

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide

a journal of nineteenth-century visual culture

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Cultivating the First Generation of Scholars at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide 14, no. 2 (Summer 2015)

Citation: Anthony Burton, "Cultivating the First Generation of Scholars at the Victoria and Albert Museum," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 14, no. 2 (Summer 2015), <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/summer15/burton-on-first-generation-of-scholars-at-victoria-and-albert-museum>.

Published by: [Association of Historians of Nineteenth-Century Art](#)

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Abstract:

In the nineteenth century, one of the few institutional settings in which art history could be pursued was in museums. This essay examines the development of art-historical scholarship at the South Kensington Museum (renamed in 1899 the Victoria and Albert Museum [V&A]) in the decades around 1900. It explores the establishment of an empirical, object-based approach, which became a V&A tradition, by curators A. B. Skinner, C. W. Wylde, H. P. Mitchell, A. F. Kendrick, and two more senior curators who adjusted to the new ethos, A. F. Strange and W. W. Watts.

Cultivating the First Generation of Scholars at the Victoria and Albert Museum

by Anthony Burton

Museums are one of the domains in which writing on art and art history is nurtured. Not all museum curators regard critical writing as part of their professional duties, but many do. Such written work can be an expression of an individual curator's predilections, but museums can also foster it as a corporate endeavor. This essay describes the formation of a generation of scholar-curators at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the decades around 1900.

Scholarship in the Museum's Early Days

The V&A grew up during the second half of the nineteenth century on its present site as the South Kensington Museum, which then had a wider scope than the V&A does now. Its present name was bestowed in 1899, and in 1909 became specifically attached to the art collections, which were then re-arranged in the newly completed buildings overlooking Cromwell Road and Exhibition Road. In 1857, when the museum opened in South Kensington, it was a new and experimental institution. It did not conform to the model of the British Museum, which might be seen as an assemblage of collections that had been formed with scholarly motives, and were largely cared for by university-trained antiquarians. Nor did it, like the National Gallery, reflect the interests of connoisseurs and academic artists. Rather, it was part of an educational establishment, the Department of Science and Art, that had been created for utilitarian purposes, namely, to improve British manufacture of consumer goods through vocational education.[\[1\]](#)

Scholarship was not in the foreground in the museum's early days. The founding director, Henry Cole (1808–1882), was not a university man. He left school in his teens and rose, by talent, through the Civil Service. The first curator whom he hired, J. C. Robinson—who left an indelible imprint on the museum, owing to the extent and quality of his acquisitions—was not a university man either. He started as a teacher in the Department's art schools, and became one of Britain's earliest and most distinguished art historians by the force of his abilities. Like him, some of Cole's museum staff had an art-school background, while others, like Cole, had been involved in running international exhibitions. Cole gave priority to the educational mission of his Department, with its nationwide chain of art schools, but he cherished its museum, and knew that the museum must be equipped with scholarly expertise.[\[2\]](#)

At first, Robinson provided most of this. But antagonism arose between him and Cole. In 1863 he was sidelined as a consultant, and in 1867 his official connection with the museum was severed. Cole decided that the museum's permanent staff should be practical administrators, and that when he needed expertise he would hire scholars from outside on a temporary basis. Robinson's full-time curatorial duties were handed on to an old art-school man, George Wallis. To some extent, the intellectual side of Robinson's work was taken over by a new recruit, John Hungerford Pollen. He was a university man, who had been a fellow of Merton College, Oxford. His principal task at South Kensington was to edit a series of catalogues of the museum's art collections. Robinson had written the first, on Italian Renaissance sculpture (1862); Pollen himself contributed volumes on furniture (1874) and gold- and silversmiths' work

(1878); all the others, on textiles, majolica, ivories, etc., were commissioned from outside scholars, for there was no-one else on the staff to do them.^[3]

Under Cole's successor as director, Philip Cunliffe-Owen, the staff of the museum continued to be valued more for administrative than scholarly ability. Scholarly publishing declined, in favor of a series of popular handbooks, which Cunliffe-Owen inaugurated.^[4] The lack of scholarly output at the museum did not go unnoticed. In 1873 a proposal was made (but not implemented) that, after Cole's retirement, the South Kensington Museum be placed under the control of the British Museum. A civil servant involved in investigating the proposal dismissed the British Museum as obscurantist, but considered that "one defect at South Kensington has been want of high culture, and even of power to appreciate it. The staff is deplorably *indoctum*, except so far as regards its self-education in the Museum."^[5]

Such a view seems to have gained strength in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. The staff were generally thought to be ignorant (although obliging). J. C. Robinson, sniping from the heights of his new position as Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures, never tired of inveighing against the "entirely unqualified persons" who now dealt with "the infinitely difficult, delicate and responsible work of discovery, selection and acquisition of works of art" at the museum.^[6]

When Cunliffe-Owen retired in 1893, there was an attempt to re-balance the structure. The museum's scientific and artistic collections were separated and placed under different directors. As art director, a new man was brought in: John Henry Middleton, a former Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge and director of the Fitzwilliam Museum.^[7] The journal *Architect* welcomed this "outside aid" because "the system of raising a high class of officials . . . at South Kensington has been a failure that is notorious." It mischievously claimed that the policemen then employed as security guards in the galleries knew more about the collections than the curators, and suggested to Middleton: "One thing he might try to do . . . would be to make some of his assistants obtain as much knowledge about the things exhibited as is now possessed by the constables on duty."^[8]

But in the demoralized institution, Middleton survived for less than four years, dying of a possible overdose of laudanum.^[9] His civil service chiefs in the Department of Science and Art included (by a quirk of administrative history) a number of soldiers from the Royal Engineers regiment. Critics resented the fact that an art museum was run by this "rapping military element . . . established as a sort of permanent drum-head court-martial." By now, there were some newly recruited, younger staff who were surreptitiously developing curatorial expertise, but they were regarded by the soldiers as "malcontents . . . hypersensitive folk, full of crotchets and fads, men who little realize the value of order and resent anything like discipline."^[10] The dysfunctional state of the organization was recognized at government level, and led to a lengthy inquiry by a Select Committee of Parliament in 1896–98. As a result, the Department of Science and Art was wound up and incorporated into a new Board of Education.^[11]

In the midst of the inquiry, an internal decision was made to invest in curatorial expertise in the museum. In 1896, Middleton's successor, Caspar Purdon Clarke (1846–1911)—not an academic, for he had trained as an architect within the Department of Science and Art—introduced a staff re-organization. He set up five departments—sculpture, woodwork,

metalwork, pottery, and textiles—to be staffed by men who would specialize in these distinct areas of the collections, and would be trained to become experts.^[12] “I expect,” he said, “that in two or three years each of these men will know more about his subject than anyone we can find outside; he ought to with such opportunities.”^[13]

