the same year that Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art* was published. In John Everett Millais' painting of 1850, *Mrs James Wyatt Jr and her Daughter Sarah* (fig. 16), the two prints on the wall after Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia* and *Alba Madonna*, with their idealised figures and harmonious composition, serve as a striking contrast to the uncompromising realism of Millais' mother and child.



Fig. 16 John Everett Millais (1829–1896), *Mrs James Wyatt Jr and her Daughter Sarah*, about 1850, oil paint on mahogany, 35.3 x 45.7 cm, Tate, London, T03858 (Courtesy of the Tate)

Whilst in the background of its pendant painting, *James Wyatt and his Granddaughter* (1849), an idealised tondo portrait of the same woman by William Boxall, a future Royal Academician, which appears to be modelled on the *Madonna della Sedia*, reminds the viewer that this ideal, rejected by Millais, was that to which students in the establishment Academy Schools were taught to aspire (fig. 17).



Fig. 17 John Everett Millais (1829–1896), *James Wyatt and his Granddaughter*, Private Collection. (Contributor: Painters (Vincent Partier) / Alamy Stock Photo)

At mid-century Raphael exercised a profound influence on the practice of British art, whether as hero or villain. For Boxall, he was undoubtedly a model, as he was for another prominent painter, Charles Eastlake, whom Boxall succeeded as Director of the National Gallery in 1866. Eastlake explicitly refers to Raphael in this painting of Ippolita Torelli, the wife of Baldassare Castiglione, looking lovingly at Raphael's portrait of her husband (fig. 18).

It was exhibited in 1851, the year Eastlake was elected President of the Royal Academy, and four years before he was appointed first Director of the National Gallery. In the case of both Eastlake and Boxall, their artistic practice fed into the formative roles they had in shaping the Gallery's collection and mission. Raphael provided a point of convergence between their roles as artists and museum professionals. A more recent Director, Nicholas Penny, has remarked that, although more great masterpieces by Raphael would be acquired later in the century, by then 'there would be little question of these paintings exercising a

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Fig. 18 Charles Eastlake, *Ippolita Torelli*, 1851. Formerly in Tate, London. Destroyed by flood in 1928. (Photo: Courtesy Tate Images)

powerful influence on the practice of British art, whereas in the first fifty years of the Gallery's life there had been good reason to hope that Raphael would affect the work of British painters and touch the hearts of her common people.<sup>57</sup>

I want to finish by returning to the question of affect, to Raphael's ability to 'touch the hearts' of his viewers, including the 'common people', and to think about Jameson's understanding of the importance of sympathy. For whilst *Legends of the Madonna* was dedicated to helping readers understand iconography and the historical contexts of representations of the Virgin, it was ultimately the emotional response of the viewer that she wished to nurture, for every viewer (man, woman; rich, poor; Catholic, Protestant; believer, non-believer) is different. Jameson validates difference. When we look at a painting, she writes, 'we each form to ourselves some notion of what

we require, and these requirements will be as diverse as our natures and our habit of thought'.<sup>58</sup>

When Jameson published *Legends of the Madonna* in the middle of the nineteenth century there was considerable interest in Raphael among artists, collectors, gallery directors, scholars and critics. In 1839 Passavant published his important book *Rafael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi*, which comprehensively catalogued Raphael's work. In 1853 Prince Albert began to compile an extraordinary collection of prints and photographs to document every version of every work attributed to Raphael at the time, an ambitious project that took a quarter of a century to complete, long after Albert's death in 1861.

But interest in and admiration for Raphael at that time was not simply a matter of scholarly endeavour or partisanship among artists; nor indeed the wish of great galleries and rich collectors to acquire his work. In line with Jameson's emphasis on affect, people felt passionately about it. *The Sistine Madonna* overwhelmed George Eliot and George Henry Lewes, for example, when they visited the Dresden Gallery in 1858 (fig. 19).

