

## DISCOVERING THE ITALIAN TRECENTO IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The growing interest in medievalism and the early Italian Renaissance during the course of the 19th century has, in recent years, become a developing area of study. The conference we propose is the second stage of a wider project focusing on the discovery and reception of the Italian *trecento* during this key century for British art. Unlike previous studies, our topic focuses on the age of Dante and Petrarch, Giotto and the Pisani which has hitherto attracted comparatively little scholarly attention. It covers such themes as the ways in which the concept of the 'primitive' changed during the 'long' nineteenth century, the century's interpretation of the age of the Italian city states and the way in which this period became an inspiration for the fine and applied arts and architecture of the day. The overall focus is interdisciplinary, the geographical scope European and North American and the period covers the late eighteenth century through to the early twentieth century. This long time-frame allows for a greater understanding of the changing approaches that developed, many of which were based on early writings and investigation by the British, both in Italy and at home. As is well documented, figures such as William Roscoe and women writers such as Maria Callcott, Elizabeth Eastlake and Mrs Jameson were highly influential in Europe and part of the international group of enthusiasts for this early period.

An initial conference held in March 2013 in London (National Gallery and Wallace Collection) introduced the main themes and shed light on some English and French collectors, writers on *trecento* artists and the role of dealers in the formation of collections. The November conference takes place at Warwick-in-Venice in partnership with the *Scuola dottorale interateneo in Storia delle Arti* (universities of Ca'Foscari, IUAV and Verona), and will be of benefit to MA and BA students in History of Art and History from Warwick, as well as Venice and Verona students, and participants of the London conference. It seeks to extend the discussion to consider the influence of the study of the *trecento* on the writing of history and on literary studies, not least the impact of connoisseurship on the study and interpretation of the *trecento*, thus picking up some of the points raised in the London conference but looking in greater detail at the early art historians and critics such as Passavant or Rumohr whose works were known and read in Britain. The overall emphasis will be on the relationships between English writers, historians and collectors with the European art world. We plan to publish the best papers from both conferences as a special journal issue.

Papers with special significance to British art focus on the interest of British artists in the writings of Dante and Petrarch and/or the impact of collections of Dante's work on connoisseurship; the writings of art historians and critics, with a strong focus on German writers, whose works were known and read in England, as well as a paper on Ruskin; the discovery of previously unknown or unappreciated authors, artists and buildings, sometimes local heroes; the importance of discovering *trecento* techniques for the artists of the Albert Memorial; and why the *trecento* was not so appreciated in the United States until much later. Walking Tours of Ruskin's Venice, Trecento Padua and Ruskin's Verona have been scheduled.