The First Group of Expert Curators

Clarke’s new curatorial departments—which, with some augmentation and adaptation, still survive at the V&A today—were headed by five members of staff whom he selected from the ranks of his generalist staff. A. B. Skinner was placed in charge of sculpture. T. A. Lehfeldt took furniture, C. H. Wylde ceramics, H. P. Mitchell metalwork, and A. F. Kendrick textiles.^[14]

Arthur Banks Skinner (1861–1911), a graduate of London University, joined the museum in 1879 as a Junior Assistant.^[15] At this time, an older generation of curators was on its way out, and Skinner was well placed to rise almost effortlessly through seniority. When the Keeper of the Art Collections, George Wallis, retired in 1891, Skinner succeeded him, rising to Assistant Director when Clarke succeeded Middleton as Director in 1896. Skinner seems to have enjoyed respect among colleagues in the museum and in other museums abroad: to him were attributed “singularly complete knowledge of the collections” and “conspicuous skill and courtesy in making his knowledge available.”^[16] He made one further step up, becoming Director when Clarke suddenly left in 1905 (lured away by J. Pierpont Morgan to be Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), but by this stage he seems to have risen above his competence, and was soon to suffer a humiliating demotion.^[17]

Skinner wrote little; his principal published work consisted of contributions to the first volume of a collaborative two-volume *Catalogue of the Art Collection, 8 Cadogan Square, S.W.* (1904–8, privately printed for the collector Sir Francis Wyndham Cook). The collection comprised antiquities and decorative art, and Skinner wrote on the “carvings in ivory and bone, rock crystal, amber, etc., woodwork and furniture, plaquettes, medals, etc., bronzes, paintings and drawings, miniatures”; three other V&A curators also contributed.^[18] Cook, a textile merchant, had been advised in his collecting by J. C. Robinson; objects from his collection have come to rest in many major museums worldwide, including the V&A.^[19]

The catalogue exemplifies the close relations that were sustained at this time between art museums and private collectors. Curators and collectors obviously had a commonality of interest, which to some extent included self-interest. Sidney Colvin considered that a museum curator should regard it as “a chief part” of his task

to win the regard and confidence of private collectors, to help and stimulate them in their pursuits, putting his knowledge at their disposal but making them feel the while that their prime, their binding, duty is to acknowledge such help by destining their collections in the long run to enrich the institution which he serves.^[20]

Skinner seems to have embraced this duty: most notably, he cultivated (and advised) the collector George Salting, much of whose outstanding collection was bequeathed to the V&A on his death in 1909.^[21]

Collectors seem to find satisfaction not only in assembling a collection, but also in publishing a catalogue of it. While some collectors produced their own catalogues, many hired curators to write catalogues for them. The practice was promoted among American millionaire collectors in the early twentieth century by the dealer Joseph Duveen. In order to encourage his clients to buy, Duveen would employ scholars to produce swagger brochures about individual works, and, when clients had acquired enough, “they’d get a book all done up,” in the words of Mrs. Randolph Hearst.^[22] The catalogues resulting from this process were usually luxuriously produced. So, when Skinner, with his three colleagues (G. H. Palmer, H. P. Mitchell, and Bernard Rackham) were engaged in cataloguing the Cook collection, they were trying their hands at a recognized form of curatorial writing.

Erudition is one of the qualities that a catalogue must display. Ideally, it should also have some sort of intellectual coherence. A curator writing a catalogue would hope to demonstrate a “system of . . . mutual definition and coimplication wherein each object resonates with all the others both morphologically and, to some extent, thematically.”^[23] Many curators who started out making lists as part of their housekeeping duties might hope to progress to the compilation of a catalogue that was a real intellectual construct, so it is worth recognizing that the generation of V&A scholar-writers with whom we are concerned duly grappled with this kind of writing.

Skinner also wrote occasional articles, as most curators did. Three examples appeared in the *Magazine of Art*, on objects in the museum: two oriental carpets, an engraving, and a stained glass window.^[24] Although Skinner again displays his versatility here, his articles are brief and dry, restricted in scope, and rather dull in comparison with other writings in this lively and wide-ranging periodical. Other V&A curators also occasionally contributed to this magazine.

The man placed in charge of “pottery, glass, enamels,” Charles Harry Wylde, proved himself an effective curator. Promoted to Assistant Keeper in 1893, he produced a series of short periodical articles on aspects of the collections under his care. This, no less than catalogue writing, was a recognized form of curatorial literature. Wylde took advantage of the foundation of the *Burlington Magazine* in 1902. Through the Victorian period, art journalism had been conducted, at a middle-brow level, chiefly through the *Art Journal* (1849–1912) and later the *Magazine of Art* (1878–1904). England was felt to lack a scholarly art history periodical, and the *Burlington* was established to occupy this “vacant space.”^[25] Accounts of the magazine’s early years have tended to dwell on personalities and finances rather than content, but Caroline Elam tries to explain how the magazine aimed to emulate foreign art-history periodicals,

combining features from all these models—the internationalism and positivistic document-based approach of the *Repertorium [für Kunstwissenschaft]*, the beautiful production values and (later) the receptiveness to contemporary art of the *Zeitschrift [für bildende Kunst]*, the quality of critical writing of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, the news from around the world of *L’Arte*, the new connoisseurship and focus on *novità* of the *Rassegna d’Arte*, as well as the antiquarianism and openness to the decorative arts of the *Connoisseur*.^[26]

Among these varied approaches to art-historical writing in periodicals, it is the last which accommodated most comfortably the type of articles Wylde wrote.

Some commentators have felt that such writing was unworthy of the high seriousness of the *Burlington*. Michael Levey, picking up a phrase from Roger Fry, disparaged “bric-à-brac articles,” which were “not perhaps totally extinguished until after the First World War.” These “effusions,” which Levey likened to “chats on old china,” seemed to him to have “a period charm, even if no more than the literary equivalent of the tissue-paper interleaving then placed between full-page illustrations and text.”^[27] There were, nonetheless, plenty of such articles in the early years, but, as Elam says, “considerable effort was devoted to distinguishing the *Burlington* from the *Connoisseur*: it was not to be ‘merely a collector’s magazine.’”^[28] Wylde also published in the *Connoisseur*, which ran from 1901 to 1992.

