

‘Such a pleasant little sketch [...] of this irritable artist’: Julia Cartwright and the Reception of Andrea Mantegna in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain

Maria Alambritis

In these days, when we cannot walk through the streets even of a third-rate town without passing shops filled with engravings and prints, when not our books only but the newspapers that lie on our tables are illustrated; when the ‘Penny Magazine’ can place a little print after Mantegna at once before the eyes of fifty thousand readers [...] we find it difficult to throw our imagination back to a time when such things were not.¹

Writing in 1845, the art historian Anna Jameson (1794–1860) encapsulated a moment in British visual culture when the development of image reproductive technologies and the expansion of the printing press brought the art of the old masters to the British public on an unprecedented scale.² Yet despite singling out Andrea Mantegna as the recipient of the gaze of fifty thousand readers, it would take almost forty years before the artist came into the spotlight in the form of a dedicated study in English art criticism, with the publication of Julia Cartwright’s *Mantegna and Francia*.³

Born into an Anglican family of country gentry, Cartwright (1851–1924) was the third eldest of nine children. The two branches of the family resided at Edgcote and Aynhoe House, Northamptonshire.⁴ Presiding over the latter was Cartwright’s uncle, the MP William Cornwallis Cartwright (1825–1915), an avid collector and supporter of the Risorgimento, who spent the majority of his time in Rome.⁵ Cartwright’s visits to Aynhoe comprised her first encounters with old master artworks,

¹ Anna Jameson, *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters, and of the Progress of Painting in Italy, from Cimabue to Bassano*, 2 vols (London: Knight, 1845), 1, 168.

² On Anna Jameson and the old masters, see the article by Susanna Avery-Quash in this issue of 19.

³ Julia Cartwright, *Mantegna and Francia*, Illustrated Biographies of the Great Artists (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1881).

⁴ Angela Emanuel, ‘Julia Cartwright 1851–1924: Art Critic and Historian of Renaissance Italy’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University College London, 1985), p. 1.

⁵ Petà Dunstan, ‘Cartwright, William Cornwallis (1825–1915)’, *ODNB* <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref.odnb/45518>>.

while also providing the opportunity to make the acquaintance of her uncle's numerous Italian visitors.⁶ Raised in an environment that valued learning and educated by private tutor, Cartwright's lessons in Italian literature and history most sparked her interest; in preparation for the family's first trip to Italy in 1868, she determined to 'find out all I can about the different schools of painting'.⁷ Cartwright's diaries detail the voracious range of her reading, which ran the breadth of the popular journals and literary magazines, accompanied by a steady diet of John Ruskin, Giorgio Vasari, Anna Jameson, Lord Lindsay, the Brownings, and George Eliot. While her tastes during her early twenties clearly reflect the influence of such authors, demonstrated by her preference for the early Italian Primitives, as Cartwright established her name in the periodical press her subject matter broadened.⁸ As a regular contributor to respected journals such as the *Magazine of Art*, *Art Journal*, and *Portfolio*, her articles covered lesser-known historic sites such as the Sacro Monte of Varallo and late-quattrocento painters like Lorenzo Lotto.⁹ Thereby, from her very first publications, Cartwright proved herself a reliable authority on the latest topics of art historical interest, 'plac[ing] her in the forefront of those who in turn influenced and reflected the emerging new taste'.¹⁰

Serialized artist biographies in the late nineteenth century

Mantegna and Francia, Cartwright's first monograph, formed one volume of the Illustrated Biographies of the Great Artists series published by Sampson

⁶ Emanuel, 'Julia Cartwright', p. 5. Cornwallis Cartwright regularly exhibited his collection, which included works by Murillo, Cima di Conegliano, and Albertinelli. See Charles B. Curtis, *Velazquez and Murillo: A Descriptive and Historical Catalogue* (New York: Bouton; London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1883), cat. nos. 3, 16, 33, 72, 200, 249, 335, 373; and *Exhibition of the Works of Old Masters and Deceased Masters of the British School*, Winter Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 35th year, exhibition catalogue (London: Clowes, 1904), cat. nos. 23, 26.

⁷ *A Bright Remembrance: The Diaries of Julia Cartwright, 1851-1924*, ed. by Angela Emanuel (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), p. 30 (22 April 1868).

⁸ Emanuel, 'Julia Cartwright', p. 34. On the change in taste for the Italian Primitives, see Carly Collier, 'From "Gothic Atrocities" to Objects of Aesthetic Appreciation: The Transition from Marginal to Mainstream of Early Italian Art in British Taste during the Long Eighteenth Century', in *The Centre and the Margins in Eighteenth-Century British and Italian Cultures*, ed. by Frank O'Gorman and Lia Guerra (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 117-39.

⁹ Julia Cartwright, 'Varallo and her Painter', *Portfolio*, 11 (1880), 50-56; 'Lorenzo Lotto', *Portfolio*, 20 (1889), 16-19, 26-30.

¹⁰ Emanuel, 'Julia Cartwright', p. 39. Cartwright also published a review of Bernard Berenson's later monograph on Lotto: 'Lorenzo Lotto', *Art Journal*, August 1895, pp. 233-37. See the bibliography of this issue of 19 for full details of Cartwright's periodical publications.

Low from 1879 to 1895. This was one of a large and varied group of popular artist monograph series which appeared at the turn of the century. Meaghan Clarke observes that within the late-century expansion of the British art press, there was a greater focus in art historical scholarship on the figure of the individual artist.¹¹ Since the eighteenth century, the genre of biography had been associated with stimulating interest in the lives and acts of historical and artistic figures, particularly those of the Italian Renaissance; Karen Junod contextualizes successful early examples such as William Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici Called the Magnificent* (1795) and Richard Duppa's *Life and Literary Works of Michel Angelo Buonarroti* (1806), as anticipating the turn-of-the-century fever for Italian old master monographs.¹²

Recently, Julie Codell, Amy Von Lintel, and Gabriele Guercio have drawn attention to the ubiquity of the artist monograph in late-Victorian Britain and the continued absence of this genre in critical histories of the discipline, despite the formative influence it played in shaping art history as it emerged during the nineteenth century.¹³ Indeed, by the early twentieth century, such biographies were so prolific that a reviewer in *The Times* noted with alarm: 'books on the painters have lately been multiplied beyond the limits of right reason [...]. It looks as if the market was being overstocked with art books.'¹⁴ This was in reference to the latest volume of Bell's successful Great Masters in Painting and Sculpture series (1899–1914), which together with other examples, such as Methuen's Little Books on Art (1903–20) and Duckworth's Popular Library of Art (1902–20), appealed to both contemporary readers' fondness for biographical narrative and an appetite for the latest knowledge and developments in art historical research. Codell points to the varied 'authorial mix' of contributors found within a single series, ranging across journalists, museum curators, scholars, politicians, and critics (*Victorian Artist*, p. 248). However, Guercio

¹¹ Meaghan Clarke, 'The Art Press at the Fin De Siècle: Women, Collecting, and Connoisseurship', *Visual Resources*, 31 (2015), 15–30 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01973762.2015.1004776>> (pp. 20–21).

