

ter the early death of Wilbraham, Caroline and Robert were re-united and married in a prominent public ceremony in St. Marylebone Parish Church, London. The couple secretly re-connected with their son, pointedly relocating during the last years of their life in order to live near him. Robert and Caroline's devotion to one another remained unwavering until their death, which occurred within weeks of one another.

The convincing account presented is backed by painstaking genealogical research. (Helpful family trees of the Howard, Bateman and Wilbraham clans aid the reader in tracking the various players and their connections). Surviving descendants were located and consulted, strengthening the case for this reconstruction of Robert Bateman's life. The narrative falters slightly in the art historical assessment of the period and Robert's place within it. For instance, the level of scandal associated with the Dudley Gallery due to Edward Burne-Jones' affair with Marie Zambaco and Simeon Solomon's fall from grace as an explanation of Bateman's choice to stop exhibiting there in 1874 is slightly exaggerated. There is also a tendency to over-read works of art, intuiting biographical details which, while plausible, are probably best not relied upon as fact. But these minor missteps do not alter the otherwise credible narrative constructed. The book is an important addition to the art and cultural history of this period as well as a darn good read!

Margaretta Frederick

Margaretta Frederick is the Chief Curator and Annette Woolard-Provine Curator of the Bancroft Collection of the Delaware Art Museum. She is also past president and current secretary of the William Morris Society in the United States.

WENDY PARKINS, *JANE MORRIS:
THE BURDEN OF HISTORY*,
EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2013.

A year after the publication of Frank Sharp and Jan Marsh's *Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, Wendy Parkins's *Jane Morris: The Burden of History* offers the first full-length work on its subject since Jan Marsh's 1986 *Jane and May Morris*. Parkins's approach is thematic rather than chronological, with chapters devoted to "Scandal," "Silence," "Class," "Icon," and "Home." As befits her post-structuralist commitments, Parkins often seems less concerned with discerning an elusive historical Jane than with deconstructing the varied ways she has been viewed, appropriated or misjudged by a long line of observers, biographers, and critics. Although at times the text's methodological digressions can impede its progress, the committed reader can glean much from Parkins's compendious marshalling of previous sources, her

zest for ferreting out contradictions, and her consistently engaged and spirited observations.

In chapter 1, "Scandal," Parkins sifts later attempts to conceal or probe evidence of Jane's two affairs, noting that Jane's own responses have been repeatedly occluded in favor of those of Rossetti. After a damning analysis of the Rossetti-worship which motivated Blunt's affair with Jane, she nonetheless concludes that Jane's "self-awareness as object of exchange between men complicates any simple portrait of either a proto-feminist heroine or a victim of patriarchal social structures" (52). In chapter 2, "Silence," Parkins attacks the view that Jane's proverbial reticence arose from self-absorption, documenting instances in which Jane demonstrated outgoing kindness, reflected on her own difficulties in expressing emotion, or minimized her health problems for the convenience of others. Chapter 3, "Class," considers Jane Morris's adaptations to a higher class status than that of her origins as "a process of the re-making of *habitus*" through acquiring new skills and an altered sense of self (91); to this end Parkins adduces Jane's avid reading habits, her friendships with reformist-minded women, her comments on current events, and her interest in alternate societies such as that of Richard Jeffries' *After London* and Albert K. Owen's utopian *Topolobampo*. Chapter 4, "Icon," catalogues the multiple instances in which Jane's appearance, dress and manner evoked stereotypes and attracted celebrity, noting her own role in shaping preferred responses and deflecting excesses. The final chapter, "Home," holds special interest in documenting Jane's artistic collaboration with her husband, her original decorative artwork, including handmade books, her efforts to "home-school" May and Jenny during their early years, her concern for Jenny's health, and her harmonious and loving relationship with May during their later years at Kelmscott Manor. *Jane Morris: The Burden of History* succeeds in defending Jane Morris's character and integrity against the class and gender biases which have obscured her agency in shaping her life, artistic persona, and later image. What Parkins dismisses as "traditional biography" remains a useful supplement to her approach, however, and readers may find a perusal of the *Collected Letters* a valuable complement—and on occasion a corrective—to Parkins's many insights.

Florence S. Boos

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Florence Boos's *History and Poetics: The Early Writings of William Morris* is scheduled to appear from Ohio State University Press in 2015.