

Victoria & Albert Art & Love

‘Preparing a handsome picture frame to pattern chosen by HRH The Prince’: Prince Albert frames his collection

Lucy Whitaker

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Prince Albert’s systematic approach to art and frames

Prince Albert, assisted by his artistic adviser Ludwig Gruner, researched, rearranged and reframed the collections of paintings and miniatures then in the Royal Collection. He also acquired paintings from areas and schools new to the Royal Collection, specifically fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Italian art, and fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Netherlandish and German art. Prince Albert’s reputation as an expert on early Italian art is illustrated by a flattering letter from the dealer William Blundell Spence, from whom the royal couple had acquired a small painting by Fra Angelico depicting *Christ Blessing*. In his letter of 1853 Spence promised to send the Prince a catalogue and a few photographs of the Lombardi-Baldi Collection, which he thought would be an important addition to the National Gallery, ‘for I am perfectly sure from the short interview that I had the honour of having with his Royal Highness that no person in England is better able to appreciate the value of the early Italian School’.¹

In a letter to Lord Ellesmere, dated 3 July 1856, Prince Albert set out his opinions about the idea of an exhibition in Manchester proposed for 1857, which would concentrate on the fine arts rather than their industrial counterpart. This scheme had the disadvantage of following other exhibitions that had been held in London in 1851, Dublin in 1853 and Paris in 1855, but Prince Albert wrote:

That national usefulness might, however, be found in the educational direction which may be given to the whole scheme.... If the collection you propose to form were made to illustrate the history of Art in a chronological and systematic arrangement, it would speak powerfully to the public mind, and enable, in a practical way, the most uneducated eye to gather the lessons which ages of thought and scientific research have attempted to abstract...

He enclosed a catalogue, organised by school, which he had had compiled and supplied to the governmental Select Committee of 1853 established to investigate the future management of the National Gallery. By organising it in this way he hoped that the exhibition would become ‘a great National object’.² Prince Albert opened the exhibition on 5 May 1857 and praised its ‘scientific and historical arrangement,



and educational character' and the 'opportunity of teaching the mind, as well as gratifying the senses; and manifold are the lessons which it will present to us'.³

Prince Albert's serious approach to art had first become apparent when he supervised the rehanging of the Picture Gallery in Buckingham Palace in 1851. In the Prince's new arrangement the British School was excluded, except for the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Thomas Uwins, the Surveyor of Pictures, prepared a catalogue to accompany the paintings⁴ and the new arrangement was recorded in Louis Hague's watercolour of the banquet to celebrate the christening of Prince Leopold in 1853, as well as in a photograph taken twenty years later (figs 1, 2). Prince Albert's desire for order can be seen in his instigation of a systematic reframing of the entire gallery. Most likely it was the Prince who selected the gilded composition frames with the reverse-moulded pattern, most of which were supplied by the carver and gilder William Thomas, of 39 London Street, Fitzroy Square (fig. 3).

Fig. 1 (above left)
Louis Haghe (1806–85),
Buckingham Palace: The christening banquet for Prince Leopold, 28th June 1853
Watercolour and bodycolour with pen and ink over pencil, 33 x 47.3cm
Royal Collection, RL 19917

Fig. 2 (above)
Attributed to Hills and Saunders,
Buckingham Palace, the Picture Gallery, c.1873
Albumen print, 15.3 x 19.8cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 2103640



Fig. 3
Willem II van de Velde the Younger (1633–1707),
The 'Gouden Leeuw' in Heavy Weather, 1671
Oil on canvas, frame 84 x 106.7cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 405324



Fig. 4
Douglas Morison (1814–47),
Buckingham Palace, the Picture Gallery, 1843
Watercolour, 27.7 × 39.0cm
Royal Collection, RL 19916

Thomas's reframing of the Picture Gallery with 'some hundred and eighty five gilt frames' began in 1850, when he started to replace all the deeper Regency frames which had a repeating leaf pattern as seen in Douglas Morison's 1853 watercolour (fig. 4).⁵ At the same time, on 25 December 1850, John Seguier submitted a bill for 'Cleaning & polishing the varnish of 152 Pictures in the Gallery of Buckingham Palace'.⁶ One advantage of this reframing programme was the elimination of shadows cast by the deeper frames previously in use; another benefit, as far as the Prince was concerned, was the unified appearance given to the gallery. Glazing was introduced in 1859 to protect the paintings in Buckingham Palace from atmospheric pollution, a constant problem noted by many visitors to London. The previous year, for instance, the visiting Prussian Helmuth von Moltke had written: 'Even in Buckingham Palace there was yesterday a thick fog consisting chiefly of coal smoke. Pictures, gold frames and embroidered work, must suffer very severely from it.'⁷

When it came to studying and reorganising the miniatures in the Royal Collection, for which Prince Albert designed a special cabinet with sliding drawers in the Royal Library,⁸ it seems that this was an activity that Queen Victoria enjoyed as much as her husband did. Albert's concern for order and standardised display found expression in the programme he introduced of reframing all the miniatures, which began in 1851 and continued throughout the 1850s. They were put in new frames of a uniform pattern with a leaf and scroll-pattern surround by J.A. Hatfield, Bronze and Ormolu Manufacturer, of 21 Cumberland Street, London,⁹ and a new convex glass fitted. At the same time the back of each miniature was engraved with an inscription giving details of artist and sitter.¹⁰



Fig. 5
Samuel Cooper (1608?–72),
Catherine of Braganza, c.1662
Watercolour and bodycolour on vellum
laid on card, frame 14.7 x 12.1 cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 420644

Fig. 6
Sir William Ross (1794–1860),
Princess Helena, 1850
Watercolour on ivory laid
on card, frame 7.4 x 6.9 cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 420341

As a result of using a uniform frame design the Stuart portrait of Catherine of Braganza seems, at first glance, to be part of one series with the young Princess Helena (figs 5, 6). Prince Albert went on in 1860–61 to reframe the enamel portraits (which are not light sensitive in the way that portraits on ivory, card or vellum are) in Hatfield frames, selecting about two hundred examples to form a carefully planned arrangement in the Audience Room at Windsor,¹¹ where they were set in wall panels with oil portraits by Gainsborough to create a royal gallery of ancestors (fig. 7).



Fig. 7
André Adolfe Eugène Disderi (1819–89),
The Queen's Audience Room looking north, 1867
Albumen print, 22.6 x 28.1 cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 2100100

Prince Albert, the National Gallery and a new approach to framing Old Masters

Prince Albert's interest in the framing of pictures extended beyond the confines of his own collection hung at various royal residences. Perhaps his most important contribution elsewhere was his work at the National Gallery. He and the Gallery's first director, Sir Charles Eastlake, had much in common. For one thing, they shared a belief in the classification of art following the advances of German art history. Both believed in a systematic arrangement of pictures by school and period reflecting the progress made in German galleries, particularly the Berlin Royal Gallery. It was Eastlake and the Gallery's Keeper, Ralph Nicholson Wornum, who had compiled the catalogue of artists organised by date and school in 1853, which Prince Albert had requested be sent to the organisers of the Manchester *Art Treasures* exhibition four years later.¹² Furthermore, both were also part of a small group of collectors who sought out early Italian, German and Netherlandish art.¹³ Eastlake believed that the National Gallery should collect Italian art before Raphael in order to understand the great masters.¹⁴ Prince Albert's interest in Raphael is demonstrated by his aim to assemble every available print after the works of Raphael, and where no print existed, to procure photographs. The plan was to continue with Michelangelo and Leonardo, but this was cut short when he died.¹⁵

Prince Albert and Charles Eastlake also shared an interest in frames. The Prince's attention to the care of frames at the National Gallery is recorded by Wornum in the diary he began in 1855.¹⁶ Albert visited the Gallery on 31 October 1857 to see the new pictures. According to Wornum, he was delighted with the new Paul Veronese, but thought some of the frames in a bad condition and recommended that one painting (the 'Vandermeire') be put in a case. At the next meeting of the Trustees, on 16 November, Wornum was authorised 'to regild at convenient opportunities, such frames as require regilding'.¹⁷ Wornum recorded on 23 November that the frame of the Vandermeire had been re-gilt and on 14 January 1858 that it had been put into a case.¹⁸

By this date Prince Albert had already begun the process of framing and reframing in the palaces and designing frames for his early Italian and German paintings. His interest in framing may have been a strong influence on the procedures of Eastlake and Wornum at the National Gallery. During the 1850s and 1860s the Director would acquire paintings during his annual continental tours, which Wornum would then arrange to be reframed or conserved on their arrival in London. Frequently frames were 'altered and regilt', often by the National Gallery framer, Henry Critchfield, of 35 Clipstone Street, London, who worked for the National Gallery from 1854 to 1880.¹⁹ The same framer also provided new frames in composition (compo). But Wornum's remit was broader and more creative than this. He was involved in the planning and design of new frames.²⁰ Thus on 2 July 1861 he

noted that he had designed a frame for “‘A Knight of Malta’? by Pontormo’ (*A Knight of S. Stefano* attributed to Girolamo Macchietti, NG 670) which G.F.Watts had presented to the Gallery. Identical and very similar frames, with a reverse profile with reel and rod motif combined with scrolling ornament in low relief on the flat frieze, were made by Henry Critchfield for several paintings acquired between 1858 and 1863.²¹ On 19 December 1862 Wornum ‘approved pattern for Andrea del Sarto frame ... perhaps the best I have yet planned’.²²