¹² Karen Junod, 'The Lives of the Old Masters: Reading, Writing, and Reviewing the Renaissance', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 30 (2008), 67–82 (pp. 67–69).

¹³ Julie F. Codell, 'Serialized Artists' Biographies: A Culture Industry in Late Victorian Britain', *Book History*, 3 (2000), 94–124; Julie F. Codell, *The Victorian Artist: Artists' Life Writings in Britain, ca. 1870–1910* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Gabriele Guercio, *Art as Existence: The Artist's Monograph and its Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Amy M. Von Lintel, 'Surveying the Field: The Popular Origins of Art History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, 2010); Amy M. Von Lintel, '“Excessive industry”: Female Art Historians, Popular Publishing and Professional Access', in *Women, Femininity and Public Space in European Visual Culture, 1789–1914*, ed. by Temma Balducci and Heather Belnap Jensen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 115–29.

¹⁴ 'Review of Books', *The Times*, 21 December 1901, p. 9.

makes a qualitative distinction between monographs written by canonical figures — such as Johann David Passavant (1787–1861), Gustav Waagen (1794–1868), and Bernard Berenson (1865–1959) — and monographs of popular series written by those who were ‘neither a connoisseur nor an orthodox art historian’, denigrating the latter as an ‘unsatisfactory’ attempt to reconcile the ‘study of the oeuvre requir[ing] specialized means’ with that of biography, which ‘verged on the novelistic’ (pp. 148, 149). Yet, as Codell argues, popular serialized biographies also wielded cultural authority and contributed to the development of art history by ‘help[ing] inexperienced readers gain access to cultural knowledge in the form of accessible canons’ (*Victorian Artist*, p. 5). Publishers’ advertisements attest to this aim. Such series intended to ‘produce, in an easily accessible form and at a price within the reach of everyone, the results of recent investigations which have been made by many well-known critics’.¹⁵ Among Julia Cartwright’s papers, a note marked ‘private’ from George Bell and Sons details instructions for contributors to the Great Masters series, providing a rare insight into negotiations between publisher and author:

The Biographical matter to be confined if possible to Chapter I or Chapters I & II & the remainder of the book to be critical [...]. A mere reprint of other men’s opinions is not desired [...]. The new book should be a real addition to the history of the Master & a guide to his works in Europe.¹⁶

Guercio’s dismissal of such serialized monographs for ‘dilut[ing] the complex dialectic of an artist’s life and work for a popular audience’ fails to nuance the differing vehicles in which art historical knowledge was disseminated at this moment (p. 149), and, as Adele Ernstrom argues, such allegiance to ‘institutional consecration [...] particularly serve[s] to erase contributions by women from surviving recognition’.¹⁷ In fact, by its dual function — of providing art critics with a format accepted as appropriately

¹⁵ Quoted in Margaret M. Smith, ‘Joseph Cundall and the Binding Design for the *Illustrated Biographies of the Great Artists*’, *Library*, 5 (2004), 39–63 (p. 40).

¹⁶ George Bell and Sons to Julia Cartwright, November 1898, Northampton, Northamptonshire Archives (NA), Cartwright Edgcote Collection, CE112/97. Cartwright was approached by the publisher, who was so keen to have her name associated with their series that they sent her money in advance, but Cartwright refused: ‘I actually had a cheque from Dr Williamson on behalf of Bell & Son for a volume on some Italian Masters, for their new series. But they only offer *thirty pounds* which is absurd’ (*A Bright Remembrance*, ed. by Emanuel, p. 235, emphasis in original). Clearly, by this point Cartwright’s name was held in high esteem, and importantly, she was well aware of the value of her work and the importance of obtaining adequate remuneration.

¹⁷ Adele M. Ernstrom, ‘Editorial Introduction: Art History Inside and Outside the University’, *RACAR: revue d’art canadienne/Canadian Art Review*, 28 (2001–03), 1–6, (p. 3).

scholarly in which to present, disseminate, and engage with current debates and knowledge of old master artworks, and ensuring a wide readership due to the genre's mass production and affordable price point — the serialized artist's biography wielded influence over both knowledge of an artist, and taste and canon formation.¹⁸

Lives of the 'difficult' artists

Nineteenth-century life writing on the old masters was intimately intertwined with the model inherited from the original artists' life writer Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) and his *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architetti* (1550/68). It was Vasari's specific 'choice of biography as the medium for his history of Renaissance art [that] chimed with the Victorians' own passion for life writing'.¹⁹ With the first translation of Vasari's *Vite* into English by Mrs Jonathan Foster (1850–51), published as part of Bohn's Standard Library, the influence of Vasari for English-speaking audiences became all-pervading.²⁰ However, as both Hilary Fraser and Cecilia Hurley establish, Vasari's *Lives* were not accepted without question by Victorian art writers. Hurley observes that 'in England [...] the Vasarian model was challenged from an early date', while Fraser points to Foster's translation as instigating a whole range of 'modern Vasaris'.²¹

The profusion of popular serialized artist biographies in the late nineteenth century provided women with an opportunity to publish their research in a widely disseminated form, under the imprimatur of a recognizable and respected publisher. Cartwright's *Mantegna and Francia* was one of several double monographs to appear in the Illustrated Biographies series, a format the publisher employed to co-join artists about

¹⁸ Bell's Great Masters were sold for 5s. each; Duckworth's Popular Library of Art, 2s.; Duckworth's A New Library of Art, 7s. 6d.; Newnes' Art Library, 3s. 6d.; and Methuen's Little Books on Art, 2s. 6d. each. As was noted at the time, pricing, physical size, and number and quality of illustrations were seen as reflective of differing levels of content and intended audience. See 'Various Art Series', *Speaker*, 27 February 1904, p. 532.

¹⁹ Hilary Fraser, 'Vasari's *Lives* and the Victorians', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Giorgio Vasari*, ed. by David J. Cast (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 277–94 (p. 278).

²⁰ See Patricia Rubin's short biography of Foster in this issue of 19. For a detailed account of Foster's background, her commission for the Vasari translation, and her working methods, see Patricia Rubin, "Not [...] what I would fain offer, but [...] what I am able to present": Mrs. Jonathan Foster's Translation of Vasari's *Lives*', in *Le vite del Vasari: genesi, topoi, ricezione*, ed. by Katja Burzer and others (Venice: Marsilio, 2010), pp. 317–31.