Eliot recalled how 'a sort of awe, as if I were suddenly in the living presence of some glorious being, made my heart swell too much for me to remain comfortably, and we hurried out of the room'. Lewes returned a few days later and gazed until he felt 'quite hysterical'. Together they often came back to the gallery during their six-week stay for 'quiet worship of the Madonna'.<sup>59</sup> The painting came

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Fig. 19 Raphael (1483–1520), *The Sistine Madonna*, 1513, oil on canvas, 269.5 x 201 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden (Bridgeman Images)

to be venerated more widely as an icon of the Positivist religion of humanity, a secular alternative to Christianity based on scientific principles and humanist values, enthusiastically taken up by many writers and intellectuals, including Eliot and Lewes. An engraving of the *Sistine Madonna* hung as a kind of altarpiece in places of humanist worship such as the Positivist Church of Humanity in Chapel Street, London (fig. 20).<sup>60</sup>

Jameson herself judged the *Sistine Madonna* to be 'In execution, as in design, ... probably the most perfect picture in the world ... a creation rather than a picture.'<sup>61</sup> She describes it as her 'ideal': 'for there she stands — the transfigured woman, at once completely human and completely divine, an abstraction of power, purity, and love, poised on the empurpled



Fig. 20 Raphael's '*Sistine Madonna*' in the Church of Humanity, Chapel Street, Holborn, London, c. 1870s, photograph, London Positivist Society papers, LPS/5/4, LSE Library (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/lselibrary/29852289120>)

air, and requiring no other support; looking out with her melancholy, loving mouth, her slightly dilated, sybilline eyes, quite through the universe to the end and consummation of all things.'

Those, like myself, whose first introduction to the Madonna was Marina Warner's marvellous study of the myth and the cult of the Virgin Mary, *Alone of All her Sex*, may not share Jameson's or Eliot's first wave feminist desire to find in the Madonna an icon of female heroism and power, or Positivism's need for a sublime symbol for secular worship. Nevertheless, Jameson's project to enable our approach to Renaissance representations of the Madonna and encourage us to respond feelingly is something I value. I am drawn less to the sublimity of the *Sistine Madonna* than the more intimate *Garvagh Madonna* in the National Gallery's own collection, about which Jameson writes under one of its alternative titles *La Madonna del Giglio* (Madonna of the Carnation) as one of the most perfect examples of its genre (fig. 21).<sup>63</sup>

This is the painting I chose to write about when I was invited to be guest author for [March's Picture of the Month](#). You can see what I have to say about it on the National Gallery's website.



Fig. 21 Raphael (1483–1520), *The Madonna and Child with the Infant Baptist (The Garvagh Madonna)*, oil on wood, 38.9 × 32.9 cm, National Gallery, London, NG744 (© National Gallery, London)

Jameson's approach to the fine arts encourages diversity: of audience and of interpretation. Images of the Madonna and Child seem well adapted to speak to a wide range of viewers, including (perhaps especially): women, the young, the poor, the unlettered — the constituency she most wished to reach. Yet Raphael's small framed Madonnas had been painted for private contemplation by wealthy owners and elite networks. They remained in aristocratic collections to which ordinary mothers and their babies had no entry. *The Garvagh*

*Madonna or Aldobrandini Madonna*, as this painting is sometimes called after its former owners, only became accessible to the general public, including poor unholy families, after it was acquired by the National Gallery in 1865 entering British public life five years after Jameson died, as both first wave feminism and the movement for political reform gathered pace.

Shortly before the *Garvagh Madonna* went on display at the National Gallery, a marble bust by a distinguished Victorian sculptor entered the South Kensington Museum for public exhibition (fig. 22).

The words incised on the pedestal of John Gibson's memorial to his friend Anna Jameson convey something of her reputation as a 'distinguished critic, and writer upon art', who 'threw new light on the Christian legends which inspired the painters and sculptors of the past, and awakened a clearer comprehension of truth and beauty in art as well as in nature', and 'roused public attention' to the condition of women. The bust has had a more chequered display history than the *Garvagh Madonna*. Like Lorenzo Lotti's sculptured memorial to Raphael, the *Madonna del Sasso*, it has been disturbed. It remained in South Kensington until 1883, by which time it inhabited a 'dark and neglected passage-way near the refreshment room'. It was relocated to the National Portrait Gallery, where again it appears to have been 'inadequately displayed'. In 1989, separated from its plinth, the bust made its way with some other Victorian works to Bodelwyddan Castle in North Wales under a regional partnership arrangement. It was reunited

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Fig. 22 John Gibson (1790–1866), *Anna Brownell Jameson (née Murphy)*, 1862, marble, 57 cm x 33.5 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 689 (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

with its plinth in 2013 and properly displayed, though, unfortunately, the partnership has been discontinued, and both are now in store.<sup>64</sup> Like the woman it memorialises, over time it has disappeared from view.