Occasionally new carved frames were commissioned from Italian framemakers in Florence, and in such cases it was Eastlake who played the most significant role. In November 1855 Eastlake reported to the Board that he had entrusted Ugo Baldi in Florence with the restoration of some recently purchased paintings. The old frames were also left in Florence to be repaired and re-gilt and Eastlake had commissioned a new frame for one of them, ‘the art of frame-carving being practised with great ability in Florence’.²³ Then, in July 1857 Wornum noted the arrival from Florence of a carved frame for the Filippino Lippi altarpiece, *The Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Dominic* (NG 293), ‘a good specimen of modern Italian frame-making’, and a frame for the Polluaiuolo *Martyrdom of St Sebastian* (NG 292), ‘overburnished, but a magnificent design and perhaps the finest frame in the Gallery’. The frame for Girolamo Romanino’s *Nativity with Saints Alexander, Jerome, Filippo Benizzi and Gaudioso* (NG 297.1-5) was made by Spelluzzi of Milan, probably with the approval of Eastlake.²⁴

Antique frames were also purchased from time to time. In 1856 Antonio Zen supplied frames for a group of paintings consigned to him by Otto Müндler.²⁵ Some were made up of fragments of old frames and the better frames moved to other paintings in the collection. Wornum described the frame bought from Pratts of Bond Street in 1863 for Bernardino Lanino *Virgin and Child with Saints* (NG 700) as a ‘fine cinquecento frame’, but it is probably nineteenth century. In 1856 ‘old frames’ were brought from Queen Anne Street by Mr Critchfield and selected and cleaned.²⁶ When the National Gallery purchased paintings from the Lombardi-Baldi Collection in 1857, they also purchased the frames. Almost all were contemporary Italian but one or two were restored Renaissance frames. The altarpiece by Francesco Botticini depicting *Saint Jerome in Penitence with Saints and Donors* (NG 227) (then thought to be by Cosimo Rosselli) was purchased from the Ricasoli family in 1855 and is in its original frame, as noted by Wornum in his 1864 catalogue of the National Gallery paintings, but in fact this was extensively reworked and re-gilded before its arrival in London.²⁷

Frames for the palaces and royal residences and royal portraiture

As we have seen, Prince Albert approved of the adoption of a standard pattern of frames for official and grand displays, such as the Picture Gallery in Buckingham Palace, which continued the principles of eighteenth-century palace interiors. At the National Gallery during the 1860s Eastlake and Wornum modified the use of standard patterns of frames to give unity to a gallery in favour of frames which reflected the style of the particular school.²⁸ Prince Albert had already done this in a remarkable way for his private collection of early paintings, while still retaining the idea of pairing paintings with the same pattern.

For the considerable work undertaken in the royal residences and palaces from 1838, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert continued to commission picture frames from firms used by their royal predecessors. The most frequently favoured were the rival firms of Thomas Ponsonby (Thomas Ponsonby and his son Thomas Thompson Ponsonby) of 32 Regent's Circus (1826–54) and 42 Piccadilly (1855–57), and William Thomas of 29 Berners Street, London.²⁹ Old picture frames were cut and altered, re-joined and re-gilded. Certain common threads run through the estimates and bills of the carver and gilders: one is Albert's desire for order, seen in both his choice and arrangement of the paintings and the novel use of clear labelling; a second leitmotif is his interest in new techniques for the manufacture of frames. There are records of many payments for ornamenting and enriching older frames, enlarging old frames, converting frames for glass to protect the paintings, for inscriptions and tablets, and for adapting old picture frames for looking-glasses as well as new paintings. For the frames of prints on show at Windsor and Osborne, Ponsonby supplied 'Balmoral maple moulding'. New materials such as papier mâché were also used.³⁰ The gilded composition frames were for paintings by contemporary artists such as Sir George Hayter, Sir Edwin Landseer and Franz Xaver Winterhalter. For Winterhalter's portrait of the Maharaja Duleep Singh, dated 1854, Ponsonby made a frame in the style of Morant (fig. 8), who had supplied frames for Thomas Lawrence in the 1820s (called a 'Lawrence pattern' in the records) and he created a similar frame for Winterhalter *The First of May 1851* (fig. 9).³¹ Other frames employed different ornaments, including 'Carlo Marratti patterns' (in the style of the eighteenth-century frame type known as 'Carlo Maratta').

Some new frames were particularly elaborate. For instance, the pair by Thomas, supplied in 1862 for the marriage portraits by Winterhalter of Prince Louis of Hesse and by Koberwein of Princess Alice, are enriched with crowns, orange-blossom and laurel.³² Thomas also made an elaborate frame, designed to stand on an easel at Balmoral, for Koberwein's copy of *The Prince Consort* by Winterhalter (RCIN 403063): this was made of satinwood, with carved emblematic ornaments, including crowns, monograms, oak and thistle foliage, and carved laurel mouldings round the inner



Fig. 8
Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1805–73),
The Maharaja Daleep Singh, 1854,
showing detail of Morant-style frame
by Thomas Ponsonby (1816–97)
Oil on canvas, frame 243.5 x 149.5cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403843



Fig. 9
Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1805–73),
The First of May 1851, 1851, with frame
by Thomas Ponsonby (1816–97)
Oil on canvas, frame 151 x 174.2cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 406995

oval.³³ Frames were occasionally carved rather than composition, like this important commission for Prince Albert's portrait. Evidence for another example is Ponsonby's invoice of £14 8s 6d for the 'making [of a] handsomely finished & emblematic Gothic frame. Carved entirely in Limetree [sic] and also wholly cut up & veined in the white & prepared & gilt in the best mat and Burnish Gilding & illuminated to correspond with Drawing'.³⁴

Prince Albert's close interest in frames is once again shown by Ponsonby's estimate of 1 October 1850 for 'Preparing a handsome picture frame to pattern chosen by H.R.H The Prince and furnishing in best B. gold £52-18-6'.³⁵ Ponsonby put together and repaired a large frame for a full-length portrait sent from Russia and a note on the estimate, dated 22 February 1850, specified that the ormolu was to be 'mixed to meet HRH Prince Albert's taste to assimilate with colour of gold sent from Russia'.³⁶ In the same year, '2 very elaborately carved Frames venetian character' were to be 'finished in burnished gold & the matted parts in the full rich coloured ormolu as described by HRH'; and in 1857, 'One handsomely enriched & fully mounted frame Pc. Albert's pattn...'.³⁷

In this period carvers and gilders such as Ponsonby were undertaking a whole range of work for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert as part of the interior decoration and additions that were being made to Buckingham Palace as well as their other residences. Frames and the display of pictures were just one part of the overall effect of a particular room. In 1847, for example, Ponsonby provided estimates for 'Eight carved Dolphins w. leaves finished in best B. gold to match Pattern sent. 36-4-0' for Buckingham Palace.³⁸ Prince Albert must have been closely involved in all matters of design and execution. Ponsonby's woodwork for the Centre Room was to be executed 'according to designs approved by H.R.H.',³⁹ and in 1847 he estimated for a gilt panel ornament for a looking-glass 'mounted to H.R.H. Prince Albert's Approval' for the Audience Room in Buckingham Palace.⁴⁰ An important illustration of Prince Albert's skill as a designer is Queen Victoria's Audience Room at Windsor Castle. As a prelude to his collaboration with John Thomas in 1860 Albert had commissioned Thomas Ponsonby to alter it in 1850. This first redecoration included a new cove and cornice, papier-mâché enrichments to the ceiling, the decoration and gilding of doors and shutters and the restoration of two eighteenth-century tables.⁴¹



Frames for new acquisitions

For most of Prince Albert's acquisitions of contemporary art the frames were designed or approved by the artist. He purchased, for instance, Ferdinand Waldmüller's *The Grandmother's Birthday* (RCIN 403605) in 1856, at a private showing of the artist's paintings at Buckingham Palace. The composition frame is German with an extremely wide *cavetto* section and pronounced corner ornaments ([fig. 10](#)), while the Eduard von Steinle *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin*, dated 1851 and purchased by Prince Albert in the same year, has an angular frame with the hollow decorated with a reed entwined by acanthus leaves; this was made in Frankfurt by J.P. (Johann Peter) Schneider, where Steinle was living ([fig. 11](#)).⁴² Prince Albert paid Steinle 'for a picture & frame £323 10s 8d' on 16 June 1851.⁴³ On another occasion, the German artist Wilhelm Hensel designed the distinctive Egyptian frame for *Miriam's Song of Praise* of 1836, which the artist presented to Queen Victoria in 1843 ([fig. 12](#)). The gilding would originally have been varied to provide different effects: the stars were oil-gilded against a matt background and the stylised papyrus plants would have been burnished.