²¹ Cecilia Hurley, 'Englishing Vasari', in *La Réception des 'Vite' de Giorgio Vasari dans l'Europe des XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles*, ed. by Corinne Lucas Fiorato and Pascale Dubus (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2017), pp. 409–25 (pp. 412–13); Fraser, p. 278.

whom little had been written in English.²² Indeed, *Mantegna and Francia* presents the first separate monographic study in the English language of both title artists. In comparison to Mantegna, Francesco Francia was perceived as far more aesthetically appealing by English viewers, particularly on account of the *Pietà* lunette from the St Anne altarpiece of San Frediano, Lucca, purchased by the National Gallery in 1841 (NG180). As Cartwright attests, this work was ‘stamped’ on British minds and lauded as ‘the highest ideal representation of the subject in the whole range of art’.²³ However, Cartwright was certainly not alone in taking advantage of this late-century trend. The list of contributors to Bell’s Great Masters in Painting and Sculpture series presents a coterie of women writing on Italian old masters – of the thirty volumes comprising this series, eleven were written by women.²⁴ Furthermore, several of these contributions focused on artists whose lives and works had yet to become familiar to a wider public beyond connoisseurial circles: *Andrea del Sarto* by Henrietta Guinness (1899); *Luca Signorelli* by Maud Cruttwell (1899); *Donatello* by Hope Rea (1900); *Brunelleschi* by Leader Scott [Lucy Baxter] (1901); *Pintoricchio* by Evelyn March Phillipps (1901); *Gaudenzio Ferrari* by Ethel Halsey (1904); and *Sodoma* by Contessa Luisa Priuli-Bon (1908).²⁵ Together with Maud Cruttwell’s *Andrea Verrocchio* (1904) and *Antonio Pollaiuolo* (1907) published in Duckworth’s New Library of Art series and Nancy Bell’s *Paolo Veronese* (1904) for Newnes’ Art Library, several significant quattrocento old masters received their monographic ‘debut’ into the English-language art press in the form of an accessible, affordably priced, and portable volume, written by a woman.

Artists such as Andrea Mantegna, Luca Signorelli, and Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo are acknowledged today as part of a significant and influential group of artists working in northern Italy during the mid-to-late

²² Other examples from the series include Leader Scott [Lucy Baxter], *Ghiberti and Donatello* (1882) and Janet E. Ruutz-Rees, *Horace Vernet and Paul Delaroche* (1894). Both authors preface their books noting the relative scarcity of English-language literature on their title subjects.

²³ *Mantegna and Francia*, pp. 89, 91. See also Edmund Gardner’s comment that ‘the lunette, with which we English lovers of painting have grown up since our childhood, the *Pietà*, has no equal in the whole range of Italian art’, in *The Painters of the School of Ferrara* (London: Duckworth, 1911), p. 108.

²⁴ Amy Von Lintel makes the same observation of Sampson Low’s Illustrated Masters, observing that the significant number of women among its contributors demonstrates their visible presence as acknowledged art writers in the British press (“Excessive industry”, p. 121).

²⁵ Von Lintel identifies Priuli-Bon, together with Marchesa Burlamacchi (*Della Robbia*, 1906) as two foreign women contributors to Great Masters. However, Lilian Priuli-Bon was not Italian but of Swedish and Welsh descent, resided in Italy, and married the Venetian architect Lorenzo Priuli. See Colin Rowe and Daniel Naegele, ‘Excursus on Contessa Priuli-Bon, with Postscript’, *AA Files*, 72 (2016), 68–72.

fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.²⁶ Yet in late nineteenth-century Britain, they occupied an anomalous position in the popular contemporary consensus. The championing of the early Italian Primitives by writers such as Anna Jameson, Maria Callcott, Lord Lindsay, John Ruskin, and Elizabeth Eastlake had, by the mid-century, transformed artists such as Fra Angelico from perpetrators of ‘gothic atrocities’ to ‘household names’ in Britain; and the grandeur of sixteenth-century Rome epitomized in the works of Raphael and Michelangelo never faded.²⁷ So, it is curious to observe that as late as 1907 — when the reign of ‘scientific art criticism’ was well underway and specialist art journals such as the *Burlington Magazine* had been established for some years — Maud Cruttwell’s publication of the very first book in any language on Antonio Pollaiuolo was met with a decidedly lukewarm response from the respected art critic Laurence Binyon. This entirely new addition to art historical scholarship was not heralded as a welcome contribution addressing a long-standing gap, or even as an enterprising coup for English art scholarship over its Continental counterparts, but instead rather snidely dismissed as ‘unsurprising’ considering ‘Pollaiuolo is not and never will be a popular artist, nor has he left any single work which wholly captivates or impresses the imagination’.²⁸ In a similar fashion, the influential critic Andrew Lang quipped in his popular column ‘At the Sign of the Ship’ that for his ‘brethren — art critics’ ‘no severer physical trial than a couple of miles of Luca Signorelli can be imposed on these devoted men; if they survive it they are made field marshals, I believe’.²⁹

Women like Cruttwell, Cartwright, and Halsey were aware of the new contribution their monographs presented. A consistent feature of their prefaces is an emphasis on the significant absence of English-language scholarship on their subject.³⁰ In her own preface, Cartwright highlights

²⁶ As demonstrated by the recent major retrospectives: ‘Luca Signorelli “de ingegno et spirito pelegrino”’, Galleria Nazionale dell’Umbria, Perugia, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo e Chiesa dei Santi Apostoli, Orvieto, and Pinacoteca Comunale, Città di Castello (21 April–26 August 2012); ‘The Ladies by the Pollaiuolo Brothers: Works from a Great Renaissance Workshop’, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan (7 November 2014–16 February 2015); and ‘Mantegna and Bellini’, National Gallery, London (1 October 2018–27 January 2019).

²⁷ Collier, ‘From “Gothic Atrocities”’; review of *Life of Beato Angelico da Fiesole*, *Athenaeum*, 29 July 1865, pp. 153–54 (p. 153), quoted in Robyn Cooper, ‘British Attitudes towards the Italian Primitives, 1815–1865, with Special Reference to the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Fashion’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Plymouth, 1976), p. vi.

²⁸ Laurence Binyon, ‘Two Realists’, *Saturday Review*, 14 September 1907, pp. 328–29 (p. 328).

²⁹ Andrew Lang, ‘At the Sign of the Ship’, *Longman’s Magazine*, May 1888, pp. 105–12 (pp. 111, 112).

³⁰ For example: ‘It is a curious fact that the works of an artist of such magnitude as Gaudenzio Ferrari should in these days of universal research be little known to students, and practically unknown to the world at large’ (Ethel Halsey, *Gaudenzio*

the ambitious nature of her undertaking: ‘no separate biography of Mantegna has been published in English’ though ‘his life and works have been the subject of much study in other countries during recent years’ (p. v). Emphasizing the evident gap in English publishing her volume is intended to address, Cartwright demonstrates her awareness of the most recent developments in art historical scholarship in Continental criticism.³¹

Dismissed in their own time, late nineteenth-century women writers of popular monographs made important contributions in disseminating information about less-widely appreciated artists, by including them in the ‘canon’ of a series alongside more familiar names. Even Cartwright herself closed her volume on Mantegna by acknowledging that ‘his works have never been, perhaps they will never become, the enthusiastic object of general worship’ (p. 62). What was the reason for the distaste shown towards these artists, despite the significant number of extant works and a wealth of foreign language scholarship?