How heartening and fitting, then, that the National Gallery now honours the woman whose writing did so much to build support for its mission to collect and display – for all – art of the calibre of Raphael's *Garvagh Madonna*, his *Ansidei Altarpiece* and more for the nation. Where Jameson used cutting edge technologies of her own day, such as wood-engraved and steel-etched illustration and steam-powered printing presses, to place her illustrated texts before 'the Million', we can now use the global reach of digital media for access to Raphael's Madonnas to those with use of the internet. Prince Albert's Raphael Collection, which in the 1850s made pioneering use of photography, is now being digitised. And the Gallery's upcoming Raphael exhibition will attract thousands of in-person visitors and millions through its Web portals. I'd like to think that some of us might enter in the company of Anna Jameson, her commentary echoing in our ears over the sound of the audioguide.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Adele Ernstrom, then publishing as Adele M. Holcomb, 'Anna Jameson (1794–1860): Sacred Art and Social Vision', in *Women as Interpreters of the Visual Arts, 1820–1979*, ed. Claire Richter Sherman with Adele M. Holcomb, Westport, Conn., and London 1981, pp. 93–121; A.M. Holcomb, 'Anna Jameson: The First Professional English Art Historian', *Art History*, vol. 6, 1983, pp. 171–87; and Judith Johnston, *Anna Jameson: Victorian, Feminist, Woman of Letters*, Aldershot, Hants 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Such as French art historian Alexis-François Rio (1797–1874). See Holcomb, 'Anna Jameson: The First Professional English Art Historian', p. 178. See also Benjamin Dabby's reference to the admiration of Australian man of letters Daniel Deniehy (1828–1865) for Jameson as 'one of England's most important women of letters' and his praise for 'her criticism of art above all'. In a lecture given after Jameson's death in 1860, he declared that she was 'as true and as thorough when she looked at historical fresco or at portrait, as William Hazlitt'. Quoted in Benjamin Dabby, 'Anna Jameson and the claims of art criticism in nineteenth-century England', *Precarious Professionals: Gender, Identities and Social Change in Modern Britain*, eds H. Egginton and Z. Thomas, London 2021, pp. 41–62 (at p. 41).

<sup>3</sup> Philip Willan, 'Raphael's last secret draws closer', *The Times*, 4 January 2022, p. 3; and leading article, 'The Unquiet Grave', p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> See Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trs. A.B. Hinds, 4 vols, London 1927, vol. 2, p. 247. Alternative rumours include that Raphael was poisoned by arsenic, with rivals such as Sebastiano del Piombo, Giuliano da Sangallo, and even Michelangelo regarded as suspects (despite the latter's absence from Rome at the time). Or again, the Church, even Raphael's friend and patron Pope Leo X, might have had reasons to poison the artist, it has been claimed. The mystery continues to interest modern scholars, including scientists. See an article published in January 2021, arguing that Raphael died of pulmonary disease. M.A. Riva, M.E. Paladino, M. Motta, et al, 'The death of Raphael: a reflection on bloodletting in the Renaissance', *Internal and Emergency Medicine*, vol. 16, 2021, pp. 243–44; see <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11739-020-02435-8> (accessed 8 September 2022).

<sup>5</sup> See Caroline Palmer, "'A fountain of the richest poetry": Anna Jameson, Elizabeth Eastlake and the Rediscovery of Early Christian Art', *Visual Resources*, 2017, pp. 48–73 (at p. 33).