Fig. 10 (above left and centre)
Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller
(1793–1865), *The Grandmother's
Birthday*, 1856, with German frame
Oil on panel, frame 106.8 x 93.4cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403605

Fig. 11 (above)
Eduard von Steinle (1810–86), *St Luke
Painting the Virgin*, 1851, with frame by
J.P. Schneider (Johann Peter's father;
Christian Schneider; founded the frame-
maker's shop in Frankfurt in 1824)
Oil on canvas, frame 175.2 x 221.6cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 408952



Joseph Green (1808–73?) made a rococo revival style frame with pierced rococo corner ornaments and a swept and completely pierced back rail to complement creatively the fairy subject matter in Daniel Maclise's *Scene from Undine* purchased by Queen Victoria in 1843 ([fig. 13](#)).⁴⁴ The knot designs in the corners and the lettering of the inscription on another frame – by George Brown of 25 Newman Street,

Fig. 12
Wilhelm Hensel (1794–1861),
Miriam's Song of Praise, 1836
Oil on canvas, frame 218.8 x 220.2cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 408985



off Oxford Street, for William Dobson's *The Almsdeeds of Dorcas*, 1855 (fig. 14) – is reminiscent of ecclesiastical designs found on Pre-Raphaelite paintings.⁴⁵ Prince Albert acquired William Dyce's *Madonna and Child* before it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1846 (fig. 15).⁴⁶ When it was sent to Buckingham Palace it was in an old but suitable frame.⁴⁷ The artist went on to paint a companion piece depicting *Saint Joseph* in 1847, commissioned by Prince Albert. Both pictures were subsequently framed in large carved and gilded frames with scrolling leaf ornament in a frieze, again reminiscent of Pre-Raphaelite frames and the taste for Gothic ornament, possibly designed by Dyce in consultation with Prince Albert.⁴⁸ There is a payment to Mr Draycott which records: 'Frames – Dyce's Pictures £16.0.0' on 22 March 1847 from Prince Albert's private accounts.⁴⁹ Presumably this is Frederick Draycott, who operated from his business at 27 Duke Street, Bloomsbury, London.⁵⁰ The frame for the Michael Wittmer *Raphael's First Sketch of the 'Madonna della Sedia'* (fig. 16), which Prince Albert purchased in 1853, looks German with its compressed band of fruit and flower ornament, but it has a Ponsonby label on the back.

Fig. 13 (above left)
Daniel Maclise (1806–70),
A Scene from Undine, 1843
Oil on panel, frame 72 x 88cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 405638

Fig. 14 (above)
William Dobson (1817–98),
The Almsdeeds of Dorcas, 1855, with
frame by George Brown, 'Looking-glass
and Picture Frame Manufactory, no. 25
Newman Street, Oxford Street, London'
Oil on canvas, frame 126.2 x 111.1cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403875

Prince Albert and frames for his early Italian paintings in Osborne

What is remarkable about Prince Albert's decision to have his pictures placed in uniform frames is that this did not stop with the most formal arrangements of pictures in the grand displays at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. In a pioneering move he adopted a similar practice for his private collection of early



Fig. 15 (far left)
William Dyce (1806–64),
The Madonna and Child, 1845
Oil on canvas, frame 119 × 94cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403745

Fig. 16
Michael Wittmer (1802–80),
Raphael's First Sketch of the 'Madonna della Sedia', 1853, with frame
by Thomas Ponsonby (1816–97)
Oil on canvas, frame 127 × 102.8cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403635

paintings. Here, however, while ornament was often repeated and particular paintings were framed as pairs, the design of the frames also reflected the style of specific schools.

Prince Albert's taste for Italian art before Raphael was unusual in Britain in the 1840s, although he was not the first to collect this period. The rigour and directness of the Italians up to Raphael must have appealed to him. When he visited Florence in 1839 he was 'often quite intoxicated with delight' when he came out of one of the galleries.⁵¹ He travelled on to Rome, where he purchased the Veneto School *Portrait of a Small Boy* (JS 312 406402) as by Veronese; this can be seen in the James Roberts watercolour of Prince Albert's Dressing and Writing Room (**fig. 19**), to the right of the Master of the Misericordia altarpiece. In a concentrated campaign between 1845 and 1847 he acquired 25 early Italian paintings, with the help of Ludwig Gruner. Ten of these were acquired from Ludwig Metzger in Florence, who had inherited his father's collection, including the Duccio triptych, the first acknowledged work by that artist to enter Britain. Metzger also supplied in 1845 the small *Virgin and Child with Saints* (RCIN 407817 LC 32), now considered the work of a follower of Hugo van der Goes (but purchased as a Hans Memling), which Prince Albert hung in the Pages' Waiting Room. In 1846 seven paintings were acquired from Warner Ottley, whose brother William Young Ottley had formed a collection in Italy between 1791 and 1798.⁵² Gruner also purchased on behalf of Prince Albert three works from Cianfanelli in Florence; two from the Melzi Collection in Florence; and two from the artist Tommaso Minardi in Rome. Some of these paintings were bought by Queen Victoria via Gruner as presents for Prince Albert.⁵³

Prince Albert arranged his personal collection of early Italian and Northern Renaissance paintings in private rooms at Osborne and preferred to do this without assistance. He and Queen Victoria took great pleasure in furnishing Osborne House, of which they took possession in the spring of 1845, and the new Pavilion (completed by September 1846) and the Household Wing and Main Wing (completed in 1851). In November 1846 an invoice was recorded for packing cases and transport of pictures to Osborne.⁵⁴ Although Augustus Wall Callcott, the Surveyor of Pictures, had been called upon to help sort out pictures arriving at Windsor from Hampton Court, when the royal couple were arranging paintings at Osborne the Surveyor was not summoned because, as noted by Queen Victoria (in relation to the 'little Drawingroom downstairs'), everything is 'our very own'.⁵⁵ Many frames and the panels are marked with Prince Albert's brand, a crowned letter A (fig. 17). Albert's Italian collection was often framed in combinations of blue and gold, his German Cranachs in Jacobean revival frames. The frames are distinctive and exemplify his taste for symmetrical arrangements. In his private room at Osborne, his Dressing and Writing Room, the Prince arranged his collection of fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Italian art (fig. 18).⁵⁶ James Roberts's watercolour of 1851 recorded the framing and arrangement of 17 of the 25 paintings in this room (fig. 19).

As for Prince Albert's unusually systematic arrangement of his collection at Osborne, some acquisitions remained in their original frames. Among these were three from Warner Ottley: the Pesellino *Coronation of the Virgin* (seen above the left door in the Roberts watercolour); the workshop of Jacopo di Cione triptych, in an original but re-gilded frame (fig. 20; seen reflected in the mirror below the Master of the Johnston Madonna tondo); and the Gentile da Fabriano *Quaratesi Madonna* (RCIN 407614, on loan to the National Gallery). Perhaps for reasons of space, he hung the last of these in the Pages' Waiting Room at Osborne, alongside his German and Netherlandish paintings. He had the outer mouldings and brackets with capitals added to original elements, as can be seen by comparing a 1919 photograph with one taken after cleaning in 1949–50 (figs 21, 22), when these additions were removed. He kept the Florentine Baroque frame, typical of those in the Palazzo Pitti, around the Raffaellino del Garbo saint, seen above the door on the right in the Roberts watercolour. Bought from Cianfanelli, the panel has a wax seal on the back, suggesting a Medici Collection provenance.⁵⁷ The Perugino *Saint Jerome in Penitence* (fig. 23), acquired by Gruner from Della Bruna of Florence in 1845, has a contemporary Italian frame, possibly Florentine or Roman, with carved and applied scrolling flowering tendril decoration applied to a *cassetta* type. The Parentino *Saint Sebastian* (figs 24, 25) acquired from Minardi in 1847 has a similar type of frame, probably made in Rome.



Fig. 17
Prince Albert's brand or cipher (letter A below a crown) found on the backs of frames and paintings identifying these works as the private property of Prince Albert



Fig. 18
Jabez Hughes (1819–84),
HRH Prince Consort's Room, 1876
Albumen print in Osborne 1876 Album
Royal Collection, RCIN 1114808

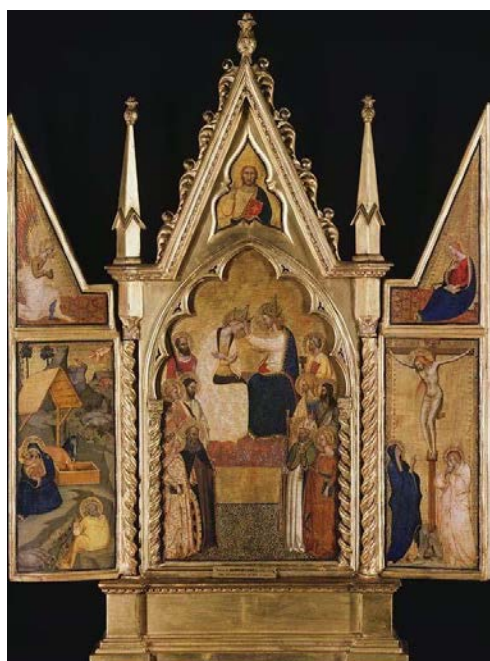


Fig. 19 (top)
James Roberts (c.1800–1867),
*Osborne House: Prince Albert's
Dressing Room*, 1851
Watercolour and bodycolour with
touches of gum arabic over pencil,
24.3 x 36.8cm
Royal Collection, RL 26224

Fig. 20 (above left)
Workshop of Jacopo di Cione (c.1330/5–
1398/1400), *Triptych: The Coronation of the
Virgin, Nativity and Crucifixion*, c.1365–70
Tempera on panel, frame 105.1 x 74.8cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403483

Fig. 21 (above centre)
Gentile da Fabriano (c.1370–1427),
The Quaratesi Madonna, c.1425
Showing framing additions added
to original frame
Tempera on panel
Royal Collection, RCIN 407614

Fig. 22 (above right)
Gentile da Fabriano (c.1370–1427),
The Quaratesi Madonna, c.1425
Showing framing additions removed in 1950
Tempera on panel, frame 229 x 96.4cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 407614



Fig. 23 (above left)
Perugino (c.1450–1523),
St Jerome in Penitence, c.1480–85
Glue-based medium (?) on canvas
laid on panel, frame 107.5 x 87cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403469



Fig. 24 (below left)
Parentino (c.1450–after 1498),
St Sebastian, c.1480
Oil on panel, frame 70.5 x 53.2cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403487



Fig. 25 (below right)
Detail of fig. 24



Albert had some of his other paintings reframed in contemporary British frames. For example, his early acquisition of a Venetian School *Portrait of a Small Boy* (fig. 26) is surrounded by a composition rococo frame.⁵⁸ Several others are framed in simple and standard Carlo Maratta-type frames with carved or compo applied decoration, for example Palmezzano's *Portrait of a Man* (Metzger), the *Virgin of the Rocks* after Leonardo da Vinci (Metzger) and the *Holy Family* by a follower of Francia (Cianfanelli; fig. 27). Visible above the mirror in the Roberts watercolour is the *Portrait of a Man* by Girolamo Romanino, in a carved and gilded oak frame with a shell at the arched section at the top. The style with a plain flat decorated with husks and laurel branch is comparable with the frames later designed for Pre-Raphaelite paintings (fig. 28).

