

MILLIONAIRE SHOPPING

THE COLLECTIONS OF
ALFRED MORRISON, 1821–1897

EDITED BY CAROLINE DAKERS



UCLPRESS

Millionaire Shopping



Imperial Cloisonné enamel double crane censers from the Yongzheng period (1723–35).

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 **UCLPRESS**

First published in 2025 by
UCL Press
University College London
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT

Available to download free: www.uclpress.co.uk

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from The British Library.



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Dakers, C. (ed.) 2025. *Millionaire Shopping: The collections of Alfred Morrison, 1821–1897*. London: UCL Press. <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781800089013>

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ISBN: 978-1-80008-899-3 (Hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-80008-900-6 (Pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-80008-901-3 (PDF)

ISBN: 978-1-80008-902-0 (epub)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781800089013>

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Richard Falkiner joined the staff of Glendining's, then the main numismatic auctioneers in the UK, in 1956. Two years later he joined Christie's, where he was in charge of numismatic auctions, remaining until 1972. His areas of expertise included antiquities and medieval, Renaissance sculpture, Islamic jewellery to about 1840 and Russian and Orthodox icons. His study *Investing in Antique Jewellery*, was published by

the Cresset Press in 1968 and remains an important resource. Freelance since 1972, his work has included identifying the Sevso treasure as Roman (the subject of a forthcoming publication), exposing as fake the medieval works of Greenhalge and major involvement in the Robin Symes case. He is a Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society, a member of the British Numismatic Society and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. He contributes regularly to the *Antiques Trade Gazette*. Since 1996, when the new Treasure Act was enacted, he has been frequently involved in treasure valuations of finds relating to this Act.

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His scholarly work centres on early modern material texts, annotated books and Renaissance travel writing and he has published articles in *Renaissance Studies*, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* and *The Library*. At the Morgan he has curated exhibitions on Beatrix Potter, Woody Guthrie, *The Little Prince* and Belle da Costa Greene. He is co-editor of the exhibition catalogue *Belle da Costa Greene: A Librarians' Legacy* and served as Project Co-Director of *The Letters of Belle da Costa Greene to Bernard Berenson*.

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Nicholas Tromans is an independent historian based in London. A specialist in nineteenth-century British painting, Tromans is the author or editor of books on David Wilkie, G. F. Watts, Orientalist painting, Richard Dadd and (with Susan Owens) Christina Rossetti. He has contributed chapters and articles to a wide range of books, catalogues and journals. His latest publications include an essay on the alienist Daniel Hack Tuke and his artist son, Henry Scott Tuke; 'Marginalia by Richard Dadd' in *History of Psychiatry* (Sage, 2020); and a book, *The Private Lives of Pictures: Art at Home in Britain c. 1800–1940* (Reaktion, 2022).

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Acknowledgements

At Fonthill, we must thank Alastair, Lord Margadale, the Hon. Mary Morrison, Vicky Macaskie and all the staff at the Fonthill Estate Office, John D'Arcy, archivist of the Fonthill Estate and Adrian Wroth (photography at Fonthill).

We have received financial support from the Marc Fitch Fund towards the publication by UCL Press, the Decorative Arts Society for the cost of images owned by Historic England, the Albert Dawson Educational Trust for the cost of a number of images and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art for a research grant for Molly-Claire Gillett's travel expenses.

Many institutions and individuals have generously provided us with images at no cost. Without such support, a book such as this would not be viable. We thank the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand; Beverley Art Gallery; H. Blairman & Sons Ltd; Bonham's auction house; the British Museum; Butchoff Antiques; Carlton Hobbs LLC; Christie's auction house; Fondation Custodia, Paris; the Fonthill Estate; Gallerie Kugel, Paris; Fay Garey; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles and Malibu; the Khalili Foundation; Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt; Lord and Lady Lloyd Webber; the Metropolitan Museum and the Morgan Library, New York; the Musée D'Orsay, Paris; the National Gallery, London; the National Gallery of Art, Washington; the National Museum of Ireland; the Royal Collection; Russell-Cotes Art Museum and Gallery, Bournemouth; Saint Louis Art Museum; Sefton Park Palmhouse, Liverpool; University of Sheffield Library; Sinai and Sons, Ltd; S. J. Phillips Ltd; Sotheby's auction house; James Graham-Stewart; Tisbury Local History Society; Walker Art Museum, Baltimore; and a number of private collections.

We owe special thanks to the late Dr Michael Darby for his extensive knowledge of and work on Owen Jones and to Dr Elisabeth Darby, to Charles Sebag-Montefiore and Dr Tom Stammers for acting as referees, to descendants of Alfred and Mabel Morrison including Rhoda Bucknill, to Lady Ashcombe and Derek Maddock at Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire, and to staff at Christie's and Sotheby's who have helped with our research.

This collaborative work would not have been possible without the generosity of the contributors, who all provided original work for no fee. As the editor, I particularly wish to thank Polly Chester and the team at Bouchier for professional and sympathetic editing, Neil Burton who read the whole text as well as delivering his own chapter, and also the anonymous reader for UCL Press.

1

Introduction

Caroline Dakers

In London [Alfred Morrison was] a man of high cultivation and an accomplished Maecenas ... in Wiltshire [he was] a model squire and a perfect country gentleman.¹

Surrounded by the objects he possesses, the collector is pre-eminently the sultan of a secret seraglio. Ordinary human relationships, which are the site of the unique and the conflictual, never permit such a fusion of absolute singularity and indefinite seriality ... the realm of objects ... being the realm of successive and homologous terms, offers security.²

Alfred Morrison (1821–97) was one of the most important and unusual collectors of the nineteenth century in Britain. He amassed not just one but a number of major collections: engraved portraits; Chinese porcelain; contemporary paintings and sculpture from Britain, Northern Europe and North America; Old Masters; coins and medals; exquisite and elaborate pieces of *virtu* made for him by European craftsmen; autograph letters. His London and country houses had interiors of unusual and striking design by Owen Jones and across 40 years he collected and commissioned regardless of cost. Though we may not all share his taste, we can appreciate his unerring eye for the highest quality of craftsmanship. The breadth of his interests reveals an unusual openness to and curiosity about cultures from around the world, while the collaborations between him and Owen Jones show an unusually close rapport between patron and designer. He enjoyed similar close relationships with the painter John Brett, the French enamellist Charles Lepec and the Spanish metalworker Plácido

Zuloaga. He was unlike other major collectors of the period because he was *sui generis*.

William Hazlitt's description of William Beckford's collection at Fonthill Abbey could be applied to Alfred, whose country estate was also at Fonthill. His house was the surviving wing of Beckford's father's house, Fonthill Splendens, and he undoubtedly saw himself as Beckford's heir.

The specimens exhibited are the best, the most highly finished, the most costly and curious of that kind of ostentatious magnificence which is calculated to gratify the sense of property in the owner, and to excite the curiosity of the stranger who is permitted to see or even touch baubles so dazzling and of such exquisite nicety of execution.³

Unlike Beckford, Alfred remains largely unknown as a person. There are a number of reasons, and the most frustrating for the historian is the lack of personal papers, making it difficult to judge his personality and to explore the motives behind his collecting. Harbury and Hitchens, in their study of inheritance and wealth, observe that 'men of wealth and power are often the subject of admiration, envy and suspicion. Society does not quite know whether to regard them as heroes or as villains.'⁴ Was Alfred a hero or a villain?

The surviving letters from the artists and craftsmen whom he patronised suggest he was both generous and knowledgeable. But a handful of comments by visitors viewing his collections, and not sharing his taste, describe him as arrogant. He was a poor public speaker and may have felt socially handicapped by the humble background of his millionaire father, the merchant James Morrison (1789–1857). The local community at Fonthill saw him as a kind landlord and welcomed his improvements to housing, funding new roads and commuting rents during the Agricultural Depression, but we know very little of his relationship with his young wife and four children. Immediately after he died, Mabel sold thousands of pieces from his collections, more than sufficient to pay death duties. She also disposed of the house in Carlton House Terrace and appears to have destroyed personal papers. No letters survive between husband and wife and very few between parents and children. Had she felt trapped, reduced to just one more of the beautiful objects that filled his homes?

Alfred's Fonthill House was demolished in 1921 and the dispersal of the collections was continued by his children, then by his grandson John Granville Morrison, 1st Lord Margadale. The demolition by Lord

Margadale of *his* Fonthill House (built for Alfred's son Hugh) in 1972 was preceded by a number of sales. Consequently, this book is about recovery: recovery of Alfred's position as collector and patron and recovery of the objects in his collections.

Pieces from Alfred's collection are now being recognised at auction and some are achieving very high prices, not just the Chinese porcelain, but sculpture, Old Master paintings, nineteenth-century paintings, coins and medals, and *objets d'art*. Many can be found in museums around the world or in major private collections. Alfred's taste is no longer 'odd' or 'queer'; his taste was highly personal, but his eye is proven to have been discriminating and discerning.

The organisation of the book; the contributors

The complexity of Alfred Morrison's collections has required the commissioning of essays by scholars with very different expertise and at different stages in their careers: retired professors and young academics who have recently completed their PhDs; dealers in the fine and decorative arts; curators in museums and private collections in Britain and the United States. Begun before lockdown, the project has been delayed by illness but also by marriages, the birth of children and changes in employment. Plans to exchange information at seminars in London and in the United States proved impossible, but Lord Margadale generously allowed items in his archive at Fonthill to be copied and dispatched via WeTransfer across the world. The archive itself is not static. Material used for this publication on occasion corrects interpretations in earlier books on the Morrisons. This process of reappraisal and reinterpretation will continue into the future.

A number of key documents in the archive have been used by the majority of contributors. Alfred kept a 'memorandum book' from 1857, the year his father died, until shortly before his own death. Though casually dated, this provides information about the artists, craftsmen and dealers with whom he maintained relationships, the names of shops he frequented and details of his responsibilities as a landowner and breeder of sheep and horses. The *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* drawn up by Christie's after Alfred's death provides a snapshot of parts of his collections, though the compiler chose to omit almost all contemporary paintings, sculpture and *objets d'art*. However, the catalogues of sales which took place from 1898 to the present day (almost all held by Christie's) make up for gaps in the list of heirlooms. Seven photographs

were taken in about 1891 of the interiors of the three galleries he built at Fonthill. These are held by Historic England and appear here in [Chapters 2 and 3](#). Christie's have been generous in providing images gratis and organising new photography of Alfred's house at 16 Carlton House Terrace. Sotheby's have also been generous with their images. Without the assistance of these auction houses it would have been impossible to adequately illustrate the book. Other museums and galleries offering images gratis are noted in the acknowledgements.

The book is divided into three unequal parts. [Part I](#) provides context. The three essays cover Alfred's biography, his building works in London and the country, and the context for his collecting of Old Masters. In [Part II](#) the focus is on specific collections. Overlap is inevitable, particularly as Alfred did not move neatly from one enthusiasm to another. Even as he was taken up by a new interest he continued to enlarge his other collections. It is hard to comprehend how his wife and children led normal lives inside his town and country homes. [Part III](#), the final three chapters, touches on the dispersal of most of Alfred's collections, beginning immediately after his death and continuing into the twenty-first century. Justifiably, his name now adds value to objects at auction and in public institutions.

Notes

- 1 Anon, 'The death of Mr Alfred Morrison...', *Truth* (6 January 1898).
- 2 Elsner and Cardinal, 'Jean Baudrillard', 10.
- 3 Ostergard, *William Beckford*, 172.
- 4 Harbury and Hitchens, *Inheritance and Wealth Inequality*, 1.

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Part I

Context

2

Alfred Morrison (1821–1897): the making of a collector

Caroline Dakers



Figure 2.1 Photograph of Alfred Morrison, n.d. Fonhill Archives.

Introduction

Alfred Morrison was the second son of James Morrison (1789–1857), the ‘Napoleon of shopkeepers’, millionaire merchant, radical MP and collector, dubbed at his death the richest commoner in Britain. His fortune was self-made; he was born in a Hampshire inn and apprenticed when a boy to a haberdasher in the City of London. He turned the moderately successful Fore Street textile warehouse in London into a world-leading business and invested the profits in houses, land, works of art and infrastructure projects across the United States of America and Canada. His own merchant bank, J. Morrison & Co. (later Morrison, Sons & Co.), operated from an office in London and had a global reach, trading in tea from Canton and cotton from New Orleans. When he died in 1857, his fortune was over £4 million.¹ He owned over 100,000 acres of land in Britain, including the estates of Basildon, Fonthill, Malham, Islay and Hole Park in Kent.²

His son Alfred (Figure 2.1) was educated at Bruce Castle, Tottenham, the progressive school established by Rowland Hill, the Post Office director famous for introducing the ‘penny black’ stamp and a close friend of James. Schooling was followed by three years at Edinburgh University and one year at Trinity College, Cambridge.³ The young man took an early interest in art at Edinburgh. On viewing David Wilkie’s *Chelsea Pensioners Reading the Waterloo Dispatch* on display at the Scottish Academy, he wrote to his mother that ‘It is a splendid picture & which I should covet very much.’⁴ He was taking a course in the fine arts at the university and was impressed by lectures given by the visiting history painter Benjamin Haydon. He also spent extended periods travelling in Europe, studying the culture, with his parents and alone.

From 1831, the family lived at 57 Harley Street, in London, and the Fonthill Park Estate in Wiltshire, where Alfred developed his prowess as a crack shot and his knowledge of horses. The house at Fonthill, known as The Pavilion, was the surviving wing of Alderman Beckford’s Palladian mansion Fonthill Splendens, made redundant by the building of Fonthill Abbey by the alderman’s son William Beckford.⁵ In 1838, James bought the Basildon estate in Berkshire, but this would not become the Morrisons’ principal country seat until about 1844.

James Morrison’s collections

In London and the country, Alfred grew up surrounded by his father’s collection of Old Masters and contemporary paintings, which included

works by Rembrandt and Poussin, Constable and Turner (see [Figures 4.3](#) and [4.4](#)). He may well have met some of the artists, and the architect J. B. Papworth who worked at all his father's properties, both residential and commercial. He also may have met Owen Jones who designed a dairy for Fonthill in 1845 which was never built, and visited the Morrisons in Harley Street. James Morrison was also interested in the history of Fonthill, acquiring pieces at William Beckford's sales in Bath.⁶

Between 1842 and 1845, Alfred was in North America, part of the time with his elder brother Charles but for the most part travelling on his own criss-crossing the continent, from Boston to New Orleans, Cuba to Upper Canada. The young men were working for the family merchant bank, Morrison, Sons & Co., salvaging losses incurred through involvement with the Bank of the United States which had collapsed in 1841 (James's portfolio then was valued at £1 million). For Alfred, the period abroad was a profound experience.

He discovered he was not cut out for a career in a merchant bank, a view with which his brother Charles agreed: 'Nothing but necessity will induce him to become the inmate of a countinghouse ... [he] does not value money & does like his ease.' But Charles commented positively on Alfred's 'prompt, decisive manner, wh. has I suppose been taught him by travelling & doing business among this sharp race of men'.⁷ His letters home reveal his resilience and self-sufficiency as he travelled alone across the country. He was always curious about peoples and cultures, from the lifestyles of the rich merchants of New York and Philadelphia to tobacco manufacturers in Cuba and Mormons living in log cabins on Grand Island. He was impressed by the 'respectable' men he met in Boston, 'several persons who belonged to a class that I have seen few specimens of in England – most of them either were in or had retired from business, and were more free from prejudice and better-informed than two-thirds of the House of Commons'.⁸ In New York he was struck by the home of William Shepard Wetmore (1801–62), a China merchant and business colleague of his father; the house was full of 'Chinese curiosities ... very beautiful'. Outside Philadelphia, he stayed with Richard Alsop, another business associate and one of the richest men in the city, spotting in his collection 'a few things in the way of pictures & furniture which I shd. like very well to see at Basildon'.⁹ Alfred was visually and intellectually stimulated by the North American continent. Watching the sunset from a rock overhanging the Horseshoe Falls at Niagara was 'an event in a man's life-time'.¹⁰ Twenty years later, he bought paintings by the Hudson River artists, reliving his experience of the landscape. He also began to

build a significant collection of Chinese ceramics, possibly influenced by Wetmore's collection.

Returning to Britain was an anticlimax; he failed to get into Parliament and considered, briefly, a commission in the army. His family were concerned. An aunt wrote to his mother: 'I am sure he would be better for permanent employment, he is learning Italian & oil painting, that and hunting forms his chief business.'¹¹ He spent some months in Italy in 1847–8 on behalf of his father, buying statuary and visiting the studio in Rome of William Theed the younger. He wrote to his father on 21 January 1848: 'I have seen Leonardi this morning – the two vases of Rosso antico, and the vase of giallo antico, are finished ... Theed I saw today & have agreed that he shall take my bust.'¹² Theed completed busts of Alfred and his father, the latter probably commissioned when James Morrison was in Rome in 1846–7, and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1849 (see [Figure 11.2](#)).¹³

Fonthill transformed into a country seat for Alfred Morrison

Meanwhile, following James Morrison's decision to make Basildon the family's principal country home, the architect David Brandon was commissioned in 1846 to carry out major building works at Fonthill.¹⁴ The Pavilion was more than doubled in size, with the additions of a tower, a second floor, portico, servants' wing and a conservatory; it was turned into a desirable gentleman's country seat to rival the mansions of neighbours (see [Figures 3.1](#) and [3.2](#)). The work was part of James's plan to provide suitable estates for his male children (the youngest was only eight in 1850). He also went on a spending spree between 1849 and 1853 buying 80,000 acres of land for almost £750,000, including buying the Hebridean island of Islay for the astonishing sum of £451,000. His intention was also to leave his daughters generous marriage settlements.¹⁵

Fonthill was ideal for Alfred, who had revealed his passion for country pursuits; his resilience had been proven in North America, he appeared to have the attributes to run an estate and he had known the property since he was a child. So in 1850 he was formally offered the Fonthill estate by his father, together with the annual rental income, some £4,000, and investments in American railways and canals producing additional income of £7,000. He was 29 years old. His sister Emily wrote to their mother on 14 December 1850: 'I dare say you felt very much

about giving up Fonthill for good. I believe Alfred is likely to spend his money well & to look after the poor there, & if you see him happily settled & well employed, I am sure you will not regret your self-sacrifice.’¹⁶

Between 1850 and his father’s death in 1857, Alfred’s annual income was typical of a landed gentleman, sufficient to run town and country properties.¹⁷ His needs, at first, were relatively modest: at the time of the 1851 census he was living at Fonthill with a staff of only four comprising a housekeeper and three servants.¹⁸ In 1852, his father drew up his will. Alfred’s ownership of the Fonthill estate was confirmed, together with land in Hampshire and South Wales, and his future inheritance of securities worth £750,000. Alfred tried again to win the parliamentary seat of Wallingford (the constituency for Basildon), standing as a free trader. His poor public speaking was a gift to the Tories who depicted him ‘always experiencing a painful difficulty in giving utterance to his Political opinions – if indeed he possess any’.¹⁹ He lost by four votes. However, he was becoming embedded in local Wiltshire politics. He became a Justice of the Peace, he supported the local Liberal candidates at general elections, and in 1853 he joined a committee pushing for an independent railway westwards from Salisbury.

By 1853, James Morrison’s health was failing and Alfred was asked to undertake the management of all his estates. His elder brother Charles wrote to him: ‘The physicians agree that he must give up business ... and as I am an unmitigated cockney it will be much better that you should be the man.’²⁰ Alfred immediately approached the land agents James Rawlence and Elias Squarey, who ran one of the most important practices in Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorset, and they agreed to take on the considerable work. Alfred was also involved in the management of his father’s estate at Malham in Yorkshire, letting the property to Titus Salt. His role was onerous as his father became increasingly anxious about money and being cheated; Alfred found himself acting as an intermediary between Rawlence and Squarey and their suspicious employer.

In Wiltshire, Alfred also began to build up his own list of local contacts to advise on new farming techniques, on breeding sheep (the Hampshire Down in particular), building cottages, and generally improving his estate. He was noticed attending auctions and bidding higher than anyone else for prize-winning sheep, he competed at local agricultural fairs (he usually won) and he served as a cornet in the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry Cavalry, joining representatives of all the leading local families including the Herberts of Wilton and the Thynnes of Longleat. He subscribed to local hospitals and schools and, in 1857, was made High Sheriff of Wiltshire. His active involvement in the

improvement of his estate continued throughout his life alongside collecting. In the 1860s, for example, he and his brother Charles, together with Elias Squarey, established a company providing loans for projects to improve agricultural land.

He patronised a local artist, George Bouverie Goddard, who specialised in sporting scenes and animals and exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1856. Goddard's painting of a grey horse called *Favourite* was shown at the Royal Academy in 1857 with the information: 'the property of Alfred Morrison, Esq., High Sheriff of Wiltshire'. Alfred later bought another two of Goddard's paintings: it was an early example of his inclination to go for quantity as well as, or sometimes rather than, quality (see [Figure 9.3](#)).²¹ The Royal Academy provided approval in his eyes.

Alfred's nearest neighbours with estates were Richard Grosvenor, 2nd Marquis of Westminster, who owned the Fonthill Abbey estate, which included the ruins of William Beckford's abbey, and built himself a brand-new mansion called Fonthill Towers; Vere Fane Benett at Pythouse near Semley; Lord Arundell at Wardour and Alfred Seymour at Knoyle House, East Knoyle. Stourhead was slightly further away, also Wilton. The Hon. Percy Wyndham moved into his brand-new mansion, Clouds, at East Knoyle in 1885.

Fonthill and William Beckford

The Fonthill Park estate was no ordinary property. As the surviving wing of Fonthill Splendens, The Pavilion was an historic relic. Some of the fittings in the house, including chimneypieces, stained glass and oak doors had been salvaged from the ruins of William Beckford's Abbey (which collapsed in 1825). The park contained grottos constructed for the Beckfords; the remnants of the abbey remained close by but were now owned by the Marquis of Westminster. The parish church at Fonthill Gifford where Alfred worshipped had been built by Alderman Beckford in 1746. The alderman, his wife and daughter-in-law were buried there.

The history of the estate mattered to Alfred, and he renamed The Pavilion Fonthill House. He owned three paintings of earlier Fonthills, one of the mansion occupied by the Mervyns and the Cottingtons and two of the mansion as enlarged by Alderman Beckford. He also possessed an unusual estate plan dating from about 1666.²² Antonio Joli's two paintings of Alderman Beckford's Fonthill were hanging in the Morning Room of Fonthill House at Alfred's death and were included in the list of

heirlooms drawn up by Christie's: 'view of a mansion, with river, bridge and wooded hills – in a panel' and 'view of the same mansion, with winding river in the foreground – in panel'.²³

The link to the Beckfords became more significant to Alfred as his own passion for collecting took hold. He named one of the bedrooms in Fonthill House 'Beckford' and took every opportunity to buy books, autograph letters and objects with Beckford connections. He acquired Beckford's rental book and a plan and survey of the Fonthill estate; letterbooks to Beckford from his lawyer Thomas Wildman expressing concerns about the demolition of Fonthill Splendens and expenses attached to building the new abbey; the correspondence of Sir William Hamilton, his wife Emma and her lover Admiral Nelson (the threesome had made a well-publicised visit to Fonthill Abbey in 1806). At the Duke of Hamilton's sale in 1882, he bought dozens of books from Beckford's library with the Fonthill bindings of cinquefoil and Latimer cross tooling on the spines, and annotations by Beckford. Shortly before his death, he bought the Rubens vase, owned by Charles V of France, Rubens, William Beckford and his son-in-law the Duke of Hamilton (see [Figure 19.8](#)).²⁴

From his father's collection he inherited Dresden china belonging to Beckford, the embroidered arms of Beckford's mother, an intaglio of a standing athlete mounted as a ring and a black and gold lacquer cabinet. In his memorandum book he copied down the inscription on Beckford's sarcophagus in Bath.²⁵

Eternal Power!

Grant me through obvious clouds one transient gleam
Of thy bright essence in my dying hour.

He also acquired, presumably from his father, the deed of covenant signed by Beckford and James Morrison in 1842 confirming the change of ownership of Fonthill.

Alfred inherits and begins to collect in earnest

No inventory was made of the contents of Fonthill House when Alfred took up residence but his father did leave some fine pieces of Sèvres porcelain and a few magnificent pieces of furniture including a Louis XV bouille writing desk, two lacquer bureau cabinets, one red and the other black, an ornate marble-topped table, also some Old Masters from his collection. The Old Masters included Rembrandt's *Head of a Rabbi* and

Van Dyck's *Queen Henrietta Maria*. One of the first purchases by Alfred for which there is documentation was a second painting of Queen Henrietta Maria, the widow of Charles I. He bought the portrait of the queen in mourning (now identified as being by Cornelis Van Ceulen) in 1852 from the print dealer and publisher Walter Benjamin Tiffin (see Figure 10.5).²⁶

After the death of his father in 1857, Alfred's estate was confirmed and his holding in investments amounting to £750,000.²⁷ He enlarged his household at Fonthill to seven servants. He and Charles had to provide their mother's annual income of £10,000. This was not much of a burden. By 1861, his real estate, capital account and revenue account totalled £821,764. By the 1870s, his income tax returns suggest that Alfred's annual income had risen to about £120,000. By the mid-1880s, income tax returns suggest his annual income had increased to over £130,000.²⁸

In London, from 1855, he occupied comfortable lodgings at 34 St James's Place, Mayfair.²⁹ Previous residents of the house included Lord Dudley Coutts Stuart, Member of Parliament for Marylebone, and Charles Henry Wyndham A'Court-Repington, Member of Parliament for Wilton and a neighbour of Alfred's. St James's Place was inhabited by a mixture of aristocrats (Lord Elcho was at no. 23), Members of Parliament and retired military men. Spencer House was close by, also the clubs of Pall Mall (Alfred was a member of the Reform) and the luxurious shops of Mayfair. He entered the names and addresses of Durlacher 'dealer in articles in Vertu' and Thomas Goode & Co. 'China Warehouse' early in his memorandum book.³⁰

In May 1858, Alfred returned to North America, possibly accompanying his young brother Walter (who had just inherited the Malham estate). Alfred sailed on the *Persia*, owned by Cunard, the fastest ship in the world since its launch the year before: it could cross the Atlantic in just nine days. Perhaps he was making some enquiries into his large holding of American securities and visiting friends made over a decade before. Walter, certainly, was staying with the Fishers, old banking friends of their father. Alfred may have visited William Shepard Wetmore's mansion on Rhode Island (Wetmore died in 1862) and seen more Asian pieces and an enormous walk-in china closet.

When Alfred returned, he began in earnest to improve the Fonthill estate, buying neighbouring land and building. He also focused increasingly on collecting, acquiring a London house of appropriate status for a young millionaire, 16 Carlton House Terrace, and, eventually, finding a wife. Between 1860 and 1870, he laid the foundation of not just one

but several major collections. He was buying pieces all at the same time: engraved portraits, Chinese porcelain, contemporary British, European and American art, Old Masters, autograph letters, coins and medals, exquisitely crafted objects of *virtu* and unique pieces of furniture, many of which he personally commissioned from the craftsmen.

Alfred's interests as a collector were well established before he married in 1866. He spent very large sums of money over a relatively short period of time on a very large number of items. Choosing a house in London was not so much about finding a home as about selecting a shell in which to display all his possessions. Here I provide brief overviews of the collections which are explored in more detail in the focused chapters. To avoid duplication, I refer to particular images in the later chapters.

Alfred liked to rely on others to make recommendations and introductions and to buy for him, including dealers, shopkeepers, sometimes the craftsmen he patronised. He was following his father in this respect. James had relied on J. B. Papworth, James Buchanan, Robert Hume and Peter Norton, the latter regularly bidding for him at Christie's and other auctions. Alfred was also in contact with collectors and artists as a member of the Burlington Fine Arts Society and the Savile Club. He was a founding member of both, the Burlington in 1866 and the Savile in 1868. The Burlington's singular remit was to exhibit the art collections of its members. Alfred joined a select group of aristocrats, artists, bankers, politicians and museum curators who together proposed, organised and furnished exhibitions.³¹ Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his brother William, the art critic, were members, also Frederic Leighton and John Ruskin, and the collectors George Schreiber, George Salting and Robert Holford (of Westonbirt). It was perhaps Alfred who persuaded Owen Jones to become a member in 1867. The club's exhibitions of 'etched works by Rembrandt' (1877) and 'pictures by Masters of the Netherlandish and Allied Schools' (1892) contained works from Alfred's collections.

The Savile Club was founded for the purpose of conversation and adopted the motto 'Sodalitas Convivium'. Members were similar to those of the Burlington, 'the learned professions, the public services, literature, science and art'.³² Alfred and his brother Walter were joined by the family solicitor W. H. Ashurst, the art critic Sidney Colvin (who also belonged to the Burlington) and two of Alfred's favourite artists, John Brett and H. W. B. Davis. The author Thomas Hughes was a friend of Walter Morrison and the artist Thomas Woolner would be commissioned by Alfred to sculpt his wife Mabel. A letter written by Mabel in the 1880s responded to criticisms of her husband by his own family suggesting he

was not particularly sociable. She defends him, writing ‘as to friends, so many people go through life with only acquaintances, but it is exactly the opposite to Alfred, so many men are quite devoted to him, I am amused at it sometimes’.³³ Within the select membership of the Savile and the Burlington, Alfred found many like-minded men with whom to exchange opinions about collections, artists whose work he liked and bought, but who also offered convivial companionship.

Marseille Middleton Holloway and Marseille Holloway, Holloway & Son

One of the first men who made a substantial contribution to Alfred’s collections was Marseille Middleton Holloway (1809–97) of 25 Bedford Street, Covent Garden. M. M. Holloway was a well-known dealer in prints, engravings and autographs, friends with a number of collectors and antiquarians. From about 1860, he and his son Marseille helped Alfred build a very large collection of engraved portraits, including works by Rembrandt, Hogarth and Dürer. Surviving bills from Holloway & Son, with details of purchases, reveal the speed with which the collection was formed. Already by 1868 the collection comprised almost 3,000 engravings. Marseille Holloway then catalogued the collection for Alfred, producing a privately printed edition of 100 copies. It was one of the first public presentations of Alfred as a collector.³⁴ M. M. Holloway later wrote that he did not add to his own collection after 1870 ‘as a friend whom he introduced to collecting was able to outbid him on all the best items’.³⁵

Marseille Holloway not only catalogued Alfred’s collection, but he also gathered the prints together in bound volumes. Some were framed. In 1868, for example, he purchased ‘6 gilt frames Wellington pattern and best flattened glass with cut out mounts of five oval openings for Photograph Portraits’.³⁶ Holloway & Son also bid for paintings on Alfred’s behalf, including Brueghel’s *A Village Fair*, which was sold at Christie’s in 1864 for £141 15s and the magnificent portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici by Bronzino sold at Christie’s in 1872 (see [Figure 10.7](#)). There is some evidence the firm borrowed money from Alfred to fund their own dealing, sharing any profits.³⁷

In 1869, Holloway & Son’s two bills amounted to over £2,800 for engravings, books, autograph letters and pictures, including etchings by Alphonse Legros and a drawing of heads by Frederic Leighton (10 guineas). Holloway was probably responsible for initiating Alfred’s

new interest in autographs, starting in 1869 with the autograph letter collections of John Young and John Dillon, the latter formerly partner of Alfred's father James Morrison in Fore Street.³⁸ Alfred very quickly bought up thousands of autograph letters.

The emphasis of Alfred's collections of engravings, autograph letters and Old Masters reveals one of his greatest obsessions, the acquisition of images of famous men and women. It also inspired his collection of coins and medals. He surrounded himself with the 'great and the good', royalty, aristocrats, politicians, men of letters, soldiers, actors, artists, architects and beautiful women. With coins and medals he could literally hold these figures from the past in his hand. Was this obsession linked to his personal shyness, his awareness of being the son of a tradesman? Did all these representations replace his own extensive family with which he appears to have had little contact? Without personal papers, such questions are impossible to answer.