In publishing in the *Burlington*, Wylde was following in the footsteps of colleagues at the V&A. W. H. J. Weale, an international authority on Flemish painting, had joined the museum as Librarian at an advanced age in 1890. In defense of scholarly values, he was soon locked in bitter dispute with the soldiers who ran the Department of Science and Art. He was among the forty eminent scholars who constituted the Consultative Committee of the *Burlington*, and he published thirty-three contributions in its pages. His younger colleague, Albert van de Put (who joined the V&A Library in 1895), an expert on heraldry and Hispano-Moresque pottery, provided nineteen contributions. These two writers were acknowledged by Levey as “authorities,”^[29] but Wylde did not attract such an accolade.

Wylde wrote on “Mr. Charles Edward Jerningham’s collection of English glass in the Victoria and Albert Museum,”^[30] “Mr. George Salting’s Chinese porcelain figures in the Victoria and Albert Museum,”^[31] and “Mr. J. H. Fitzhenry’s collection of early French pate-tendre.”^[32] These articles must have borrowed some luster from the distinguished collectors mentioned. But Wylde wrote also in the *Burlington* on “Old English drug and unguent pots found in excavations in London,”^[33] and in the *Connoisseur* on “German glass drinking vessels painted in enamel colours.”^[34] In a short-lived periodical, the *Magazine of Fine Arts* (1905–6), he produced quite substantial surveys of “French and German champlevé enamels in the Victoria and Albert Museum,”^[35] and “Early European porcelain” (this one illustrated with photographs of elegantly arranged groups of objects).^[36] These articles had a common pattern. Wylde would select twenty or more objects (which would be reproduced as illustrations) on which he provided brief comments. His anthologies would usually be preceded by a short introduction, placing the objects in context, sometimes boosting his subject with the often used trope that it was “obscure” or “undocumented.” These performances are judicious and well written in a relaxed and easy style, sometimes enlivened with references to real-life experience - such as that English drinking glasses were smaller than German because the English preferred sipping spiced strong ale to quaffing thirst-quenching beer. This may not be the highest form of curatorial literature, but Wylde did it as well as anyone.

Wylde wrote only one book, and that too was in a characteristic curatorial genre: *How to Collect Continental China*, published by George Bell & Co. in 1907. Collections which found their way into the V&A were of high quality, and usually assembled by very rich people. But collecting

was achieving popularity among more modest enthusiasts. One author who catered to these wrote in 1910:

The number of collectors is increasing rapidly, whether for pleasure or for profit, or for both; collecting is no longer confined to the wealthy or moderately rich, or to the leisured classes. . . . It is people of moderate means who are snapping up the bargains in shillings today. I am not writing . . . for the bidder at Christie's, for the man who can pay £7,000 for a couple of yards square of antique tapestry, and so forth. I am writing for the man or woman in the villa, in the flat, in the area houses in a row—for people of cultivation but not of riches, who must look twice at every pound they spend on unnecessaries, yet who long to surround themselves with beautiful old objects and to bring up their children in an atmosphere of art.^[37]

For this sort of collector, publishers hastened to provide suitable literature. Wylde's volume was one of a small series published by Bell, each with a title beginning *How to* The books provided historical accounts of certain types of collectable material, but they presented history from different angles. Frederick Litchfield's *How to Collect Old Furniture* (1904) is a friendly, conversational discourse aimed at practical collectors, offering (in his words) "notes and suggestions," "hints and cautions"; and dispensing advice and anecdotes about dealers and sale-rooms. Margaret Thomas, in *How to Understand Sculpture* (1911), writes from an artist's point of view, highlighting the aesthetic qualities of sculpture, and its techniques. G. C. Williamson's *How to Identify Portrait Miniatures* (1904) prefaces a historical account with a connoisseur's disquisition on how to look at and care for miniatures, and follows it with practical instructions on how to paint miniatures. He provides an unusually extensive bibliography. Mrs. Willoughby Hodgson, in *How to Identify Old China* (1903), gives a businesslike account of her subject, with footnotes, bibliography, reproductions of marks, and sale prices. Wylde's book is somewhat more austere, offering compressed, solid information, almost in dictionary form, covering porcelain producers country by country, factory by factory. He reproduces marks, but does not give prices or handy hints for collectors. He supplies no bibliography and few footnotes; despite frequent mentions of "documentary evidence," he fails, on the whole, to give references to his sources. It could perhaps be said that his text is a compilation of the sort of labels that curators are (or were then) accustomed to write.

Wylde's interests extended beyond Europe. He was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society from 1894, and was sent on a study and buying trip to the Far East (via the newly opened Trans-Siberian Railway) in 1911–12.^[38] During this trip he made significant acquisitions for the then insubstantial Korean collection at the V&A.^[39]

The curator put in charge of metalwork by Purdon Clarke was Hugh Parker Mitchell, who joined the V&A in 1895, as an assistant in the Art Library.^[40] It was a cause of profound irritation to W. H. J. Weale, the chief librarian, that the Department's policy of recruiting "all-round men" rather than "specialists" meant that his library staff had no bibliographical training, and indeed that the staff sent to him really wanted to get away into the museum's other collections.^[41] This happened with Mitchell, who moved on in less than two years and focused on metalwork. But his period under Weale inspired him to become a medievalist. He "had an unbounded veneration" for Weale's "untiring industry and accuracy in research," and "always spoke with particular affection" of his first mentor.

These words come from a short obituary of Mitchell in the *Burlington Magazine*.^[42] By the time of his premature death, Mitchell was so distinguished that he was on the *Burlington's* Consultative Committee, and the obituary was contributed by no less than the V&A Director, Sir Eric Maclagan. If one reads between the lines, it is clear that Mitchell was a fairly dry and cool curator. As Maclagan wrote, "It was, indeed, no secret that he longed to be rid of the rather irksome burden of official work in order to devote himself more uninterruptedly to the research on which his heart was set." It seems that "he had something of the recluse in his temperament, which made him shrink from certain forms of social intercourse," though he might be livelier with works of art: "It used to be a lesson in appreciation to watch him handling [an object] . . . and literally exulting in its lines and ornament." Mitchell was one of those curators whose "extreme conscientiousness . . . often prevented him from putting on paper conclusions with the validity of which many other archaeologists would have been satisfied, and a vast store of detailed information has been lost with him."^[43]