In order to create a cohesive display, other paintings were placed in identical frames. The two predella panels, Bernardo Daddi's *The Marriage of the Virgin* (which Queen Victoria purchased from Ludwig Metzger, through Gruner, and presented to Prince Albert 1846) and Benozzo Gozzoli's *The Fall of Simon Magus* (which Prince Albert purchased from Warner Ottley in 1846) are very close in size and were framed in matching carved Florentine-style frames, probably by a British framemaker, with pin and ribbon sight moulding and pierced scrolling acanthus ornament on D-sections. The piercing is unusual, and glass or fabric would originally have filled the gaps (figs 29, 30). Matching frames were also made in this country for Zanobi Strozzi's *Madonna of Humility*, bought as by Fra Angelico (from Metzger in 1845, payment

Fig. 26 (above left)
Venetian, *Portrait of a Small Boy*, c.1550–79
Oil on canvas, frame 75 x 64.8cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 406402

Fig. 27 (above right)
Follower of Francesco Francia
(c.1450–1517), *The Holy Family*, c.1560
Oil on panel, frame 77.2 x 67cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 404604



Fig. 28
Girolamo Romanino (c.1484–c.1560),
Portrait of a Man, c.1515–17
Oil on panel, frame 92.1 x 68.9cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 406370



Fig. 29 (far left)
Benozzo Gozzoli (c.1421–97),
The Fall of Simon Magus, c.1461–2
Tempera on panel, frame 39.7 × 49cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403372
and
Bernardo Daddi (active c.1312/20–c.1348),
The Marriage of the Virgin, c.1339–42
Tempera on panel, frame 30 × 34.8cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 406768

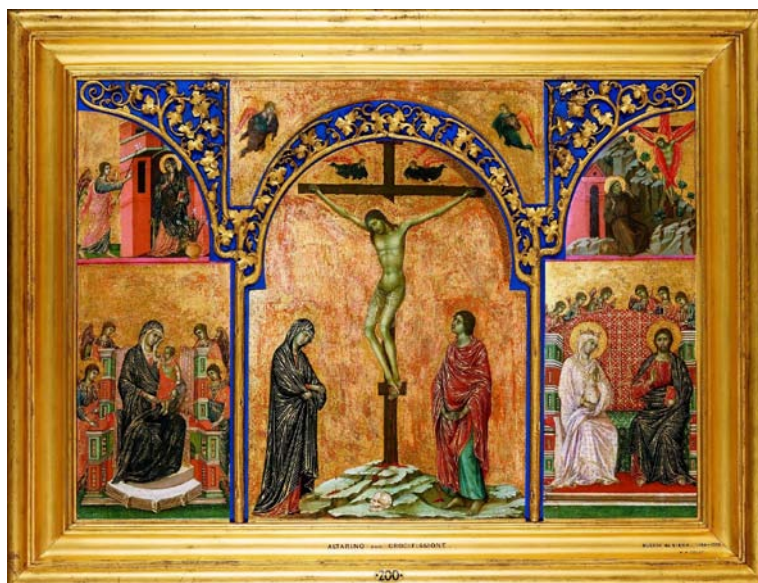
Fig. 30 (left)
Bernardo Daddi
(active c.1312/20–c.1348),
The Marriage of the Virgin, c.1339–42
Tempera on panel,
frame 30 × 34.8cm (detail)
Royal Collection, RCIN 406768

for which was made on 7 April 1846; [fig. 31](#)), and the Master of the Misericordia's *Calvary*; and *The Madonna with Eight Saints*, bought by Queen Victoria as by Andrea di Cione (from Warner Ottley in 1846, payment for it being disbursed on 16 July 1846; [fig. 32](#)).



Fig. 31 (far left)
Attributed to Zanobi Strozzi (1412–68),
The Madonna of Humility with Angels,
c.1440–50
Tempera and tooled gold on panel,
frame 111.1 × 70.25cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 400039

Fig. 32 (left)
Master of the Misericordia (active
c.1360–c.1385), *Calvary and the Virgin
Enthroned with Eight Saints*, c.1380–85
Tempera on panel, frame 112.7 × 75.1cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403954



The early Italian Gothic revival frames have a broad Gothic arch set into a rectangular frame. A broad flat is decorated with scrolling tendrils against a vivid blue; the broad flutes within the upper spandrels above are also blue.⁵⁹ The design recalls fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian engaged frames, such as that around Pesellino's *Coronation of the Virgin* (above the door on the left). Symmetrically above the Gothic revival frames are the two bust-length paintings of *Saint Stephen* and *Saint Lawrence* by Ambrogio Bergognone's workshop. Other frames in the room repeat the blue decoration, for example the Master of the Johnston Magdalen tondo depicting *The Virgin and Child and Saints* (fig. 33), bought from Metzger as by Andrea Verrocchio, which, as can be seen in the mirror in the Roberts watercolour, has elaborate fruit and flower decoration in compo. The bead and husk decoration also was used for the Francia frame (fig. 27). The frame for the Master of Marradi *Christ and Saint John* purchased from Ottley in 1846 no longer exists, but the Roberts watercolour records that Prince Albert hung it below the Pesellino fragment of *Saints Mamas and James* and that it used to have a square frame with blue decoration. The Duccio triptych, acquired by Prince Albert through Gruner in April 1846 from Metzger at the same time as the Zanobi Strozzi, has similar blue and gold decoration and is likely to have been made by the same framemaker as the Zanobi Strozzi (fig. 34). The triptych is fixed in one plane in a plain hollow frame with carved vine leaf ornament against a bright blue background. This has a powerful effect on the triptych, flattening it in one dimension and denying the careful perspective of the wings. The bars of the frame are now living trunks from which the vine grows, emphasising the fact that the cross has knots and stumps of wood and that it, too, was once a tree but has become the tree of life.

Fig. 33
Frame for Master of the Johnson Magdalen
(c.1485–1515), *The Virgin and Child and
Saints*, c.1500–1505
159.2 x 158.7cm (detail)
Royal Collection, RCIN 405685

Fig. 34
Duccio (active 1278 – before 1319)
and assistants, *Triptych: The Crucifixion
and Other Scenes*, c.1302–8, with frame
designed by Prince Albert
Tempera on panel, frame 63 x 82.2cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 400095

There is similar blue in the frame of the Friedrich Overbeck drawing *Religion Glorified by the Fine Arts* (1840; [fig. 35](#)), which was purchased from the artist in Rome by Ludwig Gruner in 1847 and presented to Queen Victoria by Prince Albert in the same year. It is recorded as hanging in the Small Drawing Room on the ground floor at Osborne by 1876. The drawing was framed according to the Prince's instructions, except for the fact that the title was given on the frame in English rather than in German.⁶⁰ The frame is probably not English but German, with its applied gilded metal ornament on the blue background ([fig. 36](#)).



Fig. 35 (below left)
Friedrich Overbeck (1789–1869),
Religion glorified by the Fine Arts, c.1840
Pencil and chalk on three pieces of cream
paper; frame 184 × 163.7cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 452387

Fig. 36 (below)
Detail of fig. 35

Prince Albert and frames for his Cranachs

Prince Albert was particularly interested in the work of the early German painter Lucas Cranach the Elder, adding about 15 paintings associated with that artist to the Royal Collection. The Pages' Waiting Room ([fig. 37](#)) was hardly a prepossessing space for paintings so important to the collector, but the room was centrally placed on the first floor of the Pavilion and was a key point of intersection in the life of Osborne House. It was hung with six Cranachs, three more reproduced on porcelain, *The Virgin and Child* by Gentile da Fabriano (now on loan to the National Gallery) and two Netherlandish paintings.⁶¹ Since Gruner had acquired *Apollo and Diana* from Mr Campe of Nuremberg and Mrs Nicholls had sold *Lucretia* to Prince Albert, both in 1844, Prince Albert must have approved the design of these identical frames ([figs](#)



Fig. 37
Jabez Hughes (1819–84),
The Pages' Waiting Room, 1876
Albumen print in Osborne 1876 Album
Royal Collection, RCIN 1114808



38, 39). These are amongst the more unusual frames of the Victorian period, being Jacobean revival in style, with elaborate composition ornament on pine bases. The frames were made from an identical mould but the *Lucretia* frame is less solid and may not have been made at the same time, or possibly by a workshop assistant. Fruit, flowers and two towers are the more ornate touches to the *Apollo and Diana* frame. The sources for such ornament can be traced back to Fontainebleau, popularised by Netherlandish prints such as those by the sixteenth-century artist Hans Vredeman de Vries. Particularly comparable are designs in the latter's *Multarum variarumque protractionum* (*compartimenta vulgus pictorum vocat*) (Antwerp, Gerard de Jode, 1555; **figs 40–43**) and *Variarum protractionum* (*vulgo Compartimenta vocant*) (Antwerp, Gerard de Jode, 1555).