‘Nothing so curious and valuable’: *The Triumphs of Julius Caesar*

Mantegna did not suffer posthumous oblivion like that of Sandro Botticelli and, since his death, had always retained a reputation as a ‘great’ artist.³²

Ferrari, *Great Masters in Painting and Sculpture* (London: Bell, 1904), p. vii); and, ‘perhaps no painter who has left us such a mass of work, and work of such interest, has attracted so little criticism and enquiry [...]. No separate life of him in English exists’ (Evelyn March Phillipps, *Pintoricchio*, *Great Masters in Painting and Sculpture* (London: Bell, 1901), p. 1).

³¹ Mantegna had been treated in German art criticism in J. W. von Goethe, *Triumphzug von Mantegna* (1830); Gustav Waagen, ‘Über Leben, Wirken und Werke der Maler Andrea Mantegna und Luca Signorelli’, *Historisches Taschenbuch*, 3.1 (1850), 471–594 (repr. in Waagen, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. by Alfred Woltmann (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1875), pp. 80–144); and Alfred Woltmann, ‘Andrea Mantegna’, *Kunst und Künstler des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, 51 (1878), 3–30.

³² There has been extensive scholarship on Botticelli’s nineteenth-century revival: Michael Levey, ‘Botticelli and Nineteenth-Century England’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 23 (1960), 291–306; Sandy May Steyger, ‘The “re-discovery” of Botticelli in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Keele University, 2001); Adrian S. Hoch, ‘The Art of Alessandro Botticelli through the Eyes of Victorian Aesthetes’, in *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance*, ed. by John E. Law and Lene Østermark-Johansen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 55–85; Jeremy Melius, ‘Art History and the Invention of Botticelli’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2010); *Botticelli Reimagined*, ed. by Mark Evans and Stefan Weppelmann, exhibition catalogue (London: V&A Publishing, 2016); *Botticelli Past and Present*, ed. by Ana Debenedetti and Caroline Elam (London: UCL Press, 2019); Patricia Lee Rubin, ‘“Pictures with a Past”: Botticelli in Boston’, in *Botticelli: Heroines and Heroes*, ed. by Nathaniel Silver, exhibition catalogue (London: Holberton, 2019), pp. 10–31; Ronald Lightbown, *Mantegna: With a Complete Catalogue of the Paintings, Drawings and Prints* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Since 1629 the Royal Collection had housed one of Mantegna's most esteemed works, *The Triumphs of Julius Caesar* (c. 1484–92), purchased by Charles I from a bankrupt Vincenzo II Gonzaga, duke of Mantua. Vasari had described this fresco cycle as Mantegna's greatest achievement and the works continued to hold sway throughout the seventeenth century, being engraved numerous times. Yet after their arrival at Hampton Court, their artistic value waned.³³ During the rebuilding of the royal apartments under the reign of William III, the new 'Kings Gallery' was designed not for Mantegna's frescoes but for the cartoons of Raphael (Martindale, p. 111). Consequently, the *Triumphs* were relegated for the next 150 years to the Queen's Apartments and, in the reign of George I, they were moved once again to make way for the tapestries of Charles Le Brun.³⁴

In 1842 Jameson drew attention to the works in her seminal *Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and near London*.³⁵ Singling them out as 'not only [Mantegna's] finest work', she insisted they were notable for marking 'an epoch in the history of art' as the single most important works of historical genre before the appearance of Michelangelo and Raphael's own celebrated fresco cycles (p. 371). The following year, Jameson devoted an article to Mantegna as part of her successful *Essays on the Lives of Remarkable Painters* series, published in the *Penny Magazine* from 1843 to 1845. Here again she asserts Mantegna as 'particularly interesting to English readers' due to the presence of 'his most celebrated work' in the Royal Collection, displayed at Hampton Court.³⁶ Jameson insisted Mantegna's frescoes were in especial need of greater attention and appreciation:

In their present faded and dilapidated condition, hurried and uninformed visitors will probably pass them over with a cursory glance, yet, if we except the Cartoons of Raphael, Hampton Court contains nothing so curious and valuable as this old frieze of Andrea Mantegna. ('Essays', p. 411)

Yet Jameson's description of the frescoes as a 'curious and valuable [...] old frieze' suggests esteem for their value as objects of historical artistic

³³ Andrew Martindale, *The Triumphs of Caesar by Andrea Mantegna in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Hampton Court* (London: Miller, 1979), p. 106.

³⁴ Martindale, pp. 111–12. For an account of the changing displays at Hampton Court between 1830 and 1880, see Brett Dolman, 'Curating the Royal Collection at Hampton Court Palace in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 29 (2017), 271–90.

³⁵ Anna Jameson, *A Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and near London* (London: Murray, 1842).

³⁶ 'Essays on the Lives of Remarkable Painters — Andrea Mantegna', *Penny Magazine*, 28 October 1843, pp. 409–12 (p. 409). These essays were later collected and republished as *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters* (1845), to which an additional section on Mantegna and engraving was added.

importance rather than as epitomes of aesthetic achievement. Admiring their ‘classical elegance of form’ and the ‘inexpressible richness of detail in the accessories and ornaments’, Jameson’s praise of the *Triumphs* is undermined when she identifies them as an *exception* in Mantegna’s work (*Handbook*, p. 372). She summarizes Mantegna’s ‘taste for the forms and effects of sculpture’ as usually ‘misplaced and unpleasing’, resulting in ‘a certain hardness, meagreness, and formality of outline’ (‘Essays’, p. 411). Jameson’s interpretation of Mantegna’s style draws heavily on Vasari’s life of the artist, which details how Mantegna cultivated his fascination with the antique while immersed in the revival of interest in the classical world among the humanist and intellectual circles of mid-fifteenth-century Padua. His tutor Francesco Squarcione encouraged his students to study from the ancient sculpture that filled his studio. As Vasari recounts, Squarcione was so offended by Mantegna marrying Nicolosia Bellini, daughter of his rival Jacopo Bellini, that he publicly denounced Mantegna’s art, claiming his human figures appeared to be made more of marble than flesh. Jameson concludes her article on this supposed ‘Remarkable Painter’ in a less than remarkable fashion: ‘in general his religious pictures are not pleasing; and many of his classical subjects have a tasteless meagreness in the forms, which is quite opposed to all our conceptions of beauty and greatness of style’ (‘Essays’, p. 412).