Mitchell's publications chiefly appeared in the *Burlington*. He entered its pages ahead of Wylde, contributing a piece on "A mediaeval silver chalice from Iceland" to the June 1903 issue, in a section devoted to "New acquisitions at the national museums."^[44] Although he did sometimes try to take a wide view of a subject (his specialty was medieval enamels), Mitchell seems always to have preferred short notes on single objects. This is a very popular mode of curatorial communication; it is, after all, only a somewhat elaborated version of a museum label. Whereas Wylde would approach a topic through generalization, Mitchell preferred to launch abruptly into scholarly detail. He made twenty-one contributions to the *Burlington* between 1903 and 1925. Otherwise, his publications were confined to contributions to catalogues: to the catalogue of the Cook Collection (already mentioned), and two V&A catalogues: *English Silversmiths' Work* (1920), and *The Jones Collection, Part II* (1924).^[45]

To counterbalance the picture just painted of a somewhat remote curator, it is worth adding that Mitchell was interested in how the museum presented itself to its public. In his early days, in 1905, he wrote a guide book to the V&A for an outside publisher, which provided plans of the galleries with a red line designed to guide visitors through the confusing collections in a way which would make some sort of coherent sense of them. He got into trouble with the museum authorities for this unsanctioned, if helpful, gesture,^[46] but later, in 1924, reiterated his concern, arguing that some reorganization was needed in order "to give the general visitor . . . at a glance an idea of the sort of thing the Museum contains."^[47]

The fifth of Purdon Clarke's team of prospective experts was Albert Frank Kendrick (1872–1954), who was put in charge of textiles. He seems to have been the originator of the new curatorial spirit. In the Parliament inquiry into the museum in 1896–98, it was put to Clarke that his new staff reorganization was "a tremendous internal reform." Not wanting to seem out of step with his superiors, Clarke cautiously replied that "it had been coming on slowly; one of our technical assistants had gradually got all the textile works into his hands and was doing the work very well, and I thought it better to extend it to other branches."^[48] Presumably it was Kendrick to whom he referred.

Kendrick did indeed achieve supremacy in his territory. An obituary comments that "in a very real sense . . . it could be said that, after the reorganization of the Museum in 1909 until his

voluntary retirement in 1924, Kendrick was the Department of Textiles and the Department of Textiles was Kendrick.” The writer of this obituary, John Beckwith, allows that Kendrick “established the systems of departmental routine which made it one of the most efficient in the world,” but for Beckwith it was Kendrick’s academic record that mattered.

Kendrick’s catalogues surpassed any work which had been done previously by Karabacek, Kiegl, Gayet, Guimet, Errera, and Dreger; they preceded by a few years, and were not outmatched by, the publications of the Berlin collections of late antique, Coptic, and Islamic textiles at the hands of Volbach and Kühnel . . . from the 1920s . . . Kendrick’s catalogues became the indispensable sources of reference for any student of the history of textiles.[\[49\]](#)

While this name-dropping has a flavor of “one-upmanship” about it, the tribute is of just the kind that any scholarly curator would wish to receive.

Kendrick made thirty-one contributions to the *Burlington Magazine* between 1904 and 1943; like Mitchell, he often contributed short notices on single objects. He also contributed a series of substantial articles to the *Magazine of Fine Arts* on Sicilian woven fabrics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and Italian silk fabrics of the fourteenth century.[\[50\]](#) His reputation chiefly rested, as indicated above, on his catalogues. In the V&A’s series of catalogues (to be described in a moment) he supplied volumes on tapestries (1914), carpets (1915), textiles from the burying grounds of Egypt (3 vols., 1920–22), Muhammadan textiles of the medieval period (1924), and early medieval woven fabrics (1925). He produced synoptic books on English embroidery (1905), English needlework (1933), and, with his colleague C. E. C. Tattersall, hand-woven carpets, oriental and European. Like Lehfeldt, Wylde and Mitchell, he did not have a university training, but learned on the job in the museum to be a scholar-writer. From this group, he did most to vindicate the early promise which Purdon Clarke had spotted. He was the first of the group to attain the rank of Keeper, in 1897, having joined as a Junior Assistant in 1889, and having been promoted to Assistant Museum Keeper in 1893.

The V&A’s Policy on Curatorial Expertise

The development of the group of curators considered above led to new policies being adopted by the V&A to nurture curatorial expertise. As we have seen, Henry Cole had wanted efficient administrators on his permanent staff, in preference to scholars. This policy was enunciated in a Treasury Report of 1865 on the staffing of the Department of Science and Art, which decreed that “services of a professional and technical character should be entrusted to persons selected and paid for the occasion”—that is, scholars would be employed only when needed.[\[51\]](#) After all the travails of the 1890s, the Department of Science and Art was wound up, and in the ensuing reorganization, a strikingly different policy was defined. An internal enquiry in 1903 into the staffing of the V&A reported that “it seems to us that it is not reasonable to expect officers, who are required to possess extensive expert knowledge, to be equally conversant with administrative methods.” Consequently, the museum staff would be encouraged to devote themselves to scholarship, and the administration would be entrusted to “a superior officer of the administrative side of the Board of Education.”[\[52\]](#) This can, of course, be interpreted as a stratagem to keep the museum administratively and financially under the thumb of the Board of Education, but it does represent a clear reversal of Henry Cole’s policy, and an endorsement of Purdon Clarke’s new arrangements.

In 1909, with the completion of the new museum building, it was necessary to lay out the V&A's collections afresh in the new galleries. Skinner, by then director, was tasked with the planning, but his efforts failed to satisfy Robert Morant, Permanent Secretary of the Board of Education, who was ultimately in charge. Morant, a very strong-minded man, set up a "Committee of Re-arrangement" to take this task out of Skinner's hands. The committee consisted largely of businessmen, but also included Cecil Smith (later Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith, 1859–1944), a curator of Greek and Roman antiquities at the British Museum. Smith soon took over as chairman of the committee, and when its report appeared, Morant installed him as director of the V&A, forcing Skinner to step down to become Keeper of the department of architecture and sculpture.^[53] Smith proved to be highly effective. Morant praised him as "a man of the highest intellectual qualifications, and a very capable and strong man for the purpose; and in his energetic hands the whole place has started into new life amazingly, and the improvements and developments are rapid and striking."^[54]

The Committee of Re-arrangement met on eighteen occasions between February and July 1908. It was primarily concerned with the accommodation of the V&A's collections in its galleries, now considerably augmented by the new building of 1909. It tackled the task conscientiously, but there is reason to think that, handicapped by a restrictive brief, it took a fundamentally mistaken decision in this matter.^[55] However, the committee's report was not restricted to space planning. It took two decisions that affected the V&A's scholarly development. One was to remove from the Library the graphic material that had been acquired to supplement the books, and to make this material into a new collection, with the workaday title of "Engraving, Illustration, and Design" (E.I.D)—a title chosen to avoid competition with the British Museum's more exalted Department of Prints and Drawings.^[56] The case for this change seems to have been chiefly made by E. F. Strange.