Fig. 38 (above left)
Lucas Cranach the Elder (c.1472–1553),
Apollo and Diana, c.1526 (RCIN 407294)
and *Lucretia*, 1530 (RCIN 400050) hanging
in the Pages' Waiting Room

Fig. 39 (above)
Detail of fig. 38

Figs 40–43 (below)
Plate from Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527–?1606),
Multarum variarumque protractionum (*compartimenta
vulgus pictorum vocat*) *libellus utilissimus / iam recens
delineatus per Iohannem Vreedmannum Frisium.* –
Antuerpiae: Gerardus Iudaeus, 1555.
facsimile edition Brussels 1870
Warburg Institute Library, London



Who made the frames for Prince Albert's Renaissance paintings?

The frames themselves for Albert's Renaissance paintings do not give any clues as to their makers. Two ledgers in the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, dating from 1840 to 1862 list Prince Albert's private accounts, but there are no related vouchers or bills giving details of the payments.⁶² His skill as a designer and his knowledge of art were widely acknowledged.

It is hard to relate the extraordinary designs of the frames at Osborne to the often prosaic frames produced by Ponsonby and Thomas for the other royal residences. However, their names – particularly that of Ponsonby – appear frequently in both Queen Victoria's main accounts and Prince Albert's private ones.⁶³ Ponsonby's name is associated with a number of gifts: on 11 March 1844 he was paid £131 44s for picture frames for presents from the Separate Reserve Fund Account, and on 25 June 1847 the sum of £101 12s, again for picture frames.⁶⁴ After 1846 payments were often made from this account to furnish Osborne. On 16 July 1845 Ponsonby was paid £51 10s 4d from Prince Albert's private account for frames for Osborne.⁶⁵ It may be coincidental, but payments to either Thomas or Ponsonby frequently follow the purchase of a work of art: for example, on 7 April 1846 there is payment of £190 to Mr Gruner for the Duccio triptych and painting by Fra Angelico, followed on 25 April by £22 1s 6d to Ponsonby.⁶⁶ The payment to Warner Ottley on 16 July 1846 for four paintings is followed on 22 July by a payment to Mr Thomas of £55 10s 6d for frames.⁶⁷ The payment of £200 to Gruner for pictures on 16 June 1847 is followed on 25 June by the large sum of £184 9s 6d to Mr Ponsonby, and after Gruner's purchase of a Cranach 29 June 1854 there is £9 15s 6d paid to Thomas for frames on 17 July.⁶⁸

Ludwig Gruner – frame designer?

Prince Albert's payment to Gruner of £46 8s for 'various frames' on 10 January 1848 is worth noting, too, in the present discussion.⁶⁹ He was an accomplished designer, immersed in ancient and Renaissance art throughout his career; but the question remains as to whether he was involved in the design of the frames for Prince Albert's Renaissance paintings. He did draw two alternative designs for frames for the Dresden version of Holbein's *Meyer Madonna*, neither of which seems to have been used; these are now in the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden.⁷⁰ To date no frame designs have been identified as being designed by Gruner for Prince Albert.

In the wide range of his designs Gruner often liked to combine blue and gold, as in the group of frames for his early Italian paintings. The gilt coffered ceilings in the Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, especially the magnificent one in Isabella d'Este's *studiolo*, had



Fig. 44
Plate from Ludwig Gruner (1801–82),
'Part of a carved ceiling in the Palazzo Vecchio
at Mantua', from *Specimens of ornamental art
selected from the best models of the classical
approach*, London 1850
Chromolithograph with hand colouring,
65.2 x 51.6cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 1192825



Fig. 45
Elkington Mason & Co. (1842–61),
manufacturer; Ludwig Gruner (1801–82),
designer, *Jewel cabinet*, 1851
Electro-plated white metal, gilt bronze,
enamelled copper, porcelain and oak,
97 x 132 x 81 cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 1562

inspired sixteenth-century Italian framemakers and nineteenth-century designers.⁷¹ Gruner included the design of one of the ceilings in his *Specimens of Ornamental Art Selected from the best models of the Classical Approach*, published in 1850 (fig. 44). Like other designers of this period, Gruner combined the bright colours and gold found in Italian Renaissance architecture and paintings, and was inspired by Renaissance and Antique ornament (such as in the House of Nero in Rome). These elements are seen in his cabinet of 1851 (fig. 45), in his illustrations of the decorations of the Garden



Fig. 46 (far left)
Ludwig Gruner (1801–82) and Anna Brownell Jameson (1794–1860),
The Decorations of the Garden Pavilion in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, London 1845
Royal Collection, RCIN 708005

Fig. 47 (left)
Arthur Croft (1828–c.1901),
Royal Mausoleum, Frogmore, 1863
Watercolour and bodycolour with gold painting and gum arabic over pencil, 42.2 x 47.2cm
Royal Collection, RL 19739

Pavilion (fig. 46) and the interior of the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore (fig. 47). The scrolling leaves on the Italian frames and the swags of fruit and strapwork on the Cranach ones echo ornament designs in Gruner's pattern books, for example in *Vorlagen für Ornamentmalerei: Motive aller Stylarten, von der Antike bis zur neuesten Zeit* of 1873 (figs 48–50). The Jacobean motifs on the Cranach frames can also be found in ornament designs, for example in *Die decorative Kunst. Beiträge zur Ornamentik für Architectur und Kunstgewerbe*, published in 1879 (fig. 51).



Figs 48–50
Plate from Albert von Zahn, Ludwig Gruner and Elisabeth Hübler, *Vorlagen für Ornamentmalerei: Motive aller Stylarten, von der Antike bis zur neuesten Zeit*, London 1873

Contemporary designs and motifs

The fashion for transferring the sinuous forms of nature into ornament can also be found in Henry Whitaker's *Materials for a new style of ornamentation* of 1849 (fig. 52) and in his *The Practical cabinet maker & upholsterer's treasury of design* published two years earlier (fig. 53). This 1847 publication is mainly comprised of designs for furniture in the Italian, Elizabethan and Renaissance styles. The designs for glass frames, tables and sideboards in the Elizabethan style have fruit and strapwork



Fig. 51
Plate from Ludwig Gruner, *Die decorative Kunst. Beitrage zur Ornamentik für Architectur und Kunstgewerbe*, London 1879

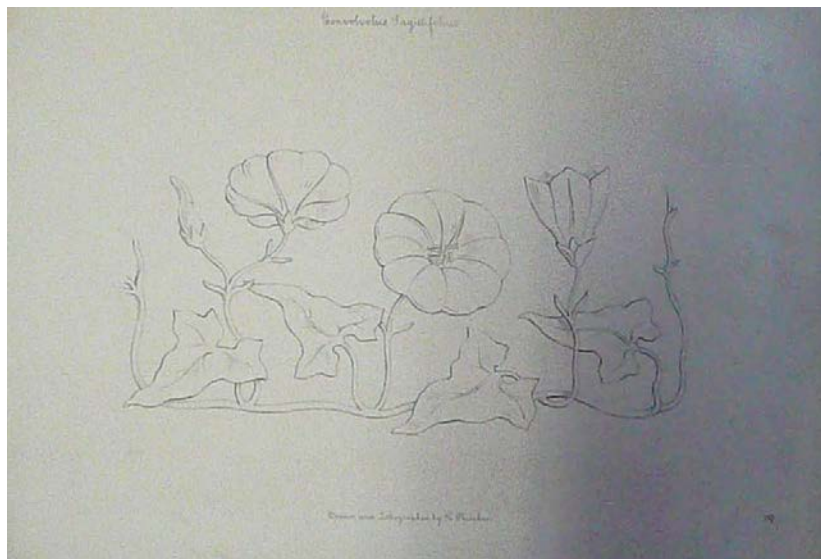
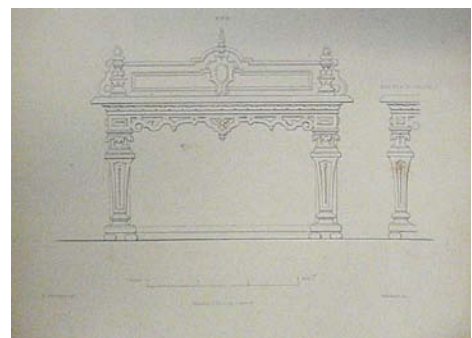
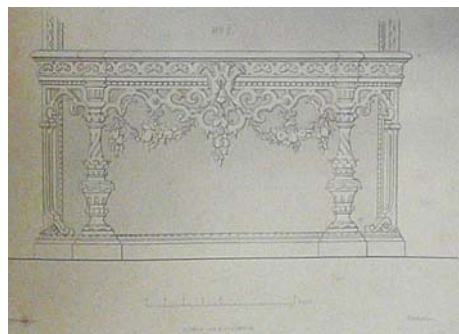
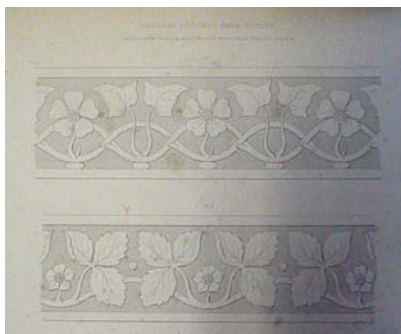


