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Mapping the “White, Marmorean Flock”: Anne Whitney Abroad, 1867–1868: Introduction, Maps and Timelines

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Abstract:

This article and the associated maps and timeline use Anne Whitney’s letters as the framework for an examination of the art and life of an American artist abroad. It illustrates Whitney’s first sixteen months of travel through these and other contemporary sources to visualize her movement and activities through space and time. This project seeks to revise the impression of Henry James’s ‘white, marmorean flock’ as a collective and look at Whitney as an individual with unique reactions to Italy, informed not only by the celebrated works of art and architecture around her but also by the experience of life abroad in all of its complexity.

Digital Humanities and Art History

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Mapping the “White, Marmorean Flock”: Anne Whitney Abroad, 1867–1868: Introduction, Maps and Timelines by Jacqueline Marie Musacchio

with Jenifer Bartle and David McClure, assisted by Kalyani Bhatt

Introduction

The poet and sculptor Anne Whitney (1821–1915) was an important member of Boston’s intersecting literary, artistic, and political circles throughout her long life. She and her companion, the painter Addy Manning, lived abroad from 1867 to 1871 and from 1875 to 1876, primarily in Rome but also in Florence and Paris, with several months each summer spent elsewhere in Europe. Whitney wrote biweekly letters to her family, and they responded in kind; almost 400 letters survive from her time abroad, providing vivid evidence about her movement through time and space and her experience of foreign cultures.

Whitney is usually associated with the group of female artists in Rome that Henry James so evocatively—and dismissively—described as a “white, marmorean flock.” Her letters document her relationships with her sister artists over the years and across the European continent. In fact, Whitney’s letters make her the best documented of these artists, though she is perhaps the least known today. Although contemporaries seemed to understand the women best as indistinguishable members of an artificially constructed group, a careful reading of Whitney’s letters demonstrates how different these women were, not only in the art they produced but also in their backgrounds, ages, and preferred style, materials, and iconography. The letters also show that the desire to travel abroad was not dictated solely by the need to study the celebrated art and architecture of the past. Rather, it was the entire cultural experience, and how that experience transformed an artist’s life in diverse and unexpected ways, that had the greatest and most lingering impact.

The number, length, and complexity of Whitney’s letters and the diverse stories they tell lend themselves to the tools of digital humanities; the depth and breadth of the information they contain could not be utilized to its full potential within the confines of a more traditional article. Instead, this publication features interactive maps and timelines created with a customized version of the Omeka plug-in Neatline to illustrate the first sixteen months of Whitney’s life abroad, with extensive quotations from her letters to provide a sense of her voice and thoughts on a wide variety of topics. My examination begins with her departure from the United States in March 1867 and continues through her arrival in Rome, her summer across the Alps, and her fall, winter, and spring in Rome, ending in July 1868, as she prepared to leave the city for another summer of travel. By visualizing this data in combination with additional information from other archives, primary source materials, and contemporary

photographs, and setting it against historical maps, Whitney’s experiences become a richly detailed case study of an American female artist abroad during this important era.

Maps and Timelines

NOTE: To best view the exhibits associated with this article, we recommend using Google Chrome. Zoom and focus for individual entries were set on a Lenovo Thinkpad with a 14-inch screen; although Neatline adjusts as best as it can according to the size of your screen, certain features may not respond as intended. Larger screens, for example, may not stretch the map to cover the entire view while smaller screens and tablet devices may stack maps, timeline, and popup windows, making it difficult to see all the features in context. Your respective internet speed may also result in slow loading, particularly for points on the Massachusetts and Switzerland maps.

The article, maps, and timeline components of this project illustrate the first sixteen months of Anne Whitney’s life abroad in a macro and micro fashion. In the language of the Neatline plugin used to generate the interactive features, the maps and timeline constitute two “exhibits”; where relevant, these exhibits are linked to the article in both the main text and endnotes. Although the article tells a complete narrative on its own, readers seeking more information, or the manuscript sources for my analysis, can link to precise points in the exhibits. While I hope readers will use text and tools together for the most complete experience, they can be accessed independently. In fact, doing so will yield even more information, since there are many records in the exhibit that are not linked to in the article, but which provide a broader and richer context for Whitney’s experience and indeed that of other female artists abroad of this era.

[Anne Whitney Abroad, 1867–1868: The Continental Perspective](#)

This exhibit provides a broad look at Whitney’s travels across the European continent. A brief narrative description of her activities during this period, found in the column on the right, links the names of the cities and towns Whitney visited to the appropriate places on the map and timeline as well as to contemporary or near-contemporary images. The user can move through the exhibit by clicking on the highlighted text on the right, the points on the map, or the timeline entries. These first sixteen months include two distinct journeys: Whitney’s trip from New York to Rome (March–April 1867) and her movement around Europe that summer and fall (June–October 1867); she remained in Rome from April to June 1867, and again from October 1867 to July 1868. The first two links in the article, indicated by a globe icon, correspond to these two journeys, which Jenifer visualized by creating lines and arrows on the map between each city or town.