<sup>6</sup> 'ESSAYS ON THE LIVES OF REMARKABLE PAINTERS.— No. XXXI. Raphael Sanzio d'Urbino: b. 1483; d. 1520'. *Penny Magazine*, vol. 13, 9 November 1844, pp. 436–8 (at p. 437). For the other instalments on Raphael, see No. XXXII. 'Raphael at Rome', pp. 444–6; No. XXXIII. 'Raphael at Rome', pp. 460–2; No. XXXIV. 'Raphael — continued', pp. 492–4. Hereafter, for convenience, I will refer to the version of the essay on Raphael published in *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters, and of the Progress of Painting in Italy*, 2nd edn, London 1868, pp. 216–61.

<sup>7</sup> Jameson, *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, p. 258.

<sup>8</sup> Jameson, *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, pp. 258–9.

<sup>9</sup> The *Smithsonian Magazine* summarises reports on how 'researchers from Tor Vergata University of Rome used the plaster cast to create a 3-D reconstruction of its owner's face. They then compared the model with the artist's self portraits, as well as likenesses painted by his contemporaries, and made a clear match'. The researchers' findings are apparently to be published in the journal *Nature*, and a life-size bust of the facial reconstruction will also go on permanent view at a museum in Raphael's birthplace of Urbino. See <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/3-d-facial-reconstruction-suggests-raphael-self-portrait-presents-idealized-version-artist-180975549/> (accessed 8 September 2022).

<sup>10</sup> Jameson, *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, p. 259.

<sup>11</sup> Caroline Palmer argues that the new insights into early Italian art expressed by Jameson, and also by Maria Callcott and Elizabeth Eastlake, 'arose from their shared engagement with German culture, which significantly influenced their approach to connoisseurship. Although the religious context lent their writing greater credibility, it was their linguistic expertise and awareness of art-historical developments in Germany that enabled them to make such an important contribution to this revolutionary shift in nineteenth-century taste.' See Palmer, 'A fountain of the richest poetry'. See also Linda Hughes, *Victorian Women Writers and the Other Germany: Cross-Cultural Freedoms and Female Opportunity*, Cambridge, forthcoming 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Anna Jameson, 'Andrea Mantegna', *Penny Magazine*, vol. 12, 1843; reprinted in *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, pp. 108–27 (at p. 121).

<sup>13</sup> Harold I. Shapiro, *Ruskin in Italy: Letters to his Parents 1845*, Oxford 1972, pp. 215–16.

<sup>14</sup> See Adele M. Ernstrom, 'Anna Jameson and George Eliot', *Revue d'art Canadienne*, vol. 20, 1993, pp. 72–82; and Johnston, *Anna Jameson*, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Holcomb, 'Anna Jameson (1794–1860): Sacred Art and Social Vision', p. 113.

<sup>16</sup> Anna Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna as Represented in the Fine Arts*, 2nd edn, London 1857, p. lxxviii.

<sup>17</sup> [G. Darley], 'Memoirs of the early Italian painters. By Mrs Jameson', *Athenaeum*, vol. 929, 1845, pp. 817–18 (at p. 817)

<sup>18</sup> Anna Jameson, 'Some thoughts on Art. Addressed to the Uninitiated', Parts I and II, *Art-Journal*, vol. 2, 1849, pp. 69–71, and pp. 103–5 (at p. 69).

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, the contemporary comment, 'A great revolution there has been, from nobody's reading anything, to every body's reading all things'. 'Periodicals', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, vol. 1, 1849, p. 182. Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900*, Chicago 1957, is still excellent on this subject, though there have been many very good specialist studies published since then. For an introduction, see my 'Periodicals and Reviewing', *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature*, Cambridge 2012, pp. 56–76.

<sup>20</sup> Jameson, 'Some thoughts on Art', p. 69.

<sup>21</sup> Anna Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, 7th edn, 2 vols, London 1874, vol. 1, p. 38. On Jameson's aims and strategies for educating a wider public in the appreciation of art see 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>.

<sup>22</sup> Jameson, *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, pp. ix–x.

<sup>23</sup> Anna Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna, as Represented in the Fine Arts*, London 1852, pp. xv–xvi.