Fig. 52
Illustration from Henry Whitaker, *Materials for a new style of ornamentation, consisting of botanical subjects and compositions drawn from nature*, London 1849



Figs 53–8 (above)
Plates from Henry Whitaker, *The Practical cabinet maker & upholsterer's treasury of designs*, London 1847

that is very similar to that on the Cranach frames (figs 54–6). The publication also has designs for furniture for Osborne, including a hall table and chair; but these are in the Italian style, which was perhaps regarded as more appropriately formal for a royal residence than the Elizabethan or Renaissance styles (figs 57, 58). The frame designs for Prince Albert's paintings would have complemented the Holland & Sons furniture which was supplied en masse around 1850–51; the firm also supplied chimneypieces, but not frames for paintings.

Three Jacobean revival frames have been found which can be compared with Cranach frames. Joseph Nash's watercolour of *The Porch at Montacute House*, Somerset of 1842 (fig. 59),⁷² has a very similar frame, complementing the architectural style of the Elizabethan exterior in the painting. Almost identical to this is the frame in Pollok House around the painting of a *Girl with a Dove* attributed to Anton Raphael Mengs (fig. 60).⁷³ Sir Willam Stirling Maxwell, the owner of Pollok House, who was collecting Old Masters from 1842 to about 1855, reframed many of his collection in this type of frame, probably in the 1850s, but this is the only one still at Pollok. The idea of a rod with a wrap-over creating internal gaps in the frame is also found in the more elaborate Royal Collection Cranach frames.

A small frame which is carved rather than compo was supplied by George Cooper of 36 Piccadilly, where the firm is recorded between 1821 and 1847, for Frederick Read's watercolour copy of *James I* (fig. 61) by Paul van Somer at Ham House. The frame's Jacobean style again matches the subject of the picture. George Cooper, a business continued by several generations with the same name, was better known for looking-glasses and is often described as a 'Japanner' in bills and estimates at this date. The firm and supplied and renovated furniture at Windsor Castle.⁷⁴

Oettingen-Wallerstein frames

The frames around many of the Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection pictures that remain in the Royal Collection are also a puzzle. A few retain their original frames or those put on before they arrived in this country, but the majority were reframed in the same distinctive gilded frames in a *cavetto* pattern with crossed rails (fig. 62). The collection of 79 paintings that had belonged to Prince Ludwig Oettingen Wallerstein was acquired by Prince Albert in lieu of a loan repayment.⁷⁵ The collection was hung for some time in Kensington Palace, and in 1848 a descriptive catalogue of the collection 'belonging to His Serene Highness Prince Louis D'Oettingen Wallerstein' was published by Gruner. The 'pictures forming the Wallerstein Gallery at Kensington Palace' were insured on 28 December 1850 by Prince Albert and the Royal Household.⁷⁶ Despite this, attempts were made on behalf of Oettingen Wallerstein to interest the National Gallery in buying the collection in 1851 and 1852.⁷⁷ The National Gallery Board of Trustees Minutes record that the National Gallery declined this offer on 5 April 1852.

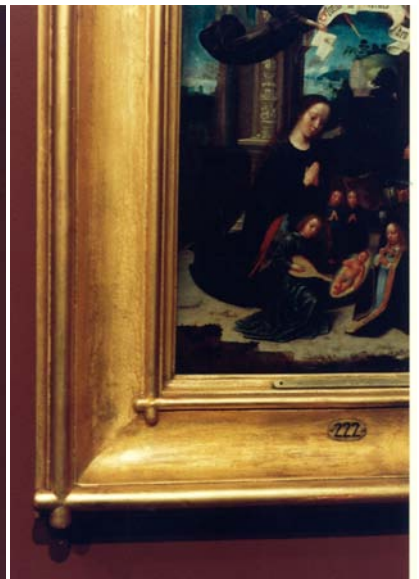
As the collection had come into his possession, Prince Albert commissioned Gustav Waagen to write *A descriptive catalogue of A Collection of Byzantine, Early Italian, German and Flemish Pictures, belonging to His Royal Highness Prince Albert* in 1854. In 1857 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert loaned 94 works to the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition,⁷⁸ more than any other lender, and the Oettingen Wallerstein Collection formed a significant part of sections on 'German and Flemish Art', 'Paintings by Ancient Masters', and the 'Byzantine and Italian Schools'.⁷⁹



Fig. 59
Joseph Nash (1808–78), *The Porch at Montacute House*, Somerset, 1842
Watercolour, 75.5 × 53.4cm
London, Victoria and Albert Museum



Fig. 60
Attributed to Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–79), *Girl with a Dove*,
Oil on canvas, frame 90 × 76cm
Pollok House, The National Trust
for Scotland © National Trust for Scotland



After Prince Albert's death Queen Victoria offered the Oettingen Wallerstein Collection to the National Gallery and 25 paintings were selected in 1863. All but one of these had been shown at the *Art Treasures* exhibition, together with 20 of the 54 paintings in the Oettingen Wallerstein group that remain in the Royal Collection.⁸⁰ The paintings were all removed from Kensington Palace in January 1863 and the 54 declined by Eastlake on behalf of the National Gallery were returned to Buckingham Palace on 3 July.⁸¹ At this point many were hung in the Chapel Gallery and have an 1866 brand on the back (fig. 63). Meanwhile, Mr Pinti restored the 25 National Gallery paintings and the frames 'were received, regilt & altered',⁸² probably by Henry Critchfield: the National Gallery still has seven frames from this set of paintings, which have some variation in composition ornament but are in the same style and can all be attributed to Critchfield (fig. 64).⁸³ One of these, formerly on the Netherlandish depiction of *The Virgin and Child in a Landscape* (NG 1864), has an 1857 Manchester *Art Treasures* label on its slip, although it is likely that the slip was reused and that the frame itself dates from after the painting arrived at the National Gallery.

Fig. 61 (above left)
Frederick Read (1800–1875), *James I*,
c.1830–75, with frame by George Cooper
Watercolour; frame 80 x 51 cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 451631

Fig. 62 (above centre) and detail (above right)
The Monogramist G.B.
(possibly Guillaume Benson,
d. before December 1574),
The Nativity, c.1544–74?
Oil on panel, frame 57 x 50.5 cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 405785



Fig. 63
1866 brand found on the backs of
frames and furniture, possibly connected
to an inventory which is now lost



Fig. 64 (left)
Workshop of Dirk Bouts (c.1400–1475),
*Mater Dolorosa from Diptych: Christ and the
Virgin*, c.1470–75, with frame attributed to
Henry Critchfield (c.1823–87)
Oil on oak panel, painting 36.8 x 27.9cm
National Gallery, London, NG 711

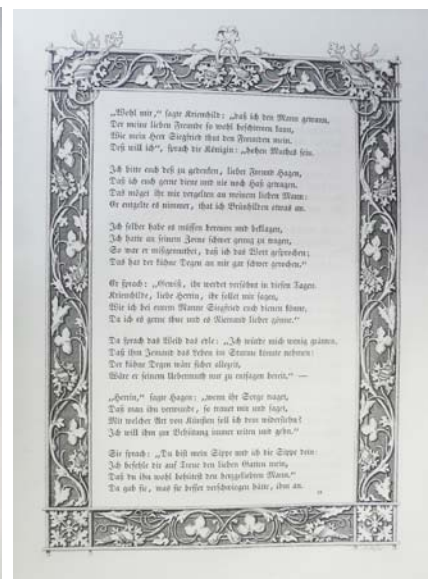


Fig. 65 (above centre)
South German frame, Schwangau, c.1849
80 x 62cm

Fig. 66 (above right)
Oxford frames on the wall in the
Luttrell Arms, Dunster, c.1870

Many of the Royal Collection frames with crossed rails also have Manchester *Art Treasures* labels on their backs; it is unlikely that all of these were transferred from previous frames – unfortunately the early paintings galleries in the *Art Treasures* exhibition were not photographed by Delamotte, so we have no record of the frames around these paintings.⁸⁴ The frames are keyed and of pine, indicating that they are English rather than German. At some point between about 1851 and 1857 Prince Albert must have had these paintings reframed. A payment of £224 17s to 'Mr E. Wyatt' from Ludwig Gruner's bank account, dated 13 November 1847 (archives of Coutts Bank, London), may refer to Edward Wyatt, successor of his father, Edward senior (1757–1833), who supplied frames and other carved work to George III and George IV.⁸⁵ This payment, however, was made a year before Prince Ludwig had Gruner publish his 1848 catalogue of his collection and is probably too early to record a reframing by Prince Albert. No other record of a large reframing payment has been found.