[Anne Whitney Abroad, 1867–1868: The First Sixteen Months](#)

The second exhibit provides a more detailed view of Whitney’s life abroad. It has additional layers that allow users to zoom into and explore historical maps not only of Europe but also of

Massachusetts, Switzerland, Paris, Rouen, Florence, Bologna, and Rome. This exhibit has a five-track timeline with links to individual records that contain excerpted texts from Whitney's letters, as well as related photographs—some of which were collected by Whitney herself—to tell a more complete story.

Exploring the Maps and Timelines

The background map of both exhibits is a georeferenced, high-resolution image of *Colton's General Atlas* (1865). Users can navigate the map with the zoom tool in the top-left corner of the exhibit, or by using zoom functions on their mouse, touchpad, or touch screen. The Home button at the top left will return the user to the main page of each exhibit. In the *First Sixteen Months* exhibit, the additional city, state, and country maps have been georeferenced to appear on top of the main Colton map, and these can be navigated in the same way. Colored dots on the exhibit maps correspond to timeline records; when one is clicked, a window pops up with contemporary photographs (where available), letter excerpts, or, in a few cases, newspaper articles and other primary sources. The related record title on the timeline is also highlighted.

Users can navigate the exhibits either via the timeline entries or by simply moving around the map itself, clicking on dots or arrows for additional information, or using the zoom feature to move in or out. The latter type of navigation allows you, for example, to read all the records about St. Peter's at once, even though they take place over many months. However, please note that the maps will refocus and/or zoom in on the relevant location when a timeline record is clicked, but not when a dot or arrow is clicked on the map. To get the most information from the map, you must access each individual record through the timeline or through the direct links in the article. Clicking and dragging the map will cause the timeline to shrink to the lower left corner of the screen, maximizing the map view. Simply clicking on the timeline again will restore it to its original size and position.

The timelines in both exhibits can be explored using a mouse wheel, a track pad, or a touch screen. When they are first loaded, the entire sixteen month span is visible, with records crowded together. Readers can expand and contract the timeline to a minimum of seven days by scrolling (up and down on a mouse wheel) or "pinching" (on a track pad, a touch mouse, or a touch screen). The timeline on *The Continental Perspective* exhibit has a single track; that on *The First Sixteen Months* exhibit is divided into five tracks: travel, daily events, sites, art, and events. These categories are conceived broadly to correspond to the different aspects of Whitney's experience, providing an enhanced visualization of events in her life and in the larger world of Rome and beyond. In *The First Sixteen Months* exhibit, category tracks will expand and contract in height so that all records are visible.

How to Cite the Exhibits

"Anne Whitney Abroad, 1867–1868: The Continental Perspective," in Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, "Mapping the 'White, Marmorean Flock': Anne Whitney Abroad, 1867–1868," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2014): omeka.wellesley.edu/annewhitney/neatline/show/overview

"Anne Whitney Abroad, 1867–1868: The First Sixteen Months," in Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, "Mapping the 'White, Marmorean Flock': Anne Whitney Abroad, 1867–1868," *Nineteenth-*

Century Art Worldwide 13, no. 2 (Fall 2014): omeka.wellesley.edu/annewhitney/neatline/show/detail

To cite a particular record:

“Seeing antiquities on the Feast of All Souls,” in Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, “Mapping the ‘White, Marmorean Flock’: Anne Whitney Abroad, 1867–1868,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2014): omeka.wellesley.edu/annewhitney/neatline/show/detail#records/112

Maps

The exhibit maps were digitized from the following sources:

Colton, G. Woolworth. *Colton’s Massachusetts and Rhode Island*. New York: Colton, 1865. (Digitized by [David Rumsey Map Collection](#))

Colton, G. Woolworth and Richard Swainson Fisher. *Colton’s General Atlas, Containing One Hundred and Eighty Steel Plate Maps and Plans*. New York: Colton, 1865.

Dumas-Vorzet, Edouard. *Paris*. Paris: Librairie du Petit Journal, 1867. (Digitized by [Harvard Geospatial Library](#))

Italy: Handbook for Travellers; Central Italy and Rome. Coblenz: Karl Baedeker, 1869.

Italy: Handbook for Travelers. Coblenz: Karl Baedeker, 1867.

Paris and Northern France: Handbook for Travelers. Coblenz: Karl Baedeker, 1867.

Switzerland and the Adjacent Portions of Italy, Savoy, and the Tyrol: Handbook for Travelers. Coblenz: Karl Baedeker, 1867.

Jacqueline Marie Musacchio is Professor of Italian Renaissance and Baroque Art at Wellesley College. Many of her publications have focused on the material culture of private life, including *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (Yale University Press, 1999), *Art, Marriage, and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace* (Yale University Press, 2009), and an essay and entries for the exhibition catalogue *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy* (Yale University Press, 2008). Her earlier article for *NCAW*, “Infesting the Galleries of Europe: The Copyist Emma Conant Church in Paris and Rome” (Autumn 2011), won the 2012 Online Publishing Prize from the Association of Research Institutes in Art History. This research is part of her current book project, *At Home Abroad: Anne Whitney and American Women Artists in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy*.

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