Chinese porcelain

The Chinese works of art amassed by Alfred formed the most spectacular of all his collections: exceptionally fine examples of the Qing dynasty, Qianlong period (1736–95) enamelled porcelain, Beijing and Canton enamels on metal and cloisonné enamels. Their provenance is now a subject of enormous sensitivity as the majority of pieces were brought to London and Paris after the looting of the Summer Palace in 1860. Alfred's addiction was lifelong. Between 1863 and 1867, he spent £40,000 through the Bond Street dealer Durlacher, almost entirely on porcelain.³⁹ He acquired the magnificent 'pair of fine Enamel storks on Stands' from Thomas W. Woodgate in 1864 (see frontispiece). The purchase price, including an Indian box, was £645 15s. Lady Theodora Grosvenor, the daughter of the 2nd Marquis of Westminster, and Alfred's neighbour at Fonthill Towers, was shown his collection at Fonthill in 1864; it was already impressive:

He took us to his house, & there showed us the most wonderful collection of Oriental China ever known, his house is filled with it, cabinets jammed full of it & each specimen perfect & exquisite – some glorious enamels too – one piece of perfectly black china – really unique – such a collection, in short, as never was seen, & never can be, anywhere else. It took us some time to see it all, & he was most kind in showing us everything.⁴⁰

Alfred never stopped adding to any of his collections nor acquiring information about individual pieces. In 1890, his daughter Katharine wrote to her brother Hugh: 'Father ... wants us all to go and see a marvellous pair of enamelled vases over 5 feet high [and] he is quite thrilled about a supposed gem that he bought which appears now to be paste – and the great question is how it was done.'⁴¹

Photographs taken in about 1891 of the saloon, one of the three new galleries at Fonthill (Figure 2.2), reveal the pride of place given to Chinese porcelain. The *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* drawn up by Christie's after Alfred's death also included most of his collection of porcelain, including several hundred pieces displayed in cabinets in the dining room, specially designed by Owen Jones.



Figure 2.2 The saloon, Fonthill House, photograph, c. 1891. BL 08782/002 by permission of Historic England Archive.

The London International Exhibition of Industry and Art, 1862; Robert Phillips, jeweller

Visiting the London International Exhibition of Industry and Art in 1862 appears to have inspired Alfred in several new directions while satisfying his urge to buy in quantity as well as by quality. The exhibition was planned to surpass both the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London and the Exposition in Paris in 1855, with 28,000 exhibitors from 36 countries. The jeweller Robert Phillips (1810–81) at 23 Cockspur Street acted as an intermediary, and it is his firm's list in the Fonthill Archives that details Alfred's purchases, which totalled over £7,500.⁴² Phillips, like M. M. Holloway and his son Marseille, was an important figure in assisting Alfred's collecting.

One of the most important introductions made for Alfred by Phillips at the International Exhibition was with the French enamellist Charles Lepec (1830–90). Lepec is now recognised as the most original and outstanding enamel artist of the nineteenth century, the master of his art.⁴³ Alfred bought a number of pieces, they became close friends and a bedroom at Fonthill was named 'Lepec' in his honour. Lepec addressed Alfred in his letters as 'Mon cher Alfred', surely an unusually informal address at the time between a craftsman and his patron.

Alfred began by buying nine enamel plaques.⁴⁴ Commissions were to follow, including the enamel decorations for the chimneypiece in the first-floor drawing room in Alfred's London house, 16 Carlton House Terrace, which took two years to complete (see [Figure 3.13](#)). Other pieces were small, delicate and intimate, including nude or semi-nude figures of women ([Figures 2.3](#) and [19.6](#)).

Amazon was commissioned by Alfred and completed in 1864, one of a pair of strong women ([Figure 2.3](#)).⁴⁵ Alfred's taste for these decorations seems to have ended with his marriage to Mabel in 1866, suggesting his wife may not have approved. Thereafter, Lepec provided enamel portraits of Mabel and their children.

Alfred's collections of sculpture and painting

The Athenaeum paid particular attention to the Scandinavian artists at the 1862 International Exhibition who were winning 'golden opinions'. Alfred agreed. He bought a painting by Johan Fredrik Eckersberg (1822–70) of Romsdal in Norway and a painting by the Danish artist Heinrich Hansen.⁴⁶ His arrangement with the Norwegian



Figure 2.3 Charles Lepec, *Amazon*, enamel on copper(?), in original ebonised frame with velvet and silver gilt mount, French, 1864. Victoria and Albert Museum.

Photograph © H. Blairman & Sons Ltd

Adolph Tidemand was unusual, as he paid £150 for both a small picture called *Administration of the Sacrament to the Sick* and as part payment for a much larger painting, to be called *An Ancient Scandinavian Duel*. Phillips organised that the second painting, when completed in 1864, should be sent by Tidemand to ‘Gambart’s Gallery’ in London, writing to Alfred that ‘I have a strong presentiment it will create a “sensation”. I hope dear Mr Morrison to congratulate you on the possession of another priceless work of art.’⁴⁷ Phillips also printed 200 copies of Tidemand’s ‘descriptive letter’ about the painting.⁴⁸ Alfred’s brother Charles also commissioned a large painting from Tidemand based on the smaller *Administration of the Sacrament* which he saw at the exhibition. In 1867, Gambart borrowed both large pictures from the brothers to show in Paris at the Exposition Universelle.

After the exhibition closed, Alfred regularly visited the Scandinavian Gallery at 7 Haymarket, buying a painting by George Edvard Saal (1817–70), *Moonlight Rendezvous* (225 guineas) in May 1864.⁴⁹ The director of the gallery made sure Alfred knew the significance of his purchases, writing that ‘your picture [by Saal] has been

greatly admired ... being one of the finest Moonlight pieces at present here in London'. Alfred returned in September to buy a painting by the Danish artist Carl Frederik Sørensen (1818–79) for £152 5s.

Alfred also bought three small bronze sculptures at the exhibition: a bull marked in the catalogue as being by Rosa Bonheur (1822–99), a bull attacking a bear by Isidore Bonheur (1827–1901), Rosa's brother (Figure 2.4), and a partridge. Alfred's purchase of the large bronze sculpture by Antoine-Louis Barye (1795–1875), *Theseus and the Centaur*, was much more ambitious. Alfred was clearly captivated by Barye's work: he went on to acquire a number of small sculptures and placed *Theseus and the Centaur* immediately in front of Fonthill House (see Figure 11.10).

Other sculptors and painters must have caught Alfred's eye when he walked around the vast exhibition because he acquired works by them very soon after, in some cases through M. M. Holloway and his son. The sculptors Giovita Lombardi (1837–76) and Stefano Galletti (1832–1905) had studios in Rome, Emilio Santarelli (1801–89) worked mostly in Florence where Hiram Powers' studio was also located, so Alfred could also have visited them when in Italy. In 1864, M. M. Holloway handled the purchase for £300 including packing, freight and insurance of Galletti's life-size figure of *Fabiola* on a marble revolving pedestal (see Figure 11.13).⁵⁰ A marble version of Lombardi's *Two Goats* was



Figure 2.4 Isidore Bonheur, *Bull and Bear*, bronze. Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

exhibited at the 1865 International Exhibition in Dublin and at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris, and Alfred acquired one of the two known versions (see [Figure 9.4](#)). He also acquired Santarelli's *Oratio Ejus Accepta*, a marble sculpture of a girl kneeling in prayer (see in [Figures 2.2, 3.23 and 19.9](#)).

M. M. Holloway had become one of two London dealers for the American sculptor Hiram Powers (1805–73) when the Civil War affected sales in the United States. The demand in England in the 1860s for Powers' work was so great that he kept six carvers working full time in his Florence workshop.⁵¹ In 1868, Holloway & Son bought Alfred one, if not two, of the most popular busts, *Proserpine* and *The Greek Slave*, for £260 (see [Figure 11.14](#)). The same year, Holloway & Son acquired the *Infant Bacchus* by Richard James Wyatt for Alfred for £252, presumably from another collector as Wyatt had died in Rome in 1850.⁵²

Alfred also bought some fine eighteenth-century sculptures, including Jean-Antoine Houdon's (1741–1828) bust of Voltaire and a magnificent bust of Handel by Louis-François Roubiliac (1702–62) (see [Figures 11.6, 11.7 and 11.8](#)).⁵³ The bust of Voltaire was brought to England during the Franco-Prussian War by the Lamorinière family, then sold to an anonymous dealer before passing into Alfred's collection. George Eliot and George Henry Lewes visited Carlton House Terrace on 21 March 1872, Lewes writing in his diary: 'called at the Morrisons to see Houdon's bust of Voltaire and their pictures. Bored by being shown all their Splendours and rarities ... each the "finest in the world".' This was unfair. Alfred's collections *did* contain splendours and rarities that *were* the finest of their kind in the world.⁵⁴

On 19 August 1863, M. M. Holloway drew up a list of pictures to be sent to Fonthill, the first of many dispatches which reveal not only the extent of Alfred's collecting by this date, but also the dealer's involvement in their storage and movement.⁵⁵ Fortunately, the London & South Western Railway from London's Waterloo station had reached Tisbury, just a few miles from Fonthill, in 1859 for passengers and 1860 for goods traffic. Holloway's list is of special interest because of the number of pictures by two American artists, eleven by J. F. Cropsey (1823–1900) and four by Louis Remy Mignot (1831–70). Both were members of the Hudson River School, painting landscapes Alfred had been powerfully affected by when living in North America.

Alfred was extremely unusual among British collectors in buying American art at this time, but it helped that both Mignot and Cropsey spent some years in London. Cropsey arrived in London first in 1856; Mignot arrived in 1862. Both showed large paintings at the International

Exhibition in 1862. *The Times* commented: ‘American artists are rapidly making the untravelled portion of the English public familiar with the scenery of the great Western continent.’⁵⁶ When Cropsey decided to return to the United States in 1863, he held a sale of 130 sketches, studies and finished landscapes, which raised some 1,200 guineas. Holloway, bidding for Alfred, was able to snap up 11 paintings and sketches, including *Autumn Foliage in the White Mountains* (Figure 2.5), which had been shown at the Royal Academy the year before, for a total of £140 8s.⁵⁷

Also in 1863, Alfred bought two paintings by Mignot at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, *Lagoon of Guayaquil* (no. 595; Figure 2.6) and *A Winter Morning* (no. 677). Mignot painted breathtaking landscapes of upstate New York and the tropical landscape of South America, particularly Ecuador. Reviews in the British newspapers were positive:

... a mind fired by a wide range of sympathies, and whether it was the superb splendor of the tropical scenery of the Rio Bamba, in South America, the sublime maddening rush of iris-circled water at Niagara, or the fairy-like grace, the exquisite and ethereal loveliness, of new-fallen snow, he was equally happy in rendering the varied aspects of nature.



Figure 2.5 J. F. Cropsey, *Autumn Foliage in the White Mountains*, 1862 (RA 1862, no. 288), oil on board, 31.1 × 49.6 cm (12¼ × 19½ in).⁵⁸

© 2016, Christie's Images Limited



Figure 2.6 Louis Remy Mignot, *Lagoon of the Guayaquil*, 1863, oil on board, 12¼ × 16½ in (31.1 × 41.9 cm).⁵⁹

© 2024, Christie's Images Limited

Alfred was obviously impressed and eventually acquired eight paintings.⁶⁰ Some sort of working relationship developed, Mignot writing to Alfred in 1865 about taking a sketching holiday at St Leonard's on Sea.⁶¹

By 1866, Mignot was living at 50 Upper Harley Street, close to the studio of his friend, the artist John Brett. From 1867, the temporary home of Alfred and his new wife was also in Harley Street (Alfred's mother, his brother Charles and sister Ellen continued to live at 57 Harley Street).⁶² In 1870, Mignot was in Paris, caught up in the Franco-Prussian War. He was imprisoned, but contracted smallpox and was released – only to die shortly after in Brighton. His wife Zairah was left destitute, but a memorial show in 1876 to which Alfred lent a number of paintings raised sufficient funds for her to live off.

M. M. Holloway's list of paintings drawn up in 1863 included three paintings by the Scottish artist Andrew MacCallum (1821–1902), *First Fruits of Autumn* and *Coming Spring*, both set in the Forest of Fontainebleau, and *Burnham Beeches*. As a sportsman and owner of a country estate, Alfred responded to landscapes and paintings of wild and domestic animals. He acquired another MacCallum in 1863, *The Moorland Queen*, formerly in the collection of John Phillip, RA, and

Windsor Oaks in 1868.⁶³ These pictures were not expensive for a wealthy collector: £80 for *Windsor Oaks*. Though little known now, MacCallum was exhibiting regularly at the Royal Academy and had a solo show at the Dudley Gallery in 1866. Alfred owned his painting *The Vanguard of the Forest, Windsor Great Park*, which was shown at the Paris Salon. Alfred would have appreciated MacCallum being commissioned by Queen Victoria to paint five views near Balmoral, while James Dafforne wrote him up for *The Art-Journal* in 1877.⁶⁴

As well as attending international exhibitions and exhibitions in London galleries, Alfred relied heavily on the Royal Academy for preselecting artists whose work he then bought. He also visited artists' studios to view paintings and sculpture before they were sent to the Academy, and in some cases he commissioned work directly from the artists. The Academicians were aware of both his wealth and buying activities, and he was included as a guest at their annual banquets from as early as 1864.⁶⁵

Alfred bought his first painting by John Brett (1831–1902) in 1864. *Massa, Bay of Naples* (now in Indianapolis Museum of Art) was exhibited at the Academy. Brett was touched when Alfred paid 250 guineas rather than the £250 price tag, and a friendship was formed. 'Hitherto I have found people mostly forget what a guinea means and pay a pound instead, but you on the contrary have sent me guineas when I only asked pounds.'⁶⁶ The following year Alfred bought *Capri in the Evening*, and Brett's striking portrait *Lady with a Dove* (now in Tate Britain). She joined the jewel-like enamels by Charles Lepec of beautiful women that Alfred was buying before his marriage and which he displayed in Fonthill House while his London home was still being completed.

Alfred became involved in Brett's projects, encouraging him to paint larger paintings and paying in advance; he eventually owned nearly thirty paintings and sketches.⁶⁷ Christiana Payne has written

Morrison's ... tastes were for large, grand paintings ... [He] encouraged Brett to increase the size of his canvases, so that by 1870 Brett had settled on a standard large size of 42 by 84 inches ... Morrison bought the first in this series, *Contiguous to a Melancholy Ocean*, as well as the only two pictures to exceed this size: *Christmas Morning, 1866* and *Seashore with Seagulls*.⁶⁸

In 1868, Alfred paid £600 for *Christmas Morning, 1866* (Figure 2.7), which measured 60 by 96 in (151 × 241.5 cm). He would undoubtedly have enjoyed its success at the Academy. William Michael Rossetti



Figure 2.7 John Brett, *Christmas Morning*, 1866, 1868, oil on canvas, 151 × 241.5 cm (60 × 96 in).

© Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth

decided ‘this is far the most important picture Mr Brett has produced’.⁶⁹ The same year, Alfred commissioned Brett to paint his wife Mabel, and his own portrait was completed in 1870 (Figure 2.13). Brett was unusual among Alfred’s close artist friends; he was critical in public of the interiors of Carlton House Terrace, observing that walls covered by rich silks designed by Owen Jones were not the best background for paintings. In 1892, he gave a lecture to the Architectural Association called ‘Daylight in the Dwelling House’:

I think it may be taken as a general principle that any architectural design that is so complete in itself as to forbid the intrusion of the subsidiary arts is not adapted for a dwelling-house. I know a man whose house was finished by Owen Jones. He is very fond of pictures, but has to keep them piled up in stacks for fear of spoiling his walls.⁷⁰

If Alfred heard the lecture he was unaffected, continuing to visit Brett’s studio throughout the 1890s and to buy more pictures. And in fact the walls of 16 Carlton House Terrace were mostly hung with framed lace and textiles.

John William Inchbold (1830–88) was another favourite British artist. Alfred acquired his *Jungfrau from Wengen Alp* in 1864. The

following year he persuaded Ford Madox Brown (1821–93) to paint a copy of a small landscape *Windermere*; he also fell for H. W. B. Davis's *Strayed Herd*. In 1866, he bought another painting by Davis (1833–1914), *Spring Ploughing (Labourage au Printemps)* (see [Figure 9.9](#)).⁷¹ In 1868, he bought Talmage White's painting *Capri from the Wall of the Hundred Chambers*. In 1869, he bought two paintings at the Royal Academy, both watercolours, on display in Gallery VIII, J. J. Bannatyne's (1832–1911) *Bencruachan, Argyllshire* (£21) and another by Talmage White (1833–1907), his *Capri Moonlight* (£84).⁷²

The year 1872 was extraordinary. Alfred bought three paintings by Brett from his studio, including the very large *Seashore with Seagulls*. At the Academy he bought Frederic Leighton's sensuous *Summer Moon* ([Figure 2.8](#)), H. W. B. Davis's enormous *A Panic*, depicting stampeding cattle and 16 ft (4.87 m) wide, and Davis's bronze *Trotting Bull* (see [Figures 9.2](#) and [11.9](#)). In addition, Holloway & Son acquired for him the magnificent portrait by Agnolo Bronzino of *Cosimo I de' Medici* (see [Figure 10.7](#)).

Sidney Colvin was lyrical about *Summer Moon* in *The Cornhill Magazine*: a 'lovely and solemn group of two women who lie coiled



Figure 2.8 Frederic Leighton, *Summer Moon*, 1872, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. Private collection. *Strand Magazine*, vol. xxxii, no. 192, December 1906, 604.

side by side draped in wine-colour and steeped in sleep'.⁷³ *The Graphic* art critic praised Davis's *A Panic*. Davis is 'high among the painters of animals ... The energy and animation of the scene are indescribable. The drawing, composition and colour are alike masterful.'⁷⁴ Alfred's patronage of Davis was of enormous benefit to the artist. For Davis, not yet elected to the Academy, it would have been a considerable gamble to paint cattle across a canvas 16 ft wide without financial backing, but it appears Alfred paid in advance. The critical success of *A Panic* led directly to Davis's election as Associate later in the year.

At the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris; purchases and loans

There is no complete list of Alfred's purchases at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867, but he once again involved the jeweller Robert Phillips, this time to buy Japanese lacquerware. Japan had not officially taken part in a European universal exhibition before 1867. Items for sale in Paris included ukoyo-e prints, silk kimonos and objects made of lacquer and porcelain, 'almost universally praised for their variety, sophistication, and technical excellence'.⁷⁵ South Kensington Museum was buying pieces, and Alfred spent just over £1,300.⁷⁶ Phillips organised the sending of 10 cases to Fonthill containing lacquerware; the most Alfred paid was 3,500 francs for an inkwell. Phillips also arranged the carriage of a 'bronze bear' by the Russian artist Nikolai Lieberich (1828–83). The full title of the sculpture is *Russian Bear Killed by the Tsar near Lisina 9 March 1865* (now in a private collection).

A new interest of Alfred at the exposition was the work of the Spanish damascene craftsman Plácido Zuloaga (1834–1910) who had probably met Alfred at the International Exhibition in London in 1862, possibly through an introduction made by Owen Jones.⁷⁷ Now, five years later, Zuloaga was commissioned by Alfred to design a necklace for his wife Mabel, 'and other small pieces' (Figure 2.9 for an example).

On 29 May 1868, Alfred drew up a list of Zuloaga's work for him over the previous three years, which included an enormous chest, two vases, two small coffers, a dagger, a light holder and a cane top.⁷⁸ Later in 1868, Zuloaga was explaining the serious financial difficulties of the family business and asking if he could work entirely for Alfred:



Figure 2.9 ‘Miniature of a gentleman with long black hair, in black dress, wearing a belt’, with octagonal damascened frame by Plácido Zuloaga. Private collection.⁷⁹

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

I throw myself at your feet in order that you may give me work so that I do not have to worry about money, which is a great trouble to me at this time ... The only hope that I have of working with beautiful things is from you and your wife.⁸⁰

Alfred chose not to employ Zuloaga on a full-time basis, but he did provide more significant commissions, including a tray or iron salver 4 ft long, damascened in gold and silver, a massive cassone over 6 ft long (1.21 × 1.82 m), several large damascened vases, tripod stands, a hall table of iron with gold and silver damascene and two chests to hold Alfred’s growing collection of coins and medals. The hall table was enormously heavy, stamped with Zuloaga’s signature, the date 1880 and Alfred’s monogram ‘AM’ (see [Figure 19.12](#)).

An anonymous article in *The Magazine of Art*, published in 1879, which described the interior of 16 Carlton House Terrace, was hardly

enthusiastic about Zuloaga's work. The pieces were triumphs of 'skilled workmanship' but 'failures in respect of utility'. 'As extraordinary feats of working in metal, these objects find a fitting home in the house of a modern Maecenas.'⁸¹ However, the relationship with Zuloaga remained constant throughout Alfred's life. More bracelets and brooches were made for Alfred's wife and daughters in the late 1880s. In 1890 or 1891, Alfred's daughter Dorothy wrote to her brother Hugh: 'Mr Zuloaga has arrived with an "intention terrible" in the shape of a plaque, it is quite lovely chiefly enamel with only a very little damascening at the edges, the design and colouring are enchancing.'⁸²

Alfred had probably seen the metalwork of Ferdinand Barbedienne (1810–92) at the 1862 International Exhibition. Now, in Paris, he bought two '*lions ailes*' (winged lions) each weighing a ton. They were sent to Fonthill for him by A. Charbonné & Co. from Le Havre to Southampton, and then by train on to Tisbury. They were placed immediately in front of Fonthill House (the Barye sculpture of *Theseus and the Centaur* in between) where they remained until the 1970s, about 50 years after the house was demolished. Barbedienne was also commissioned to work on a chimneypiece at Carlton House Terrace, this time for the dining room. *The Magazine of Art* provides a description: the mantelpiece and fireplace were enriched with grey and green marbles, 'the lower portions of the marble columns on each side of the mirror on the mantelpiece [were] encased in bronze-work by Barbedienne'.⁸³ Unfortunately, this piece was destroyed by a fire in the house in 1934.

Alfred added to all his collections, year on year, but he also lent to exhibitions in Britain and Europe. He was undoubtedly happy to be known as a discerning as well as wealthy collector; in addition, his loans benefited the artists he patronised. The 1867 Exposition Universelle was no exception. Two *tazza* by the French goldsmith and sculptor Leonard Morel-Ladeuil called *Poetry* and *Music* were first shown at the Royal Academy, then again in Paris.⁸⁴ Paintings lent by Alfred included Inchbold's *King Arthur's Island*. He and his brother Charles also lent their pictures by Adolph Tidemand, specially requested by the dealer Ernest Gambart.⁸⁵

Almost all the pieces by the enamellist Charles Lepec came from Alfred's collection. *The Art-Journal*, reviewing the Exposition Universelle, noted that 'Mr Morrison, of Fonthill, through the mediation of Mr Phillips, of Cockspur Street, is the fortunate possessor of the greatest number of his [Lepec's] chefs d'oeuvre, some of them now in the Paris Exposition.'⁸⁶ Furniture designed by Owen Jones for Alfred

won Gold Medals in Paris and later, at the International Exhibition in Vienna in 1873.⁸⁷ H. W. B. Davis's sculpture *Trotting Bull* also won a prize in Vienna.

Alfred also lent from his enormous collection of engravings. In 1872, he lent to an exhibition marking the opening of the Guildhall Library in the City of London, and in 1875, he lent 136 engravings by Wenceslaus Hollar to an exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Society. A photograph shows one of a pair of Alfred's vases by Plácido Zuloaga on display at the Paris Exposition in 1878.

Creating two 'palaces of art' for this 'Maecenas'

Alfred was collecting from the early 1860s. Fonthill House could accommodate a certain amount, but the bachelor quarters in London offered limited space.⁸⁸ The quantity of porcelain presented a particular challenge: where and how to display such delicate objects so that they could be enjoyed, but also studied by connoisseurs. The 1862 International Exhibition in London provided an inspirational solution.

At the exhibition, the furniture makers Messrs Jackson & Graham were recognised as among the largest and most important exhibitors of cabinet-work. Alfred bought two of their cabinets, of ebony and ormolu. Alfred had meanwhile lent to the exhibition Owen Jones's design for an 'Ornamental Dairy and Cottage' (no. 1795) at Fonthill, commissioned by his father James Morrison in 1845 but never built.⁸⁹ After the exhibition, Alfred commissioned Jackson & Graham as the manufacturers to produce cabinets to contain the growing collection of porcelain at Fonthill. Owen Jones (1809–74) was the chosen designer.

Owen Jones's personal papers have not survived, so the closeness of Jones and Alfred can be judged only from the large amount of work commissioned, and tributes made in obituaries coupling their names.⁹⁰ Jones visited Fonthill and designed for Alfred several ebony and ivory display cases to be lined with yellow silk for the collection of Chinese porcelain, to fit exactly into the 'new room' with its distinctive curved wall. 'AM' was proudly displayed in ivory on each section of the cupboards. Alfred's collection of porcelain had a dramatic effect on Jones, opening his mind 'to a new world of ideas with regard to colouring in the practice of decorative art' and the writing of his *Examples of Chinese Ornament*. Published in 1867, it drew on the Fonthill collection, Jones describing the pieces as 'remarkable, not only for the perfection and skill shown in the technical processes, but also for the beauty and harmony of

the colouring, and general perfection of the ornamentation'.⁹¹ A number were reproduced in the publication.

For his new home in London, Alfred once more turned to Owen Jones and Jackson & Graham. The property he acquired in Carlton House Terrace was considerably more prestigious than his father's house in Upper Harley Street. When she was in London, Alfred's widowed mother Mary Ann continued to live in the family home with her unmarried children Charles and Ellen; their neighbours in Harley Street were successful tradesmen, bankers and East India merchants. Alfred's younger brothers Walter and Frank used their inheritances to buy new town houses in Cromwell Road, South Kensington; their neighbours were similar, with links to trade and banking. Alfred may have been shy, a poor public speaker, but his choice of location for his house suggested someone who sought status, who was presenting himself as a member of society. In 1863, he applied for a lease on 16 Carlton House Terrace, one of the last 'Dwelling-Houses of the First Class' designed by John Nash to be built adjacent to the former site of Carlton House, the luxurious residence of the Prince Regent (see [Figure 3.7](#)). Alfred would have appreciated Nash's references to the Louvre, the Pantheon and 'ultimately Imperial Rome'. The first western section of the terrace had been completed by 1833 to Nash's designs, but the eastern section was left uncompleted until 1864. Alfred was acquiring a new house, ready to be filled with his ever-expanding collections.

Alfred was presenting himself in an imposing, slightly old-fashioned stuccoed property, resplendent with Corinthian capitals, overlooking St James's Park and the Mall. An article in the *Leeds Mercury*, published on 9 March 1872 and noting the death of the 3rd Earl of Lonsdale, provides a snapshot of Alfred's distinguished neighbours:

The Conservative Nestor [Lord Lonsdale] occupied a very capacious house in Carlton House-terrace ... frequently used for important gatherings of the Conservative party [nos 14 and 15]. It contained one of the best collections of old china in the kingdom, and Lord Lonsdale was buying up to the very day of his death. Three doors off is the house of a rival collector, Mr Gladstone [no. 11] ... Between the Liberal Premier and the Tory peer stand the house of Mr Glyn [Secretary of the Treasury at no. 12] and Earl Grey [no. 13], and on the other side of Lord Lonsdale's house, next door, is the house of Mr Alfred Morrison [no. 16] ... who has adorned his London home, more worthily, with a splendid collection of pictures. Mr Alfred Morrison loves art better than politics ... In the

same terrace resides ... the Duke of Leinster, Lord Otho Fitzgerald, Sir M.W. Ridley, Lord F. Cavendish, Mr Saml. Morley and the German Ambassador, Count Bernstorff. But though men of such antagonistic views are those collected in one short street, I never heard of any breach of the peace.⁹²

No. 17 was occupied by the Boston merchant banker Russell Sturgis, head of Baring's Bank and a friend of the novelist Henry James. The 2nd Earl Granville occupied no. 18 until his death in 1891; his daughter Lady Sophia Castelia Mary Leveson-Gower married Alfred's son Hugh in 1892.

Work began on the internal decorations, furniture and fittings in about 1865–6. Receipts survive for 9 July 1866 (£5,000) and 10 February 1868 (£2,500).⁹³ Henry Cole, the first Director of the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), was one of the first visitors to the finished building, writing in his diary on 22 May 1870: 'To Mr Morrison's ... his house filled with marquetry designed by Owen Jones ... mixture of Greek & Moorish, perfect mechanical work.'⁹⁴ In *The Builder's* obituary for Jones, who died in 1874, the interior of Carlton House Terrace was described and Alfred singled out for his important patronage.

Unfettered by any limit with regard to cost, and working with the full confidence of Mr Morrison in his artistic genius, this work was a labour of love to him, and he lavished upon it all his thought and all his knowledge ... it forms a monument to the genius of Owen Jones.⁹⁵

A week after Jones's death, Alfred hosted a meeting at his house attended by leading architects and designers, including Digby and T. H. Wyatt, George Aitchison, Christopher Dresser, Forster Graham (of Jackson & Graham) and Henry Cole, to discuss a fitting memorial (see [Figure 3.14](#)). Alfred was elected to the executive committee; he lent 44 items to an exhibition of Jones's work held as part of the International Exhibition in London, and commissioned an enamelled dish from Torquato Castellani with a portrait of Jones. The impact at Carlton House Terrace of Owen Jones's decorations was and still is overwhelming; the interiors were one of his most important domestic commissions. Nothing else Alfred did as a patron was so imaginative and enlightened.

Marriage and children: creating a dynasty

Alfred married in 1866 before the interior of Carlton House Terrace was complete. In Anthony Trollope's novel *The Belton Estate*, serialised through 1865 and 1866, Captain Aylmer, a second son of a baronet with a small estate, is advised by his father not to marry: 'in the way of comfort, you can be a great deal more comfortable without a wife than you can with one. What do you want a wife for?'⁹⁶ So why did Alfred get married?

He might have been concerned about his elder brother Charles's arrangements for the disposal of their father's collections at Basildon and Harley Street, not to mention land and securities, in the absence of a direct heir. In 1866, Charles was 49 years old and a confirmed bachelor. Their surviving brothers and sisters were either 'sickly' or inclined to the single life. Frank had married in 1854, but he was an invalid with no children; Walter was a bachelor enjoying his Malham estate; George would marry, but he died aged 45 without children; Allan was an invalid who never married and died aged 38. There were just four grandchildren, all in the female line: Lucy had three surviving children including one son, Harold Moffatt; Mary had died in 1859 aged 29, leaving her three-year-old daughter to be brought up at Basildon; Ellen was a confirmed spinster living with Charles and their mother.

There is evidence Alfred developed a friendship in 1864 with a close neighbour in Wiltshire, Julia Chafyn-Grove of Zeals House. There were visits back and forth between their houses, Julia accompanied by her younger brother William, who engaged the architect George Devey who was designing cottages for Alfred. She recorded being shown around Fonthill House in the summer of 1864:

We ...went to work and were 3 hours looking over his china and old engravings which are sumptuous and evidently his delight, he was very pleasant and went on bringing out one portfolio of engravings after another with the keenest relish and was pleased at our admiration of the things – lots of the china came from the Summer Palace at peking [*sic*]. We felt quite bewildered by what we saw. Mr Morrison asked me if I would like to take a book home which I jumped at.⁹⁷

After Alfred visited Zeals, Julia noted 'he has conquered his shyness of ladies ... I always rather liked him for he has conversation and nice tastes in art.'⁹⁸ Julia was at Fonthill again in July 1865: 'My attention was more

than divided from my luncheon by admiration for what it was served upon, and the tapestry and china that surrounded us. We stayed until 5 p.m. lively all the time looking over the curiosities which now include a score or more of lovely snuff boxes.’⁹⁹ If Alfred considered marriage to Julia, events intervened. In November 1865, Julia’s brother died, and she was plunged into mourning at the same time as she took up the running of the estate. She was also 40 years old, not necessarily an ideal match if Alfred was concerned with securing the family line. A few months later, Alfred became engaged to a much younger woman.