Mantegna at the National Gallery

Public visibility of Mantegna’s works improved in 1855 with the acquisition of the National Gallery’s first painting by the artist, *The Virgin and Child with Saints* (Fig. 1). It was purchased under the auspices of Sir Charles Eastlake and formed part of his plan to transform the national collection into a comprehensive survey of the history of Western art. Appointed that same year as the gallery’s first director, Eastlake was provided with a newly established annual fund of £10,000 with which to acquire paintings. Both directorship and fund were set up as part of the gallery’s pivotal reconstitution, following several years of heated debate in both the press and Parliament as to the public benefits of forming a national collection and its role in aiding and improving public education in the history of art.³⁷ In his first General Report to the Trustees, Eastlake identified the early

³⁷ Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon, *Art for the Nation: The Eastlakes and the Victorian Art World* (London: National Gallery, 2011), pp. 134–47. This was the first time the gallery appointed the role of director, equipped with purchasing powers and an annual grant. Prior to this change, there had been no set funds with which to purchase works and the responsibility of approving works for acquisition rested at varying odds between the keeper, trustees, and outside opinion, often based on a single-minded aim of acquiring ‘masterpieces’.



Fig. 1: Andrea Mantegna, *The Virgin and Child with Saints*, probably 1490–1505, tempera on canvas, 139.1 × 116.8 cm, National Gallery, London (NG274). © The National Gallery, London.

Italian schools as his primary objective for purchase, reasoning that they represented most succinctly the trajectory of art's development and noting that the collection severely lacked examples of earlier paintings.³⁸ The Mantegna was among this new cohort of works to enter the collection, its arrival reported in the *Illustrated London News* with a full-page engraving (Fig. 2).

Describing the work as 'a picture of a high and rare class', the reporter affirmed that it was 'worthy to be placed beside our Peruginos, our Francias and our Correggios', describing it as an 'important and

³⁸ Report of the Director of the National Gallery to the Lords Commissioners, 5 March 1856, London, National Gallery Archive (NGA), Annual Reports 1855–1873, NG17/2, p. 13.

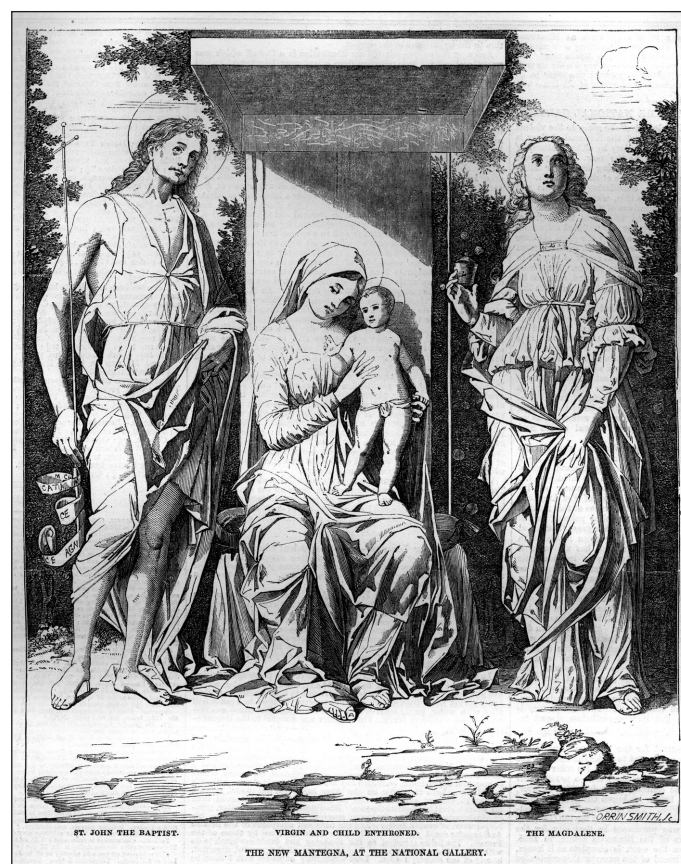


Fig. 2: 'The New Mantegna, at the National Gallery', *Illustrated London News*, 1 November 1856, p. 451. The Illustrated London News Historical Archive. © Illustrated London News Ltd/Mary Evans.

interesting addition' to the gallery.³⁹ Several further acquisitions followed: an oil sketch by Peter Paul Rubens of *A Roman Triumph* (NG278) based on Mantegna's *Triumphs*, purchased from the Samuel Rogers sale, and in 1873 the Vivian family's *Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome* (NG902). The trustees considered the initial asking price of £1,500 for this latter work too high, but owner Ralph Vivian insisted he would take no less and interventions were made to secure the work for the nation, with the approval of a special purchase grant.⁴⁰ This acquisition resulted in a flurry of articles in

³⁹ 'The New Mantegna at the National Gallery', *Illustrated London News*, 1 November 1856, pp. 451–52 (p. 451).

⁴⁰ Captain Ralph Vivian to Sir William Boxall, May 1873, NGA, NG5/466/6; note by R. N. Wornum, 5 May 1873, NGA, NGA1/1/69/8.

the press.⁴¹ Sir Frederic Burton (1816–1900), who was to assume the role of director at the gallery in 1874, summarized precisely what seemed to irk the Victorian eye about Mantegna:

No thought of pleasing *us* seems to have guided his creative pencil [...]. There are, doubtless, many [...] who are repelled from the first by the dryness of Mantegna's manner, and who [...] find in his generally austere mode of conception no sympathetic bond. (p. 4, emphasis in original)

Even the esteemed art historians Joseph A. Crowe (1825–1896) and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle (1819–1897) toed the Vasarian line.⁴² In their seminal *History of Painting in North Italy* (1871) they extolled the virtues of Mantegna's brother-in-law Giovanni Bellini through comparison of both artists' *Agony in the Garden*. Bellini's *Agony* had been acquired by the gallery in 1863 from the Davenport-Bromley collection, while Mantegna's version resided in the collection of Thomas Baring and would be purchased by the gallery in 1894.⁴³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle saw the juxtaposition of the two works illustrating 'that contempt for which [Mantegna] is so well known, of everything tender or charming in nature', concluding that Mantegna's gave 'the impression of a potent bitter'.⁴⁴

Countering 'wearisome' criticism: Cartwright's reassessment of Mantegna

Cartwright set out to challenge this received opinion on Mantegna and encourage wider appreciation of his works. Her monograph states her aim boldly: 'the old reproach that he neglected the study of real life to copy statues has been repeated till it has grown wearisome' (p. 61). Her reappraisal begins with a strong claim for the importance of the Paduan school above any other northern Italian school active during the fifteenth century. Describing it as 'independent of Byzantine traditions and strikingly

⁴¹ Fred. W. Burton, 'Mantegna's "Triumph of Scipio"', *Portfolio*, 5 (1874), 4–7; J. W. Comyns Carr, 'The New Mantegna at the National Gallery', *Art Journal*, March 1874, pp. 78–79; J. A. Crowe, 'The New Mantegna', *Academy*, November 1873, p. 427; 'The New Mantegna', *Athenaeum*, 18 October 1873, p. 502.