<sup>24</sup> Jameson, *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, pp. 219–21. Able to read German well, she probably derived this information from Passavant's *Rafael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi*, the first two volumes of which were published in 1839 (though she omits to mention his comment on Bernardina that 'her character does not seem to have had the gentleness of that of Magia', and his account of 'the annoyances she inflicted on the young Raphael after the death of Giovanni'). Johann David Passavant, *Raphael of Urbino and his Father Giovanni Santi*, London and New York 1872, pp. 26–7, 33–34. First published in German in 2 vols as *Rafael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi* in 1839, third volume added in 1858.

<sup>25</sup> G.H. Needler, ed., *Letters of Anna Jameson to Ottilie von Goethe*, London, New York, Toronto 1939, p. 124 (21 April 1840).

<sup>26</sup> Anna Jameson, *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad*. 2 vols, 2nd edn, London 1835, vol. 2, pp. 175–9.

<sup>27</sup> Jameson, *Visits and Sketches*, vol. 2, pp. 177–8.

<sup>28</sup> Jameson, *Visits and Sketches*, vol. 2, pp. 178–9. Her lexicon anticipates Tennyson's more famous endorsement in *The Princess* (1847) of 'distinctive womanhood', and of '[n]or equal, nor unequal' relations between the sexes. Christopher Ricks, ed., *The Poems of Tennyson*, Longman's Annotated English Poets, London 1969; 'The Princess', book 7, pp. 838–9, lines 285 and 258, respectively.

<sup>29</sup> Jameson, *Visits and Sketches*, p. 177. For a more interesting representation of that 'wonder of a woman' artist, 'Consummate Artemisia', see Robert Browning's late poem 'Beatrice Signorini'. Robert Browning, *The Poems, Volume II*, ed. John Pettigrew, supplemented and completed by Thomas J. Collins, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1981, pp. 899–908, vol. 2. pp. 14, 29. See Michele Martinez, 'Browning's #MeToo Critique in "Beatrice Signorini"', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 62, no. 2, Winter 2020, pp. 194–200.

<sup>30</sup> Jameson's words about the 'physical organisation of the race of women' anticipate Virginia Woolf's comments a hundred years later about gender, genre and literary form, in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) about the 'man's sentence' that was 'unsuited for a woman's use'; about how 'the nerves that feed the brain would seem to differ in men and women'; about how 'The book has somehow to be adapted to the body' (although Virginia Woolf wholly rejected the idea of writing 'as a woman'). Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own, Three Guineas*, ed. Morag Schiach, Oxford 1992, p. 101.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, 'Condition of the Women and the Female Children' in the *Athenaeum*, 18 March 1843, republished with 'On the Relative Social Position of Mothers and Governesses', in *Memoirs and Essays* (1846), and her later lectures, published as *Sisters of Charity* (1855) and *The Communion of Labour* (1856).

<sup>32</sup> MS letter of 4 February [1847], quoted in Johnston, *Anna Jameson*, p. 187, from Lovelace Papers, typescript, pp.152–5.

<sup>33</sup> Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, vol. 1, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> See Holcomb, 'Anna Jameson: The First Professional English Art Historian', p. 179. *Legends of the Madonna* has been compared with Marina Warner's influential modern study of the myth and the cult of the Virgin Mary, *Alone of All Her Sex* (1976), although it has been pointed out that the singularity of the Mother of God in the latter contrasts with Jameson's depiction of 'the Woman highly blessed' as representative of her sex. See Kimberly VanEsveld Adams, *Our Lady of Victorian Feminism: The Madonna in the Work of Anna Jameson, Margaret Fuller, and George Eliot*, Athens, 2001, p. 52. The two works share an interest in the changing symbolism of the Virgin Mary and its relevance to women in the secular world, and a focus on the material forms that embodied such belief systems. Jameson's discussion of artistic representations of the Virgin is divided into 'Devotional Subjects', such as her Coronation, the *Mater Dolorosa*, the Immaculate Conception, and 'Historical Subjects' illustrating her life; Warner's has sections on Mary's identities as Virgin, Queen, Bride, Mother, and Intercessor. Both address the roles, stories, characteristics, and associated symbols and practices that accrued around the figure of Mary at different historical moments. Of course, they themselves were written at different moments of religious, social and feminist thought and experience.