Alfred’s choice of a very young bride was wise but not without risks. Mabel Chermiside (1847–1933) was 19 years old when she married Alfred on 12 April 1866 (Figure 2.10). She was the daughter of the rector of Wilton, who was three years younger than Alfred; Alfred was 45. Such a difference in age was not usual at the time. The ‘ideal’ age difference was considered to be three to seven years, and the majority of upper-class women married at around 25. Marriages with such large age differences were normally only socially acceptable



Figure 2.10 Miniature of Mabel Morrison. Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

if a man was a widower with children to raise.¹⁰⁰ Alfred was, however, very rich, and Mabel was an unusual young woman. She had spent part of her childhood in Paris with her grandfather Sir Robert Chermside, physician to the English Embassy and the personal doctor of the elderly Marchioness of Hertford, his neighbour in the Rue Taitbout. Mabel's father, the Rev. Richard Seymour Conway Chermside, was named after the important collector Richard Seymour-Conway, 4th Marquess of Hertford and (probably) the father of Richard Wallace, who later founded the Wallace Collection. Mabel consequently had some early experience of collectors and their particular traits. At Wilton she played with the young Herberts, Lady Maud who married the composer Hubert Parry becoming a lifelong friend. Edith Olivier's description of Mabel as a young woman is striking:

At sixteen Mabel was a singular and beautiful figure to come upon in a country rectory. All her life she had her own peculiar style of dressing, and already she enjoyed collecting amusing costumes in the various countries she visited. She brought back strange headdresses, shawls, and jewels, to add their foreign flavour to her own lavish movements, to the beauty of her face, and to the brilliancy of her speech. The Chermsides were not rich, but Mabel had always her own splendour.¹⁰¹

The description, however, was based on anecdote; Olivier was 25 years younger than Mabel and infatuated with the idea of her exotic neighbour. They shared the same childhood experience of living close to the Herberts at Wilton House, Olivier's father having succeeded Mabel's as rector. Anna Thomasson's description of Olivier's childhood could also apply to Mabel. 'Socializing with the Pembrokes' circle of aristocratic and intellectual friends, listening to the conversations of dukes and duchesses, artists, historians, poets and politicians, had given her strong opinions and fanciful ideas. It gave her a sense of superiority, both socially and intellectually, that never left her.'¹⁰²

What did Mabel see in Alfred? Isabel Archer, the wealthy heroine of Henry James's novel *Portrait of a Lady* believes herself in love with the much older collector Gilbert Osmond whom she meets surrounded by his treasures in his villa high above Florence.

She had never met a person of so fine a grain ... He was certainly fastidious and critical; he was probably irritable. His sensibility had governed him – possibly governed him too much; it had made him

impatient of vulgar troubles and had led him to live by himself, in a sorted, sifted, arranged, world, thinking about art and beauty and history. He had consulted his taste in everything – his taste alone perhaps.¹⁰³

Even though Isabel associates Osmond's home with 'darkness ... dumbness ... suffocation', she is flattered by his attentions; once married, however, she finds herself trapped in a golden cage. Edith Olivier provides a rare comment on the relationship between Mabel and Alfred: 'Mabel's independent mind was an unfailing delight to her husband in whose eyes she remained the most unique among all the treasures he had collected.'¹⁰⁴ This could be read in different ways.

Alfred drew up a generous marriage settlement and signed his will on the day they were married. A trust of £50,000-worth of consolidated stock of the East India Railway was immediately established for Mabel; at Alfred's death she would receive income from an annuity of £150,000, to keep even if she married again, and a lifetime interest in Fonthill House, 300 acres of surrounding parkland, the house in Carlton House Terrace, the household effects in both properties and stables in Duke Street.

Alfred's 'treasures' were another matter. An inventory was to be made by Christie's immediately after his death listing 'pictures prints statues busts bronzes marbles antiquities and other articles of art or *vertu*' which were to be deemed 'heirlooms'. Mabel could enjoy these in her lifetime, but they would pass with the Fonthill estate to Alfred's heir. If they had no children, everything would go to Harold Moffatt, the son of Alfred's sister Lucy.

The Rev. Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne officiated at their wedding in St James's, Piccadilly. He was well known at the time for his 'lay sermons' delivered from the pulpit of *The Times*. He was also passionate about the improvement of the conditions of agricultural labourers, so may have been a friend of Alfred's. Mabel's father was too ill to officiate and died the following year.

They spent their honeymoon in Paris before proceeding to the south of France. Robert Phillips had advised Alfred to call on Charles Duron in the Rue de Richelieu 'on your way through Paris, he is preparing some very remarkable work[s] which you will find are in an advanced state'. Alfred had already bought pieces by Duron, including an 'enamelled mask'. Bills in the archive suggest Alfred did order more pieces by Duron, including a bracelet and a brooch, presumably for Mabel.¹⁰⁵ Alfred and Mabel were back in Fonthill by September 1866. They entertained 200 of

their tenants and local families in a new barn built at Berwick St Leonard and hosted a party where the guests included William Gladstone and Lady Herbert (of Lea) from Wilton House. Mabel was also presented to the Marquis and Marchioness of Westminster, neighbours from Fonthill Towers. Their daughter, Lady Theodora Grosvenor, wrote a rather barbed entry in her diary:

Made acquaintance with his [Mr Morrison's] new wife (Miss Chermside). Very young, very cheerful, invincibly good natured & quite as if she had had £50,000 a year all her life – walked home with them to see their house which is being decorated & painted gorgeously from top to toe, & will be very successful.¹⁰⁶

Alfred commissioned portraits of Mabel by two of his favourite artists, Charles Lepec and John Brett, also a necklace for her by the Spanish craftsman Plácido Zuloaga (see [Figures 16.1](#) and [18.4](#)). Thus she was added to his 'treasures', with more to follow.

Their daughter Rachel was born early in 1867 and christened on 28 April, but she only lived another nine months. Mabel was already pregnant with her next child, Hugh, born in 1868. Alfred now had a son and heir. Just 14 months later, Katharine was born, though there were difficulties and doctors were in attendance a month before the birth. In 1870, the family moved from temporary lodgings at 2 Harley Street into Carlton House Terrace together with 16 servants. Dorothy was born in 1871 and James Archibald ('Archie') in 1873.

While Mabel gave birth to five babies in the first seven years of their marriage, Alfred continued to collect, to commission and increasingly to lend, virtually without pause. Around 1874, Mabel became virtually bedridden, remaining an invalid for 12 years or more. References in the press to tenant parties at Fonthill often report her apologies for being absent. The few clues to her physical condition suggest a gynaecological problem, perhaps a prolapsed womb. She had begun to pursue her own cultural interests, ancient jewellery, needlework and lace, joining the council of the Royal School of Art Needlework. She supported the production of Kenmare lace in Ireland, together with Richard Wallace (see [Figures 16.2, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5](#)). Lace was used in the decoration of Carlton House Terrace, displayed on the walls and on the panels of the drawing-room doors, spread over the sofa backs, stored in oak chests, cabinets and drawers 'all packed full to the very top with pounds and pounds' worth of this costly needlework ... the visitor becomes dumb with sheer wonder'.¹⁰⁷

In 1883, Alfred built Mabel a luxurious retreat on the Fonthill estate, called The Ranche, at a cost of £3,000. She appeared the same year at a musical party for neighbours from the county, looking 'very pretty and very delicate' but talking without a break 'one flow of conversation'.¹⁰⁸ One of a small number of surviving personal letters, written by Mabel in the early 1880s, possibly to her sister-in-law Harriet Morrison, discusses Alfred's kindness to her: 'I often think that none of the others have the least idea of what he really is, how gentle & pleasant he is in his own home, how generous & how beloved.' She confessed she had 'fretted dreadfully at first for fear my being ill should spoil my husband's or children's life, but I see it doesn't & that is everything'.¹⁰⁹

The final decade: collecting, cataloguing and curating

By 1880, it was clear that Alfred had run out of space in London and Fonthill for his collections. The conservatory at Fonthill was full of sculpture and large pieces of Chinese porcelain. Application was made to the Crown Estate by Jackson & Graham to build three galleries on top of Carlton House Terrace. However, the scheme was rejected. Then, in 1884, the architects Gordon and Lowther were commissioned to build picture galleries at Fonthill. A number of surviving labels attached to Alfred's Old Masters are dated December 1887, with an indication of where they should hang in Carlton House Terrace (see [Figures 10.10](#), [10.12](#) and [10.14](#)). They suggest a rehang was gradually underway. Photographs taken in around 1891 of the completed galleries at Fonthill are dominated by contemporary paintings, at least one of which is known to have hung at Carlton House Terrace before 1882. The only descriptions of the interiors of Carlton House Terrace, the anonymous journalist from *The Magazine of Art* (1879), Mrs Caddy (1881) and Mrs Haweis and Moncure Conway (1882), all pre-date the building of galleries at Fonthill.

Meanwhile Alfred's major preoccupation from the 1880s onwards was the cataloguing of his enormous collection of autograph letters. By the late 1870s, M. M. Holloway had retired and his son had died. The archivist and palaeographer Alphonse Wyatt Thibaudeau (1840/1–93) of 382 Oxford Street now took on the production of a number of catalogues.¹¹⁰ The first of six folio volumes of the *Catalogue of the collection of autograph letters and historical documents formed between 1865 and 1882 by Alfred Morrison* was published in 1883. The final

volume (S–Z) appeared in 1892. A further three volumes (1893–6) covered the letters collected between 1882 and 1893; two more volumes (1893–4) were devoted to the Hamilton-Nelson papers; the Blessington Papers appeared in 1895 and the first volume of the Bulstrode Papers the following year.

The published report by the inspectors for the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1884 must have boosted Alfred's ego as well as his sense of social standing:

It can therefore be readily believed that the Mss., gathered together from so many different sources by a connoisseur, whose enthusiasm in his peculiar department of literary service has never been unattended by critical caution and nice discrimination, may be described in the language of moderation as the most remarkable gathering of historical autographs ever formed by a single collector in Great Britain.¹¹¹

Alfred here clearly revealed his interest in famous men and women, his 'special penchant' for 'distinguished recipients as well as writers,' for example Queen Elizabeth I to Henry IV of France; Keats to Fanny Brawne; Robespierre to Danton.¹¹² One of his obituaries summed up the collection: 'it is hardly an exaggeration to say that every reigning Sovereign and every first-rate statesman whose name is to be found in the French or English history of the last three centuries, and nearly all the great names of literature, science, and art, are represented in this collection'.¹¹³

Scholars were welcomed to Fonthill and Carlton House Terrace. John Cordy Jeaffreson's biography of Nelson and Emma Hamilton, published in 1888, relied almost entirely on Alfred's collection. Jeaffreson was profuse in his praise of Alfred, who 'places' his collection 'at the service of men of letters with characteristic generosity'.¹¹⁴ He might also have seen Alfred's portrait of *Nelson* by Arthur Devis. Alfred took every opportunity to acquire portraits alongside the letters of celebrities.

Alfred owned a copy of Clouet's portrait of Mary Queen of Scots (the original is in the Royal Collection) (see [Figure 19.10](#)). Now he acquired her very last letter written to her brother-in-law King Henri III of France the night before her execution ([Figure 2.11](#)). The letter was in the archives of the Scots College in Paris until the French Revolution, when it passed into the hands of the Chevalier d'Hervilly, and subsequently became the property of Messieurs Feuillet de Conches and B. Fillon, and then Alfred. The queen writes:

Digne d'excuse
 8 fev. 1587

Monsieur mon beaufrere estant par la promesse
 de Dieu pour mes pechez comme ie croy venue
 me ioster contre les bras de ceste Roynie ma
 cousine au ray ou veueux deuenir & passer
 pres de vingt ans ie suis enfin parvenue & suis
 estee condampnee a la mort & ayant demande
 mes papiers par eux ostez a ceste fin de faire
 mon testament ie nay peu rien retirer d'iceux me
 seruisit ny obtenir chose de n'importe quel libere
 ny qu'après ma mort mon corps fust baillé par
 selon mon desir en votre royaume ou ray ou
 honneur de vostre royaume votre sœur & sœur
 d'allye
 C'est pourquoy après avoir ma este de bonesse
 ma sentence pour estre exécutée demain comme
 aux criminels de viel heures du matin
 ie nay eu loisir de vous faire une ample lettre
 de tout ce qui s'est passé mais sil vous plait
 de croire mon me l'esme & ces autres ments
 desolez serait une vaine parole la verité & en
 grace a dieu ie m'excuse la mort & fidellement

Figure 2.11 Last letter written by Mary Queen of Scots, on 8 February 1587 to her brother-in-law, Henri III of France. Adv.MS.54.1.1. Presented in 1925 by the Faculty of Advocates to the nation on the foundation of the National Library of Scotland.

© National Library of Scotland

Sire, my brother-in-law, having by God's will, for my sins I think, thrown myself into the power of the Queen my cousin, at whose hands I have suffered much for almost twenty years, I have finally been condemned to death by her and her Estates ... Tonight, after dinner, I have been advised of my sentence: I am to be executed like a criminal at eight in the morning ... It remains for me to beg Your Most Christian Majesty, my brother-in-law and old ally, who have always protested your love for me, to give proof now of your goodness on all these points: firstly by charity, in paying my unfortunate servants the wages due them – this is a burden on my conscience that only you can relieve: further, by having prayers offered to God for a queen who has borne the title Most Christian, and who dies a Catholic, stripped of all her possessions. As for my son, I commend him to you in so far as he deserves, for I cannot answer for him ... Give instructions, if it please you, that for my soul's sake part of what you owe me should be paid, and that for the sake of Jesus Christ, to whom I shall pray for you tomorrow as I die, I be left enough to found a memorial mass and give the customary alms.

This Wednesday, two hours after midnight.

Your very loving and most true sister, Mary R

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Alfred continued to buy paintings from established and young artists, and to commission new *objets d'art*. In 1882, he was approached by the owner of the United Art Gallery in London who was showing the work of the Polish artist, Franciszek Streitt (1839–90). He bought paintings by the Norwegian Otto Sinding (1842–1909), *A Sea Piece, with Shipping and Evening*, by the Dane Carl Rasmussen (1841–93) *A View in Greenland* and *An Autumn Day at Kornok, Greenland*, and, in 1888–9, five drawings by the Polish artist Anna Bilinska (1857–93; [Figure 2.12](#)), who had settled in Paris and showed work in London at the Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery.

Alfred bought all of Bilinska's drawings exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1888. Bilinska kept the positive reviews along with engravings of the works in a memorial album. The whereabouts of Alfred's drawings is unknown.

Frank Bramley (1857–1915) was a relatively young artist when his painting *A Hopeless Dawn* was bought for the nation under the Chantrey Bequest in 1888 after critical success at the Royal Academy. He was a member of the Newlyn School of Artists and a founder member of the New English Art Club. In 1889, Alfred paid £750 for his painting



Figure 2.12 Anna Bilinska, *Self Portrait*, c. 1888, copy from Bilinska's memorial album, 1920.¹¹⁵ Ms.Przyb.BJ15/78 (Ms.Acc.Jagiellonian Library 15/78).

Saved ... Oft in a Humble Home a Golden Room is Found, which was hung 'on the line' at the Academy. Bramley was elected an Associate of the Academy in 1894.

The French enamellist Lucien Falize (1839–97) was commissioned to make two extraordinary pieces. The first piece was a fantastic clock of gold, silver, enamels and gems, in the shape of a late Gothic church tower with the monogram AM displayed on its side (see [Figures 18.5–10](#)). The second, a vase of enamelled gold and carved rock crystal, may have been commissioned by Mabel. Both were shown at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889, prompting Falize to express his gratitude. 'I am pleased to say that I am indebted to [Alfred] for successfully undertaking and completing a work [the vase] of which I am more than proud; it is thanks to his refined taste, the trust he has placed in me, as well as the intelligent advice of Mrs Morrison, whose competence is great in these matters.'¹¹⁶

A handful of letters from 1890 show Alfred's continuing interest in Japanese pieces which he first bought at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris. He was buying from Halstaff & Hannaford in Regent Street,

S. Garcia & Co. in St Mary Axe and the Japanese Fine Art Depot in Duke Street. The proprietor of the Japanese Fine Art Depot was John Sparks, who knew how to write an enticing letter to his client. On 12 June 1890, he informed Alfred:

I have today seen unpacked two magnificent Screens, certainly the finest ever produced in Japan. They are simply marvels of Art workmanship and quite unique of their kind in the world. The price for the pair is £2500 but as the materials alone cost nearly £1500 and they have taken seven years to make that sum is by no means high.

Would Alfred be able to go ‘as far as the Warehouse’ in the City to see them? ‘As yet they have been seen by no one save myself and those who unpacked them.’ The following month Sparks offered Alfred a ‘magnificent Cabinet ... a pair of exceptional Cloisonné vases ... also ‘a splendid Japanese Bronze Eagle’.¹¹⁷

Shortly before, Caspar Purdon Clarke, Keeper of the India Museum at the South Kensington Museum, suggested Morrison might be persuaded to buy embroideries from Turkestan. He had no more room at the museum, but advised the vendor, Major Burton, ‘try Alfred Morrison he is the best connoisseur of textiles in England’.¹¹⁸ Alfred kept the letter.

Family life and portrait commissions

Alfred commissioned a number of portraits of Mabel on their marriage, including a portrait by an unknown artist (the signature ‘Galbraith’ may have been added later), in which she as yet wears no wedding ring. Portraits by Charles Lepec and John Brett were followed by Thomas Woolner’s marble bust, completed in 1874 (see [Figure 11.4](#)). Brett’s portrait of Alfred was completed in 1870 ([Figure 2.13](#)).

More portraits date from the mid-1880s, including their children. Katharine was depicted by Claudius Marcelain Popelin in 1880. Lepec’s portrait of Mabel from 1886 was set in an elaborate carved boxwood frame; another dated 1888 may have been intended for a sculpture. There are designs by Lepec, dated 1886, in the Victoria and Albert Museum for a red velvet and gilt metal-mounted tabernacle to contain portraits of Mabel and her four children. The artist Otto Scholderer (1834–1902), his wife and young son were invited by Mabel to spend six weeks in a cottage on the Fonthill estate in 1884. Scholderer had settled



Figure 2.13 John Brett, *Alfred Morrison*, 1870. Private collection.

Photograph © Fonthill Estate

in London during the Franco-Prussian War and was naturalised British. He showed at the Academy and lived in Putney, a neighbour of John Brett, who introduced him to Alfred. The holiday in Wiltshire in 1884 involved his giving lessons to Alfred's daughters Dorothy and Katharine which 'wasn't much fun'.¹¹⁹ In 1885, however, he was commissioned to paint Alfred, seated in a 'dark coat with a fur collar'. The portrait was shown at the Royal Academy in 1886 (no. 1239).¹²⁰

In 1888, Alfred lent 37 Renaissance medals to the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy. Alfred was then approached by Henry Jamyn Brooks for inclusion in the painting *Private View of the Old Masters Exhibition*, Royal Academy 1888.¹²¹ Alfred stands between the Director of the National Gallery and Charles Drury Fortnum, the collector and benefactor of the University of Oxford. It is not difficult to believe Alfred would have appreciated this recognition of his position as patron and collector.

There is evidence of Mabel being more proactive as she gradually recovered from her debilitating medical condition, although her health remained a concern for the rest of Alfred's life. Their eldest son Hugh was

21 in 1890. Mabel, however, was not well enough to attend the celebrations, but 150 enjoyed luncheon at Fonthill and listened to a speech by Alfred. Eager to share his collections, he said 'it would afford him much pleasure if those present spent a short time in looking at the pictures around them'.¹²² During a holiday in Fishguard in August and September the same year, Mabel was taken ill with a heart attack. A young guest described it as 'one of her worst heart attacks, worse than she has had for three years'. She was apparently 'near Death' and her physician Dr Black was called from London. During the same holiday a little more was revealed of her character, again by one of the younger guests. 'One feels she is the most wilful person that ever was ... but she does give such an enormous amount of pleasure all round her where she goes ... She is devoted to all her servants.' She is 'delightfully fresh & full of fun' however 'perhaps her faults are nearer the surface than most peoples. But [she has] boundless sympathy for all the world and her keen wish to help everyone if possible.'¹²³

For all her illnesses, Mabel proved to be the healthy partner in the marriage, living until 1933, when she was 93 years old. She outlived her eldest son Hugh and died just one year before her son Archie. Hugh married Lady Mary Leveson-Gower on 16 August 1892. He was the first member of the extended Morrison family to marry into the aristocracy. Lady Mary's father, the 2nd Earl Granville, had lived almost next door, at 18 Carlton House Terrace, but was virtually bankrupt when he died in 1891. Hugh's courtship took place at Kensington Palace, where Lady Granville had an apartment. He recorded in his diary, 10 July 1892, 'felt terribly nervous – got to Kensington Palace. Lady G most kind. Then saw and was accepted by Mary.'¹²⁴ The wedding took place at St Mary Abbots Church in Kensington and was attended by the prime minister Mr Gladstone and his wife. Mabel did not attend. Alfred settled £50,000 on Hugh and a further £50,000 on Lady Mary.¹²⁵ The same year, Archie left Eton for New College, Oxford, but never completed his degree. He joined the Grenadier Guards in 1896. Katharine and Dorothy continued to live with their parents. Katharine married Sir Stephen Gatty in 1905 and Dorothy married Viscount St Cyres in 1912.

In 1892, Philip Burne-Jones (1861–1926), son of Edward Burne-Jones, was commissioned to paint Alfred's portrait. He painted Alfred at Fonthill, in one of the new galleries beneath the vast canvas by H. W. B. Davis of stampeding cattle. The moment is significant. Burne-Jones's letter provides a fixed date by which Alfred's rehanging and display of his collections was most likely completed. The artist's view of Alfred's taste is also of interest. He was writing to Mary Elcho (née Wyndham), whose

aesthetic sense was informed by her mother Madeline Wyndham and the mix of early Italian Master paintings, works by the later Pre-Raphaelites and furnishings by Morris and Company at Clouds House, very different from either Fonthill or Carlton House Terrace:

Their gallery of pictures was the most depressing thing of all. I had never quite realised what unlimited wealth – combined with bad taste – could achieve. Do you remember that vast canvas, of life-size cows coming full tilt at one, with a thunderstorm raging in the background? It got on my nerves – & I wondered whether my portrait wd look like the Cow picture when it was done. But they were kind & hospitable – & everyone needn't have good taste, need they?¹²⁶

The following year, Alfred's son Hugh went to see the portrait in Burne-Jones's studio in London, at the same time visiting, with his father, the studios of Otto Scholderer, Andrew MacCallum and David Murray. In March, the portrait was on display at the New Gallery.

The last portrait of Alfred was painted soon after by Ignacio Zuloaga (1870–1945), the son of the Spanish damascene craftsman Plácido Zuloaga. Ignacio was struggling to find patrons in Paris and came to London in 1893. Introductions were made by his father who gave a portrait of himself by Ignacio to Alfred (see [Figure 14.2](#)).¹²⁷ Ignacio was then commissioned to paint Alfred and Mabel.

Ignacio's portrait of Alfred ([Figure 2.14](#)) reveals a frail figure: he is about 73 years old; a rug is placed over his knees and he is seated in front of the enamelled censers from the Summer Palace (see frontispiece).¹²⁸

Mabel's portrait has not been discovered, so only her own effusive letter provides an idea of what it was like. She wrote in French on 23 June 1894 to Ignacio's close friend Santiago Rusinol.¹²⁹ This is an extract translated from her French.

Our Ignacio is painting (perhaps he has already told you) my portrait, and I can assure you that it will be a first-rate portrait. I am delighted about it, for one can see at first glance that it is the work of a master. It is astonishingly original – the delineation, the harmony of shades, the pose, the whole composition, at last the artist's idea and its realisation loudly proclaim that this portrait by our Zuloaga is a triumph, a triumph without any doubt of the modernists. I understand that in your opinion, as well as mine, this quality increases a thousand times the value of the picture. For modernism



Figure 2.14 Ignacio Zuloaga, *Alfred Morrison*, c. 1894, oil on canvas, 183 × 153 cm (72 × 60 in). Private collection.

Photograph © 2010, Christie's Images Limited

is the only way to reach the truth and life in painting. I will never be persuaded otherwise! The background of the picture is an imaginary landscape delicately shaded with clouds, which give an unbelievable softness to the bold combination of colours that your friend has chosen for the costume in this portrait. I consider this picture almost like a banner, which will bring grief to the enemy camp and courage and hope to the brave hearts and workers. I will have all my life a special reserved affection for this picture, which has led to the honour of a certain intimacy of acquaintance with your friend. I can't explain to you the pleasure I feel to talk with him. And to discover the depths of this proud character. And I esteem him as much as a man as I admire him as an artist. I am sad about his pessimism but I am very hopeful that this trait will ease. He has been through, young as he is, considerable struggles. These have left their fingerprints, which only time can erase ... his future. And I am convinced that he is a man of genius. I wish in all

things to be useful to him. And I want him to create beautiful things as he likes. I wish ... portrait of my husband and say in advance that it will be a success, I'm sure.

According to Mabel another portrait was planned:

Our Zuloaga has a project when we are all in the country to do another portrait of me. This time it will be out of doors, just after sunset ... I will try to help him find something for which the idea of something diaphanous, lightly depicted, the costume in two shades of grey, on the head nothing but a flowing veil. And the idea I'm inclined to – I believe one could draw from this ... the subtleties of the hair, all subordinate to the fading light of day and that one will feel the darkness of the night, growing very softly with arms outstretched to bury and extinguish the hours ... (the only remnants of the vanished glories of the sun) sprinkled here and there on the clinging grey folds of the woman's costume. But, but, I must stop this boringly long chatter.¹³⁰

It would appear that Alfred's illness and death intervened. In 1895, Alfred had a major operation after 'great haemorrhage & other effects of an infection in the nose'. He recovered, and was reported out shooting pheasant by his brother Charles ('120 head in 180 minutes. Very good for a man over 74'). Ignacio Zuloaga visited in August, perhaps discussing his second portrait of Mabel.¹³¹ Two years later, Alfred fell seriously ill in London and was taken to Fonthill followed by his London doctors, Dr Treves and Dr Black. Alfred died there on 22 December 1897.

Conclusion

Obituaries all marvelled at the collections of Alfred, his patronage of craftsmen and the extraordinary interiors of 16 Carlton House Terrace; he was 'one of the greatest collectors of pictures, engravings and autographs of modern times':

His special interest, at least during the last 20 years of his life, lay in encouraging the finest forms of modern handicraft. He used to maintain that there are modern workmen in many countries who can produce as fine examples of cameo cutting, inlaying of metals, glass work, &c., as were ever produced before if they are properly



Figure 2.15 Alfred Morrison's tomb, Holy Trinity Church, Fonthill Gifford.
Photograph © Caroline Dakers

paid for their time and not overwhelmed in the general rush for cheapness. He loved to be the Maecenas of these men.¹³²

His collection 'must have cost him at least a million of money'.¹³³ A few noticed his other achievements as a prize-winning breeder of sheep, benefactor to his Wiltshire community and kind landlord. His coffin was placed in one of the galleries at Fonthill, surrounded by his paintings and *objets d'art*. His funeral at Fonthill Gifford was attended by a wide circle of neighbours, landed gentry, farmers, his tenants, local shopkeepers and businessmen as well as his own family (Figure 2.15). Unlike Beckford, Alfred managed his fortune with care. When he died, he was still worth nearly £1 million, though the probate valuation suggests his collections were undervalued. And unlike Beckford, the sales of his collections began *after* he was dead.

Notes

- 1 Calculated at £7.2 billion in 2007. See Beresford and Rubinstein, *The Richest of the Rich*, 178.
- 2 For full biography of James Morrison see Dakers, *A Genius for Money*.
- 3 James Morrison sent his youngest sons to Eton, then Oxford University.
- 4 Alfred Morrison to Mary Ann Morrison, 10 April 1837, Fonthill Archives.
- 5 See Dakers, *Fonthill Recovered*, for a full history of houses on the Fonthill estate.

- 6 See Dakers, *A Genius for Money* and 'Furniture and interior decoration', 189–216.
- 7 Charles Morrison to James Morrison, 5 December 1842, Fonthill Archives.
- 8 Alfred to Charles Morrison, 29 October 1841, Fonthill Archives.
- 9 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 151.
- 10 Alfred to Mary Ann Morrison, 1 May 1842, Fonthill Archives.
- 11 Fonthill Archives.
- 12 Alfred to James Morrison, 21 January 1848, Fonthill Archives.
- 13 Theed's bust of James Morrison exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1849, no. 1282.
- 14 Brandon and Wyatt drawings for Fonthill House, 1848–9, Dept of Prints and Drawings, Victoria and Albert Museum, D.467–541.
- 15 For more information about James Morrison's lengthy will, see Dakers, *A Genius for Money*.
- 16 Emily Grant to Mary Ann Morrison, 14 December 1850, Fonthill Archives.
- 17 Alfred's landed property was valued at just over £170,000; his investments in American railways and canals were valued at £88,333 6s 8d. For details of income, securities and land from Fonthill, see F/1/1100, F/1/1110 and F/3/1161.
- 18 In London he may have been living with his parents in Harley Street or he may have taken lodgings in St James's Place.
- 19 *Freedom of Election*, Wallingford, 4 June 1852, Fonthill Archives.
- 20 Charles to Alfred, 7 August 1853, Fonthill Archives.
- 21 *Favourite* was no. 361 at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition.
- 22 See Dakers, *Fonthill Recovered*. William Beckford commissioned Hendrik Frans de Cort to paint Fonthill Splendens in 1791. James Morrison acquired the painting and took it to Basildon. It passed to descendants and now hangs at Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire. The estate plan and three paintings eventually owned by Alfred may have passed from Beckford to John Farquhar, his nephew George Mortimer and then to James Morrison, who left them for Alfred when he moved to Basildon.
- 23 See Burton and Chapel in Dakers, *A Genius for Money*.
- 24 Sale of Duke of Hamilton, Christie's, 15 March 1892.
- 25 Memorandum book, Fonthill Archives.
- 26 Alfred bought it as the work of P. de Champagne. He lent it to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1879, no. 157, when the artist was named as Claude Le Fevre; it was also lent to New Gallery, Exhibition of the Royal House of Stuart, 1888–1889, no. 70. It was sold at Bonhams in 2013. Tiffin (1795–1877) was a leading connoisseur and figure in the antiquarian trade in prints and drawings and agent for the British Museum. His business was at 434 West Strand until 1860, when he semi-retired to Canonbury.
- 27 Victoria Dock Bonds 20,000; East India Railway Shares 64,500; Grand Trunk of Canada 1st Pref Bonds 10,400; Brazilian Bonds 21,000; Norwegian Trunk pref. shares 10,000; Spring Gardens Bonds \$100,000; Northern Liberties Bonds \$20,000; Hawaii Division Canal Bonds \$100,000; City of Philadelphia loan \$100,000; New York Central Bonds \$58,500; Chesapeake & Delaware Bonds \$50,000. Fonthill Archives.
- 28 According to Alfred's Memorandum Book, he was paying £1,500 income tax a year in the 1870s, when the rate was 3d in the pound; in 1884, he paid £3,500 when the rate was 7d in the pound.
- 29 Information from 1861 Census.
- 30 Memorandum book, Fonthill Archives.
- 31 See Pierson, *Private Collecting*.
- 32 Anderson, *Hang Your Halo in the Hall*, 16. For a list of early members see Martin-Holland, *The Savile Club*.
- 33 Mabel Morrison, possibly to her sister-in-law Harriet Morrison, n.d., Fonthill Archives.
- 34 The Holloways' account in 1863–4 was £2,772 4s 1d, for buying engravings and travelling; in 1868, they spent £1,340 on 175 items; in February to June 1869, Holloway's account was £1,284 19s for etchings (Legros), engravings, sketches, books from the library of Dillon, autographs from the Dillon collection and engravings. In May 1869, Holloway's account was £1,582 62s for buying autographs, engravings, etc. from the Young sale. Also Leighton drawing of heads 10 guineas, three pictures from Todd sale including Hofland 'Twickenham Meadows' £30 9s. See Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
- 35 See Holloway collections at University of St Andrews: <https://collections.st-andrews.ac.uk/group/marseille-holloway-genealogical-information/2078194>.

