

centrality of her powerful presence, even in absence, within the economy of aesthetic production" (211). Dever is similarly concerned to situate the mother at the centre of her scholarly narrative, offering a fresh explanation by way of object-relations theory for the construction of the good mother as a cultural ideal in the Victorian novel. Her book ultimately demonstrates both the enabling and the containing power of the trope of maternal loss.

Catherine Waters

***A.W. Franks: Nineteenth-Century Collecting and the British Museum*, edited by Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry. London: British Museum Press, 1997.**

I think I may fairly say that I have created the department of which I am now Keeper [British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography], and at a very moderate cost to the country. When I was appointed to the Museum in 1851 the scanty collections out of which the department has grown occupied a length of 154 feet of wall cases, and 3 or 4 table cases. The collections now occupy 2250 feet in length of wall cases, 90 table cases and 31 upright cases.

A.W. Franks (1893)

As the title of this quality publication suggests, this is not merely a general book about nineteenth-century collecting. It is a collection of essays focusing on Augustus Wollaston Franks, doyen of the British Museum who in his active career from 1851 to 1897 was largely responsible for the quality and diversity of the British Museum's collection. This biographical approach to the topic makes for a readable foray into the history of Victorian collecting which, whilst a very different experience from the more general texts on the subject, is just as enlightening. In many ways the book resembles a long overdue Festschrift—marking as it does the centenary of Franks's death—and the reader can be left in no doubt as to the debt owed to Franks's diligence and scholarship, as well as, in a more general way, the important role individual personalities have had on the development of national collections.

Because of the biographical focus of the book, fifteen of the seventeen chapters concentrate on Franks's role within specific collecting areas, and despite the breadth of Franks's collecting interests he was no shallow dilettante. Considering himself a public servant dedicated to collecting for the benefit of the nation, Franks was also fulfilling a personal need, declaring in 1893, "Collecting is an hereditary disease, and I fear incurable" (318). To his credit, Franks contributed a good deal of his personal income to the British Museum's collection, either by subsidising purchases or through outright gifts. Although primarily a medievalist, he was swept up in the wave of interest in prehistory burgeoning in the middle of the nineteenth century and became a widely published professional at a time when few archaeologists or historians existed beyond amateur societies.

The introduction by David Wilson and the chapter by Marjorie Caygill flesh out a personal biography of Franks on the bones of his better known professional life. Of independent wealth (his decision to become a salaried employee of the British Museum involved concerns about being *infra dig*), he lived his life as a bachelor and primarily in rented accommodation. Wilson maintains that the resultant combination of lack of heirs and “no attics or cupboards accidentally filled with paper which might have survived to the present generation” are the reasons for the dearth of personal knowledge about Franks. By way of an almost archaeological method that perhaps Franks would have appreciated, an engaging profile of the man is constructed from preciously few remains.

Other chapters by Arthur MacGregor and John Mack commendably contextualise Franks from the period after 1851 when he joined the museum. That the worlds of private and institutional collecting were interrelated more than ever before or since illustrates how much Franks was suited to his time, and how possible it was for an individual to influence the collecting interests of an institution before collection development policies became as firmly entrenched as they are today.

The career of Franks is then traced chapter by chapter through his active participation and influence in surprisingly diverse collecting areas, as disparate as Oriental Pottery and Porcelain to Early Scientific Instruments and Horology. Also included are Franks’s role in the Stone Age Collections, the Early Medieval Archaeology of Britain and Ireland, the Medieval Collections, European Ceramics, Glass and Enamels, the Oxus Treasure, Sculpture from India, the Art and Antiquities of Japan, Islamic Art and Numismatics. The black-and-white plates accompanying the essays are sufficient if not spectacular.

Much more than just a celebration of a deserving individual, this book is a refreshing look at the British Museum collection through the context of its historical acquisition. As such, scholars of the Victorian period can gain insights into the materialism and taxonomic fascination that so enthralled the educated of that time.

Paul Donnelly

***Hidden Newcastle: Urban Memories and Architectural Imaginaries*, edited by John Moore and Michael Ostwald, photography by Alan Chawner. Ultimo: Gadfly Media, 1997.**

This is a book on the urban history of Newcastle. There is some social and political history, but a majority of the essays concern architecture and the history of municipalities and other self-identified areas in the city. There is no essay which attempts to focus on Victorian culture whether literary or architectural, but the nineteenth-century history of the city is pervasive and readers of this journal will find aspects of interest.

In their introduction the editors give a kind of tour of contemporary architectural attitudes to urban history, which derive largely from Walter Benjamin. They argue for the book to be seen as a set of partial and multiple forays rather than an holistic account