⁴² 'Crowe, Sir Joseph Archer', *Dictionary of Art Historians*, ed. by Lee Sorensen <<http://www.arthistorians.info/crowej>>; and 'Cavalcaselle, G. B.' <<http://www.arthistorians.info/cavalcaselleg>> [both accessed 7 April 2019].

⁴³ Giovanni Bellini, *The Agony in the Garden*, c. 1458–60, egg tempera on panel, 80.4 × 127 cm (NG726). This was purchased as a Mantegna and reattributed the following year to Bellini; Andrea Mantegna, *The Agony in the Garden*, c. 1455–60, egg tempera on panel, 62.9 × 80 cm (NG1417).

⁴⁴ J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting in North Italy: Venice, Padua, Vincenza, Verona, Ferrara, Milan, Friuli, Brescia, from the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century*, 2 vols (London: Murray, 1871), I, 141, 383.

peculiar in its characteristics', she insists it 'even surpassed the Venetian school in the vigour and individuality of its art' (p. 1). Cartwright then reassesses the contemporary consensus on Mantegna himself, observing the negative reception of his style as a response to the 'occasional antagonism between the ideal form after which he strove and the actual fact present before his eyes' and that it is this 'sense of conflicting elements [...] which has given rise to so much mistaken criticism of Mantegna's work'; she argues instead that 'no man had ever a more thorough knowledge of nature, or was more keenly alive to the minutest details of everyday life around him' (p. 61). To illustrate this point, Cartwright dispatches with the Vasarian anecdote that Squarcione's insults had provoked Mantegna to embark on a more naturalistic rendering of the human form. This change of style was traditionally noted by historians to occur in Mantegna's commission for the Ovetari Chapel in the Church of the Eremitani in Padua, with the frescoes of *St James on his Way to Martyrdom* and *The Martyrdom of St Christopher* pinpointed as the striking turning point in the artist's development.⁴⁵ Cartwright decisively attributes this change to the 'new influence' of Jacopo and Giovanni Bellini on Mantegna's work, brought about by his marriage to Nicolosia, describing this event as 'an important fact in art history as strengthening the ties between these distinguished artists' (pp. 8–9). Here Cartwright departs from her contemporaries Crowe and Cavalcaselle and aligns herself with the opinions of German critic Gustav Waagen. In his important account, *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain* (1857), Waagen corrects the assumption of his earlier 1850 treatise on Mantegna where he 'erroneously ascribed the change to Squarcione's criticism on the misapplied imitation of sculpture apparent in Mantegna's earlier pictures', affirming that 'the great development of the picturesque and realistic feeling in most of Mantegna's later works may now without question be ascribed to his connection with Jacobo Bellini'.⁴⁶ Crowe and Cavalcaselle remained hesitant on this point and 'assume[d]' the 'force of the Bellinesque influence' was present, suggesting that 'the general softening of his style [...] may have been the fruit of some transient but powerful expression of Bellinesque opinion in Mantegna, when

⁴⁵ Mantegna's frescoes at Padua had received an early mention in Maria Callcott's *Description of the Chapel of the Annunziata dell'Arena; or, Giotto's Chapel, in Padua* (London: the author, 1835), in which she included a page on the Eremitani. Callcott recounts being 'attracted by the frescoes, by Andrea Mantegna. These evince extraordinary talents for composition, and particularly the Martyrdom of St. Christopher', also commenting that these frescoes included portraits of Squarcione and Mantegna himself (p. 15).

⁴⁶ Dr Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain*, trans. by [Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake] (London: Murray, 1857), pp. 29, 29–30. This is the supplemental vol. iv to Waagen's *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, trans. by [Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake], 3 vols (London: Murray, 1854).

stung by the criticism of Squarcione' (1, 339–40). Cartwright incorporates and expands on Waagen's observation of the 'great and lasting' mutual influence between Mantegna and the Bellini: from Giovanni, Mantegna gained 'the softer colouring and delicate feeling that impart so pure a charm to those well-known Madonnas which fill the churches of Venice'; while Giovanni benefited from his brother-in-law's 'knowledge of classical architecture and perspective, as well as the sculptural cast of drapery' (p. 9). Referring to another scene, *The Martyrdom of St James*, Cartwright observes the 'life-like' figures and the 'striking [...] close attention to natural objects' in the 'winding road and rocky terraces'. Despite his 'love of antique statuary', it is in the 'faithful reproductions of Italian landscape and streets, with red roofs, arched loggias', and 'every detail' of the 'furlows and wrinkles of old age, the ragged coat or torn shoe' rendered with 'an accuracy that is almost painful', that Cartwright insists 'how strongly realistic' Mantegna was (p. 9). As she concludes, 'to say that Mantegna was alike destitute of feeling for beauty and of spiritual perception appears to us simple blindness' (p. 61).

While Cartwright's monograph challenged the overarching opinion of Mantegna held by her fellow Anglophone art critics, it also presented a concerted effort to encourage the appreciation of her non-expert reader. Describing her book as 'a guide for the use of those who have not the opportunity of studying the master's works for themselves', she assures such a reader that she herself has 'carefully examined' the artworks described therein and provides 'descriptions written on the spot' (p. v). It has been well established that this in-person viewing of an artwork was one of the key strategies used by women art writers throughout the century to authenticate their published opinions.⁴⁷ Here Cartwright emphasizes her direct looking as both a means of proving her first-hand knowledge of Mantegna's oeuvre, while also situating herself as a trustworthy mediator for readers unfamiliar with his artworks. Cartwright first visited Mantua in September 1880 on her honeymoon with husband Henry Ady. Her diary details her visit to Mantegna's tomb in the church of Sant'Andrea, the Ducal Palace, and the Camera degli Sposi, and records her surprise at the notable absence of Mantegna in the town in which he had reigned as court painter to the powerful Gonzaga family:

We studied Mantegna's room a long time and most interesting the groups are. We went through court after court and found scanty remnants of Andrea's work [...]. All through Mantua it was quite hard to find out anything about Mantegna. (*A Bright Remembrance*, ed. by Emanuel, p. 115)

⁴⁷ Caroline Palmer, "I will tell nothing that I did not see": British Women's Travel Writing, Art and the Science of Connoisseurship, 1776–1860', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 51 (2015), 248–68.

This first-hand experience of Mantegna's neglect was translated in her monograph into an emphasis on those extant works *in situ*, as she observes of the Camera:

All the frescoes have been much damaged, and those on two of the walls completely obliterated; but the groups which remain and the decorations of the ceiling are of the highest interest, and, if we except the Hampton Court Triumphs, form the most important series that we have from Mantegna's hand. (p. 25)

Similarly, Cartwright highlights the frescoes of the Ovetari Chapel in Padua as key 'to form a correct idea of Mantegna's powers' during his early career, despite their having suffered 'from the damp of the walls' and that 'a great part of the subjects in the apse, as well as several figures in the martyrdom and burial of St Christopher, are completely destroyed' (pp. 3, 4). Nevertheless, other 'portions are still in good preservation' and Cartwright goes as far as to describe the chapel as the equivalent 'for the schools of North Italy what the Brancacci Chapel had been for Florence' (p. 4), using this comparison with a pivotal example in the development of Florentine painting to situate the importance of Mantegna's influence within a history of art that, following Vasari, predominantly favoured the artistic production of Tuscany.