- 36 Holloway papers in Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
- 37 Holloway papers in Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
- 38 Holloway's own collection is at the University of St Andrews.
- 39 Surviving receipts from Durlacher begin in 1863 when he spent £4,565; in 1864, he spent £12,676; in 1865, he spent £17,228, mostly on porcelain. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1130.
- 40 Diary of Lady Theodora Grosvenor, 28 August 1864, private collection.
- 41 Katharine Morrison to Hugh Morrison, 10 December 1890, Fonthill Archives, O/1/1498.
- 42 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 43 See Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the patronage of Alfred Morrison', 195–223.
- 44 Le Saut de l'Amour inscribed on the reverse 'No 125 / Dernière plaque / du coffret, les prouesses de / l'amour / 9 plaques à sujets 12 [?] plaques d'ornement Charles LEPEC / I.P.V. / 1 [?] Juillet 1860 24 Nov 1861' *Les Lutteurs d'Amour* inscribed 'CHARLES LEPEC 'INV. PINX. VITR. / anno 1861 / etatis 31 / NO 115 / 8 FEVX'. Handwritten paper label to reverse of frame: 'No 5 / £75'. The plaques were presumably acquired from Charles Lepec by Robert Phillips of Cockspur Street, then sold to Alfred Morrison (1821–97); sold by Mabel Morrison, Christie's, 25 January 1899 and following two days, day three, lot 393 (part), see cat. no. 8, above, bt Giuliano; [...]; private collection, Cadogan Square, London, and by descent; Cheffins, Cambridge, 9 December 2020, lot 56, to Sinai & Sons.
- 45 See H. Blairman & Sons Ltd catalogue, 2015, item 6: *Amazon & Atalanta* by Charles Lepec.
- 46 Also two paintings by the Belgian artist A. D. Dillens, *Winter in Zealand* and *Summer in Zealand*, £350 the pair – see [Chapter 5](#).
- 47 Robert Phillips to Alfred, 30 January 1864, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1131.
- 48 Phillips to Alfred bill for 17s 6d, 7 May 1864, Fonthill Archives, F/2/ 1131.
- 49 Receipt from George Edvard Saal, 3 May 1864, 225 guineas for *Moonlight Rendezvous*. 13 September 1864 receipt for £152 5s for picture by Sørensen. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 50 Holloway accounts, 1 December 1864, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
- 51 See Wunder, *Hiram Powers*.
- 52 Holloway's account, 20 April 1868, for Wyatt statue £252, Power statue £260. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
- 53 See Wilson, "By heaven inspired", 14–29.
- 54 After meeting Thomas Woolner at the home of Eliot and Lewes, Alfred commissioned him to sculpt a bust of Mabel, shown at the Royal Academy in 1874.
- 55 19 August 1863, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
- 56 See Manthorne and Coffrey, *The Landscapes of Louis Remy Mignot*, 138.
- 57 See Holloway papers in Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129. Purchases by Holloway on behalf of Alfred from Cropsey's sale, Foster & Sons 'London Pictures and Sketches by J.F. Cropsey', 29 April 1863: 17 *Twilight Sky*; 18 *Study of Sky, Hyde Park*; 51 *Sunset at Newport Rhode Island*; 57 *Autumn Foliage in the White Mountains*; 58 *Twilight in the South*; 64 *Study of Sunset, Storm Sky*; 65 *Study of Rain Sky at Sunset*; 99 *Study of Sky in the Catskill Mountains*; 105 *Study of Foliage on the Chenongo River*; 115 *Rock in the Sea, West Lulworth, Dorset*; 117 *Study of Sky, Clearing Up After Rain*; total £140 8s. NAL: 'A catalogue of a collection of finished pictures and sketches of that talented America artist, J.F. Cropsey, Esq. Messrs Foster, the Gallery, 54 Pall Mall, 29 April 1863.' Also see Talbot, *Jasper F. Cropsey* (1970) and Talbot, *Jasper F. Cropsey* (1977).
- 58 J. F. Cropsey, *Autumn Foliage in the White Mountains* (RA 1862, no.288), sold Christie's American Art, 22 November 2016, lot 35.
- 59 Louis Remy Mignot, *Lagoon of the Guayaquil*, 1863, sold at Christie's sale, 18 January 2024.
- 60 1863: *The Rainbow and Lake George*. 13 June 1864: receipt for £300 from Mignot for a picture. 20 January 1865: receipt from Louis R. Mignot £78 for *Sunny Afternoon Warwickshire* at British Institution. 5 April 1865: receipt for £125 from Mignot for *Lowlands of Guayaquil*. May 1865: receipt for £105 from Mignot for *Rio Savaneta*. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128/1130/1131.
- 61 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 62 Alfred's mother and brother Charles continued to live in the original home of James Morrison in Harley Street.
- 63 Receipt from MacCallum for £80, 24 February 1868. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 64 Dafforne, 'The works of Andrew MacCallum', 353–6.
- 65 RA Council minutes, Vol. 12, 1861–8. Alfred in list of names for the dinner, 12 April 1864.
- 66 Brett to Alfred, 3 June 1864, Fonthill Archives, F/02/1132.

- 67 See Brett papers, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1132. 3 June 1864: receipt for £250 from John Brett for *Massa, Bay of Naples* now at RA; 1864: Brett, *View of the Corniche* – bought by AM from studio? 1864: Brett, *Capri in the Evening* – possibly bought by AM for £300 – Wheldon diaries. 19 September 1865: receipt from John Brett for £100 for *Lady with Dove*. 1865: R. A. Brett shows *Capri in the Evening* – bought by AM year before? 22 March 1866: Brett asks AM to lend *Bonchurch Downs* drawing for the RA – he is also sending another picture of AM's to the RA. 22 August 1866: receipt from John Brett for £75 for *The River Dart* at Manchester Exhibition. 13 May 1867: receipt from John Brett for 250 for *Lat 53* etc., RA. 13 September 1867: receipt from John Brett for £150 – advance payment for painting. 1868: John Brett portrait of *Mabel Morrison*; 1868 RA buys Brett *Christmas Morning*; 1868 24 March receipt from John Brett for £450 for *Christmas Morning* at RA 624. 17 July 1868: receipt from John Brett for £128 for oil portrait of Mrs Morrison, two pencil heads of Mrs Morrison and an etching of Mr Morrison. 1870: portrait of Alfred Morrison. 1872: *Sea-Shore with Seagulls, Dawn off Lundy Island, Sunset off Lundy Island*.
- 68 Payne, John Brett, 91.
- 69 Rossetti and Swinburne, *Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition*, 24.
- 70 Brett, 'Daylight in the Dwelling House', 458–60; *The Builder*, no. 63 (10 December 1892): 458–60.
- 71 November 1864: receipt for £262 10s from Inchbold for *Jungfrau from Wengen Alp*. 22 March 1865: Ford Madox Brown offers to paint copy of 'Windermere' after AM has seen it in his gallery (no. 25) and discovers it is not for sale. 21 April: Brown writes 'little picture is finished'. Alfred also bought by Davis *Approaching Thunderstorm, Early Summer* and *Shepherd and Sheep, and Figures Harvesting*. He bought Inchbold's *Twixt Theodore and Mark, King Arthur's Island* and *An Alpine Scene*. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 72 Receipts in Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128. 11 August 1869: £21 for Bannatyne. August 1869: £84 for Talmage White (White was living in Capri). Alfred bought another Bannatyne, *Morning Twilight: the Moon Loch, Argyllshire*.
- 73 Colvin, 'Pictures in London and Paris', 41.
- 74 Anon, *The Graphic*, 22 June 1872, 590.
- 75 Martin, 'Staging China, Japan, and Siam', 134.
- 76 Robert Phillips receipts, 30 August and 8 November 1867, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1131.
- 77 See Lavin, *The Art and Tradition of the Zuloagas*, and Wainwright, 'Alfred Morrison', 31. Zuloaga showed an inkstand made for the Queen of Spain which received praise in *The Art-Journal*.
- 78 List in Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 79 No. 497 in Alfred Morrison's *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*.
- 80 Letter in the Khalili Collection, 13 October 1868.
- 81 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art', 140–4.
- 82 Fonthill Archives.
- 83 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art', 207–11.
- 84 Royal Academy 1865. Morel-Ladeuil was working for Elkington & Co.
- 85 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 86 Anon, *The Art-Journal* 6, 1867, 154.
- 87 See Sala, *Notes and Sketches*, 348–9.
- 88 One solution was renting storage space. A bill for 1865 reveals Alfred renting space in the Albany Pantechnicon, Regent's Park at £2 per month. Fonthill Archives.
- 89 See Owen Jones to James Morrison, 23, 30 January 1845, Fonthill Archives, A/7/0214.
- 90 See Darby, 'Owen Jones and the Eastern Ideal'.
- 91 Jones, *Examples of Chinese Ornament*.
- 92 Anon, 'From a London Correspondent', 9.
- 93 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1121.
- 94 Darby, 'Owen Jones and the Eastern Ideal', 422.
- 95 Anon, 'The late Mr Owen Jones', 385.
- 96 Trollope, *The Belton Estate*, 353.
- 97 Elias, *Zeals*, 120, quoting the Journal of Julia Chafyn-Grove, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, WSHC.865/577.
- 98 Elias, *Zeals*, 118.
- 99 Elias, *Zeals*, 163.

- 100 Jalland, *Women, Marriage and Politics*, 79.
- 101 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies*, 50.
- 102 Thomasson, *A Curious Friendship*, 12–14.
- 103 James, *Portrait of a Lady*, 279. James was a member of the Savile Club with Alfred.
- 104 Oliver, *Four Victorian Ladies*, 60.
- 105 Phillips to Alfred, 6 April 1866. Duron's bill September 10 1866. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1131.
- 106 Diary of Lady Theodora Grosvenor, 2 September 1866, private collection. The local paper recorded an accident to William Ebil, one of the decorators, who fell and broke his leg (19 May 1866). For more information on the new Fonthill Abbey and the Grosvenors see Dakers, *Fonthill Recovered*.
- 107 Aurora, 'Ladies Column', n.p.
- 108 Dakers, *Clouds*.
- 109 Incomplete and undated letter, early 1880s, in Mabel's handwriting, Fonthill Archives.
- 110 By 1890, Thibaudeau's business had failed. His wife Wilhelmina wrote to Alfred for financial help, 28 June 1890. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1135.
- 111 Munby, *The Cult of the Autograph Letter*, 78.
- 112 Munby, *The Cult of the Autograph Letter*, 79.
- 113 Anon, 'Obituary', 7.
- 114 Jeaffreson, *Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson*, vii.
- 115 https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl//dlibra/metadatasetsearch?action=AdvancedSearchAction&type=-3&val1=Title_version:%22M%C3%A9morial+Album+artystki%5C-malarki+Anny+Bili%C5%84skie+%5C:+Odezwy+prasy+wszech%C5%Bwiatowej+w+ci%C4%85gu+jej+kr%C3%B3tkich%2C+bo+zawrze%C5%Bnie+po+pi%C4%99ciu+zaledwie+latach+%C5%Bmieri%C4%85+przerwanych+wszech%C5%Bwiatowych+tryumf%C3%B3w%22.
- 116 See Purcell, *A Dynasty of Jewellers*, 95.
- 117 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1133.
- 118 Clarke to Burton, 31 May 1890, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1135.
- 119 Letter to Fantin Latour, 18 November 1884: https://quellen.perspectivia.net/fr/fantin-scholderer/1884_10.
- 120 Portrait sold 1 November 1971, Christie's, lot 541.
- 121 Displayed at the Dickinson and Forster Gallery, 114 New Bond Street, in 1889.
- 122 Anon, 'East Knoyle Choir Treat', 7.
- 123 Susan Lushington correspondence, 1890, in Surrey Record Office. Transcriptions provided by David Taylor FSAL.
- 124 Hugh Morrison diaries, Fonthill Archives, M/01/1379.
- 125 The couple had to undergo lengthy sometimes painful treatment for infertility until 1906, 14 years after their marriage, when a son was born, heir to the Fonthill estate.
- 126 Dakers, *Clouds*, 72.
- 127 Plácido visited Alfred in 1885, perhaps to discuss Ignacio's position. In 1887, Ignacio wrote to Oscar Browning describing Alfred as 'a very good person for us, he is our protector'. OB papers at King's College Cambridge, OB/1/1853/C. Hugh Morrison, travelling in Spain in 1890, was met in Madrid by Zuloaga, possibly the son, who accompanied him to the Prado and to Toledo. Hugh records meeting Zuloaga in London in 1892; again this could be Ignacio.
- 128 Lertxundi Galiani, *Zuloaga*. Pair of enamel storks on stands bought from Thomas W. Woodgate of High Holborn, October 1864, £645 15s (including an Indian box), Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128. In 1937, when a catalogue was drawn up of paintings owned by Alfred's grandson John, the artist was named as Plácido Zuloaga and the storks were described as herons.
- 129 Reference Arxiu del Cau Ferrat, Sitges. No. Inv. 32.270.
- 130 Translation of letter from the French by Fay Garey for this publication.
- 131 Hugh Morrison diaries, 25 August 1895, Fonthill Archives, M/01/1379.
- 132 Hugh Morrison scrapbook of obituaries, Fonthill Archives.
- 133 Aurora, 'Ladies Column', n.p.

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- Anon. 'From a London Correspondent', *Leeds Mercury*, 9 March 1872, 9.
- Anon. *The Graphic* 5, no. 134 (22 June 1872): 590.
- Anon. 'The late Mr Owen Jones', *The Builder* 32, no. 1631 (9 May 1874): 383–5.
- Anon. 'Obituary: Alfred Morrison', *The Times*, 27 December 1897, 7.
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Alfred Morrison as a patron of architecture

Neil Burton

Introduction

When Alfred Morrison was given the house and estate at Fonthill by his father in 1850, he was a cultivated young man of 29. He had been educated at Edinburgh and Cambridge Universities. He had had the run of his father's collection of paintings and had travelled to Europe with his parents and to the United States in 1841 with his brother Charles, attending to his father's business. The letters home which he sent during his travels show a reasonable appreciation of architecture, though in a fairly conventional, classical way. He admired the marble porticoes of the houses in New York and thought the custom house 'fine' but in a mean setting. He admired Girard College in Philadelphia, which he compared to the Madeleine in Paris and also the Bank of America building, built on the plan of the Pantheon in Rome.¹ Some of his views were more critical and may have been influenced by the collapse of the US banking system, in which the Morrison family had a large stake. He returned to England permanently in 1844.

In 1846, the Morrison family transferred their principal residence from The Pavilion at Fonthill in Wiltshire to Basildon Park in Berkshire, which had much quicker communication with London and was more convenient for business. The estate at Basildon had been purchased by James Morrison in 1838 and considerable improvements had been made with help of the architect John Buonarotti Papworth, who was replaced in 1846 by David Brandon. As soon as the family had moved, James Morrison engaged Brandon to enlarge and refurbish The Pavilion at Fonthill, perhaps with a view to the house becoming the residence of his

eldest son Charles, a bachelor still living with his parents at Basildon and in the London family house in Harley Street.

David Brandon at Fonthill

Brandon added a new top storey to the existing house and doubled the footprint of the building, replacing the relatively modest service accommodation at the rear with a new two-storey range extending into wings on either side of the main house.² The south wing was for the family; the north wing contained extensive accommodation for servants with a service yard behind.

In the centre of the new rear range was a grand new hall and main staircase with scagliola columns and pilasters and a groined ceiling. A handsome corridor with a groined ceiling led from the foot of the main stair into the south wing, which comprised an ante-room, morning room and conservatory on the ground floor with a billiard room on the first floor. The morning room was a large rectangular space 22 ft by 30 ft and 14 ft (6.7×9.1 and 4.3 m) high with a panelled plaster ceiling, two east-facing windows and a semicircular columned alcove 10 ft (3 m) wide in the centre of the west (rear) wall. On the south side of the room were three openings into the conservatory, which was a solid stone-built, flat-roofed structure with continuous arcaded openings in the east, south and west walls.

The few surviving detail drawings and Brandon's specification of works suggest that the interiors were wholly classical in character. Brandon also updated the exterior of the building in the fashionable Italianate style, enriching the window surrounds on the upper floor and adding a large new arcaded porte-cochère over the main entrance, an enriched cornice above the second-floor windows and a tall tower in the angle of the main block and the new south wing. The tower was doubtless influenced by the tower of the church of St Michael and St Nicholas at Wilton, designed by Brandon's business partner T. H. Wyatt and finished in 1845.

Sporadic correspondence between James Morrison and David Brandon charts the progress of the work, which was all finished except the morning room by September 1849.³ Comparison between Brandon's drawings and old photographs makes it clear that the conservatory as built was nearly double the size of the conservatory as proposed and there may have been other variations (Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

It does not appear that Alfred had anything to do with the enlargement and improvement of the house. This may have been because

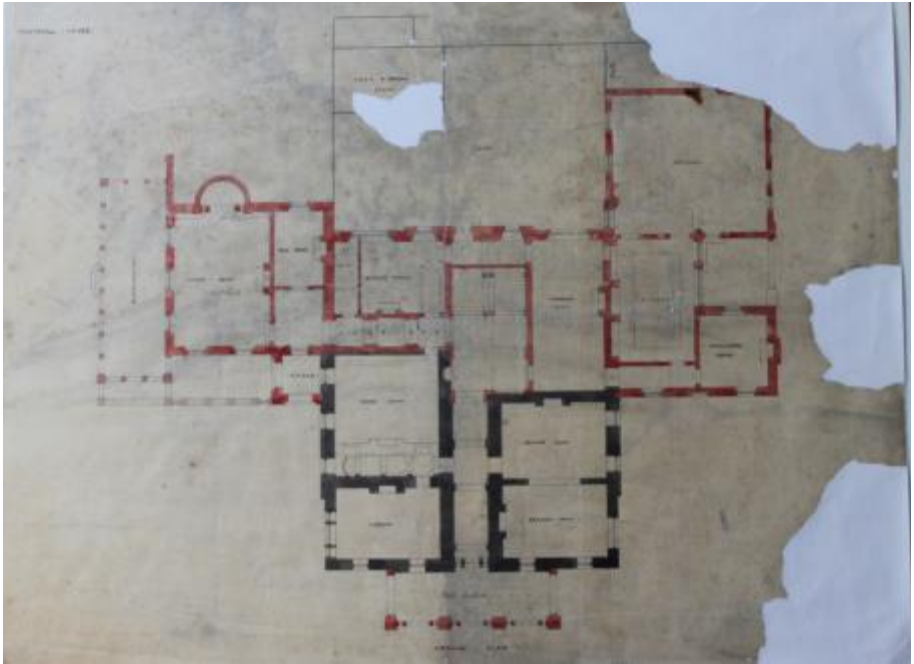


Figure 3.1 David Brandon's 1846 plan of the ground floor of Fonthill House, showing his proposed additions (in red), which included the morning room in the south wing with an alcove in the west wall. Fonthill Archives F/2/1120.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

the building was intended for Charles, but it became clear to James Morrison that his eldest son would prefer to live closer to the City of London, and in 1850 The Pavilion and estate were given to Alfred, who changed the name of the house to Fonthill House.

For most of the 1850s, Alfred Morrison lived the life of a young, wealthy, cultivated bachelor landowner. Some items from his father's collection remained at Fonthill including paintings by Van Dyck and Rembrandt and he began to collect himself; his early purchases included portraits, both painted and engraved, and paintings of horses (see [Chapters 9 and 10](#)). He was an avid sportsman, keen on horses; he would become a prize-winning breeder of sheep and he seems to have enjoyed estate management. In the mid-1850s, he began to make some minor improvements. In 1855, he enlarged the stable block at Fonthill to accommodate more hunters. The work was done by Thos B. Miles, a builder from Shaftesbury.⁴ There is no mention of an architect, and the work is functional in appearance. The following year, he had new eel traps installed at the head of the Fonthill lake.⁵

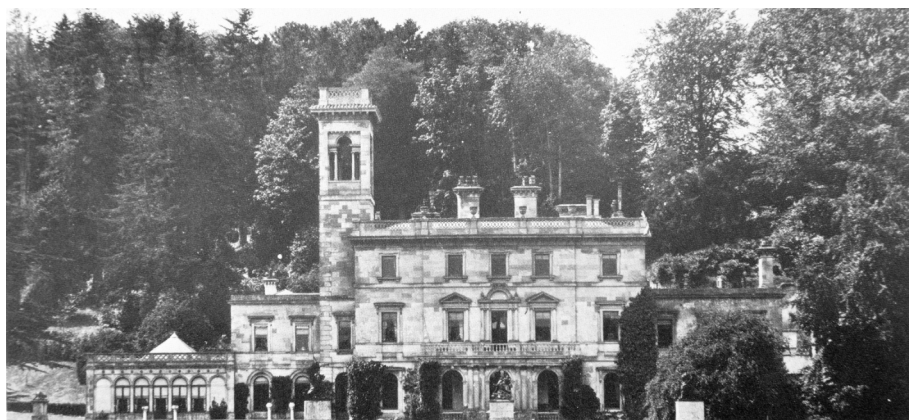


Figure 3.2 A view of the main east front of Fonthill House, perhaps c. 1880, set against the hill behind and showing Brandon's additions including the tall tower, the two-bay south wing containing the morning room to the left, with large single-storey conservatory beyond.

Fonthill Archives

James Morrison died in October 1857 and his second son Alfred inherited about £750,000 of investments, as well as the Fonthill estate.⁶ In the same year, he was made High Sheriff of Wiltshire, a reflection of his established status within the county. In 1858, he was one of the applicants for a faculty to restore the small parish church of Berwick St Leonard, one of the villages on the estate. The church is a very modest building, twelfth century in origin, and consists of a chancel and nave with a south-west porch surmounted by a low tower. The faculty application noted that

... the parish church and chancel of Berwick St Leonard are both externally and internally in such a state of general decay as to render it necessary that the fabric should be generally restored and the interior be extensively re-fitted ... That it is proposed by Alfred Morrison, who is the owner of all the land in the parish except the glebe land of the Rev. Henry Grove, to effect the above works at his sole cost ... That in restoring the fabric it is not proposed either to take down any portion of the building or to alter or interfere with the original architecture thereof.⁷

In the event, Alfred had the chancel rebuilt and the nave reroofed as well as refitting the interior. No architect has been identified for the work, which was done in the plainest manner, perhaps by a local builder.

New building on the Fonthill Estate, 1860–1866

Although Alfred was both the principal landowner and Lord of the Manor of Berwick St Leonard, the advowson of the church was held by the Marquis of Westminster, owner of another part of the old Fonthill Estate. The marquis was both a strong churchman and an improving landlord, and during the 1850s he built a series of new cottages for his tenants in Fonthill Gifford. Some were of red brick and some of stone, with hoodmoulds and lattice mullioned windows to give a picturesque appearance.

Perhaps Alfred was inspired by the example of his neighbour, because in 1859 he made a note in his memorandum book of the address of the Cottage Improvement Society at 18 Adam Street, Adelphi. This was the Central Cottage Improvement Society, which had been issuing or reissuing model plans and specifications of labourers' cottages since at least the early 1850s, primarily for the benefit of landowners.⁸ The year 1860 saw the publication by the Society of *Rural Architecture, being a series of designs for rural and other dwellings, from the labourer's cottage to the small villa and farmhouse with outbuildings*, by George Morgan and James Sanderson.

In 1860, Alfred commissioned the building of Ashley Wood Farmhouse in the village of Fonthill Gifford. Dated 1861, with the initials AM on the gable, this is a substantial L-shaped stone building in a vaguely seventeenth-century style, with mullioned lattice windows and hoodmoulds. The elevations of the building are slightly clumsy and the window details are very similar to those of the cottages near Stop Farm, Fonthill Gifford, built for the Marquis of Westminster five years earlier. No architect is known for the farmhouse, and it was probably designed by a local builder or surveyor.

Ashley Wood Farmhouse may be a builder's work, but by the time the farmhouse was finished, Alfred had retained the services of the architect George Devey, who designed a handful of cottages on the estate which were built in the 1860s. Devey was an important and innovative figure in the national revival of vernacular architecture, which began in the 1860s and he was a major influence on later architects such as Norman Shaw and W. E. Nesfield and their Arts and Crafts successors.⁹ He was still fairly early in his career in 1860 but had already designed cottages for Lord De L'Isle at Penshurst and for the Duke of Sutherland at Trentham, Cliveden and Dunrobin, and had just been commissioned to design estate buildings for Baron Mayer Amschel de Rothschild at Mentmore in Buckinghamshire. It is unclear how Alfred came to hear about Devey but his neighbour, the Marquis of Westminster, had married

the Duke of Sutherland's sister; he knew the Loch family who were the Duke of Sutherland's chief agents, and he was passingly familiar with the banking world in which the Rothschilds operated.

Devey's first work for Alfred was a single cottage on Hindon Lane in Fonthill Gifford, which is dated 1862 with the initials AM. The building is an exercise in Devey's established 'Wealden' style, which he had developed at Penshurst and on the Trentham estate. It has a stone-faced ground floor and timber-framing on the upper floor with some tile-hanging in the gables, a thatched roof and prominent brick chimneys. The elements of the cottage are picturesquely grouped, but the style is Kentish and alien to Wiltshire.

The next commission was much more original. Turnpike Cottages on Salisbury Road in the village of Fonthill Bishop form a row of four cottages, dated 1864 on the building so presumably begun in 1863 (Figure 3.3). The cottages are all of local stone with plain tiled roofs. The rectangular windows have stone mullions and one of the cottages has a gabled, columned porch derived from one or two local examples, but otherwise there is no 'period' detail and the elevations are strikingly austere. Equally striking is the irregular grouping of the units, with



Figure 3.3 George Devey, photograph of Turnpike Cottages, Fonthill Bishop. Courtesy of the University of Sheffield Library, Special Collection and Archives, Box 2, 281/2/22b, Devey.

© University of Sheffield

one taller block and one longer and lower range slightly set back, both with large gabled cross-wings and tall brick chimneys. Behind the lower range is a single-storey stone building which originally contained two sheds, four privies and two large ovens. From both front and rear the cottages are exceedingly picturesque and strangely modern in appearance.

At about the same time Devey provided a design in similar vein for a pair of cottages in the village of Berwick St Leonard. Again, the cottages are built of stone and roofed with tiles. There are two different ridge-lines and the elevations are completely asymmetrical with stone-mullioned windows and varied projections, some gabled. The two cottage units are divided by a through-passage at ground-floor level and the integral porches have segment-headed side openings. It is difficult to think of anything quite like these two sets of cottages, with their extreme simplicity and absence of ornament, in the whole of Devey's large *oeuvre*.¹⁰ It is frustrating that, as in most of Alfred's architectural projects, there is no surviving correspondence between him and the architect, and we have no means of knowing whether Alfred had any input into the design process or what he thought of the results.

Devey designed no more cottages at Fonthill, but he did make one further and slightly surprising contribution to the architectural character of the estate. The main route to Fonthill House from the north was a public road which ran under a splendid Palladian archway erected by Alderman Beckford in the 1740s, with small plain lodges attached on either side. Papworth added flanking walls to the northern approach to the arch for James Morrison in the 1830s. Devey aggrandised Papworth's walls with massive rusticated stone piers carrying enormous urns, and gave the lodges more consequence by adding balustrades and providing rusticated entrance arches on the north side (Figure 3.4). Presumably, the intention was to underline Alfred's status, perhaps in competition with the Marquis of Westminster. The summary valuation of masons' work drawn up on 7 July 1866 totalled £3,327 6s 4d.¹¹ This was apparently Devey's first work in the classical style.

While Devey was employed at Fonthill, he was introduced by Alfred to William Chafyn, who had inherited the Zeals Estate at nearby Mere when he came of age in September 1861. By the end of 1862, work had started on the enlargement of Zeals House to Devey's designs. Alfred sometimes drove Devey over from Fonthill to Zeals, and it appears that a friendship had developed between Alfred and Chafyn's sister Julia, which may have been one reason for Alfred's visits. Julia's Journal, which only survives for the years 1864 and 1865, records several visits by



Figure 3.4 George Devey, 'Work to retaining walls of north archway at Fonthill Bishop'.

6470, RIBA Collections

Alfred to Zeals and several of her visits to Fonthill, where she often took friends to see Alfred's collection of china and other treasures. In 1865, she recorded seeing 'a score or more of lovely snuff-boxes'.¹² If there was any romantic element in this friendship, it was snuffed out by Alfred's marriage to Mabel Chermside in April 1866.

Devey's striking designs did not have much lasting influence on Alfred's approach to cottage building. Later cottage and farm buildings on the Fonthill estate were much more conventional in appearance. The surviving examples are mostly simple structures, built of the local greensand stone with red brick dressings and red tiled roofs; the kind of building which could be erected by a competent builder without benefit of an architect. At Devey's Turnpike Cottages the Clerk of Works was a Mr Carder.¹³ John Carder is shown in the 1861 census as a builder living in Fonthill Bishop and employing 28 men and two boys. In 1866, at a tenants' celebration of Alfred's marriage held in a large barn at Berwick St Leonard, the chairman of the meeting, Mr Rawlence the land agent, proposed the health of Mr Carder, the clerk of works, referring to the excellent cottages and farm buildings which had recently been erected on the estate and giving as an instance the capital barn in which they were assembled.¹⁴ In the absence of other probable candidates, it seems

likely that the routine building work on the Fonthill Estate in the later 1860s, 1870s and early 1880s, including the Berwick St Leonard barn, a pair of cottages in the same village, a row of four cottages in Fonthill Bishop which could be seen as a simplified take on the Devey's nearby Turnpike Cottages and several cottages in Tisbury including two semi-detached pairs in Duck Street, Tisbury, and a row of four in Weaveland Road, Tisbury, were built by John Carder.

All these were in existence by the time of the 1886 Ordnance Survey. Later estate buildings erected during Alfred's lifetime include the crew yard in Fonthill Bishop, with two ranges of buildings dated 1887 and a substantial triple cottage in Court Street, Tisbury, dated 1891. John Carder had died in 1885 so these must be by other hands, but they are in the same design idiom: simple volumes, stone walls with brick dressings and red-tiled roofs.

Owen Jones and Jackson & Graham at Fonthill House, 1862–1866

At about the same time that Devey's first cottage was finished in 1862, Alfred embarked on some refurnishing at his Fonthill mansion which was a direct consequence of his collecting. In 1861, he had acquired a huge collection of Chinese porcelain, much of it looted by British and French forces from the Summer Palace in Peking. There can have been no room for this acquisition in the London apartment in St James Place, which Alfred had occupied since the mid-1850s, so the collection was brought to Fonthill. The house already contained a quantity of works of art, but the porcelain presented a new challenge; where and how should such delicate objects be displayed to be enjoyed but also studied by connoisseurs? The 1862 International Exhibition in London provided an inspired solution. The furniture makers Jackson & Graham were among the largest and most important exhibitors of cabinet work. Alfred bought several cabinets of ebony and ormolu at the exhibition and then approached the firm to provide appropriate fittings at Fonthill for his porcelain. The commission was accepted and was executed in collaboration with the architect Owen Jones. By this date, Jones was established as an influential designer and a successful architect, and as his future association with Alfred Morrison proved both close and fruitful, it will be helpful to review his career before 1862.¹⁵

Owen Jones was born in London in 1801, the son of a Welsh furrier with an interest in old Welsh poetry. In 1825, he was articled to Lewis

Vulliamy, a very successful and eclectic architect who could turn his hand to any style that early Victorian taste might demand. Vulliamy was also thoroughly professional and prided himself on the accuracy of his estimates and the efficiency of his office. His practice in the late 1820s was still largely domestic, although he was beginning to design Commissioners' churches of which he did a large number, mostly in the Gothic style.¹⁶

Jones remained in Vulliamy's office for five years until 1830 and attended the Royal Academy schools from 1829. After leaving Vulliamy, he worked briefly in the office of the surveyor George Wallen, who, by coincidence, was just then involved with the work of improvement to James Morrison's premises in the City. After a few months, Jones left to travel through Europe, and finished by spending six months camping in the Alhambra at Granada and sketching the buildings and their elaborate decoration. He returned to England in 1834 and subsequently issued *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra*, in 12 parts over a period of almost 10 years, from 1836 to 1845. It was to be a key milestone in the development of Owen Jones's reputation as a design theorist and became one of the most influential publications on Islamic architecture.