The Oettingen-Wallerstein frames are English, but Gruner may have been involved in their design since the closest comparison is a German frame, gold on blue, produced in the region of Schwangau in about 1849 (**fig. 65**); neo-Gothic became fashionable here, when the castle of Hohenschwangau was refurbished in the 1830s.⁸⁶ A highly adaptable and economic design, the most common English version of the frame, seen in a small photograph of about 1870 (**fig. 66**), is the so-called 'Oxford' frame,



after the Oxford Movement. The crossed rails motif is also found in the decorative borders in Gotthard Oswald Marbach's *Das Nibelungenlied*, illustrated by Eduard Bendemann and Julius Hübner and published in Leipzig in 1840 (figs 67–9).⁸⁷

A copy of these German tales and legends was given to the Prince Consort and bears the bookstamp of his private library. The decorative leaves and scrolling foliage in the borders, part of a Europe-wide fashion in the 1840s and 1850s, is also close to the ornament on the frames for the Italian paintings (fig. 25).

Figs 67–9
Pages from Gotthard Oswald Marbach
(1810–90), *Das Nibelungenlied* Date?
Royal Collection, RCIN 1050651

Concluding remarks

Prince Albert was interested in the design of new frames to enhance paintings in his collection and their display. He liked to create order and unity by repeating the same design or style throughout a hang, or more subtly varying an idea, both in grand, public settings such as the Picture Gallery in Buckingham Palace and in his private rooms in Osborne. We have no evidence that he appreciated period frames, as Eastlake and Wornum did at this time. We do have some of the distinctive and flamboyant frames chosen by him to complement his Italian and Northern Renaissance paintings, their designs being in a Gothic revival style popular in the 1840s and 1850s. Prince Albert's taste for early Italian and Northern Renaissance art was unusual for his time, as was his preference for frames in a new style. Their combination, on display in his private apartments, embodied his most private and personal taste.

Notes

1. Royal Archives, RA PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/5/4194: Letter from W.B. Spence to Hon. Col. Charles Gray, dated 30 October 1853. The Fra Angelico is attributed to his workshop *Christ Blessing* (RCIN 407616) and is on loan to the National Gallery, London. The National Gallery acquired 22 paintings from the Lombardi-Baldi Collection in 1857; see Davis 1986 pp. 565–7. I am very grateful to Jill Kelsey, Deputy Registrar, Royal Archives, for her assistance with this paper and also to her colleagues Allison Derrett, Lynnette Beech and Laura Hobbs in for their help.
2. Exhibition of Art Treasures Report 1859, p. 17.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
4. Uwins 1852; Noble 1993, pp. 102–75.
5. The National Archives, NA LC9/405: 10 September 1850 (Thomas – Carver and Gilder – Estimate – Buckingham Palace – 953.0.0 – 185 Frames for the ‘Gallery Pictures’); and LC11/134 p. 44: Quarter ending 31 December 1850; Noble 1993, pp. 171–2. Although most frames were supplied by William Thomas (1822–64), that for Willem van de Velde the Younger’s *The ‘Gouden Leeuw’ at Sea in Heavy Weather* (RCIN 405324) bears the label of William Brooks (1828–65). Thomas reduced their charge of £1,053 by £100 in consideration of the ‘old frames’ they were allowed to keep. This was probably the value of the Regency frames, whose gilding would have been recovered. On this point see Noble 1993, p. 175 n. 14; Marsden 2010, p. 46.
6. TNA LC 11/144 Bills and Sundries I, p. 53: Quarter ending 31 December 1850 (£13 3s 0d).
7. Moltke 1896, vol. 2, p. 89. Molke was aide-de-camp to Prince Frederick William of Prussia, and was in London for the marriage of the Prince and to Victoria, Princess Royal. Noble 1993, p. 172.
8. RA LC/LCO/AR/1857/8; Lloyd and Remington 1996, pp. 23–4; Remington 2010, vol. 1, pp. 24–5.
9. RA LC/LCO/AR/1852/6, 24 January 1853; TNA: LC 11/139 fols 95–6, 145; LC 11/139 (1851–5); LC 11/136 (1855); LC 11/137 (1857); LC 11/152–5 (1858); LC 11/161 (1860); LC9/ (1851–8).
10. Remington 2010, vol. 1 pp. 24–5.
11. H. Roberts 2009, pp. 824–9; Remington 2010, vol. 1 pp. 25–7.
12. Avery-Quash and Sheldon 2011, pp. 167–8.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 138–9, 159–62; S. Avery Quash, ‘Incessant personal exertions and comprehensive artistic knowledge’: Prince Albert’s Interest in Early Italian Art’ and S. Foister, ‘Prince Albert’s German pictures’ in the present online collection of essays.
14. Avery Quash and Sheldon 2011, pp. 158–9. The acquisition of the Lombardi-Baldi Collection in 1857 was justified in the *Report of the Director of the National Gallery for 1857/8* (printed in 1867), reprinted in Davis 1986, pp. 565–7: ‘The unsightly specimens of Margaritone and the earliest Tuscan painters were selected solely for their historical importance, and as showing the rude beginnings from which, through nearly two centuries and a half, Italian art slowly advanced to the period of Raphael and his contemporaries.’
15. M. Clayton, ‘Prince Albert’s Raphael Collection’, in Marsden 2010, pp. 176–7.
16. National Gallery Archives, NGA 2/3/3/1. I would like to thank Alan Crookham of the National Gallery Archives, Louisa Davey, Framing Department, and Susanna Avery-Quash, Research Curator, for their generous help with this part of my research.
17. NGA, NG1/4: National Gallery Board Minutes, 16 November 1857.
18. NGA, NGA2/3/3/1: 31 October 1857; 17 November 1857; 23 November 1857; 14 January 1858.

19. For Henry Critchfield, see *British picture framemakers*. See also Penny 2004, pp. 25, 127, 245, 288–90. For nineteenth-century frames at the National Gallery: *Framing Italian Renaissance Paintings*; Penny 1997, pp. 44–52; Penny 1998, pp. 376–7. I am very grateful to Louisa Davey for generously sharing her knowledge of nineteenth-century frames in the National Gallery.
20. NGA, NGA2/3/2/13:Wornum Diary, 8 December 1859, 'made a design for a frame for the Lorenzo Costa'; 7 January 1860, 'Received the frame for the Lorenzo Costa, quite satisfactory, though not architectural'.
21. Penny 2004, p. 25.
22. NGA, NGA2/3/2/13:Wornum Diary, 19 December 1862.
23. NGA, NG1/4: National Gallery Board Minutes, 12 November 1855, p. 5; *Framing Italian Renaissance Paintings*, p. 2.
24. Penny 2004, pp. 329–30.
25. Mündler 1985, p. 92, 5 January 1856: 'To Zen, where we passed upwards of 2 hours, and succeeded in finding 6 frames, adapted to as many out of the Galvagna pictures'. NG5/127/1856 Bill from A. Zen, Venice 2 April 1856; Bartolomeo Veneto, *Ludovico Martinengo* (NG 287) has a frame supplied by Antonio Zen, but made up of fragments, Penny 2004, pp. 8–9.
26. NGA, NGA2/3/2/13:Wornum Diary, 25 September 1856.
27. Wornum 1864, p. 218.
28. Penny 2004, p. 355.
29. *British picture framemakers*; Beard and Gilbert 1986; O. Millar 1992. Other firms employed were: George Jackson & Sons, Rathbone Place, London, for frames and glass frames; James Spencer & Son, Knightsbridge Green, London; Edward Wyatt & Sons; George Cooper & Son; Armstrong & Smith.
30. TNA LC 11/128, p. 90: Quarter ending 30 June 1845. The papier mâché manufacturer, including picture frames, mouldings and ornament, was C.F. Bielefeld, 15 Wellington Street North, Strand. In this instance Bielefeld provided a flower and a frame with 'the woodwork all Gilt, the ornament Oak ... £5.10'.
31. O. Millar 1992, no. 916 (RCIN 403843) Thomas Ponsonby label on frame, 'REGENT CIRCUS PICCADILLY'; no. 827 (RCIN 406995) Thomas Ponsonby label on frame, 'THAMES GLASS WAREHOUSE'.
32. RA PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/65/4325; O. Millar 1992, nos 881 (RCIN 408903) and 1001 (RCIN 403895); *British picture framemakers*.
33. O. Millar 1992, vol. 1, no. 955; RA PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/65/4260 (£41 10s 0d).
34. RA PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/20/7236. The date on the invoice itself is 23 December 1856, the cheque is dated 9 January 1857 and the invoice was received on 12 January 1857.
35. T LC 11/134, p. 49: Quarter ending 31 December 1850.
36. TNA LC 11/134, p. 148: Quarter ending 31 March 1850.
37. TNA LC 11/134, p. 149: Quarter ending 30 June 1850: 'Buckingham Palace For China pictures: 2 very elaborately carved Frames venetian character bold flowing scroll with alternate ruffles & laying a richly engraved ground & each frame surmounted with its proper heraldic bearing carved in Lime Tree & entwined with Branches of Palm and Laurel leaves, all the depths of these frames finished in burnished gold & the matted parts in the full rich coloured ormolu as described by HRH, 46-16-0'. RA PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/23/7845. RA PP/2 7845, 6 July 1857.
38. TNA LC 11/134, p. 145: Quarter ending 30 September 1847, 3 September:

39. TNA LC 11/134, p. 47: Quarter ending 30 September 1850, 2 September.
40. TNA LC 11/134, p. 146: Quarter ending 31 December 1847, 24 November: Ponsonby's estimates for 'A gilt Panel Ornament covered with Trellis patterns and pateras on the joints mounted to H.R.H Prince Albert's Approval & finished in "Best B." gold with silvered stars at the back. 7-10-0'.
41. RA, MRH/Supt WC/Bills: Quarter ending 31 December 1850, p. 19; TNA LC 9/405 9 October 1850; TNA LC 11/134: Quarter ending 31 December 1850, pp. 47–8; Roberts, 2009, p. 826.
42. Label on frame 'J.P.Schneider j.r./VERGOLDER / Schnurgasse No 48 / FRANKFURT A/M.'
43. RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED/1851, p. 173, 16 June 1851.
PA LEDGERS, p. 173, 16 June 1851.
44. Label on frame: JOSEPH GREEN / Plate Glass Dealer / Carver Gilder / Looking Glass Picture / AND / FANCY: WOODFRAME MAKER / Window Service [?] and ... (torn off). See *British picture framemakers*; O. Millar 1992, no. 486; A. Reynolds in London 2010, no. 54.
45. Label on back. I am much indebted to the helpful suggestions about the frames in the exhibition *Victoria and Albert: Art and Love* (The Queen's Gallery, London 2010), made by Michael Gregory, Nick Penny, Michael Field and Stephanie Carlton. Alex Buck has provided much helpful advice and assistance on frames in the Royal Collection.
46. RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED/1845, p. 51, 12 August, 'August 12 1845 Mr Dyce Picture of Virgin and Child £80.0.0' (in List of Pictures, 11 August 1845); and Prince Albert commissioned *St Joseph* in 1846, RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED/1846: p. 59, 25 May, 'May 25 1846 'Companion to Madonna and Child £80.0.0' (in List of Pictures, 25 May 1846).
47. RA VIC/ADDC12/23: Dyce, 9 August 1845, 'The frame from which the picture now is, is an old one but as it seems to suit the picture very well, it might ... be regilt'; O. Millar 1992, nos 227, 228.
48. There are no framemakers' labels on the frames.
49. RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED/1847, p. 67, 22 March.
50. See J. Simon in *Directory of British Picture Frame Makers*.
51. Jagow, 1938, pp. 19-20.
52. Waagen, 1838, vol. 2, pp. 121-131. S. Avery Quash in Gordon, 2003, pp. xxv-xxvi; J. Shearman xiv-xv.
53. **Metzger**: Duccio, 400095 JS 86, Bernardo Daddi, 406768 JS 79; Fra Angelico 403377 JS 8; workshop of Ambrogio Bergognone 406339 and 406 338 JS 41,42; Marco Palmezzano 405472 JS 182; Zanobi Strozzi 400039 JS 252; Francesco and Bernardino ? Zaganelli 406294 JS 327; attributed to Master of the Johnston Magdalen 405685 JS 216; after Leonardo da Vinci 404668 JS 136. **Ottley**: Benozzo Gozzoli 403372 JS 132; Gentile da Fabriano 407614 JS 111; Master of the Misericordia 403954 JS 154; Pesellino 407613 JS 196; Pesellino and workshop 403385 JS 197; workshop of Jacopo di Cione 403483 JS 135; attributed to the Master of Marradi 403484 JS 153. **Cianfanelli**: attributed to Sebastiano Mainardi 403027 JS 150; attributed to Raffaellino del Garbo 406697 JS 215; follower of Francesco Francia 404604 JS 98. **Melzi**: Giulio Cesare Procaccini 402738 JS 212; workshop of Ambrogio Bergognone 403940 JS 40; **Minardi** Giovanni Battista Cima 407288 JS 71; Parentino 403487 JS 184.
54. TNA LCI 11/134 p. 71: Quarter ending 31 December 1846, John Dickson, Joiner; ordered and invoiced 23 November 1846 'For cases to Pack Pictures for Osborne R. Cripps £1 – 15 - 1½'.
55. RA VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1845: Queen Victoria's Journal, 20 June 1845; O. Millar in Lloyd 1991, p. 25; O. Millar 1992 pp. xxxv–xxxvi.
56. *Catalogue* (Osborne) 1876, pp. 84–90.
57. John Shearman, proposed that the wax seal, partly defaced, with ducal coronet and six *palle* in the right half, suggested a provenance from the Medici Collection in Florence and that the seal could be that of the Electress Palatine Anna Maria Luisa, last of the Medici, who died in 1743, bequeathing all the family collection to the next Grand Duke (Shearman 1983, no. 215).

58. Noted in List of Pictures; 'Bought at Rome 1839, Paulo Veronese, Portrait of a Child of a Noble Family £40'.
59. The frames for the Zanobi Strozzi, the Master of the Misericordia and the Duccio were skilfully restored in the Marlborough House workshop by Stephen Sheasby, Perry Bruce-Mitford and Lizzie Parker; and by Michael Field and Stephanie Carlton in the Windsor Conservation Studio. For the Gothic frames the blue had been covered by gold – it was too much for twentieth-century taste. The Duccio triptych had been reframed so that it was not held flat in one plane when the painting was restored 1983–8.
60. There is no copy of the letter in the Royal Archives; it is summarised in Prince Albert's letter register RA VIC/ADDA10/77: 16 December 1847; K. Heard in Marsden 2010, no. 55
61. *Catalogue* (Osborne) 1876, pp. 69–71.
62. RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED.
63. Other names in RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED, RA PPTO/PP/QV/QVACC/JNL and RA PPTO/PP/QV/QVACC/LED: Mr Spencer; framemaker at Windsor, Mr Gregory, Mr Vokins (presumably John and William Vokins, 1837–1910).
64. RA PPTO/PP/QV/QVACC/JNL/1844: p. 262, 11 March, and RA PPTO/PP/QV/QVACC/JNL/1847: p. 268, 25 June.
65. RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED/1845: p. 49, 16 July.
66. RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED/1846: p. 57, 7 April and p. 58, 25 April.
67. RA PPTO/PP/QV/QVACC/JNL/1846: p. 191, 16 July (£270.0.0) and p. 192, 22 July, (Mr Thomas £55-10-6). The date of the purchase of the four paintings is 14 July 1846, not 16 July, in List of Pictures.
68. RA PPTO/PP/QV/QVACC/JNL/1847: p. 209, 16 June (Mr Gruner £200 0s 0d) and 25 June (Mr Ponsonby £184 9s 6d) and RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED/1854: p. 4, 29 June (Gruner £27 6s 0d) and p. 5, 17 July (Thomas).
69. RA PPTO/PP/PAPC/PAPCACC/LED/1848: p. 75, 10 January: '10 January 1848 Mr Gruner various frames 46-8-0'.
70. Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kupferstich-Kabinett, C 1982-120/1. I am very grateful to Jonathan Marsden for this information.
71. Penny 1998, pp. 379–80; Marsden 2010 pp. 19–20.
72. No. 1039-1873. I am very grateful to Michael Snodin and Mark Evans for this information.
73. Mengs *Girl with a Dove*, PL 104, on loan to Pollok house from the Maxwell family. The rods are wood covered in gesso. I am grateful to Nicholas Penny for telling me about this frame. I am indebted to Robert Ferguson, National Trust for Scotland, for providing me with invaluable information and images of the frame.
74. E.g., in 1846:TNA LC 11/131, p. 35: Quarter ending 31 March 1846; LC 11/ 132; p. 46: Quarter ending 30 June 1846; LC 11/ 133, p. 63: Quarter ending 30 September 1846. See also Cooper in *Directory of British framemakers*.
75. L. Campbell 1985, pp. xviii–l; L. Campbell 1998, p. 14.
76. RA VIC/ADDT/24. The policy itself runs from 28 December 1850 but is signed and dated 3 January 1851.
77. RA VIC/ADDT/25-29: Correspondence between Mr C. Neeser, on behalf of Oettingen-Wallerstein, and Lt-Colonel Phipps, Keeper of the Privy Purse and Treasurer to Prince Albert, 27 December 1850 to 22 March 1852. NGA, NG5/88/3, NG5/89/9, NG6/2/56: National Gallery letters 8/8/51, 31/3/52, 6/4/52 correspondence between Henry Mogford and Colonel Thwaites; L. Campbell 1998, p. 14.

78. Victoria Whitfield in Hunt and Whitfield 2007, p. 19.
79. Manchester 1857.
80. NG 720, workshop of Master of the Female Half-Lengths, *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt* was not included in the Manchester exhibition.
81. The paintings chosen by the National Gallery: NG622, NG701–723, NG1864.
82. NGA, NGA2/3/2/13:Wornum Diary, 28 March 1863. I am very grateful to Peter Schade and particularly Louisa Davey of the National Gallery framing Department for their help with the Oettingen-Wallerstein frames.
83. Louisa Davey suggests the following frames: NG73, NG622, NG711 (former frame), NG712 (former frame), NG719 (former frame), NG723 (former frame), NG1864 (former frame). The tacking line on the back of the frame for NG1864 (F 20202) is evidence of the cloth backing which Wornum arranged to have put on to protect paintings.
84. Delamotte, Album of photographs entitled *Recollections of the Art Treasures Exhibition at Manchester, 1857*.
85. My thanks to Jonathan Marsden for this reference.
86. Spindler 2007, pp. 107–8.
87. I am very grateful to Philip Ward-Jackson for this suggestion.

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