The second decision concerned office accommodation for staff. The new building did not contain any office space, since the brief given to Aston Webb, the architect, did not ask for offices. Now that the building was complete, space for offices had to be found in remote corners and obscure voids. This improvised solution was favored by Smith and the committee, because it allowed curators to be placed in close proximity to the collections they were responsible for. The Board of Education, however, wanted all the staff to be housed together, so that they could be more easily deployed to serve the immediate needs of management (and, presumably, so that discipline could be better maintained).^[57] Smith and the committee stood firm, and so, in the jungle of the collections, little camps of departmental offices were widely dispersed. This arrangement, ostensibly a matter of mere administrative convenience, turned out to have a deep and lasting effect on the intellectual life of the V&A, leading to the consolidation of object-based scholarly disciplines, and, perhaps, to a somewhat fractured approach to art history.^[58]

Smith was committed to Clarke's endeavors to foster expertise. When in 1912 the formation of an Advisory Council to support the museum was in view, and a press release from the Board of Education suggested that the members of the council might supply expertise, Smith quickly stamped on this.

I feel very strongly on this point. The Officers of the Museum should be, and in most cases already are, the best experts on their own subjects: where they are not so, that is a defect of staff, which it lies with the Board to remedy: but it is in my view essential that the Board should take this view, and uphold it against all criticism; otherwise there will certainly be a tendency to slide back into the old vicious state of things and an untenable position will again arise. The British Museum system of Trustees at Bloomsbury works admirably: there is not one among them who may be said to have expert knowledge, and they do not think of interfering in questions of expertise.^[59]

As this minute implies, Smith aimed to lift the V&A up to the standard of the British Museum, where he had previously worked, and it was recorded that “he raised the status of the technical staff and obtained for them the same pay and conditions as the officials of the British Museum already had.”^[60]

While the remit of the Advisory Council was restricted to principles and policy, Smith used its members in a maneuver to get his curators to reflect on what they were doing. In 1913, a series of committees brought council members and curators together to analyze the various collections, the result being a Report on the Principal Deficiencies in the Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum (1914). The report was important as it provided the first systematic acquisition policy ever undertaken by the museum. Smith backed it up by issuing a *Review of the Principal Acquisitions*, which was published each year from 1912 to 1939.

In the context of this essay, his most important move was to encourage the writing of scholarly catalogues. While catalogues of temporary exhibitions had always been produced by the museum, hardly any catalogues of the permanent collections were published since the series started by Cole and edited by Pollen. Smith reported to his superiors that “I have in view a complete scheme of catalogues, but their publication is largely a question of staff, and it may be many years before we can deal adequately with this requirement.”^[61] The first of the new series (quarto size and bound in blue cloth or paper) was Kendrick’s catalogue of tapestries (1914), already mentioned.

Smith’s effort to raise standards was achieved partly by recruiting more highly qualified staff. In his entry for Bernard Rackham in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, R. J. Charleston (one of his successors as Keeper of Ceramics) records that Rackham “entered a competition for an assistant keepership at the South Kensington Museum . . . under a scheme whereby the government aimed to attract Oxford and Cambridge graduates to the museum.”^[62] While the present writer has failed to track down further information about such a scheme, it obviously worked, because from 1898 onwards men with degrees, usually Oxbridge degrees, flocked to the museum.

The new tone was set by the arrival in 1898 of Bernard Rackham with a First in Classics from Pembroke College, Oxford, to be followed by Martin Hardie (Trinity College, Cambridge), A. J. Koop (Pembroke, Cambridge), H. Clifford Smith (University College, Oxford), and, after the First World War, James Laver (New College, Oxford), Kenneth Codrington (Corpus Christi, Cambridge), Leigh Ashton (Balliol, Oxford), Charles Oman (New College, Oxford). While Cecil Smith had not, after schooling at Winchester, proceeded to university, his successor, Eric

Maclagan was a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford.^[63] Of him it was said that he had “that peculiar polish, that perfect balance of mind, sense and memory, which is the mature fruit of a long summer of civilisation.” He was “exquisitely courteous,” if inclined to “polite apathy.”^[64] “Highly fastidious” was another phrase applied to him,^[65] while his colleague James Laver said that “he could . . . if he wished to, freeze people more effectively than anyone I have ever known.”^[66] When relaxed, however, he could be fascinatingly erudite, with his “soft, delicious voice.”^[67] Above all, he was a very distinguished art historian indeed, and in him the V&A at last acquired a supreme practitioner of the curatorial tone that had been lacking at the turn of the century.

Curators from the Old Régime

The “all-round men” from old times lived on in the V&A, readjusting to the new atmosphere, and it may be interesting to note a couple of them, contemporaries of Skinner. William Walter Watts joined the museum from school in 1879, and worked in the Circulation Department (devoted to sending travelling exhibitions to art schools and provincial museums), where he became Keeper. The Circulation Department was a service department rather than an intellectual powerhouse, and Watts established himself as an administrator. He moved over to be Keeper of Metalwork in 1910. “He had nothing to do with metalwork until he was put in charge of the new department” (with the younger Mitchell beneath him), but “was good at getting up subjects from books”^[68] and made the grade as a scholar, producing catalogues of chalices and other communion vessels (1922), pastoral staves (1924), and ironwork (1930).

Alongside him, Edward Fairbrother Strange showed both versatility and scholarly competence. Having entered the Civil Service in 1881, he transferred to the museum in 1889. Clearly he had literary aspirations, for he privately printed a slim volume of poetry, *Palissy in Prison and Other Poems*, in 1892. He was also interested in graphics. He worked in the museum library, which at that time collected not only books but prints, drawings and photographs, and, under Weale’s keepership, “Mr Strange was placed in charge of the cataloguing and indexing of the Prints and Drawings.”^[69] In the 1890s he published a bibliography on Japanese art, a textbook on lettering, an academic article on writing manuals of the sixteenth century, an exhibition catalogue on lithographs, and a first treatment of what was to become one of his specialties, *Japanese Illustration: A History of the Arts of Wood-cutting and Colour Printing in Japan*, in Bell’s “Connoisseur series,” 1897.