Much of the importance of the Alhambra to Jones lay in the intricate and, at that time, brightly coloured stylised decoration, and his drawings reflected that interest – but the standard of colour printing in Britain in the 1830s was not very high. Jones spent some time researching the new technique of chromolithography and collaborated with the established lithographic printing firm of Day and Haghe to ensure the required colour quality. His book was the first work of any significance published in England to make extensive use of high-quality chromolithography.¹⁷

The Alhambra drawings were also shown at the Royal Academy between 1835 and 1841. This brought Jones to the attention of James Morrison, and in January 1839 he was invited to one of Mrs Morrison's special At Homes where fellow guests included the architect J. B. Papworth, the painters Turner, Eastlake and Clarkson Stanfield, the sculptor Sir Francis Chantrey, the antiquary John Britton and the President of the Royal Academy.¹⁸ The acquaintance was fruitful, and in 1845 Jones was commissioned by Morrison to design an ornamental dairy and cottage in the Moorish style for the estate at Fonthill. The dairy was never built, but the drawing remained in the family's possession at least until the mid-twentieth century. It is now, sadly, lost.

As far as architecture is concerned, Jones was mostly employed on domestic commissions during the 1840s, often as a decorator rather than an architect, but in 1843 he was retained as the architect and

agent of John Blashfield in the projected development of Kensington Palace Gardens with a number of large detached houses. Various other architects were involved but Jones himself designed one large house in the Italianate style with Moorish detailing (8 Kensington Gardens, finished in 1846, demolished in 1961) and a smaller house with a more wholeheartedly Moorish character (24 Kensington Gardens), which was finished by Jones's old master Vulliamy in 1849.¹⁹

At the end of the decade, Jones got his big break. Through his friendship with the architect Matthew Digby Wyatt and with Henry Cole, who were both on the building committee for the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, Jones was employed, initially to assist Wyatt in the preparation of drawings for the exhibition building and later as one of the Superintendents of Works. Besides supervising construction, he also devised a system of painted decoration to be applied to the exterior and interior of the building, using only the primary colours, red, blue, yellow and white. The scheme was at first hugely controversial but eventually met with general approval, and established for Jones an international reputation as a decorator.²⁰

When the Crystal Palace was removed to Sydenham in 1852/4, Jones was appointed Director of Decorations and was responsible for the design of the Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Alhambra Courts. Two years later, in 1856, he published *The Grammar of Ornament*, the book with which his name is still mostly associated. Although it included work by others, including his friend Matthew Digby Wyatt, the book was principally intended as a summary of Jones's design theories. He set out to identify the common principles behind the best examples of historical ornament and to formulate a design language that was suitable for the modern world and which could be applied equally to wallpapers, textiles, furniture, metalwork and interiors. The book was also intended to act as a collection of the 'best' examples of ornament and decoration from other cultures and other periods.

By the mid-1850s, Owen Jones was widely recognised as a significant decorator, designer and colour theorist, and an exponent of the use of colour in architecture. The second half of the decade saw the construction of three buildings in central London which made his reputation as an architect, at least for interiors. The first was St James's Hall, a concert hall on an enclosed site with frontages to Piccadilly and Regent Street in London (Figure 3.5). Initial proposals were aired in 1852 and three drawings by Jones were published in *The Builder* magazine in October 1855, but final agreement with the Crown Estate as the freeholders was not reached until January 1857.²¹ The structure



Figure 3.5 St James's Hall, main concert hall, *The Builder*, 4 October 1856, p. 543.

was largely complete by January 1858, and the hall opened with a charity concert at the end of March.

The building had relatively modest fronts to the two main streets and contained a large concert hall with two smaller halls beneath and a large restaurant. The whole of the framework of the main building was of iron; the spaces between the iron piers were filled with brickwork.

The main hall had a spectacular curved ceiling of fibrous plaster painted in red, blue, white and yellow or gold and was lit by gas burners from below so that the ceiling glowed like stained glass.²² The builders were Lucas Bros. For about 50 years, until its demolition in 1905, this was one of London's premier concert halls.

A second project was the Crystal Palace Bazaar, an iron and glass *galleria* 'for the exhibition and sale of goods of the most elegant description' on a site bordered by Lower Regent Street, Oxford Street and what is now Great Portland Street, which opened in December 1858. The building was roughly L-shaped in plan; the two arms were 180 ft (54.9 m) long and 90 ft (27.4 m) long with modest frontages to Oxford Street and Great Portland Street. Like St James's Hall, the main roof was barrel-vaulted and made of iron, timber and fibrous plaster, but the spaces between the ribs were filled on the inside with stained glass and on the outside with plain glass. The roof was supported on two tiers of cast-iron columns connected laterally by horizontal girders which carried side galleries. The interior was decorated in the now familiar combination of blue, red, white and gold.²³

A third project carried out at the same time was a showroom for Osler's, the prestigious glassware manufacturer, at 76 Oxford Street, which opened in 1859 (Figure 3.6). Jones designed a sober street front with tiers of arched openings. Behind the front was a long display gallery, apparently constructed of timber rather than iron, with a ceiling of trefoil section divided into fourteen compartments containing stained glass in geometric panels of fibrous plaster, like those used in the Crystal Palace Bazaar. The side walls were lined with mirrors, producing 'an almost infinitesimal perspective and a wonderful effect of extended space'.²⁴ In 1862, Jones added a wing at the north-east, which the *Art Journal* described as surpassing the principal gallery in its 'intrinsic beauty of effect'.²⁵

These three buildings, all spectacular, all in the centre of London and all open to the public, helped to confirm Jones's reputation. They involved new processes of construction, new materials and large quantities of colour, all of which combined to create a distinctly new form of architecture. It is easy to see that Alfred Morrison with his love of colour and his concern for the encouragement of 'modern' art would have found Jones's work appealing. Sadly, the demolition of these buildings – the Bazaar in 1890, St James's Hall in 1905 and Osler's showroom in 1928 – did much to undermine Jones's status as a designer of buildings, and his reputation now rests largely on his publications.

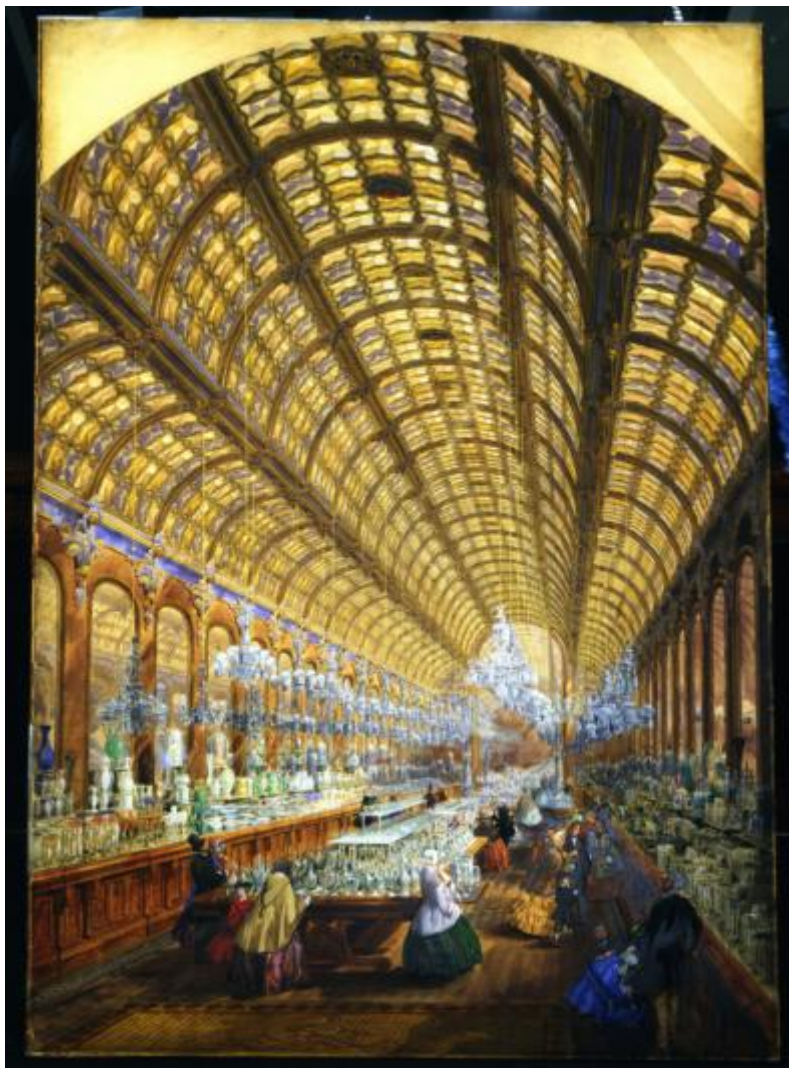


Figure 3.6 The interior of Osler's lighting shop, 1859, watercolour, 147.3 × 102 cm, (57.9 × 40.2 in), Victoria and Albert Museum, P.29-1976.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

These sumptuous polychromed interiors were monuments to leisure and consumption, but they were also remarkable for their use of modern building materials including cast iron, plaster and stained glass. In achieving his effects, Jones owed a great deal to the Frenchman Leonarde Alexandre Desachy, whose invention of fibrous plaster made the spectacular ceilings of Jones's buildings possible. Desachy took out a

British patent in 1856 for 'producing architectural mouldings, ornaments and other works of art formed with surfaces of plaster'.²⁶ The process involved making up a mixture of plaster oil and glue strengthened with sheets of canvas and pressed into moulds. The moulded sections could then be fixed into position with the help of wires embedded in the canvas.

Desachy almost certainly met Jones when he and Matthew Digby Wyatt were arranging for casts to be taken of antiquities in the Louvre for the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. Desachy carried out this work and came to London to assist in the assembly of the casts. He subsequently worked for Jones on St James's Hall and the Crystal Palace Bazaar, but returned to France in 1860, leaving the business to his foreman and chief modeller. According to a later writer, Desachy was financially indebted to Jones, which handicapped the successors.²⁷ In 1863, the business was taken over by George Jackson & Son, papier-mâché manufacturers based in Rathbone Place, who also acquired the patents, although this did not stop Jones using fibrous plaster in his later work.

Many of Jones's commissions, particularly those involving inlaid woods and complex fibrous plaster work required considerable mechanical and physical skill in execution and it was not surprising that he formed a relationship with one company in particular, Jackson & Graham of Oxford Street, who proved themselves well able to carry out his most involved designs. The firm had been founded in 1836. Initially they seem to have made furniture alone but in 1863 they advertised in the London Suburban Directory as supplying paper hangings and papier-mâché and a similar advertisement in 1866, by which time the firm occupied premises at 29–38 Oxford Street, offered an enormous range of products:

Jackson and Graham respectfully announce ... that they have made great additions to their former extensive premises, which render their establishment the largest of its kind in this or any other country. The Spacious Show Rooms and Galleries are filled with an unrivalled stock, the prices of which are all marked in plain figures at the most moderate rates for ready money. The extensive Manufactory adjoining with Machinery worked by Steam Power, is fitted with all means and appliances to ensure superiority and economise cost. East of the departments will be found as complete as if it formed a separate business, viz:- Paper Hangings, Paintings and Interior Decoration of all kinds, Carpets of superior manufacture of every description. Cabinet Furniture, Chairs, Sofas, ottomans &c. Silk and Silk and Wool Damasks,

Aubusson and Venetian Tapestries, Chintzes, Utrecht Velvets, Arras, Reps, Merino Damasks, Cloths &c. &c. Bedsteads of Iron, Brass and various woods and superior Bedding and Mattresses of all kinds (The new and extensive premises (No. 29) consisting of four floors measuring 20,000 feet are devoted to this department). Plate Glass, Carving and Gilding, Gallery of Bronzes d'Art (sole depot for the productions of F. Barbedienne & Co. of Paris) Clocks, Candelabra, Vases and Ornamental porcelain.²⁸

Jones had enlisted the help of the firm in 1851 to demonstrate that his proposed colour scheme for the Great Exhibition would not adversely affect the delicate colours of the exhibited carpets and fabric by hanging up samples of fabric in some parts of the building which had already been painted. Thereafter, he appears to have supplied designs for some of their products and employed them to supply the fittings for the Crystal Palace Bazaar.

The collaboration between Owen Jones and Jackson & Graham at Fonthill was one of their earlier joint projects, but is poorly documented. The readiest source of information is Jones's obituary in *The Builder*, which appeared in May 1874 and from which the following is an extract:

About this time [1862] Messrs. Jackson & Graham had the satisfaction of introducing Mr. Owen Jones to Mr. Alfred Morrisson [sic], who required some additions and decorations to his country residence (Fonthill House), where he had a large and fine collection of Chinese porcelain and enamels, comprising many of the finest objects from the Summer Palace at Pekin ... This collection, to use his own words, 'opened to his mind a new world of ideas with regard to colouring in the practice of decorative art,' the first fruits of which are to be seen in the decoration of the staircases at Fonthill House, in which the purest Greek forms are united with the delicate tones of colour in the finest specimens of Chinese eggshell pottery. For the convenient display of a portion of these choice objects, a room was built, decorated, and fitted up by the firm in question [Jackson and Graham], from Mr. Jones's designs, in the Cinque-cento style, of which it forms an exquisite example. The chimney-piece and fittings are entirely of ebony, inlaid with ivory, and the ceiling is of wood, panelled and inlaid, the mouldings being black and gold.²⁹

While it is certainly true that Owen Jones and Jackson & Graham collaborated on providing display cases for Fonthill House and on some internal

decoration, *The Builder's* account is not wholly accurate. In the first place, Owen Jones needed no introduction to Alfred Morrison since he had had dealings with the Morrises in the 1840s and provided a design for a building on the Fonthill estate in 1845. In the second place, there is no firm evidence that Jackson & Graham built an entirely new room for the display of the porcelain; it is more likely that they decorated and refitted an existing room to Jones's design.

Among the Fonthill Archives is an undated 'Estimate of Account', presumably from Jackson & Graham at an early stage in the work, listing various items at Fonthill House including, under the heading 'New Room', the likely costs for ebony cases and chimneypiece (£2,000), grate with marble hearth and fender (£200), curtains (£350), carpets (£130) and lining walls (£120). Six marquetry chairs, a marquetry table and a marquetry etagère (total cost £676) may have been furnishings for the same room.³⁰ The estimate also includes japanned furniture, bedsteads and bedding, which were presumably for other rooms. There is no mention of any proposed building works, or indeed of decoration beyond lining the walls. There is also an invoice dated July 1864 for a suite of bedroom furniture in rosewood, bed curtains of French chintz and an ebony and enamel coffret.³¹

One of Jackson & Graham's ebony and ivory display cases which still survives is concave in form and 110 in (2.8 m) wide overall (see [Figure 8.2](#)). In the north wall of the morning room which David Brandon added to Fonthill House in the late 1840s was a semicircular niche of precisely this width, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the case was made for the niche ([Figure 3.1](#)). In addition, Brandon's specification for the works at Fonthill directed that the morning room was to have a panelled plaster ceiling and it seems likely that this ceiling was repainted under Jones's direction, rather than being remade in wood as the description in *The Builder* suggests.

The cabinets were probably finished by 1864, but the campaign of furnishing and decoration at Fonthill seems to have extended from 1863 until late in 1866. In the summer of 1864, the Marquis and Marchioness of Westminster and their daughter Theodora paid a visit to Fonthill. They inspected Alfred's horses, and then 'he took us into his house and showed us the most wonderful collection of Oriental China ever known. His house is filled with it, cabinets jammed full of it.'³² This suggests that Alfred's collection of porcelain was already on display at Fonthill, presumably in the cases made by Jackson & Graham. Theodora visited again in September 1866 to meet Alfred Morrison's new wife Mabel and noted 'walked home with them to see their new house, which is

being decorated and painted gorgeously from top to toe and will be very successful'.³³ Apart from the fact that the house was by no means new, the implication here is that decorating was still continuing.

There are no surviving photographs or drawings of the interiors of Fonthill House in the two decades after the completion of the 1860s work, and the only written description appears to be that in *The Builder* already quoted. The catalogue of Jones's works which were included in a memorial exhibition after his death in 1874 includes two designs for the redecoration of the drawing room, but these do not appear to have survived. All we know for certain is that one room (probably the morning room built to Brandon's designs) was richly decorated with a painted panelled ceiling and fitted with ebony and ivory cases to house the porcelain collection; that Jackson & Graham also provided a quantity of bedroom furniture; that the stairs in the house were painted in 'the delicate tones of colour in the finest specimens of Chinese eggshell pottery' united with 'the purest of Greek forms' and that Jones provided designs for the redecoration of the drawing room and possibly (if Theodora Grosvenor is to be believed) for many of the other rooms in the house.

One important by-product of the commission was that Owen Jones had the opportunity to study Alfred Morrison's collection of Chinese porcelain at close quarters. In his *Grammar of Ornament*, Jones had been remarkably dismissive of Chinese design, claiming that millennia of civilisations in the region had been 'totally unimaginative' and 'wholly devoid of either architectural design or ornament' and suggesting that the Chinese ceramics tradition was surpassed by 'the rude water-bottles of porous clay which the untutored Arabian potter fashions daily on the banks of the Nile, assisted only by the instincts of his gentle race'.³⁴ The visit to Fonthill changed his mind. As *The Builder* remarked, 'The study of these objects was a delight to Mr. Jones, and induced him to publish his work ... on "Chinese Ornament," which is illustrated by many copies of parts of the objects in Mr. Morrison's collection.'³⁵

Examples of Chinese Ornament was published in 1867. In his introduction to the book Jones noted that:

The scheme of colouring of the Chinese is peculiarly their own. They deal principally with broken colours: pale blue, pale green, and pale pink for the masses; dark pink, dark green, purple, and yellow and white, in much smaller quantities. There is nothing crude or harsh in any of their compositions; the eye is perfectly satisfied with the balance and arrangement of both form and

colour; but there is an absence of that purity in the drawing which we find in the works of the ancient Greeks, Arabs, and Moors, and even in the works of our own day, of all the Mahommedan races.³⁶

On the evidence of the obituary in *The Builder* quoted earlier, it seems that Jones had already used ‘the delicate tones of colour in the finest specimens of Chinese eggshell pottery’ for the staircase at Fonthill. Contact with Alfred’s Chinese pots had broadened the rather restrictive and doctrinaire approach to colour shown in Jones’s earlier works, and the fruits of this broader approach were shown in the decoration of Alfred’s London house in the later 1860s.

It is interesting to speculate whether Owen Jones ever came into contact with George Devey while both were working for Alfred Morrison in the early 1860s. The two men had their offices in the same London street, but they epitomised diverging tendencies in English architecture of the time: Jones driven by the idea of a new architecture and the use of new building materials like cast iron and fibrous plaster; Devey drawing on the vernacular tradition.³⁷ Sadly, there is no record of such a meeting.

At about the same time that the works of improvement to Fonthill House were under way, Alfred’s local parish church of Fonthill Gifford was completely rebuilt. The old church, which was a reduced version of St Paul’s Covent Garden, erected at the expense of Alderman Beckford in the 1740s, was replaced by a building in the muscular Gothic style of the thirteenth century designed by T. H. Wyatt, which was consecrated in June 1866. As at Berwick St Leonard, the patron of the living was the 2nd Marquis of Westminster, who paid for the rebuilding, but Alfred gave the funds for the new font and pulpit.³⁸ The octagonal font is a conventional Gothic piece made of freestone with an inscription in Lombardic characters round the rim and resting on clustered marble columns. The striking semicircular pulpit of green alabaster with the heads of the four apostles in relief is more unusual but still broadly Gothic in style. The designer is unknown.

16 Carlton House Terrace

Like any wealthy bachelor, Alfred maintained a London residence. From 1854, he occupied an apartment at 34 St James’s Place.³⁹ In the early 1860s, his thoughts turned to something more ambitious, and in 1863 he agreed to take a lease of a large house in Carlton House Terrace on the Crown Estate which was about to be erected under the auspices of

Sir Samuel Morton Peto, a highly successful builder, entrepreneur, civil engineer and railway developer, and for more than 20 years a member of Parliament.

Carlton House Terrace is a row of very large and very grand houses on the north side of St James's Park built on the site of the royal residence Carlton House, which was demolished in 1829. The architect John Nash prepared an elaborate plan for three terraces on the north side of the park and two on the south side, but in the event only two on the north side were built, known as Carlton House Terrace East and West. The two terraces were designed by Nash and built under the superintendence of his assistant James Pennethorne.⁴⁰ Work began in 1830, and by 1831 the western terrace was finished, but the eastern terrace was left uncompleted with only six of the intended ten houses built.

In May 1862, Pennethorne, who had become the sole Surveyor of the Crown Estates in London managed by the Office of Woods and Forests, reported to the Hon. Charles Gore, a Commissioner, that he had made a plan for laying out the land at the east end of Carlton House Terrace for building, and in February 1863 he was authorised to enter into agreements for building on the individual plots.⁴¹ Later that year, the Office contracted with Sir Samuel Morton Peto to build two new houses continuing the terrace and with the Duke of Newcastle to build one large house to complete the terrace at the eastern end.⁴² In the same month, new street numbers were assigned to the new buildings at the eastern end of Carlton House Terrace by the Metropolitan Board of Works and Peto's new houses, or rather their intended sites, were numbered 16 and 17, with the Duke of Newcastle's house as number 18.⁴³ The duke's house was designed by William Burn. Peto's two houses appear to have been designed or at least supervised in erection by the architect James Murray, whose drawings and specification were approved by the Crown Estate in March 1863.⁴⁴ The elevations were to conform to Nash's original design (Figure 3.7). Murray's specification for the interior describes wholly conventional finishes.

It may have been as early as 1863 that Peto agreed to assign the lease of his westernmost house (now no. 16) to Alfred Morrison. The builder was Thomas Lucas, and the carcass of the building was completed by May 1865. Morrison's solicitors Ashurst & Crisp then applied to the Crown Estate for the granting of a 99-year lease, which was agreed. The lease is dated April 1866, but it seems likely that work had already begun on fitting up the interior under the direction of Owen Jones, with Jackson & Graham as the furnishers and decorators.⁴⁵



Figure 3.7 The south side of Carlton House Terrace in 1896, the year before Alfred's death. No. 16 is the house to the right of the pediment with several roof-lights in the front roof slope.

Anon, *Round London* (London: George Newnes Ltd, 1896), 127

Alfred's new house was the product of a loose association of professionals who had all worked together on other jobs in various combinations. Samuel Morton Peto's firm of Grissell and Peto built many well-known London buildings, including the Reform Club, the Oxford & Cambridge Club, Nelson's Column and the new Houses of Parliament, the latter under the direction of the architect Charles Barry. They had a separate business as railway contractors, often working with the civil engineer Thomas Brassey. During the Crimean War, Peto and Brassey oversaw the construction of the Grand Crimean Central Railway to transport supplies to the troops at the front line, and in 1855 Peto was created Baronet of Somerleyton in the county of Suffolk for his wartime services.

The architect James Murray spent the years 1839–47 in the office of Charles Barry, where he produced many of the drawings, including for the Houses of Parliament, and where he doubtless came into contact with Peto. Murray was also the joint architect of the Langham Hotel, begun in 1863, where the builders were Lucas Bros, and the interiors were fitted and decorated by Owen Jones and Jackson & Graham. Lucas Bros was a very successful firm of builders. The business was founded by Charles Thomas Lucas and Thomas Lucas, who were the sons of James Lucas, a

plasterer from St Pancras in London. After serving articles with a London builder, Charles joined his father's business and was soon employed to manage construction of the Norwich & Brandon Railway, which opened in 1845 and for which Samuel Morton Peto was the main contractor. In 1842, Charles was joined in business by his brother Thomas and in 1850 the brothers moved to London, going on to construct many major London buildings including the Covent Garden Opera House, designed by Charles Barry and completed in 1858. The same year saw the opening of Owen Jones's St James's Hall, which was also built by the Lucas brothers.

From 1854, Sir Samuel Morton Peto was living in a palatial house at 12 Kensington Palace Gardens but in 1863 he applied to the Crown Estate for permission to build an entirely new house in the garden of no. 12, later 12A. He explained that he had intended to move to Carlton Gardens (at the end of Carlton House Terrace) but his wife preferred to remain in Kensington.⁴⁶ His new house was designed by James Murray, the builder was Thomas Lucas, the interiors were designed by Owen Jones and the decorators were Messrs Jackson & Graham, 'which firm has also been entrusted the furnishing'.⁴⁷ This was precisely the same team that worked on 16 Carlton House Terrace. The Kensington house survives, but the original interiors have been lost.

The exterior of Alfred's new house conformed to John Nash's original design and was, in the words of one jaundiced observer, 'one of those large, square, lead-coloured buildings of which so many thousands exist in London, that anyone passing by would pronounce characteristically characterless'.⁴⁸ By contrast, the interior was a feast of rich colour. One of the most dramatic features was the Moorish ceilings in all the principal rooms. Designed by Owen Jones, they were made of fibrous plaster and moulded in deep relief. The floors of all the main rooms except the library were covered with fitted carpets designed by Jones whose patterns matched those of the ceilings. The upper parts of the walls were lined with coloured Lyons silk, mostly to Jones's design, and the skirtings, dados, doors and fitted cupboards were all of rare woods with a great deal of inlaid and marquetry decoration, designed by Jones and made by Jackson & Graham (see [Figure 8.6](#)).

An idea of the overwhelming richness of the interior spaces can be gleaned from various contemporary accounts. Henry Cole, who visited in May 1870 when the decoration must have been newly completed noted, 'to Mr Morrison's ... his house filled with marquetry designed by Owen Jones ... mixture of Greek & Moorish, perfect mechanical work'.⁴⁹ In its obituary for Jones published in 1874, *The Builder* provided a fuller general description:

...the woodwork of the panelling, dado, doors, architraves, and window-shutters in the outer and inner hall, staircase, and all the rooms on the ground and first floors, is inlaid from designs by Mr Jones, with various woods of different kinds, the colours of which were carefully selected by him, with a view to perfect harmony of colouring. The walls are hung with the richest Lyons silks, all specially designed by him, and coloured to harmonise with the ceilings, which may be described as perfect, in the proportions of their geometrical divisions and the designs and colouring of their decorations. The chimney-pieces, too, grates, and fenders; the carpets, and the furniture, which is all marquetry, were designed by Mr Jones.⁵⁰

The extraordinary furniture in the house designed by Owen Jones and made by Jackson & Graham is described elsewhere (see [Chapter 8](#)), but it is worth reviewing the arrangement and general character of the rooms themselves. There appear to be no surviving original plans or design drawings for the interior and no plans, views or photographs of the interiors during Alfred and Mabel's occupation, but the original layout of the principal floors can be deduced from later plans in the Crown Estate archives ([Figures 3.8](#) and [3.9](#)). Above a double basement allowing for ample servants' accommodation, the principal rooms were at the back overlooking the park, with smaller rooms on the front elevation and a central core containing a large curving main stair and two service stairs.

A vivid picture of the individual rooms a decade after their completion is given by a cluster of four descriptions published between 1879 and 1882 in *The Magazine of Art* (1879), by Mrs Caddy in her *Lares and Penates* (1881), by Mrs Haweis in her *Beautiful Houses* (1882) and by Moncure Conway in his *Travels in South Kensington* (1882). In the following summary these four accounts are conflated.⁵¹

Immediately inside the front door was a large rectangular entrance hall or ante-room, which was 'umber toned' with the walls panelled in polished wood, 'the ceiling latticed in brown and gold and the floor velvet carpetted to match'. The room was furnished with two life-sized porphyry busts of Roman emperors and a huge ornamental iron chest in the Renaissance manner by Zuloaga (see [Figures 11.5](#) and [14.1](#)). A dark corridor hung with pictures, including a portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria, connected the entrance hall with the inner hall, which was formed in the curve of the central staircase. Here there were marble busts, including one of Voltaire, a Florentine table, two



Figure 3.8 The ground-floor plan of 16 Carlton House Terrace redrawn from a plan of 1899 in the National Archives (National Archives CRES 35/1981).

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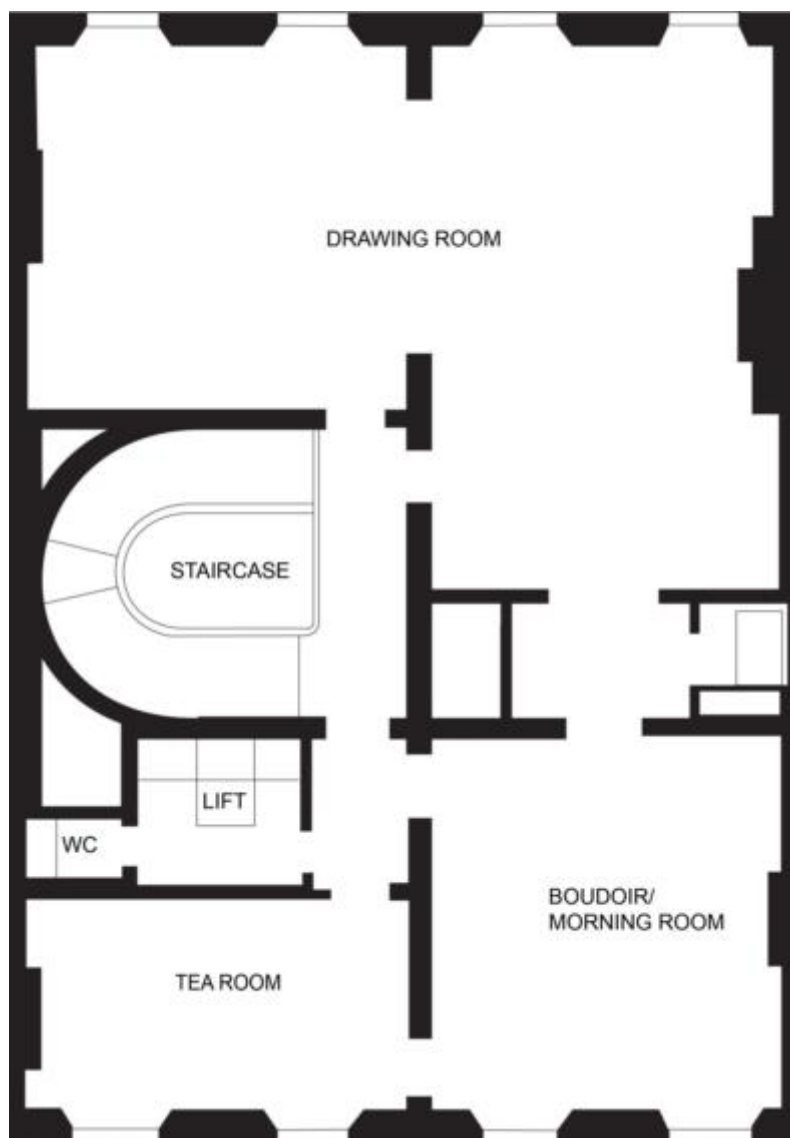


Figure 3.9 The first-floor plan of 16 Carlton House Terrace, redrawn from a plan in the National Archives (National Archives CRES 65/145).