<sup>35</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna* (1857), p. lxxviii.

<sup>36</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna* (1857), p. xix.

<sup>37</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna* (1857), pp. xvii, xxxix–xl.



<sup>38</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 9. And see Adams, *Our Lady of Victorian Feminism*, pp. 52-61.

<sup>39</sup> See Adams, *Our Lady of Victorian Feminism*, pp. 2, 8, 54-6, 68-71.

<sup>40</sup> For an illustration, see <https://archive.org/details/legendsofmadonna1852jame/page/n11/mode/2up> (accessed 8 September 2022).

<sup>41</sup> In her Preface she explains that some of the images are 'different and more appropriate' than those that appear in the first edition, and so we can assume that her selection of this illustration as the reader's first introduction to her subject is quite deliberate.

<sup>42</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xlvii. The sealed book is 'a symbol often placed in the hands of the Virgin in a mystical Annunciation, and sufficiently significant. The allusion is to the text "In that book were all my members written;" and also to the text in Isaiah (xxix. 11, 12.), in which he describes the vision of the book that was sealed, and could be read neither by the learned nor the unlearned'. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xlvi.

<sup>44</sup> *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, p. 221. Jameson refers to it as the *Blenheim Altarpiece* in her *Life of Raphael*. She notes that both the altarpiece and the painting *The Dream of the Young Knight*, also acquired by the National Gallery, have recently been 'engraved in a perfect style by Louis Gruner'.

<sup>45</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 117.

<sup>46</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xlii.

<sup>47</sup> For example, see Jameson's discussion in *Legends of the Madonna* of examples of Raphael's portrayals of *The Annunciation* as a mystery, *The Coronation of the Virgin* as a mystery, the *Mater Dolorosa*, the *Madonna in Glory*; and also of *The Adoration of the Shepherds* and *The Entombment*.

<sup>48</sup> Jameson, *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, p. 259.

<sup>49</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xxv. See Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, vol. 1, p. 25. The painting was, in 1790, reattributed to Duccio di Buoninsegna. It now hangs in the Uffizi, alongside Cimabue's *Santa Trinità Madonna*, which is indeed regarded as pioneering a new, more naturalistic painterly style. Vasari appears to have conflated the two works.

<sup>50</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xxvi.

<sup>51</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xxvii.

<sup>52</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xxvii.

<sup>53</sup> Jameson, *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, p. 220.

<sup>54</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 161.

<sup>55</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xxx. According to VanEsveld Adams, 'In Jameson's view, virtually every subject added to the Marian "repertoire" in the late Middle Ages augmented the power and the status of the Virgin; the art historian could describe the Madonnas of this period not just as "contemplative," "chaste," and "serene," but also as "powerful," "beneficent," and "divine." Such figures were moving and authoritative illustrations of her claim that Mary, as the divinized representative of women and the representation of woman as divine, shows woman's fundamental equality with man.' Adams, *Our Lady of Victorian Feminism*, p. 100.

<sup>56</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xxxii.

<sup>57</sup> Nicholas Penny, 'Raphael and the Early Victorians', *Raphael from Urbino to Rome*, eds Hugh Chapman, Tom Henry, and Carol Plazzotta, London 2004, pp. 295-303 (at p. 301).

<sup>58</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, pp. xli-xlii.

<sup>59</sup> *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight. 9 vols, New Haven 1954-78, vol. 2, pp. 471-2.

<sup>60</sup> See T.R. Wright, *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain*, Cambridge 1986, p. 83.

<sup>61</sup> Jameson, *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*, pp. 252-3.

<sup>62</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. xlii.

<sup>63</sup> Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 256.

<sup>64</sup> See Peter Funnell, 'Anna Jameson's Plinth'; see <https://www.npg.org.uk/blog/anna-jamesons-plinth> (accessed 17 February 2022).