He had other connections with the publisher George Bell & Sons, and together with Gleeson White (art journalist, and founder of the *Studio* magazine in 1893) he was joint editor of “Bell’s Cathedral Series.” It is worth noting this series of guide books, because three V&A curators, including Strange, contributed to it. Architectural guides related only tangentially to the museum’s collections, but they were a developing mode of art-historical writing. The series on cathedrals published by Bell was aimed at readers

who must often have felt the need of some work dealing with the history and antiquities of the city itself, and the architecture and associations of the cathedral, more portable than the elaborate monographs which have been devoted to some of them, more scholarly and satisfying than the average local guide-book, and more copious than the section devoted to them in the general guide-book of the county or district.^[70]

These books were successful—cheap, pocket-sized, well illustrated, intelligent. With their attractive bindings (a black design on green cloth) they are still instantly noticeable in libraries and second-hand book shops. Strange wrote the volume on the cathedral of his home town, Worcester (1900), and was presumably responsible for recruiting two of his V&A colleagues. George Palmer, who worked in the library, wrote on Rochester (1897), and A. F. Kendrick wrote the volume on Lincoln (1898).

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Strange continued to turn his hand to various publications relating to library collections (illuminated manuscripts, botanical ornament, architectural drawings, prints by J. M. W. Turner and Frank Short). In the debates about rearrangement he argued for a separate print department, which was finally created as the Department of Engraving, Illustration and Design, to which he transferred. He was not just an antiquarian, but from time to time expressed forceful opinions in print about contemporary design.^[71] At the same time, he was also writing about his specialty, Japanese colour prints, and it is for his many contributions to this subject that he is now remembered. From Japanese prints his interests moved easily to oriental furniture, and he produced catalogues of the V&A's Japanese lacquer (2 vols., 1924–25) and Chinese lacquer (1925). He was keeper of the Woodwork department from 1914 to 1926,^[72] and when he stepped down he edited *Old Furniture: A Magazine of Domestic Ornament* (1927–29). He was not a remote scholar but a man effective in the world. He served in the First World War (and was generally known afterwards as Colonel Strange), and then went into the Ministry of Food before reverting to the V&A. He served on official committees; and was also involved in numerous artistic societies. He showed that the “all-round man” could survive successfully in the V&A.

Conclusion

This essay has attempted to show how the V&A purposefully developed scholarly expertise in a generation of curators in the early twentieth century. This expertise was “object-based” scholarship, and it may be useful finally to relate this, the ongoing tradition in the V&A, to wider issues.

In looking at the group of V&A curators who learned their trade in the early years of the twentieth century, we have encountered three types of curatorial writing: the catalogue, the periodical article (sometimes on a single object, sometimes on a group), and the general book, probably aimed at a middlebrow audience of collectors. These types of writing are still standard among curators today. In this survey, however, there has been little to show that the early V&A curators concerned themselves much with the methodology or theory of art history. Perhaps museum curators are not natural theorists.

It is worth noting, however, that the museum did once have on its staff one of the most important of nineteenth-century art theorists, Gottfried Semper. He worked for a few years (1850–55) within Henry Cole's Department of Science and Art, as a teacher rather than as a curator. He was a refugee from the revolutionary disturbances of 1848 on the Continent, and returned there to pursue a career in Switzerland and Germany. While at South Kensington, he drafted a treatise (still surviving in manuscript in the V&A library), which was later elaborated into his major work, *Der Stil* (1861–63).^[73] This was to have a major influence in the nineteenth century. A thriving academic industry has developed around Semper and other theorists in

recent decades,^[74] but Semper was not much remembered at South Kensington or in Britain at large. He was an honorary member of the Royal Institute of British Architects,^[75] and he had an English disciple, Lawrence Harvey, who tried to spread his ideas.^[76] These ideas, however, were only available in German (and difficult German at that), and Semper's range of enquiry was formidable. His ideas affected the way decorative art museums arranged their galleries, and for the V&A they re-emerged as relevant in the deliberations of the Committee of Re-Arrangement. But that is another story.^[77] It is sufficient to note here that Semper was probably the greatest intellectual to be fostered (if only for a short time) by the South Kensington Museum. One person in Britain who did appreciate Semper was Gerard Baldwin Brown, the first full-time professor of art history in the United Kingdom (at Edinburgh University, 1880–1930). He remarked (perhaps hinting at a criticism of South Kensington) that “the qualities which give Semper's book its value are just those that make it decidedly unsuitable for being boiled down into a Science and Art Department handbook.”^[78]

Few others have emerged as public intellectuals from the V&A's cohorts of object-based scholars. One example was Herbert Read, probably the most important English art critic of the twentieth century. Devoted first to literature, he moved over to art, and he had to tack about throughout his career as he established his influence in various fields, such as modern art, art education, and industrial design. Between 1919 and 1922 he worked as a civil servant in the Treasury, in order to support himself with a regular salary. He then contrived to transfer to a post in the V&A, which was then run as part of the civil service.^[79] As an Assistant Keeper in the Ceramics Department, he buckled to, just like the curators we have already noticed. He wrote learned articles for the *Burlington* (and was editor of the magazine from 1933 to 1939),^[80] and dutifully produced books on English pottery (with Bernard Rackham, 1924), English stained glass (1926), and Staffordshire pottery figures (1929).^[81]

The intensity of his engagement with the culture of his time took him far beyond the V&A (which he left in 1939), but it has been said that “his qualifications to write and speak [on art] were formed within a great general collection, daily in touch with works of every kind and in the company of such distinguished scholars of the period as Bernard Rackham and Eric Maclagan.”^[82]

It is perhaps worth recalling that in the 1920s, Read used to meet for occasional lunches with T. S. Eliot at a pub near the museum, and the livelier curators from the V&A (James Laver from Engraving, Illustration and Design, Kenneth Codrington from the Indian Department, Arthur Wheen from the Library) used to go along.^[83] This may have been the high point of the V&A's intellectual life, though Laver recalled that Eliot “never seemed to *say* anything.”^[84]

The V&A's object-based scholars were productive, and continue to publish energetically. The V&A is unusual among museums in that it has made an attempt to record the art-historical writings of its staff.^[85] As art history developed in British universities, it naturally concentrated on fine art, and so the V&A, a museum of the decorative arts, tended not to be in the mainstream. But the boundaries of art history have become more permeable, and, while the work of the V&A continues to be chiefly object-based, some wider connections have been made. In 1982, under director Roy Strong, the V&A and the Royal College of Art established a joint MA course in the History of Design, thus involving the museum formally in university teaching. In 1989, director Elizabeth Esteve-Coll set up the Research Department, which gives museum

staff a chance to work on research projects, and brings into the museum, on secondment, academics from an international range of institutions. In this activity, a long-standing staff exchange arrangement with the University of Sussex is noteworthy. The V&A's intellectual activity has thus been considerably widened over the years. But the crucial development in the V&A's intellectual life was the creation in the early years of the twentieth century of the home-grown experts (Skinner, Wylde, Mitchell, Kendrick, Strange) who established object-based scholarship as the museum's characteristic contribution to art history.