© Thomas Burton

enormous iron vases by Zuloaga, a large bronze statue of a trotting bull and 'a fine piece of modern Palissy Ware, having the owner's monogram among its piscine contents' (see [Figures 11.6, 11.7 and 11.9](#), and [14.3](#)).⁵²

Opening from the dark corridor between the two halls was the study at the front of the house (later known as the morning room), which had a greenish-yellow carpet and ebony skirtings and dados inlaid with bands of pale woods, with a row of inverted anthemions beneath the chair rail. The chimneypiece and door surrounds continued the character of the dado and were inlaid with geometrical designs. The walls were hung with silk 'made in Lyons after a design by Owen Jones. The shade and lustre are changeable but the prevailing colour dark red.'⁵³ The curtains were 'of the same silk as the wall hangings and the iridescent purple tone produced by the mingled Tyrian crimson and pale blue was changed at intervals into bronze by gold patterning'.⁵⁴ The room was completed by a heavily coffered ceiling and a richly coloured stencilled cornice.

In the middle of the house was the inner hall, containing a curving cantilevered stone stair rising to the second floor, with a solid balustrade of polished ebony, ivory and rosewood and a matching dado on the outer wall of the stair ([Figure 3.10](#)). The stair itself had a heavy piled carpet of crimson velvet and was lit by bronze candelabra 7 ft (2.1 m) tall, fixed at intervals. The walls were 'studded with pictures by Holbein and his school, some in very fine early *Renascence* frames, besides modern pictures by Macallum, Brett and others'.⁵⁵ To the north of the main stair was a service stair serving the upper floors, and to the west was another stair linking the basement kitchen with the dining room.

Facing the foot of the main stair in the inner hall was the principal entrance to the large oblong dining room at the back of the house. The room had a panelled inlaid dado, doors and shutters and silk hangings on the walls of a golden colour.

The ceiling is of a pure Moresque type, consisting as it does of interchanging star-shaped forms of deep red ornament on a golden ground and of deep blue ornament on a golden ground. The dado is of polished ebony, with symmetrical garlands inlaid as a border in grey-green and orange-brown woods ... The mantelpiece and fireplace in the dining room are enriched with grey and green marbles. The lower portions of the marble columns on each side of the mirror on the mantelpiece are encased in bronze-work, done by Barbedienne of Paris.⁵⁶



Figure 3.10 The staircase at 16 Carlton House Terrace during the occupation of Lord Cowdray c. 1920.

Image used with the permission of the Crown Estate

Besides the main oblong dining table and a round breakfast table, the room contained five Florentine tables of inlaid marbles ‘laden with vases by Lepec’.⁵⁷

The other room at the back of the house, which was also entered from the stair hall, was the library, which was more like a museum, with glazed and inlaid ebony bookcases by Jones round the lower part of the

walls 'forming a handsome dado of ornate panels of marquetry, alternated with glass shelves on which one sees ranks of books, miniatures and occasional groups of precious objects in metal'.⁵⁸ The collection here also included Japanese *netsuke* and silver niello work by Tiffany. The wall above the dado cabinets had golden-green silk hangings by Jackson & Graham and the ceiling was of 'an intricate Arabic design' (Figure 3.11). 'The chimneypiece here may be regarded as a large arched cabinet with fire-grate beneath, having two wings, in which are contained specimens of porcelain from Persia and Cashmere.'⁵⁹

Mrs Caddy was particularly struck by 'the superb collection of antique embroideries, which gives a character to the whole house – embroideries from *Spain, Italy* and the *Orient*; some of immense age, all beautiful, the meaner kind startling us on every table, stool and couch, the finest framed and glazed on the walls'.⁶⁰ These and similar items were Mabel Morrison's particular interest (see Chapter 16). The room also contained Frederic Leighton's painting *Summer Moon* (see Figure 2.8).

At first-floor level, the room above the entrance hall was the tea room, 'furnished in cream colours and light blue under white lace'.⁶¹ Mrs Haweis called it 'a little room choked by lace'.⁶² The curtains were



Figure 3.11 The ceiling of the former ground-floor library in 16 Carlton House Terrace.

Photograph © 2020, Christie's Images Limited

bordered with deep Spanish lace and magnificent examples of Spanish lace were set on crimson velvet and framed as pictures. In the recesses by the fireplace were crimson velvet panels set with plates of eggshell china. The sycamore furniture had been made for the Empress Eugénie (and was presumably acquired by Morrison after the Empress settled in England in 1871); between the windows and the fireplace was a cabinet of ivory etched in gilt relief which had the effect of gold lace.

Adjoining the tea room was the boudoir, also confusingly known as the morning room, whose walls had pale amber silk hangings designed by Owen Jones with curtains of the same material. The damask on the walls was 'much hidden by the large framed pieces of Spanish and other embroidery, of which here there is a noble school of examples'.⁶³ The elaborate Moorish ceiling painted in blue and gold was mirrored by the Axminster carpet (Figure 3.12). The doors and dado were of ebony and mahogany with bands of ivory and violet stained sycamore. The *portières* or hangings covering the double doors between this room and the drawing room were of grey plush, edged with gold bullion lace.

The L-shaped drawing room overlooking St James's Park was the largest room in the house and the most lavish of Jones's interiors.



Figure 3.12 The ceiling of the former first-floor boudoir or morning room in 16 Carlton House Terrace.

Photograph © 2020, Christie's Images Limited

The elaborate ceiling in two parts was thought to be, ‘more positively Arabian than the others, the interlacements are larger and more boldly radiated’.⁶⁴ The frieze was in three bands – red and gold, blue and red on gold and gold and blue. The walls below the frieze were hung with silk in ‘a sweet pale hue of pinky grey, that best enhances contrasted outlines of the inlaid work’.⁶⁵ The Axminster carpets in the two parts of the room echoed the pattern and colours of the ceiling. In this room Jackson & Graham’s craftsmanship was at its finest:

in the dado, jambs, chair boarding, we find no carved work but simply the most exquisite combinations of ebonised and many coloured woods. Some of these, as the Indian holly, are so fine that the grain is invisible to the closest inspection. Other woods are so soft and beautiful that they have the surface of petals ... without a particle of pigment being used on any one of them, they gather to form rosettes on the chimneypieces, cappings for the dadoes, and finest featherings round the doors – white, golden, red, cream-coloured, brown, and these of every shade.⁶⁶

At either end of the room were elaborate chimneypieces with overmantel mirrors flanked by inlaid pilasters with capitals of chased brass (Figure 3.13). The hearth surround in the smaller of the two compartments was particularly elaborate, with highly coloured enamel decoration by Lepec of Paris, ‘two years in the making’.⁶⁷ The only paintings in the room were ‘a French miniaturised water-colour picture of Psyche’s Dream by Polier ... and two water-colour studies at Capri, “Moonlight” and “Twilight” by Talmage White, standing on easels’.⁶⁸

The layout and use of the rooms on the upper floors is unclear, but Mrs Caddy noted the existence of a print room over the drawing room housing Alfred’s important collection of prints: ‘the walls are hung with old Spanish leather, the curtains are of grey plush bordered with gold bullion lace; the trellised ceiling is of rosewood, and rosewood portfolio stands encircle the room’. There was also a schoolroom ‘hung with a pretty paper of Mrs Morrisons design’ and containing a cooking range for the children and Mrs Morrison’s private sitting room where ‘embroideries still smother the couches and tables; but the walls are hung exclusively with the earnest and laborious landscapes of Macallum. In the corners stand tall storks of *cloisonné* about four feet high’ (see back cover).⁶⁹ None of the visitors mentions the bedrooms, and it is unclear where they were and what they looked like. Mrs Caddy ends her description of the



Figure 3.13 The chimneypiece in the drawing room of 16 Carlton House Terrace, with an enamelled surround by Lepec and an inlaid overmantel and dado by Jackson & Graham. Part of the ceiling is reflected in the overmantel mirror.

Photograph © 2020, Christie's Images Limited

interior with the startling comment that 'It is impossible to give even a 'Catalogue *raisonnée*' 'of the treasures of this house, as they are entirely changed every fortnight, so vast is the reserve of treasure.'⁷⁰ The mind boggles.

Henry Cole's succinct comment in 1870 that the interior was 'Greek and Moorish ... perfect mechanical work' sums up the general mood of the decorations well. The overall impression is of a combination of Greek and Moorish forms, but it is not possible to point to specific sources for Jones's designs. Although there is an underlying naturalism in many details of the decorative patterning, all the designs have a rigid geometric basis, which is further emphasised by the absence of large areas of colour in the woodwork, though this is something which would have been originally supplied by the wall-coverings and the richly diverse furnishings.

All the contemporary observers were agreed on the perfection of the fitting out and the overwhelming richness of the contents. Accounts of Morrison notice that he 'specially interested himself to seek out artistic craftsmen in all countries, and employed them for years in the slow and careful production of masterpieces of cameo-cutting, inlaying of metals and enamelled glass'.⁷¹ Minute detail and craftsmanship of the highest quality characterised his taste in decorative art, and were the inspiration for the choice of Jackson & Graham and Jones at both Fonthill and Carlton House Terrace. They must certainly have lived up to his expectations.

Morrison clearly had a close and friendly relationship with Owen Jones, as he had with many of the artists and craftsmen who created the things he collected. Only a few years after the completion of the work at Carlton House Terrace, Jones died in May 1874, at the age of 65. Just over a fortnight later, 'A meeting took place ... at the residence of Mr Alfred Morrison, Carlton House Terrace, for the purpose of discussing the expediency of perpetuating the memory of the late Mr Owen Jones.'⁷² Alfred presided and Henry Cole explained at some length the object of the meeting. Others present at what was evidently a large meeting included the architects Thomas Henry Wyatt, Matthew Digby Wyatt, George Aitchison, Joseph Bonomi and George Godwin, the designer Christopher Dresser, Peter and Forster Graham of Jackson & Graham, Henry Brassey, the second son of the railway magnate Thomas Brassey and the terracotta manufacturer John Blashfield. It was resolved that a portrait of Owen Jones in mosaic should be made and offered to the nation, and that there should be a public exhibition of Jones's designs and executed works.

A mosaic portrait was duly commissioned for the Victoria and Albert Museum and was placed on the south wall of the east cloister, which Jones had decorated. The mosaic was designed by Reuben Townroe and was adapted from an oil painting by Henry Wyndham Phillips, now in

the collection of the RIBA. In its shape and general conception it alluded to the 'Kensington Valhalla' portrait mosaic sequence of the great representatives of Western art from antiquity onwards, which was commissioned in the 1860s for the South Court of the museum, and as such it represented a great honour to Jones. The mosaic was subsequently removed and has now disappeared, but Townroe's sketch survives in the museum (Figure 3.14).

The proposed exhibition also materialised as a special section in the London International Exhibition of all fine arts, industries and inventions held at South Kensington in 1874. Alfred lent numerous works including design drawings for Jones's 1860s redecoration of the drawing room at Fonthill.

Although Mrs Caddy commented in 1881 that 'The picture gallery is one of the features of the country seat [at Fonthill] so not many are



Figure 3.14 A design by Reuben Townroe for a mosaic depicting Owen Jones, commissioned by the Owen Jones Memorial Committee, oil on canvas, 104.5 × 34.5 cm (41.4 × 13.6 in), P.14-1934, Victoria and Albert Museum.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

retained in the town house', just the year before, in 1880, Jackson & Graham had applied to the Office of Woods and Forests for permission to construct a series of iron and glass galleries across the whole of the third floor of 16 Carlton House Terrace 'for the display of paintings and objects of art'. The designs, by the architect Charles Sayer of Soho Square, were submitted in December 1880 and rejected in November 1881.⁷³ Alfred made no further attempt to house his steadily growing collection of paintings in London but turned his attention to Fonthill (discussed later).

The subsequent history of 16 Carlton House Terrace saw the gradual erosion of the interior decoration. After Alfred Morrison's death in 1897, the lease of the house passed to his wife Mabel for her lifetime. She at once vacated the property and took away all the moveable furnishings, presumably to Fonthill. In 1898, she relinquished the lease, which was reassigned to Sir Weetman Pearson, later Lord Cowdray, the British engineer, oil industrialist and Liberal politician who was the owner of the Pearson conglomerate. He employed the architect Aston Webb to make minor internal alterations in 1899, including the repaving of the entrance hall in black and white marble. In 1910, Webb oversaw the formation of a minstrels' gallery at the inner end of the drawing room, and in 1920, under his supervision, the main bedrooms were panelled and a range of new attic bedrooms was added facing the park.⁷⁴ Some photographs of the interior spaces taken at this time appear to show that at least some of Owen Jones's ceilings had been painted white and the silk linings in most of the main rooms had been removed or replaced.⁷⁵ In the dining room the walls were hung with figurative tapestries.

Lord Cowdray died in 1927, and six years later, in 1933, his widow put 16 Carlton House Terrace up for auction. The lease was acquired by Crockfords, the gaming club, which remained in occupation until the early 1980s. During that 50-year period, a number of alterations were inevitably made to the interior and many of the remaining interior fittings were lost, but most of Owen Jones's decorative ceilings survived. The most serious loss was caused by a fire in August 1934, which gutted the dining room. The room was 'restored' in a subdued Jazz-moderne style by Hampton & Son.⁷⁶

In the late 1980s, the house was taken over by the Crown Estate and amalgamated with 13–15 Carlton House Terrace as the Crown Estate offices. The interiors were sympathetically restored. In the early twenty-first century, the decision by the Crown Estate to relocate their offices and sell the buildings allowed the houses to revert to residential use, and in 2006 all four were acquired by the Hinduja brothers and

adapted to form a single palatial residence. The Owen Jones work was carefully preserved and integrated into a rich new decorative scheme. All the main rooms on the ground and first floors except the former dining room have retained their original ceilings, most have kept their original chimneypieces and several still have their ornamental dados, doors and door furniture.

Later works in Wiltshire, including the Fonthill Galleries

Alfred's Memorandum book contains a note in 1883, 'Cost of Wooden Ranch £1400, add furniture and work by Beckett and Carder, £2248, say £3000'.⁷⁷ The Ranche (as it was always known) was a substantial timber bungalow, with a veranda on all sides covered by the main roof, which was swept down with the eaves supported on timber posts with decorative cusped braces. Built in the Great Ridge Woods, the Ranche was a family retreat from the great house, rather like Marie Antoinette's Petit Hameau at Versailles, and was used extensively by Alfred's wife Mabel and her four children. John William Carder, as we have seen, was the estate carpenter and presumably the builder of the Ranche. The building has not survived; it was demolished in the mid-twentieth century.

The application made in 1880 by Jackson & Graham for permission to construct new picture galleries on the roof of 16 Carlton House Terrace suggests that Alfred was at that time proposing to concentrate his art collection in London. The refusal of consent by the Office of Woods and Forests made him change his plans, and in 1884 he commissioned designs for three new galleries at Fonthill House. Jackson & Graham had got into financial difficulties in the early 1880s, and Alfred turned for the gallery designs to the young architect Henry Thomas Gordon of the firm of Gordon & Lowther, which had offices in Basinghall Street in the City. Basinghall Street was next to Coleman Street, where the Morrison family had business interests and owned substantial property, and it seems likely that Alfred found his new architect through this connection. In later years, the same firm, now called either Gordon, Lowther & Gunton (before 1900) or Gordon & Gunton (after 1900), designed several commercial buildings in the City for the Morrison family, including two properties in Coleman Street flanking the offices of the family's London agent (1889–90), Basildon House in Moorgate (1899) and London Wall Buildings in Finsbury Circus (1901).

The designs for the new Fonthill galleries were prepared in 1884 and were advertised for tender in November of that year.⁷⁸ The new

galleries were sandwiched between the back of the house and the steeply sloping hillside behind, filling the west side of the service yard where there was already a row of small buildings. These were incorporated into the new work, which also included the provision of some new service rooms as well as the galleries.

There are no surviving plans of the new galleries, only the broad outline shown on the 1901 Ordnance Survey (Figures 3.15 and 3.16) and a few partial photographs of the exterior (Figures 3.17 and 3.18). From this rather patchy evidence it is possible to deduce that two galleries were set end to end across the west side of the service yard, which became the music gallery and the picture gallery. Parallel to these two galleries and set partly into the hillside to the west behind the house was a considerably larger gallery, which became known as the saloon. All the galleries appear to have been built with solid windowless walls of brick or stone, with prominent curving roofs with iron ribs, topped by lantern lights along the ridge.

There appear to be no surviving plans showing the general layout of the rooms in the main house after David Brandon's plans for the enlargement of the building drawn in 1846 (Figure 3.1). The plan names the rooms but, not surprisingly, the names seem to have changed during the 47 years of Alfred's occupation, and as a result it is difficult, if not impossible, to be sure whereabouts in the house he kept his various collections. The *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* produced in 1900, three years after Alfred's death, is cast broadly in the form of an inventory, with individual heirlooms allocated to particular rooms, but the location of the rooms is often unclear.

On Brandon's plan of the ground floor, the main body of the house was bisected by a central corridor with a drawing room on the right-hand (north) side occupying the full depth of the house and a library on the south side at the front with a dining room at the back. The south wing added by Brandon contained an ante-room close to the new main stair with the morning room and conservatory beyond. As we have seen, the morning room can be identified with the so-called new room redecorated by Owen Jones in the early 1860s and fitted up with display cabinets by Jackson & Graham. From the 1900 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* it is clear that Brandon's morning room was now the dining room, which is shown as containing eight tall show cabinets for china, including the distinctive semicircular cabinet made for the alcove in the west wall of the room by Jackson & Graham.

There is no mention in the heirloom list of a conservatory, but a room called the morning room contained several large porcelain jars



Figure 3.15 A detail from the 25 inches to 1 mile Ordnance Survey (Wiltshire LXIV.6) surveyed in 1885 and published in 1887.



Figure 3.16 A detail from the 25 inches to 1 mile Ordnance Survey (Wiltshire LXIV.6), revised in 1900 and published 1901, showing the new galleries to the left (west) of the main house.



Figure 3.17 The south side of Fonthill House, c. 1880, before the addition of the galleries.

Photograph © private collection



Figure 3.18 Fonthill House from the south-east, c. 1900, showing the top-lit galleries behind the main building.

Photograph courtesy of Tisbury History Society, donated by Kath Mould to Tisbury History Archive

of the kind which can be seen in the conservatory in a photograph of the house dating from the 1880s (Figure 3.17). There are also several interior photographs showing very large Chinese vases in a room with round-arched windows like those of Brandon's conservatory (see Figure 7.3). One later writer noted that 'the magnificent Oriental china was given a Crystal Palace-like room opening onto the garden'.⁷⁹ The conclusion must be that the conservatory had become the morning room.

Alfred's drawing room in the main house probably retained its original name and identity, but the 1846 dining room appears to have become the tapestry room, where apparently Alfred liked to have lunch.⁸⁰ The heirloom list shows the existence of a 'Daffodil Bedroom' which was on the ground floor and the 'Chippendale Room', which is mentioned twice, both times as next to the galleries, so it was probably on the ground floor and was possibly the rectangular space between the main house and the galleries shown on the 1900 Ordnance Survey.

The biggest mystery is the library. It is shown on Brandon's plan as already existing, but no library is mentioned in the heirloom list. Alfred clearly had need of a library:

Like his wife, Mr Morrison was a great book buyer, and his parcels of books were delivered almost daily. But unlike her, he was in no hurry to open them, and they remained on the floor in their paper parcels till his wife and daughters insisted on one of the periodical unpackings. Even then the books were not put away in shelves, as Mr Morrison said he could see them better on the floor so there they lay, with a path kept clear between them from the door to his chair.⁸¹

Presumably these books did eventually find their way onto shelves to join the usual contents of a library in a country house. The library was also the obvious place for Alfred to keep his portfolios of autographs, which were regularly consulted by biographical researchers. Perhaps the omission of the library from the heirloom list was simply because Alfred's magnificent collection of autographs was not considered by Mr Cox, the valuer from Christie's, to have heirloom value.

The progress of the building works on the new galleries is unclear but may have extended over several years. Madeline Wyndham from Clouds House recorded attending a concert 'in the picture gallery' in October 1885, which may mean that the new galleries close to the house were finished by then.⁸² But in June 1886, Dorothy Morrison wrote to



Figure 3.19 The music gallery, c. 1891, looking towards H. W. B. Davis's *A Panic* at the far end.

Photograph BL08782/005 by permission of Historic England Archive

her brother that 'They have commenced building the pantry in the back yard and there will be some servants bedrooms over it',⁸³ and as late as 1890 Dorothy's sister Katherine was telling her brother that:

Maze [Mabel Morrison] has chosen a most lovely blue and white paper for the gallery & is beginning to decide about recovering the furniture & brackets ... Father is delighted I believe at the thoughts of having the tapestry room. But there is no idea of the gallery being finished for Christmas so there is no hurrying.⁸⁴

In January 1891, Katherine Morrison wrote to her brother again that 'mother has gone to London to see about things for the Gallery or Saloon as it is to be called'.⁸⁵ At about the same time, Mabel herself noted that 'I have been looking hard at the saloon, as we have determined to call the last new gallery. I want to make it the Fonthill drawing room.'⁸⁶ All this



Figure 3.20 Another view of the music gallery looking into the picture gallery, c. 1891.

Photograph BL08782/006 by permission of Historic England Archive

suggests that the large gallery, known as the saloon, was not finished and occupied until some time in 1891.

While the record of the external appearance of the new galleries is patchy, there are good photographs of all the gallery interiors (Figures 3.19–3.24). Entrance to the gallery complex was from the ground floor of the main staircase compartment up steps into the music gallery, which had a parquet floor and Lincrusta wall-coverings, which were largely hidden by a close hang of large modern paintings (Figures 3.19 and 3.20). In this, as in the other galleries, artificial light was provided by elaborately decorative oil lamp chandeliers by W. A. S. Benson, hung from the long skylight. The room was dominated by Henry Davis's enormous painting of charging cows called *A Panic*, which filled the whole of one end wall and dwarfed the grand piano in front of it (see Figure 9.2). On one of the long side walls was a massive marble chimneypiece with curving brackets, and over the chimneypiece hung a large seascape by John Brett, now in the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and

Museum and Gallery at Bournemouth (see [Figure 2.7](#)). There were many side tables cluttered with *objets de vertu*.

Double doors in one of the end walls opened into the picture gallery, which had a simple boarded floor and plain painted walls, again close-hung with modern paintings, including Leighton's *Summer Moon*, which had evidently been moved from Carlton House Terrace where Mrs Haweis noted it in 1882 ([Figures 3.21](#) and [3.22](#)). In front of the paintings along one of the side walls was ranged a row of tall iron vases by Zuloaga.

From the picture gallery, a massive single door led into the saloon, which was longer, wider and higher than the other galleries ([Figures 3.23](#) and [3.24](#)). The boarded floor had inset metal grills along the foot of the walls for a heating system. The walls themselves were covered with a boldly patterned wallpaper, presumably the blue and white paper which Mabel Morrison chose in 1890. The principal objects here were Chinese porcelain and modern sculpture. In the centre of each wall was a large draped mirror, which enhanced the apparent size of the room. In front



Figure 3.21 The picture gallery with Zuloaga vases to the right, c. 1891.

Photograph BL08782/008 by permission of Historic England Archive



Figure 3.22 Another view of the picture gallery looking into the music gallery, with Zuloaga vases to the left, c. 1891.

Photograph BL08782/007 by permission of Historic England Archive

of the mirror on one end wall was Lombardi's sculpture of two goats (see [Figure 9.4](#)) and on either side were round-topped crimson velvet panels set with Chinese plates (described by Mrs Caddy in 1881 as being in the tea room at Carlton House Terrace).⁸⁷ In front of the mirror on the other end wall was Galletti's statue of *Fabiola*, flanked by more round-topped crimson velvet panels set with Chinese plates and busts by Hiram Powers (see [Figures 11.13](#) and [11.14](#)). Along both side walls was a mixture of engraved portraits and Chinese porcelain vases on stands and brackets.

The galleries at Fonthill were Alfred's last significant architectural enterprise. The only new building works on his property in the 1890s before his death in 1897 were a handful of cottages in the villages belonging to the Fonthill estate.



Figure 3.23 View of the saloon looking north towards the Lombardi sculpture of two goats, c. 1891. For another view, see [Figure 2.2](#).

Photograph BL08782/004 by permission of Historic England Archive

Conclusion

To all appearances, Alfred Morrison did not have a particular interest in architecture, as opposed to interior decoration. Despite his enormous wealth he never commissioned a major new building. He restored the church at Berwick St Leonard in the 1850s in the plainest possible manner, apparently without the assistance of an architect. He employed George Devey to design a few estate cottages in the 1860s, but this may have been because Devey was recommended as a good man for cottages and not because Alfred was interested in Devey as a designer. There is apparently no surviving correspondence which might give a clue as to the relations between Devey and his patron, and the connection with Devey was not lasting. Alfred employed Owen Jones and Jackson & Graham to redecorate and refurnish parts of Fonthill House in the 1860s, but the evidence suggests that there was no new building and that all the work was internal.



Figure 3.24 A view of the saloon looking south towards the Galletti sculpture, *Fabiola*, c. 1891.

Photograph BL08782/003 by permission of Historic England Archive

In London he leased the carcase of 16 Carlton House Terrace, which appears, from the architect James Murray's specification, to have been built as a completely conventional, if very large, terraced house. He then gave Owen Jones a free hand and an open cheque book to replace the ceilings and decorate the interior with the assistance of Jackson & Graham providing fittings and furnishings. It seems extraordinary, but despite the rich and unusual character of the finished house, which is Owen Jones's most important domestic work, there is again no record of any direct involvement of Alfred with the decoration of his London house, or indeed with Jones's earlier work at Fonthill. We can only assume his approval from his continuing commitment to Jones, culminating in the Memorial Committee and the mosaic portrait installed in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This personal commitment to the creators of works of art was one of Alfred's marked characteristics, and can be found in his relations with many of the painters and craftsmen whose works he collected.

The last significant building work undertaken by Alfred was the new galleries at Fonthill, erected in the late 1880s. In contrast to the Carlton House Terrace interiors, the galleries were functional, windowless top-lit spaces intended principally for the display of works of art and similar to many public galleries. As so often in Alfred's buildings, their external architectural character appears to have been a secondary consideration.

Notes

- 1 See Dakers, *A Genius for Money*.
- 2 Many of Brandon's drawings and his specification of works are in the Victoria and Albert Museum Drawings Collection, ref. A174; there are also some drawings in the Fonthill Archives.
- 3 See Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, and Fonthill Archives.
- 4 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1121, payment to Thomas B Miles, 25 December 1855, £416 5s 3d.
- 5 Fonthill Archives.
- 6 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 205.
- 7 Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, D1/61/10/20.
- 8 The Cornwall Record Office has a portfolio of sketches circulars, plans and specifications for labourers' cottages issued by the Central Cottage Improvement Society in 1851, CRO CF1/3084.
- 9 For Devey's life and career see Allibone, *George Devey*.
- 10 All three of Devey's cottages are illustrated in Dakers, *Fonthill Recovered*, 150, 151.
- 11 RIBA Drawings Collection, Account book of George Devey, De G/1/1.
- 12 Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, *The Journal of Julia Chafyn*, Vol. II, ref. 865/577, quoted in Elias, *Zeals*.
- 13 Fonthill. Devey's invoice dated 1864 for work in 1863 and 1864 is annotated 'taking instructions for a row of cottages – staking out and arranging details with Mr Carder ...'.
- 14 Anon, *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 19 May 1866, 8.
- 15 This short account of Owen Jones relies heavily on the detailed research work by Michael Darby. Darby, *Owen Jones and the Eastern Ideal*.
- 16 Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary*, 1077–80.
- 17 Darby, *Owen Jones and the Eastern Ideal*, Vol. I, 42–55.
- 18 Fonthill Archives.
- 19 Survey of London, 1973, 162–93.
- 20 Darby, *Owen Jones and the Eastern Ideal*, Vol. II, 262–90.
- 21 Anon, *The Builder*, 4 October 1856, 542, 543, and 18 October, 571.
- 22 Anon, *The Builder*, 13 March 1858, 171.
- 23 Anon, *The Builder*, 30 October 1858, 720.
- 24 Anon, *Building News*, 3 June 1859, 570.
- 25 Anon, *The Art-Journal*, 1862, 211.
- 26 Patent 2494, 23 October 1856.
- 27 Millar, *Plastering Plain and Decorative*.
- 28 *A London Directory*, 1866, quoted in <https://bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org/entry/jackson-graham-1836-40>, accessed 21 June 2024.
- 29 Anon, *The Builder*, 9 May 1874, 383ff.
- 30 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1121.
- 31 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1121.
- 32 Diary of Lady Theodora Grosvenor, 28 August 1864, private collection in Somerset.
- 33 Diary of Lady Theodora Grosvenor, 2 September 1866.
- 34 Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, 86.

- 35 Anon, *The Builder*, 9 May 1874, 383ff.
- 36 Jones, *Examples of Chinese Ornament*, 1867, 8.
- 37 Jones lived at 9 Argyll Place. Devey had his office at 16 Great Marlborough Street, of which Argyll Place was the western extension.
- 38 Anon, *Salisbury and Wiltshire Journal*, 2 June 1866, 6.
- 39 Post Office London Directories.
- 40 *Survey of London*, Vol. XX, 'Trafalgar Sq. and Neighbourhood, St Martins in the Fields', pt III, 1940, 77–87. Note that this account has some inaccuracies.
- 41 National Archives, CRES35/1981.
- 42 National Archives, CRES35/1981.
- 43 London County Council, *Names of Streets and Places*, 140.
- 44 National Archives, CRES35/1981 (specification only).
- 45 National Archives, CRES35/1981.
- 46 *Survey of London*, 1973.
- 47 Anon, *The Builder*, 23 September 1865, 676–8.
- 48 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 154.
- 49 Cited in Darby, *The Islamic Perspective*, 98.
- 50 Anon, *The Builder*, 9 May 1874, 383ff.
- 51 Anon, 'Treasure-Houses of Art', 140–4, 206–11; Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 264–84; Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 53–60; Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 150–9.
- 52 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 265.
- 53 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 154, 155.
- 54 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 267.
- 55 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 57.
- 56 Anon, 'Treasure-Houses of Art', 142.
- 57 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 281.
- 58 Anon, 'Treasure-Houses of Art', 142.
- 59 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 156.
- 60 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 55, 56.
- 61 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 269.
- 62 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 58.
- 63 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 272.
- 64 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 274.
- 65 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 277.
- 66 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 155, 156.
- 67 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 156.
- 68 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 276.
- 69 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 59.
- 70 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 282, 283.
- 71 *Dictionary of National Biography*, supplement 1909, 1065.
- 72 Anon, *The Builder*, 16 May 1874, 412.
- 73 National Archives, CRES35/1981 and LRRO1/1102.
- 74 National Archives, CRES35/1981.
- 75 Photographs in the archives of the Crown Estate show the interiors of the dining room, drawing room and morning room. The definition in the photographs is poor.
- 76 National Archives CRES65/145.
- 77 Fonthill Archives, Alfred Morrison Memorandum Book.
- 78 Anon, *The Builder*, 8 November 1884, 646. Tender advertisement 'for engineer's work in constructing and heating picture gallery at Fonthill, Wilts, for Mr Alfred Morrison. Messrs Gordon & Lowther architects:- Marshall & Hatch, Bingfield Iron Works, London ... also for iron stable fittings at the above:- Marshall & Hatch'.
- 79 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies*, 57.
- 80 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies*, 60.
- 81 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies*, 61.
- 82 Stanway Estate papers, Madeline Wyndham to Lady Mary Elcho, 22 October 1885.
- 83 Fonthill. Dorothy Morrison to Hugh Morrison, 13 June 1886.
- 84 Fonthill. 0/1/1498: Katherine Morrison to Hugh Morrison, 10 December 1890.
- 85 Fonthill. 0/1/1498: Katherine to Hugh Morrison, probably January 1891.