Reviews of *Mantegna and Francia* demonstrated the wide appeal and success of Cartwright's approach. The *Academy* review began with the assertion that 'Mantegna is not a popular favourite among Italian masters, nor is the history of his life particularly interesting', but continued,

great credit, therefore, is due to Miss Julia Cartwright for having made such a pleasant little sketch out of the dry materials at her command [...]. [She] appears to have studied all the latest sources of information regarding this irritable artist, and evidently speaks of many of his works from personal knowledge.⁴⁸

Referring to Crowe and Cavalcaselle, the reviewer commended Cartwright's ability to 'translat[e] the dry and somewhat involved style of writing peculiar to these learned historians into easy readable English, free from technical terms' (p. 408). Beyond simple compilation, her writing was recognized for its distinctive blending of a literary style of exposition with an informed knowledge of current critical opinion. In the *Athenaeum*, the reviewer commended how 'the facts have been carefully fused into a continuous and homogenous narrative' and how 'unusual care and discretion' was used in

⁴⁸ Review of Julia Cartwright, *Mantegna and Francia*, *Academy*, 26 November 1881, pp. 408–09 (p. 408).

drawing on foreign secondary sources.⁴⁹ The *Academy* concluded: '[Miss Cartwright's] powers of pleasant description, artistic perception, and lucid criticism' are 'as valuable in [their] way as scientific criticism' (p. 409). Cartwright's distinctive brand of art history combined the familiar, widely appealing biographical narrative with her own personal observations and the most recent research from respected foreign scholars and ensured her regular and prolific publishing commissions; in her diary, she records meetings with publishers who were 'keen to have literary criticism not technical'.⁵⁰ Indeed, Cartwright's acumen and awareness of both the British literary tradition of art writing and Continental advances in connoisseurial methods meant that publishers often solicited her opinion on potential new publications. For example, John Murray consulted her on manuscripts for prospective art historical books, writing in one case, 'I felt it my duty to ask the opinion of the best authority I could think of.'⁵¹ Cartwright was not only well read, but knowledgeable and aware of the nuances of publishing art history both at home and abroad.

'A very considerable interest' in Mantegna

Immediately following Cartwright's publication, several works attributed to Mantegna entered the National Gallery's collection. From the major sales in 1882 of Hamilton Palace and the Sunderland collection, the gallery acquired *Two Exemplary Women from Antiquity* and *Samson and Delilah*.⁵² All three works were purchased under the directorship of Burton, who had previously deemed Mantegna's 'austere manner' incompatible with wider public tastes. While the Hamilton Palace pictures had been noticed by Waagen in 1854, *Samson and Delilah* was recorded for the first time in the Sunderland sale.⁵³ However, the price paid for this (£2,362) caused dispute in the House of Commons. As reported by Henry Wallis in the *Art Journal*, the objections were made on the grounds that 'the actualities of modern Art' were more valuable than 'the remoter themes of the great Paduan master'.⁵⁴ However, the existence of 'a large and influential class' with 'a

⁴⁹ 'Fine Arts', *Athenaeum*, 25 February 1882, pp. 256–57 (p. 257).

⁵⁰ Diary, 13 November 1901, NA, CE 385, emphasis in original.

⁵¹ John Murray to Julia Cartwright, 26 October 1896, NA, A/VII/CE 110/21.

⁵² *The Vestal Virgin Tuccia with a Sieve*, c. 1495–1506, tempera on poplar, 72.5 × 23 cm (NG1125.1) and *A Woman Drinking*, c. 1495–1506, 71.2 × 19.8 cm (NG1125.2); *Samson and Delilah*, c. 1500, glue size on linen, 47 × 36.8 cm (NG1145).

⁵³ Waagen, 1, 304–05; Hamilton Palace Sale, 24 June 1882, lot 398, *The Hamilton Palace Collection: Illustrated Priced Catalogue* (London: Remington, 1882), p. 56; Sunderland Sale, 15 June 1882, lot 82, quoted in Lightbown, *Mantegna*, cat. no. 40, p. 449.

⁵⁴ Henry Wallis, 'The National Gallery — Recent Acquisitions', *Art Journal*, November 1883, pp. 370–72 (p. 372).

very considerable interest in the art of Mantegna' was noted and Wallis concluded that 'if the Gallery had missed the Mantegna the authorities would have been blamed now, and more severely in the future' (p. 372). Wallis himself was part of this 'influential class' as the artist responsible for producing a set of nine photographs after the *Triumphs* in 1875.⁵⁵ In 1883 the gallery received by donation a plaster cast taken from the bust of Mantegna in his chapel in Sant'Andrea, Mantua.⁵⁶ Though not an original painting, this gift and the trustees' willingness to accept it demonstrates the rise of Mantegna's artistic profile in the public eye, for which Cartwright arguably wielded influence (*Fig. 3*).⁵⁷

Together with works in public collections and *in situ*, Cartwright frequently drew attention in her publications to prominent old master



Fig. 3: Anon., *Bust Portrait of Andrea Mantegna*, c. 1880, plaster of Paris with a 'bronzed' finish on plaster, 75 cm, National Gallery, London (NG2250). © The National Gallery, London.

⁵⁵ 'Mantegna's Triumph of Julius Caesar', *Saturday Review*, 11 December 1875, pp. 741–42.

⁵⁶ Donated by Henry Vaughan, NG2250.

⁵⁷ Meeting of the Trustees, Tuesday, 13 February 1883, Board Minutes 1871–1886, NGA, NG1/5, p. 231. The V&A acquired a similar plaster cast of the bust in 1893. See <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O347773/roundel/>> [accessed 7 April 2019].

artworks housed in British private collections. In 1882 Mantegna's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (after 1450), then in the Boughton-Knight collection at Downton Castle, Herefordshire, was publicly displayed for the first time at the Burlington House Winter Exhibition of Old Masters (Fig. 4).⁵⁸ The work's provenance, traceable directly to the Gonzaga, and excellent state of preservation drew much attention and Cartwright did not hesitate to be the first to feature it, included in a thematic article on 'The Nativity in Art' published the following year in the *Magazine of Art*.⁵⁹ She also took the opportunity of requesting that the work be engraved for the first time, acknowledging the permission obtained from Charles Boughton-Knight to do so for her article. Alongside the full-page reproduction, Cartwright described the work 'as fresh and brilliant as a Limoges enamel' and 'a tiny



Fig. 4: Andrea Mantegna, *Adoration of the Shepherds*, shortly after 1450, tempera on canvas, transferred from wood, 40 × 55.6 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (32.130.2).