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Notes

[1] See Anthony Burton, *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 1999); and John Physick, *The Victoria and Albert Museum: The History of Its Building* (London: V&A, 1982).

[2] See Elizabeth Bonython and Anthony Burton, *The Great Exhibitor: The Life and Work of Henry Cole* (London: V&A Publications, 2003).

[3] Burton, *Vision*, 81–83.

[4] *Ibid.*, 130, 125–26.

[5] Physick, *Victoria and Albert*, 168.

[6] In “an address prepared for delivery at the annual distribution of prizes at the Birmingham School of Art in 1888”; title written in Robinson's hand on what appears to be a privately printed pamphlet, pressmark Box II 86 DD, Spielmann papers, National Art Library, London. Quoted in Burton, *Vision*, 133.

[7] Burton, *Vision*, 133–34.

[8] “Notes and Comments,” *Architect*, May 19, 1893, 326.

[9] Burton, *Vision*, 134, 137.

[10] M. H. Spielmann, “Chances for Reform,” *Magazine of Art* 19 (1895–96): 419; and “Morning . . . [?]” September 18, 1894, imperfectly recorded reference for a cutting in the V&A Cuttings Book, July 1891–May 1898, V&A Archive, London. Quoted in Burton, *Vision*, 144.

[11] Burton, “The Purgation of the Department of Science and Art,” in *Vision*, chap. 9, esp. 145, 152.

[12] Burton, *Vision*, 137–38.

[13] "Second Report from the Select Committee on Museums of the Science and Art Department ... Ordered by the House of Commons, to be Printed," July 23, 1897, para. 3910. Quoted in Burton, *Vision*, 147.

[14] *Ibid.*, 137. Leffeldt, who became an Assistant Keeper in the Art Branch of the museum in 1893, was the least productive of this group. His only publication was a revision, published in 1908, of a museum handbook on furniture by Pollen, first published in 1875. Leffeldt eventually became curator in charge of the V&A's branch museum at Bethnal Green, which might imply that he had not made much impact at South Kensington.

[15] Dates of office and ranks achieved mentioned in this essay are derived from the published annual reports of the Department of Science and Art, from the annual reference work *The Year's Art* (publisher varies, 1880–1947), and from the continuing annual reference work *Whitaker's Almanack* (publisher varies). The structure of the "professional" staff in the museum settled into a pattern by the 1880s. From the top: Museum Keepers; Museum Assistant Keepers; Junior Assistants; and Special and Technical Assistants. Recruitment was almost entirely restricted to the two lowest levels. Staff then rose by virtue (variously) of age, seniority, merit, and the availability of vacancies in the hierarchy caused by retirements or resignations. This pattern (with slight changes to the names) persisted throughout the period covered in this essay.

[16] "The Art Museum at South Kensington," *Times*, August 14, 1905.

[17] Burton, *Vision*, 126, 137, 152, 164.

[18] Elon Danziger, "The Cook Collection, Its Founder and Its Inheritors," *Burlington Magazine* 146, no. 1216 (July 2004): 444–58.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Sidney Colvin, *Memories & Notes of Persons & Places 1852–1912* (London: Edward Arnold, 1921), 205.

[21] Burton, *Vision*, 164.

[22] S. N. Behrman, *Duveen* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 54–56.

[23] Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), 192.

[24] A. B. Skinner, "Two Oriental Carpets in the South Kensington Museum," *Magazine of Art* 23 (1899): 296–98; A. B. Skinner, "Some Notes on a Print by Enea Vico," *Magazine of Art*, 16 (1902): 520–22; and A. B. Skinner, "On a Painted and Stained Glass Window in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington," *Magazine of Art*, n.s., 2 (1904): 315–17.

[25] "Editorial: Fifty Years of the *Burlington Magazine*," *Burlington Magazine* 95, no. 600 (March 1953): 63.

[26] Caroline Elam, "'A More and More Important Work': Roger Fry and the *Burlington Magazine*," *Burlington Magazine* 145, no. 1200 (March 2003): 143.

[27] Michael Levey, "The Earliest Years of the *Burlington Magazine*: A Brief Retrospect," *Burlington Magazine* 128, no. 1000 (July 1986): 474.

[28] Elam, "'More and More Important Work,'" 145.

[29] Levey, "Earliest Years of the *Burlington Magazine*," 474.

[30] C. H. Wylde, "Mr. Charles Edward Jerningham's Collection of English Glass in the Victoria and Albert Museum," *Burlington Magazine* 4, no. 11 (February 1904): 131–34.

[31] C. H. Wylde, "Mr. George Salting's Chinese Porcelain Figures in the Victoria and Albert Museum," *Burlington Magazine* 24, no. 6 (March 1905): 495.

[32] C. H. Wylde, "Mr. J. H. Fitzhenry's Collection of Early French Pate-tendre," *Burlington Magazine* 7, no. 27 (June 1905): 188–201.

[33] C. H. Wylde, "Old English Drug and Unguent Pots Found in Excavations in London," *Burlington Magazine* 7, no. 25 (April 1905): 78–82.

[34] C. H. Wylde, "German Glass Drinking Vessels Painted in Enamel Colours," *Connoisseur* 10 (1904): 25–29.

[35] C. H. Wylde, "French and German Champlevé Enamels in the Victoria and Albert Museum," *Magazine of Fine Arts* 1 (1905): 133–40.

[36] C. H. Wylde, "Early European Porcelain," *Magazine of Fine Arts* 1 (1906): 396–403.

[37] Sir James Yoxall, *The A. B. C. About Collecting* (London: Stanley Paul & Co., [1910]), 21–22.

[38] See file Ed 84/206 in V&A Archive, London.

[39] Liz Wilkinson, "Collecting Korean Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1888–1938," *Journal of the History of Collections* 15 (2003): 241–55.

[40] See note 15.

[41] Quotations are from "Second Report from the Select Committee on Museums of the Science and Art Department . . . Ordered by the House of Commons, to be Printed," July 23, 1897, paras. 1311–13. For further discussion see Burton, *Vision*, 136, 143, 148.

[42] Eric Maclagan, "Obituary," *Burlington Magazine* 48, no. 278 (May 1926): 269–70.

[43] Ibid.

[44] H. P. Mitchell, "A Mediaeval Silver Chalice from Iceland," *Burlington Magazine* 2: 6 (June 1903): 70–74.

[45] Mitchell's authorship is cited in the entries for these works in the British Library catalogue.

[46] From a typescript by Charles Oman, headed "Confidential. The Department of Metalwork 1925–1939," 2, preserved in the V&A Metalwork Department.