- 86 Fonthill Archives.
 87 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 270.

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Alfred Morrison's Old Master paintings collection in context

Susanna Avery-Quash

Introduction

The Pre-Raphaelite painter John Brett (1831–1902) once observed in a public lecture that he knew a man – he had Alfred Morrison (1821–97) in mind – who was very fond of pictures but who had them stacked up because he was afraid to hang them on the walls, in case they would damage the decorative schemes designed by Owen Jones.¹ This anecdote reveals that, as a collector, Morrison did not prioritise paintings in the way that many collectors did. Indeed, as this book demonstrates, Morrison spent more time and money on other parts of his extraordinarily broad-ranging and extensive collections, which encompassed sculpture, prints, coins and medals, Chinese ceramics and other decorative arts, chiefly from France and Spain, furniture and autograph letters. The relatively minor regard in which he held his Old Master paintings collection may also be gauged from the fact that whereas Morrison never employed a curator or cataloguer to assist with the care of his pictures, he paid the archivist and palaeographer A. W. Thibaudau to oversee his vast collections of autograph letters and historical documents and to produce various publications about them, including a six-volume catalogue in 1883–92, while earlier, in 1868, Morrison had had a catalogue privately published of his 3,000 engraved portraits. Again, while porcelains, coins and medals and engraved portraits were considered important enough to be listed as heirlooms in Morrison's will, none of his paintings were afforded that honour. Certainly, reviewers paid relatively little attention to his paintings when they described his London town house and the chief treasures it contained.² It should therefore come as no surprise that, although

Morrison was included in Henry Jamyn Brooks's panoramic *Private View of the Old Masters Exhibition at the Royal Academy, 1888* – in a place of honour between Frederic Burton, the Director of the National Gallery and Charles Drury Fortnum, another great late Victorian collector – it was not as a lender of Old Master paintings that Morrison had been involved in this particular exhibition but rather on account of his loan of 37 Renaissance medals.

This chapter, building on previous scholarship by Caroline Dakers,³ explores the nature of and some of the motivations and obsessions behind Alfred Morrison's fine art collection,⁴ in particular his Old Master paintings, which he acquired during the last three decades of his life. It offers an overview of the artists and schools represented and the subject matter depicted, and as such relates to one other chapter in this book: Emily Burns's investigation of some of the most significant of Morrison's Old Masters ([Chapter 10](#)). Furthermore, in passing, it overlaps with other collections that Morrison built up, most obviously the common interest between his many painted portraits and his 3,000 portrait engravings of famous men and women (some by celebrated artists such as Holbein, Dürer and Rembrandt), which are the focus of the chapter by David Alexander ([Chapter 12](#)). To evaluate the importance of Morrison's collection of historic art and his record as a taste-maker, the chapter contextualises this part of his collections against a larger backdrop of picture collecting in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Setting the scene: collecting Old Masters in Britain before the 1860s

By the time Alfred Morrison died in 1897, the peak of British collecting was over. Indeed, the famous Hamilton Palace Sale in 1882 and the subsequent sale of pictures from Blenheim Palace in 1884 are often cited as signalling the end of British domination of the art market and marking the concomitant rise of collectors with new wealth from North America and South Africa. By contrast, the era when Morrison started to collect has been described as 'the high water mark of British collecting',⁵ and certainly by the 1860s there was a rich tradition of collecting paintings among British private collectors from across the social spectrum.

During much of the eighteenth century, the most important art collectors in Britain were members of the aristocracy. One standard way in which these individuals added to their family art collections was by undertaking a Grand Tour round Europe, especially Italy, where they

purchased Old Master paintings as well as antiquities, had their portraits painted and commissioned furniture from European craftsmen.

From the start of the nineteenth century, however, those interested in collecting historic paintings found they no longer necessarily had to travel abroad to acquire such art. After the suppression of ecclesiastical foundations across Europe, first by Austrian rulers and later by the French, and in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, major historic works of art, if not entire collections, started to flood the art market. Owing to Britain's comparative stability – although at war with France it had not been invaded – during the first decades of the nineteenth century, London came to rival if not surpass the traditional art market centres of Amsterdam and Paris.⁶ Consequently, countless paintings – often sixteenth-century Italian and seventeenth-century Italian, French, Flemish and Dutch works – arrived on English shores, many from Italian churches and monasteries and from Florentine, Roman, Genoese and Bolognese palaces, although a number of premier collections came from France, notably the Orléans collection, built up by members of the French royal family and considered one of the very finest collections then in private hands. It was a period when wily dealers with international networks flourished. In Britain one thinks especially of the activities of William Buchanan (1777–1864), a Scottish lawyer-cum-dealer who worked with Arthur Champenowne and who published in 1824 his important, if self-promoting, *Memoirs of Painting, with a Chronological History of the Importation of Pictures by the Great Masters into England since the French Revolution*.

Among the English aristocrats who exploited the influx of Old Masters to enhance their collections – and reputations and wealth – were the Bridgewater Syndicate, comprising Francis Egerton, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater (1736–1803), whose fortune arose from the canal he built between Manchester and Liverpool, and two younger family connections, his nephew, Earl Gower, and Gower's brother-in-law, the 5th Earl of Carlisle. They purchased, through the British art dealer Michael Bryan, all the Italian and French paintings from the Orléans collection. Having divided the pictures between themselves and retained the 94 they preferred, the syndicate put up the rest for sale, selling 135 pictures in a novel two-venue selling exhibition in 1798–9 and a further 66 by auction in 1799. Among the purchasers were traditional aristocratic collectors such as the 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion (1745–1816), who added works by Titian, Veronese and Palma Vecchio to his collection (now, with the rest of his bequest, in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), while new collections were formed through

purchases from the Orléans collection by Lords Berwick, Darnley, Garvagh, Northwick and Radstock.

Other active purchasers hailed from a novel class of collector: newly rich City of London merchants and bankers, some of whom succeeded in forming collections which rivalled in quality long-standing aristocratic ones. A notable example is John Julius Angerstein (1735–1823), an émigré businessman born in St Petersburg who, having made a fortune as an underwriter and insurance broker, and a member of Lloyd's of London, started to invest in art (as well as land and ships) in the 1790s with advice from several eminent painters, especially Thomas Lawrence. From the Orléans sale, Angerstein acquired several pictures, including Sebastiano del Piombo's *The Raising of Lazarus* and Raphael's *Portrait of Pope Julius II* (London, National Gallery) (Figure 4.1),⁷ highlights of what became the National Gallery's foundation collection when, in 1824, 38 paintings from Angerstein's collection at his London town house in Pall Mall were purchased by Lord Liverpool's government for the nation.

Angerstein's tastes were very much of his time – his choice of pictures reflecting the type of art most esteemed by European art



Figure 4.1 Raphael, *Portrait of Pope Julius II*, 1511. Oil on wood, 108.7 × 81 cm (42.8 × 31.9 in).

London, National Gallery (NG27)

academies; preached by the likes of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first President of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, in his biennial 'Discourses'; and embodied in the paintings of the Orléans collection: apart from a few prized historical British pictures by William Hogarth, Reynolds and David Wilkie, the majority of Angerstein's pictures were by sixteenth-century Italian and seventeenth-century Italian, French, Dutch and Flemish painters, notably Titian, Claude and Poussin, Rubens and Rembrandt. Similar tastes are found in three generations of collectors in the Baring banking dynasty, whose wealth derived chiefly from the eponymous family bank. For instance, Alexander Baring (1774–1848), who was believed to have spent more than any of his contemporaries on pictures, purchased a number of important Flemish and Dutch paintings from Buchanan, including Jan Both and Cornelis van Poelenburgh's *A Landscape with the Judgement of Paris* of about 1645–50 (London, National Gallery),⁸ which hailed from the collection of a French diplomat, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord.

A number of public-spirited private owners started to open their art collections to select strangers, including established painters or aspiring ones who came recommended by the Royal Academy, distinguished compatriots and important foreigners. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, visiting arrangements, especially to London-based collections, became more systematic, with fixed opening times and published guidebooks.⁹ For instance, Thomas Hope (1769–1831), from the rich Dutch banking dynasty, opened his residence in Duchess Street to visitors from 1804 in a pioneering move. There they enjoyed themed collections in his statue gallery, Egyptian room, Indian room, Flaxman room and Flemish picture gallery, the latter containing his finest Old Masters by Guercino, Poussin and Rubens. At the same time, George Granville Leveson-Gower (1758–1833) of the Bridgewater Syndicate, who became 2nd Marquess of Stafford on his father's death and inherited his uncle's London home, Cleveland House, and its collections, from 1806 opened the renamed Stafford Gallery to the public on Wednesday afternoons in the summer.

Important published surveys, focusing on collections of paintings both in London and the regions, started to appear from the late 1830s. Among the most significant were those by the early female art historian, Anna Jameson, in 1842 and 1844, and by two important foreign commentators, Johann David Passavant and Gustav Waagen, originally published in German and then subsequently translated into English (and other languages). In Waagen's case, his original German edition of 1838 was expanded into three volumes in English in 1854 with a supplement

published in 1857. The importance of Waagen's scholarship in particular in securing Britain's reputation at home and abroad as a country rich in art (at least in the private sphere) cannot be emphasised enough.

The richness of English private collections also became evident through loans to important exhibitions, such as those which were mounted pioneeringly by the British Institution, a body set up in 1805 by a group of influential private collectors, connoisseurs and taste makers, including Sir George Beaumont (1753–1827), with the king as its patron and the Prince of Wales as its president, and with prominent premises on Pall Mall. From 1806, the British Institution hosted annual summer exhibitions of the work of living British painters as a way of offering them a showcase and a selling platform for their work, while from 1813 it started an equivalent annual exhibition series in the winter devoted to the Old Masters, partly to encourage native painters through showing them esteemed examples of the art of the past and partly to promote what was deemed good taste among the general public. After two exhibitions devoted to historic British art, the 1815 exhibition focused on Dutch and Flemish Old Masters, with the work of Peter Paul Rubens dominating; to it Beaumont lent *An Autumn Landscape with a View of Het Steen in the Early Morning* (National Gallery, London) (Figure 4.2),¹⁰ and the dealer Arthur Champenowne lent its pair, *The Rainbow Landscape* (Wallace Collection, London). After more than half a century of activity, the British Institution was disbanded



Figure 4.2 Peter Paul Rubens, *An Autumn Landscape with a View of Het Steen in the Early Morning*, probably 1636. Oil on wood, 131.2 × 229.2 cm (51.6 × 90.2 in).

London, National Gallery (NG66)

in 1867, but its work of mounting annual Old Master exhibitions was continued from 1870 by the Royal Academy.

Mid-century saw the birth of yet more ambitious exhibitions on an international scale, starting with the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. Soon the fine arts, including historic painting, began to feature alongside contemporary art manufactures that had always been included. In relation to the display of Old Master paintings, the most important exhibition took place near Manchester in 1857; it was called 'Art Treasures', a title that reflected Waagen's choice for his handbooks noted earlier, the fourth and final volume of which was published that same year. The idea of displaying fine art in such settings is often credited to Prince Albert, and he and Queen Victoria were generous lenders to Manchester. Most of the important British collectors of their day also lent pictures, including the Dukes of Buccleuch, Newcastle, Northumberland and Richmond, the Marquis of Westminster, the Earl of Pembroke, and Lords Carlisle, Cowper, Ellesmere, Hertford, Northwick, Overstone, Spencer, Ward and Yarborough, as well as, among non-titled collectors, Alexander Barker, Thomas Baring, Angela Burdett-Coutts, the Rev. Walter Davenport Bromley, Robert Holford and William Stirling. Among the exhibits were 1,097 Old Masters and 689 British paintings. Once again, knowledgeable foreign visitors were astonished at the richness of English private art collections on display; the French critic Theophile Thoré, for instance, likened the quality of what he saw to the permanent collections in the Louvre.

By mid-century, in the public sphere, the nascent National Gallery was becoming more certain about its aims and objectives. After a new management structure was introduced in 1855, its first director Sir Charles Eastlake (1793–1865) was appointed with a new annual purchase grant of £10,000 and a systematic purchasing policy to fill certain gaps in the collection. The aim was to transform the gallery into more of a survey collection of European art appropriate for a public gallery rather than for it to continue along the lines of what the collection had originally been during its first thirty years of existence – essentially a private collection reflective of tastes in art then in vogue. Given the quantity and quality of Old Masters in British collections, England became an attractive destination for art lovers from across the globe. To underscore this point, we may quote from a letter written from London in 1867 by the Italian connoisseur Gustavo Frizzoni, a pupil of the great Italian connoisseur Giovanni Morelli, to his friend Count Carlo Lochis:

Here you have to find resources in things other than the pleasure of beautiful architecture or buildings, for the English have no taste in

these matters, as they generally succeed in everything other than being good artists. But in making collections of art and science they are second to nobody, especially since they know no limits in their expenses, when they make acquisitions that contribute to making their museums more complete and interesting. I am certain that the National Gallery would please you enormously, since it has only well-chosen work, acquired mostly with much money. I tell you the truth that my heart cries to see the Perugino from the Melzi collection, banished from its home, also the painting of the Family of Darius before Alexander by Paolo Veronese, formerly the property of the Pisano family. Also, there are some very beautiful works by those dear Tuscans, and of the highest quality by Giovanni Bellini. One of the first questions that the director of the gallery, Boxall, asked, was if I knew any good collections for sale in Italy. You can well imagine that I did not forget your own, inspiring him to visit it the next time he returns to Bergamo.¹¹

Whereas the examples of historic Italian art cited by Frizzoni had all been purchased abroad, National Gallery directors and their boards of trustees continued to hope that such carefully selected foreign purchases might be supplemented through equally prestigious gifts and bequests from patriotic British citizens. The gallery's first donor was Beaumont, who had offered his own collection if the government purchased Angerstein's collection. His tastes had been formed through his friendship with Reynolds and through extended travels around Italy in 1783 and 1821, and such factors ensured that Beaumont's collection upheld the established canon of the Old Masters: it included fine works by Claude, Poussin, Rubens, Rembrandt and Canaletto. Beaumont's gift, which reached the gallery in 1828, was quickly followed by a generous bequest. The donor was the Rev. William Holwell Carr (1758–1830), an absentee vicar and Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and his bequest of 35 pictures was of a taste akin to both Angerstein's and Beaumont's: it included works by Titian, Tintoretto, Domenichino, Reni, Claude and Rembrandt. Wishing to build on such early examples of generosity, Henry Austen Layard (1817–94), an important collector and a National Gallery trustee from 1866, wrote a lengthy review article about the gallery in the *Quarterly Review* in 1859, where he referred to the desirability of 'public spirited and liberal men' taking pride in confiding their treasures to the gallery.¹² Layard himself donated one painting during his lifetime, while the gallery received much of his collection as the Layard Bequest after the death of his widow in 1912.

Origins of Alfred Morrison's collection of Old Master paintings and early influences

His father James Morrison's collection

Alfred Morrison did not come from an aristocratic family; rather, his father was a brilliantly successful self-made man in the haberdashery trade who established a bank. Making one's own fortune and investing it at least partly in art was a common trait in the history of British collecting throughout the nineteenth century. From the end of the eighteenth century, much new wealth arose from industries linked to the Industrial Revolution as well as from businesses associated with railways and canals in the UK, and from business and administration associated with the British Empire more broadly, including the transatlantic slave trade. While a few collectors made their names and gained social prestige from building up natural history collections, several industrialists built up pioneering fine art collections in the generation of Alfred Morrison's grandfather. For instance, Joseph Strutt (1765–1844) of Derby, the son of the inventor of hosiery machinery and a cotton spinner, published a catalogue of his collection in 1827 which listed 585 paintings, including some historic paintings, as well as drawings, sculpture, china and other items. Another was William Wells (1768–1847) of Redleaf, Kent, who was a shipbuilder and owner of the Blackwall Docks. He was a major patron of living painters, including Charles Eastlake (he was an aspiring painter before he became President of the Royal Academy in 1850 and Director of the National Gallery in 1855), Collins, Landseer, Stanfield and Wilkie, but he also acquired some very important Old Masters, including works by Claude and Anthony Van Dyck. A third contemporary example of 'new money' used to purchase historic art is Philip John Miles (1774–1845), who having grown rich through financing the building of railways and the Avonmouth Docks, purchased Leigh Court, near Bristol, and acquired paintings for it, some attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, Correggio, Giorgione, the Carracci, Guercino, Claude and Van Dyck.

Alfred Morrison's father, James (1789–1857), accumulated far more wealth than any of these collectors, dying the richest commoner of his day in Britain. As Dakers has pointed out, his life embodied the classic 'rags to riches' story. The son of a Hampshire innkeeper and apprenticed to a London haberdasher, his business acumen increased the firm's turnover, secured him a partnership in the company and marriage to his boss's daughter Mary Ann Todd (1795–1887). By 1824, the year the National Gallery was founded, James owned the company outright,

renaming it Morrison & Co., and by 1830 he was generating an annual turnover of almost £2 million. The profits he invested in collecting art, in infrastructure projects across the USA and in his own merchant bank, J. Morrison & Co. Alongside a deep interest in politics – he was friendly with radicals including John Bowring, Joseph Hume and Edwin Chadwick, and he became an MP, using the Commons to speak in favour of free trade and state regulation of the railways – he became interested in the arts, using his platform in Parliament to promote public access to art, campaigning for a national collection and the establishment of a government-sponsored industrial art school.

James Morrison's increasing interest in the arts started with British painting. As Dakers has pointed out, for two decades from 1823, Morrison relied on his friendship with the architect J. B. Papworth to guide his taste and purchases, often the result of introductions to artists and craftsmen or the outcome of what was on sale at the Royal Academy's annual exhibition. For instance, his first British picture was *A Boat Passing a Lock* by John Constable, a friend of Papworth's, purchased from the Academy's show in 1824, where Morrison also acquired three works by another of Papworth's acquaintances, J. M. W. Turner, while from the Academy two years later, he purchased two contemporary works by William Collins and Samuel Prout. James made contact himself with other English artists during his cultural tours across Europe, when he took the opportunity to visit important public and private collections. It was in Rome, for instance, that he was introduced to Wilkie and Eastlake, which led to his purchase of Wilkie's *The Confessional* (Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland) and Eastlake's *Escape of the Carrara Family* (Tate). Following traditional practice, James also commissioned portraits of family and friends, including paintings of himself, his wife, his father-in-law and two business partners, many from the popular Victorian artist Henry William Pickersgill, as well as sculpted marble busts of himself, one from William Theed, a successful English sculptor who had studied in Rome, and another from Francis Chantrey, which was completed just before Chantrey died. Other living British painters represented in James's collection were Collins, Hilton, Nasmyth, Stanfield and Webster, while deceased British masters included Hogarth and Richard Wilson.

James Morrison was also interested in historic European painting, of the type associated with the Orléans generation noted earlier. His first Old Master purchase was Claude's *Rape of Europa* in 1831, followed in 1835 with the purchase of two Dutch seventeenth-century pictures by Berchem and Teniers; slightly more unusual perhaps was his acquisition

at this time of two ‘fête champêtre’ scenes by Watteau. It was in 1839 that James’s collection of Dutch seventeenth-century pictures was boosted, when, in partnership with the dealer Buchanan, he bought a first-rate group of pictures including Rembrandt’s *Portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels* (London, National Gallery; [Figure 4.3](#)),¹³ and numerous landscapes, townscapes and genre scenes by Hobbema, Jan Wynants, David Teniers, Karel Dujardin and Gerrit Dou. The group also included notable religious works such as Rubens’s *Four Evangelists* and Van Dyck’s *Infant Christ embracing Saint John*. These pictures were bought as a speculation by Buchanan and James Morrison, who purchased the entire collection of Edward Gray (1751–1838) from Gray’s executors in February 1839 for £15,000,¹⁴ a venture which involved them thereafter in years of complicated business dealings.

Other important acquisitions by Morrison later on included another Claude and Van Dyck’s double portrait of *Dorothy Countess of Leicester and her sister Lucy Countess of Carlisle* as well as two works by Nicolas



Figure 4.3 Rembrandt, *Portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels*, probably 1654–6. Oil on canvas, 101.9 × 83.7 cm (42.8 × 31.9 in).

London, National Gallery (NG6432)

Poussin, one of which was *The Triumph of Pan* (London, National Gallery; [Figure 4.4](#)), and a *sacra conversazione* by Parmigianino.¹⁵

The various European artistic schools were differentiated within James's collection by virtue of the fact that they were displayed in different rooms in his different properties; he employed Robert Hume to organise the displays at his country seat, Basildon Park, Berkshire and his London town house in Harley Street. Both collections were visited by Waagen, whose national survey noted some careful arrangements of pictures by school.¹⁶ For instance, at Basildon, apart from the mixture of key masterpieces displayed in the Tribuna-like setting of the library (Waagen pointed out Poussin's bacchanal, the Rembrandt portrait, the Rubenses and the Parmigianino in that room), the Oak Room contained the greater part of the Netherlandish school (with a few French pictures added into the mix) and the Octagon was richly decorated with James's English paintings.

Alfred Morrison would have grown up surrounded by his father's art collection and would have been familiar with paternal art world



Figure 4.4 Nicolas Poussin, *The Triumph of Pan*, 1636. Oil on canvas, 135.9 × 146 cm (53.5 × 57.4 in).

London, National Gallery (NG6477)

associates. However, as the second son, he did not inherit the collection, which passed to his elder brother, Charles (1817–1909), who also received his father's business and the bulk of the family properties – Basildon Park, Islay House in Argyll and Bute and a house in Harley Street (after his mother's death). Alfred did, however, inherit a select number of works of the decorative and fine arts from his father, including some fine Sèvres porcelain and a handful of magnificent pieces of furniture including a Louis XV bouille writing desk, two lacquer bureau cabinets and a marble-topped table. Additionally, he received a few Old Master paintings, the two most important being Rembrandt's *Head of a Rabbi* and Anthony Van Dyck's *Queen Henrietta Maria*, both of which came with Fonthill, the one estate that his father did bequeath him.¹⁷

For his own part, Alfred began collecting in earnest after the death of his father in 1857, and was enabled to do so through wealth derived from a mixture of sources, notably annual rental income from the Fonthill estate and other land in Hampshire and South Wales, inherited securities and from investments in American railways and canals. Occasionally, Alfred bought items at auction which had a family association. For instance, in 1869, he purchased the collection of autograph letters amassed by John Dillon, the former business partner of his father, and also spent almost £2,000 on items formerly belonging to members of his mother's family including engravings, books, autograph letters, etchings by Alphonse Legros and a drawing by Frederic Leighton.¹⁸

Fonthill and William Beckford's art collection

Following his father's fascination before him, Alfred Morrison became interested in a former owner of the property and estate he inherited – William Beckford (1760–1844), the famous author, collector and taste-maker who, with money derived largely from Jamaican sugar plantations, demolished the family home, a Palladian mansion, Fonthill Splendens, and built on a separate site Fonthill Abbey, which resembled a neo-Gothic abbey. In it he meticulously arranged his eclectic collection, comprising antique and modern French furniture, eighteenth-century Chinese vases, antiquarian items befitting the rooms he called the 'Holbein cabinet' and 'King Edward III's Gallery', and books. He also collected pictures whose importance can be gauged from the fact that some twenty of them are now in the National Gallery,¹⁹ including three early Italian pictures – a type of art which had previously been comparatively overlooked: two works by Giovanni Bellini, *Agony in the*



Figure 4.5 Giovanni Bellini, *Doge Leonardo Loredan*, c. 1501–2. Oil on wood, 61.4 × 44.5 cm (24.2 × 17.5 in). London, National Gallery (NG189)

Garden,²⁰ and the *Portrait of Doge Leonardo Loredan* (Figure 4.5),²¹ and one by Raphael, *Saint Catherine* (all London, National Gallery).

Beckford also owned examples of the work of Claude, for instance paying the huge sum of 7,000 guineas for a pair known as the ‘Altieri Claudes’ (Anglesey Abbey, National Trust) in 1799 from the Orléans sale. Beckford’s collection additionally contained works by Dughet, and by Northern painters including Gerrit Dou, Hans Memling, Jan Brueghel, Rembrandt and De Hooch. Not much remains of Beckford’s architectural or art historical creations, for in 1825 Fonthill’s tower collapsed and, after Beckford’s finances fell apart, he was forced to sell up. In 1823, the Fonthill sale took place, which is remembered as one of the most spectacular British art auctions of all time, lasting 37 days and comprising 3,960 lots.

Another great earlier art collector who had similar tastes and who also affected aspects of the Gothic Revival was Horace Walpole (1717–97), the youngest son of Sir Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford, who had built up a magnificent collection at Houghton Hall, Norfolk. To create his neo-Gothic fantasy, Strawberry Hill, in Twickenham, Walpole transformed a cottage into a structure reminiscent of a late medieval

English castle. He filled it with carefully chosen relics from English history, including a glove of James I and a hat belonging to Cardinal Wolsey. What is interesting about Walpole's collection, when thinking about potential influences on Alfred Morrison's collecting habits, is the fact that Walpole collected a lot of oriental and French porcelain and that his fine art collection was dominated by portraits, whether paintings, drawings, miniatures or prints, including an important group of miniatures by Holbein, Hilliard and Oliver of Tudor sitters and Stuart collectors. The sale of Walpole's collection in 1842 was almost as lengthy as Beckford's, lasting some 32 days. Interestingly, James Morrison purchased various items at it, including Anthony Van Dyck's important double portrait of the countesses of Leicester and Carlisle, which makes it more than likely that Alfred came to know about Walpole through his father.

Alfred Morrison's father brought his family to live at Fonthill in 1831. To draw attention to the connection between himself and Beckford, having purchased The Pavilion, which was the surviving wing of Fonthill Splendens, James salvaged certain elements including chimneypieces, stained glass and oak doors from the nearby ruins of Fonthill Abbey. He also bought several additional items from later Beckford sales, notably a number of pieces of furniture in 1841, and four years later a pietra dura table that Beckford had commissioned. However, these items were taken to Basildon, so they passed to his elder son Charles. James had to stave off certain rivals at the Beckford sale, who likewise wished to own objects with such an illustrious provenance or which would suit interiors they were refashioning. As James Stourton and Charles Sebag-Montefiore have noted: 'By the mid-nineteenth century almost every old family in Britain was busy reinventing itself, not only by rebuilding their homes to look more romantic but restocking them with "the true rust of the Baron's Wars".'²² For instance, George Lucy (1789–1845), when refurbishing Charlecote Park, Warwickshire, as a medieval interior – the estate had been in his family since the twelfth century – spent almost £3,500 at the Fonthill sale. Likewise, Jesse Watts-Russell (1786–1875) of Ilam Hall, Staffordshire, enhanced his collection, dominated by British art, through purchasing certain paintings at the Fonthill sale.

Alfred Morrison continued in the footsteps of collectors like his father, Lucy and Watts-Russell. He renamed The Pavilion 'Fonthill House', named one of the bedrooms 'Beckford' and treasured those items which came with the house and had a Beckford provenance. Morrison seized opportunities to acquire other Beckford 'relics', including various

estate papers from Beckford's day. Most importantly, he bought dozens of books from the Fonthill library at the Hamilton Palace sale.²³

Other early influences: art in Edinburgh, Cambridge and North America

A few early personal encounters with people and pictures outside his family also played a part in fostering Alfred Morrison's particular interests in different types of painting. In terms of British art, it is worth recalling that as a student for three years at Edinburgh University, Alfred enjoyed attending lectures given by the history painter Benjamin Robert Haydon, who was a constant advocate for British art and the need for patronage of living artists. It was at the Scottish Academy that Alfred first encountered the work of David Wilkie. He informed his mother that he thought Wilkie's *Chelsea Pensioners Reading the Waterloo Dispatch* was 'splendid'.²⁴

In relation to Old Master pictures, it was presumably when Alfred went on to study for a year at Trinity College, Cambridge, that he encountered many fine examples of historic art in the newly established Fitzwilliam Museum, a collection particularly rich in Italian sixteenth-century and Dutch seventeenth-century art given the founder's activities in those fields of collecting, not least at the Orléans sale, as noted earlier. Alfred's love of Italian Old Master paintings would surely also have been encouraged through the continental travels he undertook first with his parents and then alone in 1848–9, the latter occasion when he was in Rome to oversee the completion of Theed's bust of his father and to purchase other sculptures for the paternal collection (see [Figure 11.2](#)). It was his travels in America that inspired Alfred's collecting interests in one of the fields in which he was most distinctive: contemporary North American sculpture and painting (see [Figures 2.5](#) and [2.6](#)). For several years between 1842 and 1845, while undertaking business for his father's bank, sometimes in the company of his brother Charles and sometimes alone, Alfred had travelled widely across the continent. He stayed with wealthy merchants in New York and Philadelphia, such as William Wetmore, who amassed an important collection of historic Chinese ceramics; once more the impressionable Alfred commented positively in letters home on certain works of art he had encountered in their collections. Furthermore, he was impressed by some of the natural scenes he witnessed including the falls at Niagara, memories which doubtless stimulated his later interest in modern American landscape painting.

Alfred Morrison's art collection

Its eclectic and extensive range

As mentioned earlier, Alfred Morrison began collecting seriously after his father's death in 1857. Whereas James's collection comprised largely paintings, Alfred developed far wider interests. In terms of the range of his interests and the quantity and quality of works of art he built up, Alfred may be compared with a few leading eclectic collectors from his father's generation and among his own peers. One good comparator from his father's era is Ralph Bernal (1783/4–1854). As a Francophile, Bernal amassed a vast number of French objects including an important Sèvres collection and French medieval works, but additionally he owned the 'Lothair Crystal' (British Museum), an engraved gem from north-west Europe, dating from 855–69 CE, and many Italian Renaissance objects as well as paintings ranging from Cranach to El Greco and eighteenth-century French art. The scope and significance of the collection is evident from the fact that Bernal's posthumous sale lasted 32 days and purchasers included leading public and private collectors such as the British Museum and South Kensington Museum (the Victoria and Albert Museum), Lord Hertford and the Rothschilds.

In terms of Alfred's contemporaries who were eclectic collectors of equivalent importance – if not more so – we may cite Robert Stayner Holford, Francis Cook and Richard Wallace. All three were members of what became known as the Burlington Fine Arts Club, a group set up in 1866 for collectors to come together to see and discuss each other's collections and which, from 1867, also mounted important exhibitions for members – a group whose ranks Alfred Morrison was invited to join as a founder member. Holford (1808–92) inherited his wealth from an uncle and father (his father's money had derived from supplying London with fresh water through the New River Company) and commissioned Lewis Vulliamy to build Dorchester House on Park Lane and to remodel Holford's country house, Westonbirt, Gloucestershire, as a neo-Elizabethan mansion. His collections, the most important parts of which he displayed in London, comprised Old Master paintings; prints; sculpture and bronzes; porcelain, maiolica and Della Robbia ware; Renaissance gold and silverware; and illuminated manuscripts and printed books. Interestingly, one of Holford's first fine art acquisitions, which took place in 1840 as soon as he had come into his inheritance, was a group of seven paintings bought from the elderly William Beckford for 4,500 guineas, comprising landscapes by Claude, Berchem, Gaspar Poussin, Jan Both and Wouwermans, and two interior scenes by Jan Steen and Adriaen van Ostade.

Sir Francis Cook, 1st Baronet (1817–1901), who developed his father's linen retailing business into a successful cotton, linen and silk empire, used his wealth to build up vast collections. These he displayed mostly at Doughty House, Richmond, but partly at his foreign residence, Monserrate, near Sintra, Portugal, which, interestingly for the current discussion, had once belonged to William Beckford and which Cook remodelled to evoke an oriental palace. While his holdings of the decorative arts, which included Greek and Roman marbles, bronzes, enamels, ivories, amber and jewels, have been compared in quality to collections in the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum, Cook's picture collection of over 500 paintings resembled a small-scale National Gallery. His paintings ranged from early Italian pictures and a painting by the Van Eycks, works by Raphael and Titian, to works by Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Claude, Poussin, Chardin, Greuze, Clouet and El Greco.