⁵⁸ See *The Adoration of the Shepherds* <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436966>> [accessed 7 April 2019]. Several other prominent works by Mantegna from British private collections received greater exposure at the end of the nineteenth century as exhibition loans. The *Adoration of the Magi* from Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* in the Earl of Pembroke collection, and a *Madonna and Child with Seraphim and Cherubim* from the collection of Charles Butler were all displayed in the seminal 'Exhibition of Venetian Art' at the New Gallery in 1894.

⁵⁹ Julia Cartwright, 'The Nativity in Art', *Magazine of Art*, 6 (1883), 74–82.

masterpiece of colour and invention and drawing — a little window opened for us on a remote and beautiful world' (p. 78). Continental critics acknowledged Cartwright's authoritative knowledge of Mantegna and efforts to publicize his lesser-known works. Cartwright's monograph was followed by several French and German publications, among them Paul Kristeller's and Charles Yriarte's.⁶⁰ Yriarte visited England as part of his research and among his list of acknowledgements he names Cartwright and Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes (1858–1950), a close friend of Cartwright who was to write the important scholarly monograph on Vincenzo Foppa.⁶¹ Charles Philipps informed Cartwright that Yriarte 'talked a lot of my Mantegna and the Boughton Knight picture which he admires greatly'.⁶² Yriarte described the picture as one of the least known but most beautiful works by Mantegna, directing his readers towards Cartwright's *Magazine of Art* article and praising her first-hand knowledge of the painting and competency on the subject.⁶³ In contrast, Kristeller listed it as 'attributed' and doubted it was an autograph work, but acknowledged only seeing it in reproduction via Cartwright's article (p. 453). This article must have helped raise interest in the work and its value, as Boughton-Knight later offered it for sale to the National Gallery, writing to then director Charles Holroyd (1861–1917), 'I shall be only too anxious to do anything that I personally can do to keep these fine works in England. I cannot bear the thought of the Foreigners getting hold of them!'.⁶⁴ However, the trustees resolved that there was no prospect of raising the £70,000 requested and the offer was refused.⁶⁵

By the late century the term 'Mantegnesque' had come into common usage among English-language art critics, as an umbrella term to describe the appearance of a range of northern Italian quattrocento paintings. This

⁶⁰ Henry Thode, *Mantegna*, Künstler-Monographien, 27 (Bielefeld: Velhagen & Klasing, 1897); Paul Kristeller, *Andrea Mantegna*, trans. by S. Arthur Strong (London: Longmans, Green, 1901); Charles Yriarte, *Mantegna: sa vie, sa maison, son tombeau, ses oeuvres dans les musées et les collections* (Paris: Rothschild, 1901). Two more followed in the early twentieth century: *Andrea Mantegna: Des Meisters Gemälde und Kupferstiche*, ed. by Fritz Knapp (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1910); and André Blum, *Mantegna: biographie critique* (Paris: Renouard, 1912).

⁶¹ On Ffoulkes, see Francesco Ventrella, 'Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes and the Modernization of Scientific Connoisseurship', *Visual Resources*, 33 (2017), 117–39; and Ventrella, 'Feminine Inscriptions in the Morellian Method: Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes and the Translation of Connoisseurship', in *Migrating Histories of Art: Self-Translations of a Discipline*, ed. by Maria Teresa Costa and Hans Christian Hönes, Studien aus dem Warburg-Haus, 19 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), pp. 37–58.

⁶² Diary, 10 March 1897, NA, CE 381/NA.

⁶³ 'Mme Julia Cartwright, très compétente sur le sujet, qui a vu le tableaux en 1882, lui a consacré un article' (p. 218).

⁶⁴ Letter from C. A. Boughton-Knight, 16 July 1913, NGA, NG7/429/1.

⁶⁵ Boughton-Knight offered the Mantegna together with Rembrandt's *The Cradle*. See letters NGA, NG7/429/2–5; and Meeting of the Trustees, Tuesday 5 August 1913 and Tuesday 11 November 1913, Board Minutes 1910–1918, NGA, NG1/8, pp. 150, 155.

was a dramatic turnaround in the estimation of an artist's style that, only a few decades earlier, was deemed antithetical to Victorian conceptions of beauty. From a 'curious old frieze', the *Triumphs* were lauded as 'the most magnificent single work by an Italian master in any gallery', as proclaimed Mary Berenson (1864–1945) in her pamphlet on Hampton Court.⁶⁶ She acknowledged the pervasiveness of the artist's influence throughout northern Italy in the second half of the fifteenth century, 'hence the whole age has been called "Mantegnesque"'.⁶⁷ Indeed, the prevailing use of the term 'Mantegnesque' caused the Italian connoisseur Giovanni Morelli (1816–1891) to rail against it in exasperation, castigating any critic using it as rendering 'a superficial and shallow interpretation of art history'.⁶⁸ Yet the recognition of Mantegna's overwhelming and varied influence continued to grow. It was in this late nineteenth-century 'Mantegnesque' atmosphere that the National Gallery purchased several works by the artist.⁶⁹ Edward Cook's *Popular Handbook to the National Gallery* (1888) provides a snapshot as to the arrangement of the paintings with all the works attributed to Mantegna then in the gallery's collection displayed together in a room dedicated to the 'Paduan School'.⁷⁰

In English art criticism, Cartwright's monograph paved the way for two further studies by women: Maud Cruttwell's *Andrea Mantegna*, published for Bell's Great Masters series in 1901 and Nancy Bell's in 1911 for Jack's Masterpieces in Colour series.⁷¹ Cartwright concluded her 1881 monograph with the suggestion that it was 'the very greatness of Mantegna's genius, its immense strength and power', which 'may in itself be the cause that he is not strictly speaking a popular artist' (p. 62). Disseminating her original and informed research in a popular format, Cartwright's work was invaluable for bringing the artist to wider public attention. Though aware that Mantegna was something of an acquired taste for her readership, Cartwright found a means to validate her expertise, while bringing something new to the table.

⁶⁶ See the article by Ilaria Della Monica in this issue of 19 on Mary Berenson and this pamphlet.

⁶⁷ Mary Logan, *The Guide to the Italian Pictures at Hampton Court*, Kyrle Pamphlets, 2 (London: Innes, 1894), p. 46.

⁶⁸ Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Masters in German Galleries*, trans. by Mrs Louise M. Richter (London: Bell, 1884), p. 103.

⁶⁹ *The Holy Family with Saint John* (NG5641) would arrive as part of the Mond Bequest in 1924.

⁷⁰ *A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery*, comp. by Edward T. Cook (London: Macmillan, 1888), pp. 179–87. Works by Carlo Crivelli, Marco Marziale, Niccolò Giolfino, Gregorio Schiavone, and Bartolommeo Vivarini also featured in this room.

⁷¹ My forthcoming PhD will discuss these women's work on Mantegna and other 'difficult artists'. On Cruttwell, see the articles by Francesco Ventrella and Tiffany Johnston in this issue of 19.