[47] Charlotte Benton, "'An Insult to Everything the Museum Stands for' or 'Ariadne's Thread' to 'Knowledge' and 'Inspiration'? Daniel Libeskind's Extension to the V&A and Its Context. Part II," *Journal of Design History* 10 (1997): 316.

[48] "Second Report from the Select Committee on Museums of the Science and Art Department . . . Ordered by the House of Commons, to be Printed," July 23, 1897, paras. 3910, 3757. Quoted in Burton, *Vision*, 147.

[49] John Beckwith, "A. F. Kendrick," *Burlington Magazine* 96, no. 618 (September 1954): 290.

[50] A. F. Kendrick, "Sicilian Woven Fabrics of the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Centuries," *Magazine of Fine Arts* 1 (1905–6): 36–44, 124–30; and A. F. Kendrick, "The Italian Silk Fabrics of the Fourteenth Century," *ibid.*, 202–11, 415–23.

[51] "Report of the Treasury Committee of Inquiry into the Establishment of the Science and Art Department" [1865], in 14, f.57, Cole Miscellanies, in the National Art Library, London. Quoted in Burton, *Vision*, 81–82.

[52] The policy is stated on page 1 of a confidential internal printed document, entitled "Report on the Administration of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Branch at Bethnal Green," (17076) 25.-1.03, pressmark VA 1903.0004, National Art Library, London.

[53] Burton, *Vision*, 157–58, 164.

[54] Morant to Lord Knollys, May 21, 1909, in file Ed 84/154, in V&A Archives.

[55] See Burton, *Vision*, chapters 10 ("Rearrangement") and 11 ("Reconsideration and Further Rearrangement").

[56] Typescript "Minutes of the Committee of Re-arrangement," 71, 196–214, pressmark VA. 1908.0001, National Art Library, London.

[57] "Minutes of the Committee of Re-arrangement," 5, 9, 29, 32, 36, 60.

[58] This arrangement persisted until 1997, when most of the curators were grouped in offices in the north-west corner of the museum site, as far as possible away from the museum's ever-growing administrative staff in the south-east corner. It is not clear what this might imply about the current balance of power in the museum.

[59] Minute dated 11/12 in file Ed 84/107, V&A Archive, London.

[60] See the entry for Cecil Harcourt-Smith in L. G. Wickham Legg and E. T. Williams, eds., *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941–50).

[61] Minute to "Secretary," February 4, 1913, in file Ed 84/213, V&A Archive.

[62] See the entry for Bernard Rackham in E. T. Williams and C. S. Nicholls, eds., *Dictionary of National Biography, 1961–1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

[63] Burton, *Vision*, 171.

[64] K. C., "Obituary, Sir Eric McLagan," *Burlington Magazine* 93, no. 584 (November 1951): 358.

[65] *Museums Association Monthly Bulletin*, July 1966, 28.

[66] James Laver, *Museum Piece: The Education of an Iconographer* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963), 213.

[67] Quoted from T. G. H. James, "Diary of Diana Wooner," entry for January 12, 1926, *Egyptian Archaeology* 7 (1995), 28. Quoted in Burton, *Vision*, 178.

[68] From a typescript by Charles Oman, headed "Confidential. The Department of Metalwork 1925–1939," 1, Metalwork Department, V&A.

[69] “Minutes of the Committee of Re-arrangement,” 204.

[70] Press review from the *Times*, quoted in an extra publicity leaf in the volume on Rochester. G. H. Palmer, *The Cathedral Church of Rochester: A Description of its Fabric and a Brief History of the Episcopal* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1897).

[71] For example, E. F. Strange, “The Art Movement: The Arts and Crafts in 1899,” *Magazine of Art* 24 (1900): 86–91; and E. F. Strange, “Applied Art in 1906,” in *The Year’s Art 1907*, ed. A. C. R. Carter (London: Hutchinson, 1907), 10–11.

[72] Simon Jervis, “The Department of Furniture and Woodwork, Victoria and Albert Museum,” *Furniture History* 26 (1990): 124.

[73] Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in technischen und tektonischen Künsten*, 2 vols. (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1861, 1863). For more on Semper and South Kensington see Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper: Architect of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 208–227; and Wolfgang Herrmann, *Gottfried Semper im Exil. Paris, London, 1849–55. Zur Entstehung des ‘Stil’, 1840–1877* (Basel and Stuttgart: Birkhäuser, 1978).

[74] See Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982).

[75] See Thomas Donaldson, “Obituary,” *RIBA Transactions*, 1878–79, 233–35.

[76] See Lawrence Harvey, “Semper’s Theory of Evolution in Architectural Ornament,” *RIBA Transactions*, n.s., 1 (1885): 29–54.

[77] See Burton, *Vision*, chapters 10 (“Rearrangement”) and 11 (“Reconsideration and Further Rearrangement”).

[78] G. Baldwin Brown, “Semper and the Development Theory,” *Architect*, December 27, 1884, 414.

[79] See Herbert Read, *The Contrary Experience: Autobiographies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 246, 259, 266, 267.

[80] For details of Read’s 74 contributions to the *Burlington Magazine*, consult the “Archive” section of the magazine’s website, accessed May 21, 2015, www.burlington.org.uk. For Read’s editorship of the magazine, see “Editorial: Herbert Read and The Burlington Magazine,” *Burlington Magazine* 110, no. 785 (August 1968), 433–34.

[81] Herbert Read and Bernard Rackham, *English Pottery, Its Development from Early Times to the End of the 18th Century* (London: Ernest Benn, 1924); Herbert Read, *English Stained Glass* (London and New York: Putnam, 1926); and Herbert Read, *Staffordshire Pottery Figures* (London: Duckworth, 1929).

[82] Basil Taylor, “Obituary, Herbert Read” *Burlington Magazine* 110, no. 758 (August 1968): 462.

[83] James King, *The Last Modern: A Life of Herbert Read* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), 89.

[84] Laver, *Museum Piece*, 89.

[85] There is an admirably detailed (and very thick) book recording the publications (mostly by staff) issued by the museum itself: Elizabeth James, *The Victoria and Albert Museum: A Bibliography and Exhibition Chronology, 1852–1996* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998). Details of curators’ writings issued through publishers other than the museum are not gathered together (though many are traceable in the National Art Library catalogue), except for some years in the late twentieth century. The V&A’s *Review of the Years 1974–1978* (London: HMSO, 1981), 143–168, includes “Publications by staff” in those years. As it happens, this list was compiled by the present author, who was also involved with later lists created through the V&A Research Department. These *Research Reports* covered publications by all staff in 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997–99.