Sir Richard Wallace (1818–90), the illegitimate son of the 4th Marquess of Hertford (1800–70), inherited houses in Paris and Hertford House in London as well as the unentailed Hertford collections, much of which reflected his father's passion for French eighteenth-century furniture, porcelain and paintings by Watteau, Boucher, Pater and Lancret. Additionally, there were pictures by later painters such as Diaz, Delaroche, Bonington and Meissonier as well as by esteemed Old Masters including Claude, Poussin, Murillo, Rembrandt, Rubens, Frans Hals and Velázquez. Wallace added to these inherited collections with fine Italian bronzes, glass and maiolica, French ivories and enamels, and German silver, as well as important collections of arms and armour. Here it is worth noting the link between Alfred's wife Mabel and the Hertfords, Mabel having spent part of her childhood in Paris with a grandfather who was the Hertford family's physician.²⁵

A fourth collector, a little younger than Alfred Morrison, who again built up a wide-ranging and discriminating collection at the same time that he did, was George Salting (1835–1909). With a fortune inherited from sheep farming in Australia, Salting amassed a collection of paintings and drawings by an eclectic group of artists including Ghirlandaio, Signorelli, Memling, Hals, Hobbema, Vermeer and the Barbizon school. He also purchased European Renaissance bronzes, ivories, enamels and Chinese porcelains. On his death, Salting's collections were divided between the National Gallery, British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum.

Modern art: British and foreign schools

It is clear from extant inventories and other records that Alfred Morrison collected mostly modern paintings, many by British artists. In this regard, he may be compared with other Victorian collectors, many of whom, like him, came from industrial or commercial backgrounds, although some had clear agendas, which he did not share, to demonstrate the superiority of recent and living British painters over esteemed earlier foreign counterparts, especially Dutch seventeenth-century painters of landscapes and genre scenes. One of the first collectors to promote British painting was not an industrialist, in fact, but a landowner, politician and amateur artist, Sir John Fleming Leicester (1762–1827). Having been on a Grand Tour, where, tellingly, he purchased nothing, from 1800 he started to form a collection solely of British painting. Ultimately, it comprised a few deceased masters, notably Reynolds, Gainsborough and Wilson, and many works by living British painters including Fuseli, Hoppner, Lawrence, Turner and Ward. Leicester divided his pictures between his homes, Tabley House, Cheshire, and 24 Hill Street, Berkeley Square, London. From 1818, Leicester opened his collection to the public, and in 1823 he offered it as the foundation of a national gallery of British art. However, the prime minister, Lord Liverpool, declined it, stating that he would prefer to base any nucleus of a national gallery on a collection of Old Masters, which happened soon afterwards with his purchase, as noted, of Angerstein's historic art collection, which opened to the public in May 1824. Leicester's collection was disbanded after his death in 1827. Interestingly, at the sale of it organised by Christie's at Hill Street on 7 July 1827, James Morrison bought J. M. W. Turner's *The Thames at Pope's Villa*.

Several other important collectors of modern British art were active in Alfred's father's generation, a prime example being Elhanan Bicknell (1788–1861), a prosperous London businessman and shipowner. Not 'giv[ing] a damn' about the Old Masters, Bicknell owned a few works from the previous century by Gainsborough and Wilson, and patronised living British painters including Eastlake and Turner. Then there was Robert Vernon (1774–1849), a London hackneyman and stable owner, who, from 1843, opened his collection to the public at his London town house on Pall Mall and who, in 1847, gave 164 paintings to the National Gallery, thereby transforming its holdings of contemporary British art.²⁶ Equally public-spirited was John Sheepshanks (1787–1863), a Leeds clothing manufacturer, who, in 1856, gave his collection of 233 British oil paintings and 93 watercolours to the

South Kensington Museum (Victoria and Albert Museum), again as the nucleus of a national gallery of British art.

Among Alfred's own peers there were several serious collectors and benefactors of British art. One was Jacob Bell (1810–59), a pharmaceutical chemist, who, once more, bequeathed his picture collection, including works by Landseer, Leslie and Rosa Bonheur, to the National Gallery. Even more significant was Sir Henry Tate (1819–99), who used a fortune gained from a London- and Liverpool-based sugar refining business to buy important British nineteenth-century art including work by Millais, Orchardson and Waterhouse. In 1890, Tate offered his collection to the National Gallery; after some wrangles, he gave 65 pictures and paid for a gallery to be built as the first UK public institution dedicated to British art – the Tate Gallery at Millbank. It is interesting that Alfred Morrison never felt compelled to donate any part of his collection to the nation.

If we survey the type of British art that Alfred Morrison collected, two areas emerge as being of particular interest to him, both of which dovetail with much English collecting during the Victorian era. One was animal painting, a traditional area of patronage and collecting in Britain from the eighteenth century, which appealed to Morrison because of his deep interest in country sports, rural life and agriculture (see [Chapter 9](#)). Morrison owned works by a number of the leading nineteenth-century painters (and a few sculptors) of horses and other animals, horse-racing and hunting scenes. In addition to his early patronage of the local, Salisbury-based, sporting and animal painter and illustrator George Bouverie Goddard (1832–86), three of whose paintings of horses are listed in an important printed inventory of Alfred Morrison's collection taken in 1900,²⁷ Morrison acquired paintings by several more established painters, notably Charles Towne (1763–1840) and Abraham Cooper (1787–1868). Alfred's largest group of animal subjects were paintings and drawings by James Ward (1769–1859), a prolific artist who focused on livestock, and who filled a gap in the market after George Stubbs's death in 1806 and before the emergence of Edwin Landseer in the 1830s (see [Figures 9.7](#) and [9.8](#)). Arguably, the most well known of his animal paintings is a vast canvas of stampeding cattle, *A Panic*, painted in 1872 by Henry William Banks Davis, which has always elicited a mixed response (Beverley Art Gallery, East Riding of Yorkshire Council; see [Figure 9.2](#)).

The second area of Alfred Morrison's British art collection which reflected contemporary fashion was Pre-Raphaelite art. He was a loyal patron of two artists on the periphery of the group, John Brett

(1831–1902) and John William Inchbold (1830–88), both of whose work Morrison collected in quantity (see [Figure 2.7](#)). For instance, among nearly 30 paintings – mostly landscapes – by Brett which Morrison owned, was the artist’s esteemed *Massa, Bay of Naples*. Morrison also owned Inchbold’s *The Moorland*, a work publicly praised by the rising Victorian art critic John Ruskin; Inchbold and Ruskin went on to spend time together in Switzerland in the mid-1850s. By contrast, Morrison’s contemporaries often patronised painters more visibly in the forefront of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. For instance, George Rae (1817–1902), a Liverpool banker, was a major patron of Dante Gabriel Rossetti; William Graham (1817–85), a Scottish politician, wine merchant, cotton manufacturer and port shipper, was another important patron of Rossetti as well as of Edward Burne-Jones; James Leathart (1820–95), a lead manufacturer from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, patronised Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown and Arthur Hughes; Sir Thomas Fairbairn 2nd Baronet (1823–91), a Manchester millwright, iron and brass founder, steam engine and boiler manufacturer, was a patron of William Holman Hunt; and Frederick Richards Leyland (1831–92), a Liverpool shipowner, owned many of Rossetti’s works (and commissioned James Abbott McNeill to create ‘The Peacock Room’ for his London home, where he displayed his esteemed Chinese porcelain collection).

It was in modern foreign painting, and two areas in particular, that Alfred Morrison followed his own instincts and diverged from the more standard tastes of the day. His collection contained a large number of landscapes, some of which were acquired from the International Exhibition of 1862, along with numerous items of the decorative arts. One impressive group was by Northern, Nordic and Russian painters, which comprised works by the Russian Nikolai Sverchkov (1817–98), including *Winter Scene with a Russian Bridal Party*; the Norwegians Adolphe Tidemand (1814–76), including *The Result of a Single Combat in a Norwegian Hut* and Otto Sinding (1842–1909); the Danes Carl Frederik Sørensen (1818–79) and Carl Rasmussen (1841–93); the Pole Anna Bilinska (1854–93) and the Germans Adolf Menzel (1815–1905) and Georg Edvard Saal (1817–70), including *Moonlight Rendezvous*, as well as Otto Scholderer, the latter who painted Alfred’s portrait in 1885–6.

Morrison was equally passionate about the work of the mid-nineteenth-century group of North American painters known as the Hudson River School, who made their name for their romantic evocations of the Hudson River Valley and its landscape environs. Morrison, as in other areas, mass-purchased examples of the work of certain painters from this

school, in particular Jasper Francis Cropsey (1823–1900), from whom he acquired 11 pictures, including *Autumn Foliage in the White Mountains*, and Louis Mignot (1831–70), from whom Morrison purchased four pictures in 1863 alone (see [Figure 2.6](#)). Mignot had arrived in England the year before to escape the American Civil War and exhibited at the Royal Academy for the first time that year, continuing to show his work there until his death seven years later. Morrison remained a faithful patron to the end, going on to acquire another four paintings by Mignot.

By contrast, most of Morrison's contemporaries who were interested in landscapes by contemporary painters purchased works either by the French Barbizon School or by its Dutch counterpart, the Hague School. The collecting of French Impressionists took off seriously in Britain only in the early twentieth century. A rather exceptional example of a British collector of modern foreign art is James Staats Forbes (1823–1904), General Manager of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company, who assembled over 4,000 paintings including a good number of works by the French painters Rousseau, Daubigny, Millet and Corot, and their Dutch counterparts Mattijs Maris and Jozef Israels – foreign pictures which sat alongside English landscapes by John Constable and other native painters associated with the Norwich School. Interestingly, several Scottish collectors were in the vanguard of this type of modern foreign art collecting of French and Dutch landscapes, notably James Reid (1823–94), a Glasgow marine engineer and locomotive manufacturer; Thomas Glen Arthur (1857/8–1907), a Glasgow warehouseman; James Donald (1830–1905), a Glasgow manufacturing chemist; and Robert Thomas Hamilton Bruce (1846–99), an Edinburgh flour merchant.

European Old Masters and historic portraits

From the printed inventory of 1900 mentioned earlier, it is clear that Alfred Morrison's collection of historic art was significantly smaller than his collection of modern pictures. Some information regarding dates of acquisition may be gleaned from records of purchases and loans and from Morrison's personal correspondence. It seems that Alfred's first purchase of an Old Master took place in 1852, when he acquired a portrait of Henrietta Maria in mourning, which was bought as a work by Philippe de Champaigne but is now attributed to Cornelis Van Ceulen (see [Figure 10.5](#)). It came through Walter Benjamin Tiffin (1795–1877), who, having started out as a print publisher, became a leading dealer in prints and drawings, selling numerous prints to the British Museum, for instance. Morrison started to buy older art more regularly from

the early 1860s and came to rely most often on Marseille Middleton Holloway (1809–97) and his son (also called Marseille), well-known London dealers in prints, engravings and autographs, with premises from c. 1849–75 at 25 Bedford Street, Covent Garden. Marseille Holloway authored for Morrison the *Annotated Catalogue and Index to Portraits* of 1868 mentioned earlier.

Initially, Morrison purchased historic art which ranged broadly in terms of historical school and subject matter. Looking at the first two years of his Old Master acquisitions, Dakers has pointed out that in 1864, with Holloway's help, Morrison secured at Christie's a painting by Jan Breughel the Elder described as 'A wide village scene in summer with carts, villagers and gentlefolk', for £141 15s. The following year, he acquired through Whitehead of Duke Street a drawing of Nonsuch Palace by Hoefnagel (£50) and two drawings attributed to Dürer (but now attributed to Hoffmann) of a 'dead jay and Wing of a Kingfisher' (£250) (see [Figure 19.16](#)).²⁸ Although Morrison also came to own a few more townscapes, including two of Haarlem, a view of Italian palazzi and one of Dürer's house, neither landscapes, cityscapes nor natural history dominated his historic art collection in the way it did in his modern and contemporary art collection. While Northern European painters remained a dominant feature, in parallel with his love of Northern European modern art, the eclectic subject matter fell away and he focused increasingly on portraits.

Alfred Morrison's interest in portraits did not sit in a vacuum; rather, it fitted into a long tradition and one that had received some recent fresh impetus. While it had been common practice for the English court to commission portraits of the monarch and their inner circle – a spectacular instance being James II's commissions in the mid-1660s of Peter Lely to paint a series of female court beauties and another of his admirals – and for aristocratic families to hang ancestral portraits on the walls of their historic country houses, there was another tradition of collecting portraits of particular types of individuals, often related to the collector's own field of professional interest rather than of immediate family members. For instance, during the Restoration era, Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon (1609–74), as a leading historian of the Civil War, amassed a collection that the diarist John Evelyn described as 'pictures of most of our Antient & Modern Witts, Poets, Philosophers famous & learned English-men'.²⁹ Or one may think of the diarist and naval administrator Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), whose encyclopedic collection included a significant group of portraits of important figures from medieval and Renaissance Europe, among which was a subgroup

of likenesses of doctors and scientists including Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne (by Rubens), Vesalius (by Titian), Boyle and Halley. Often, portraits were collected as much on account of the painter as the sitter. For instance, within the wide-ranging collections amassed by the famous physician Dr Richard Mead (1673–1754) were a number of important portraits such as Hans Holbein the Younger's *Portrait of Erasmus* and its companion likeness of Petrus Aegidius, now catalogued as by Quentin Matsys (both Longford Castle, Wiltshire, the former on loan to the National Gallery) (Figure 4.6) and Rubens's portrait of the distinguished collector Lord Arundel.

One collector of Alfred's father's generation with a developed interest in collecting portraits was William John Bankes (1786–1855) of Kingston Lacy, Dorset, who inherited a series of important family portraits by Lely which had been built up by his royalist ancestor Sir Ralph Bankes in the seventeenth century as well as other good examples of later family members by other painters of the British school including Gilbert Jackson, Romney, Reynolds, Lawrence and Zoffany. To these, William Bankes added three bronze sculptures commissioned from Carlo Marochetti, which depicted his two most important seventeenth-century ancestors, Dame Mary and Chief Justice Bankes, and the third of Charles I.



Figure 4.6 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Erasmus*, 1523. Oil on wood, 73.6 × 51.4 cm (28.9 × 20.2 in).

On loan from Longford Castle collection, © Longford Castle Collection (L658)

Bankes went on to buy some significant Old Master portraits, including Velázquez's portrait of Philip IV, purchased at the Count Altamira sale in London in 1827, and two great Flemish portraits by Rubens of Marchesa Maria Pallavicino and Marchesa Maria Grimaldi, acquired in Genoa in 1840. Interesting, too, is the fact that in 1836 Bankes purchased 58 enamel miniatures by the recently deceased Henry Bone (1755–1834), purportedly the greatest British artist to work in this medium. The group included portraits of Queen Elizabeth and various of her courtiers and contemporaries as well as two likenesses of Dame Mary. Bankes's batch was part of a yet larger set of 85 miniatures, which had been unsuccessfully offered to the nation for £4,000 by the elder Bone.

The idea of a national portrait gallery slowly gained ground as part of a commitment by the state to expand its support for the arts and education. In 1846, the politician Philip Henry Stanhope, 4th Earl Stanhope, first proposed the idea of such a gallery in Parliament, but it was not until his third attempt, in 1856, this time in the House of Lords, that the proposal was accepted. With Queen Victoria's approval, the House of Commons set aside £2,000 to establish the first national public gallery anywhere dedicated to displaying portraits of the country's famous citizens. The idea of exhibiting portraits remained popular. A decade after the National Portrait Gallery was opened, the first of three temporary exhibitions of portraits opened at the South Kensington Museum. The inaugural Exhibition of National Portraits of 1866 contained portraits of people from or linked to the history of England until the Glorious Revolution; the second, which took place in 1867, displayed portraits dating to between the Glorious Revolution and 1800; with the final exhibition of 1868 showing portraits of people living after 1800 including some likenesses of sitters who were still alive. The first exhibition displayed 1,035 exhibits, including works by Memling and Hans Holbein the Younger, was attended by over 73,000 visitors and sold over 16,000 catalogues. Although there were fewer exhibits and visitors and fewer catalogues sold at the two subsequent exhibitions, the statistics in all areas remained very respectable throughout the series. The initiative was taken up by other London-based exhibiting bodies such as the British Institution, the Burlington Fine Arts Club and the Royal Academy. Alfred Morrison was a lender to certain of these exhibitions, sending, for instance, the portrait of Henrietta Maria in mourning to the Royal Academy's Winter Exhibition in 1879 and to the Exhibition of the Royal House of Stuart, hosted at the New Gallery in 1888–9, while to the 1879 Winter Exhibition Morrison also lent portraits by Bartholomäus Bruyn, Antonio Moro, Vincenzo Foppa and LeFevre.³⁰

Thinking about Alfred's interest in portraits, it is worth noting that there had been a few portraits of famous men and women in his father's collection, notably Reynolds's portrait of Dr Johnson, Rubens's sketch of Charles V receiving a deputation from the citizens of Antwerp and the portrait of Henrietta Maria by Van Dyck which Alfred inherited, as noted earlier. Alfred added a few works which augmented these portraits. For instance, he acquired another likeness of Dr Johnson, by Joseph Wright of Derby, and one of Alfred's first purchases was the Van Ceulen portrait of Henrietta Maria in mourning, perhaps partly to speak to his other likeness of the same sitter. Indeed, looking at Alfred's collection as a whole, it seems fair to suggest that he was as interested, sometimes more so, in the sitter than the painter. Alfred's collection included a number of likenesses of leading figures in Britain's arts and sciences: Alexander Pope by Kneller, Edward Gibbon by Reynolds (plus a miniature of Gibbon after a Reynolds portrait) and Isaac Newton by James Grandy. Royalty and their entourages were also represented in good number: the Tudor dynasty was dominated by an important portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, but there were also purported representations of Thomas Cromwell, Edward VI, Mary Tudor, Mary Queen of Scots and of the latter's second husband, Lord Darnley. The Stuart court was represented by the two images of Henrietta Maria. Another seventeenth-century English monarch represented was William of Orange. From the era of James II were portraits of the king's brother-in-law, the 2nd Earl of Clarendon, and the notoriously brutal Judge Jeffreys. The most modern British portrait that Alfred owned was of the naval hero of the Napoleonic wars, Admiral Lord Nelson, by Arthur Devis.

The collection also contained likenesses of foreign kings, mainly French royalty. It is probable that Morrison collected an early German *Adoration of the Magi* not so much on account of its religious subject matter (the only other religious pictures that he owned were a *Virgin and Child* by Marco D'Oggiono and a triptych formerly attributed to Memling and now in the Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio) but because it depicted the Duc de Burgundy. Morrison owned two portraits of Charles IX, the penultimate monarch of the House of Valois, as well as an image each of Francis I (described in the 1900 inventory as depicted in 'a white slashed dress' and being by Clouet), Louis XIII ('in armour and lace collar' by Philippe de Champaigne) and Louis XIV's illegitimate son, the Duc de Maine (listed as by Hyacinth Rigaud). Other than French royalty, there were likenesses of two leading seventeenth-century French clerics, the cardinals Mazarin and Fleury, and two French military leaders, the Bourbon leader Condé and Napoleon Bonaparte,

the latter by Jacques-Louis David and a star item within the collection. It is worth pointing out that an interest in imagery of Napoleon was quite common; an early expression of this trend was the commission of the 10th Duke of Hamilton (1767–1852) in 1811 to Jacques-Louis David to paint *Napoleon in his Study at the Tuileries* (National Gallery of Art, Washington), while later in the century the 5th Lord Rosebery (1847–1929) owned a collection of portraits of Napoleon and his family (including the portrait by David, which he bought at the Hamilton Palace Sale), while John Bowes (1811–85) hung portraits of Napoleonic marshals in his eponymous house museum in County Durham.

In terms of Italian rulers, Alfred Morrison owned a magnificent portrait by Bronzino representing the famous sixteenth-century Tuscan prince and art patron par excellence, Cosimo de' Medici of Florence, which Holloway had secured at Christie's on 11 May 1872 (Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney); it was a fitting image to be owned by a collector with ambitions such as Morrison's, and the finest old master painting in his collection (see [Figure 10.7](#)). He also owned a second supposed Bronzino which depicted one of Cosimo's children. The Spanish king Charles III was represented by Goya, the leading Spanish painter and etcher of the late eighteenth century, and court painter to Charles III, Charles IV and Ferdinand VII of Spain. Morrison's collection included a number of unidentified German margraves, some with added importance in Morrison's day because they were then considered to be by Hans Holbein the Younger.

While Morrison's collection was dominated by portraits of men, it did contain a number of likenesses of women, including (in addition to the queens of England already mentioned) several French noblewomen: the thirteenth-century Jeanne, Queen of Navarre; the sixteenth-century Louise de Lorraine, Queen of France; Elizabeth de Valois, who was Queen of Spain when married to Philip II; and Margaret of Valois. There were also two portraits of women associated with the arts: Elizabeth Spencer, an esteemed patron of the arts, and Mme Goffrie, famed for her correspondence.

Finally, Morrison's collection included a few portraits of notable individuals who had nothing to do with European royalty or their courts, one such being a portrait by Rembrandt of Ephraim Bones, a supporter of the printing press run by Rembrandt's neighbour. In this category should be mentioned two of Morrison's most important historic sculptures: Louis-François Roubiliac's bust of the German-British Baroque composer George Frideric Handel and Jean Antoine Houdon's bust of the French Enlightenment writer, historian and philosopher Voltaire (see [Figure 11.6](#)).

From this survey of Alfred Morrison's collection of portraits, it is evident that he was not particularly interested in collecting family portraits; indeed, he commissioned only a handful of portraits of himself and his wife, Mabel, and usually gave these commissions to his favourite artists, doubtless as another way of supporting them. Thus, he commissioned a miniature in enamel of Mabel in 1866 from the leading enamellist Charles Lepec, mounted in a frame made by Plácido Zuloaga (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) (see [Figures 16.1](#) and [18.1](#)).³¹ Morrison likewise commissioned drawings of himself and Mabel by John Brett, the portrait of Alfred dating to 1870, and in about 1894, he commissioned likenesses of himself and his wife from Ignazio Zuloaga, the son of Plácido (Alfred's portrait is now in a private collection). Mabel also had her likeness reproduced in the form of a marble bust by the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor Thomas Woolner, a commission which came about in 1874 after Morrison had met Woolner at the home of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes (see [Figure 11.4](#)).³²

Alfred Morrison acquired likenesses of famous people from the past, often powerful men and beautiful women, in various different formats, which meant that his historic painted portraits linked up in interesting ways with other parts of his collections, notably his collection of 3,000 portrait engravings. Comparing the two collections we find that there is some overlap in terms of individuals portrayed. Similarly, some of the same characters appear in Morrison's collection of coins and medals; for instance, no. 37 in the 'gold and silver medals' section of the 1900 inventory was a gold coin depicting Philip III of Spain. Additionally, Alfred had a large collection of German medals of different important medieval and Renaissance figures, including the artist Albrecht Dürer, who was represented on a bronze medal and also featured in the 'gold and silver medals' section, both pleasing complements to the painted depictions noted earlier that Morrison owned of Dürer's house and the watercolour of a kingfisher's wing attributed to the artist and exhibited as such at the Burlington Fine Arts in 1869. Now the watercolour is identified as depicting the wing of the blue roller and attributed to Hoffmann. Nor should it be forgotten that Morrison's collection of autograph letters included letters to or from some of the same individuals; according to one of his obituaries: 'it is hardly an exaggeration to say that every reigning Sovereign and every first-rate statesman whose name is to be found in the French or English history of the last three centuries, and nearly all the great names of literature, science and art, are represented in this collection'.³³

In terms of trends in collecting, Morrison's Old Master paintings, especially his historic portraits, had most overlap with one particular

niche area of collecting in Victorian Britain: early Netherlandish and German art.³⁴ Eastlake at the National Gallery was spearheading this new direction in collecting in the public sphere not least because he was interested in the history of oil painting – a subject on which he published a pioneering survey, *Materials for a History of Oil Painting* (1847), a technique that had been largely developed in the Netherlands in the fifteenth century. Eastlake himself acquired a few examples himself, including *The Exhumation of Saint Hubert*, now catalogued as a work by Rogier van der Weyden and his workshop (National Gallery, London; formerly owned by William Beckford) (Figure 4.7),³⁵ which he kept at home at 7 Fitzroy Square.

Furthermore, during his decade as Director of the National Gallery, he acquired several important examples for the national collection, including two portraits of a man and a woman by Robert Campin and Rogier van der Weyden's *Magdalene Reading*, which were all acquired, with a few other early Netherlandish works, as part of the Beaucousin collection purchase in 1860.³⁶ Certain private collectors already mentioned were among the early lovers of early Northern painting. One such was Thomas Baring, whose collection included prime examples



Figure 4.7 Rogier van der Weyden and workshop, *The Exhumation of Saint Hubert*, late 1430s. Oil on wood, 88.2 × 81.2 cm (34.7 × 31.9 in).

London, National Gallery (NG783)



Figure 4.8 Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1450–60. Oil on wood, 35.4 × 26 cm (13.6 × 10.2 in). London, National Gallery (NG2593)

such as Petrus Christus's *Portrait of a Young Man* (London, National Gallery; [Figure 4.8](#)).³⁷

Prince Albert (1819–61) likewise was a keen and knowledgeable collector of early Flemish and German art (as well as early Italian art – Raphael was his passion). A large group came from the collection of his relative Prince Louis of Ottingen Wallerstein, including Memling's *Virgin and Child* (London, National Gallery) ([Figure 4.9](#)),³⁸ 25 of which were presented in 1863 by Queen Victoria to the National Gallery to fulfil the wishes of her late husband.

The fact that Alfred Morrison's collecting was largely conducted on thematic lines may explain why there were not more connections between his paintings and his decorative arts collections. For instance, given his interest in contemporary Spanish craftsmanship, notably his consistent patronage of the Spanish metalworker Plácido Zuloaga and an associated team of artisans for over two decades, as well as the portrait commissions given to Plácido's son Ignazio, one may wonder why Morrison was not more interested in Spanish painting. His Goya portrait of Charles III was seemingly a one-off purchase.

By contrast, a small group of British collectors centred their collections round historic Spanish art. We think in particular again of



Figure 4.9 Hans Memling, *The Virgin and Child*, perhaps c. 1475. Oil on wood, 37.9 × 28 cm (14.9 × 11.0 in).
London, National Gallery (NG709)

William John Bankes, who, while patronising living craftsmen, mainly Italian, collected historic Spanish art. A trip to Spain and Portugal in 1812–15 resulted in the purchase of paintings by Alonso Cano and Zurbarán's studio, to which he added yet finer paintings in the 1820s, including Velázquez's full-length portrait of Philip IV of Spain. In the 1830s, Bankes even had a so-called Spanish Room designed for the works, with walls lined with Spanish leather. Another important collector of Spanish painting of the day was Frank Hall Standish (1799–1840), whose collection included works by Murillo, Velázquez and Zurbarán. Interestingly, when Standish's offer of his collection to the British nation in exchange for a baronetcy was turned down by the prime minister Sir Robert Peel, the collection was bequeathed by Standish to King Louis Philippe of France, whose heirs sold it at Christie's in 1853. A third important contemporary collector of Spanish art was Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, 9th Baronet (1818–78), whose collection included paintings and prints by El Greco and Zurbarán. Stirling-Maxwell was the author of the pioneering *Annals of the Artists in Spain* (1848), a book which introduced an English readership to this field of painting and collecting.

It is hard to gauge the esteem in which Alfred Morrison held his Old Masters. Seemingly they were not a high priority given that he had them neither catalogued nor curated, and that after his death he made no

provision to preserve them intact apart from assuming, perhaps, that they would be included in any list of heirlooms. They were dispersed largely through a series of auctions as outlined by Dakers in [Chapter 19](#). In comparison with his father's more traditional taste in terms of collecting Old Master paintings, it is clear that Alfred Morrison was open to a wider canon of art than that of the Orléans generation of collectors, as demonstrated in the interest he took in early art, especially medieval German and Netherlandish art, as well as in his pioneering collecting of Northern European, Nordic and North American modern landscapes. Another distinctive element of his Old Master collection is the way that the dominant subject matter in it – portraits – ranged across several other collections, the portraits produced in oil on wood or canvas speaking to others, sometimes of the very same sitter, produced as pen and ink drawings, engravings, coins and so on. Another notable fact about Alfred's collection of portraits is that it encompassed not just his fellow countrymen but European sitters too. As such, his historic portraits seem to reflect a deep interest in European history as a whole rather than revealing a desire to demonstrate his family's standing or any wider patriotism. Again, the fact that Alfred Morrison commissioned very few portraits of himself (interestingly, his initials were incorporated into various pieces of decorative art),³⁹ and did not seek to leave a named bequest to a major public museum let alone found a museum named after himself, suggests that keeping his own name alive or adding to his country's patrimony were not priorities for him as a collector.

Notes

- 1 Brett, 'Daylight in the dwelling house', 458–60. On Owen Jones's interior decorations for 16 Carlton House Terrace, Alfred Morrison's London town house, see Anon, 'Treasure houses of art – I', 140–4, and Part II: 206–11, which focus on key works of modern decorative art in Morrison's collection, especially objects manufactured in metal, glass, pottery and wood. The only painter mentioned is Richard Dadd (1817–86).
- 2 See, for instance, the comparatively few paintings noted in the detailed chapters describing Alfred Morrison's home at Carlton House Terrace, in Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 53–60. She mentions several striking portraits – Queen Henrietta Maria by Claude Lefevre, Grotius by Van der Helst and 'a very early work by Beltraffio ... a particularly interesting study of Italian costume in 1467' near the entrance (54); she notes that the Library 'enshrines Leighton's loveliest work, *The Summer Moon* (56); and that the staircase is 'studded with pictures by Holbein and his school, some in very fine early Renaissance frames, besides modern pictures by Macallum, Brett and others' (57). See also Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 264–84, who notes in the inner hall that of the paintings they are 'mostly portraits of the Elizabethan period, and various subjects by Ravenstein, Van der Heist, Vincenzo Foppa, and others' (266); and in the Drawing Room that there is a 'French miniaturized water-colour picture of "Psyche's Dream", by Polier ... and two water-colour studies at Capri, "Moonlight" and "Twilight", by Talmage White, standing on easels' (276).
- 3 See especially Dakers, *A Genius for Money*.

- 4 Sadly, there are very few surviving letters to illuminate this topic; for instance, no correspondence remains between Alfred Morrison and his wife, Mabel.
- 5 Sebag-Montefiore and Stourton, *The British as Art Collectors*, 245. This survey has been an invaluable source for the writing of this chapter. It contains further details concerning most of the collectors discussed here.
- 6 See Avery-Quash and Huemer, *London and the Emergence of a European Art Market*.
- 7 See Gould, *National Gallery Catalogues*, 208–10.
- 8 See MacLaren, *National Gallery Catalogues*, 53.
- 9 See Avery-Quash, 'Building(s) for art', 165–83.
- 10 See Martin, *National Gallery Catalogues*, 137–42.
- 11 Quoted in Anderson, *Giovanni Morelli in Risorgimento Italy*, 114.
- 12 Layard, 'National Gallery', 381.
- 13 See Brown, *Art in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, 74–5.
- 14 The sale contract reveals Buchanan's calculation that, if sold privately, the pictures might raise a total of £18,544.
- 15 See Wine, *National Gallery Catalogues*.
- 16 See Waagen, *Treasures of Art*, vol. 2, 260–3, for his comments on Morrison's London house, and the same author's *Galleries and Cabinets of Art*, 300–12, for his commentary on Basildon.
- 17 Alfred Morrison was offered the Fonthill estate by his father in 1850, and in 1852 his ownership was confirmed, together with land in Hampshire and South Wales, and his future inheritance of securities worth £750,000. No inventory was made of the collections when Alfred Morrison inherited the Fonthill estate.
- 18 See [Chapter 2](#) of this volume.
- 19 See Waagen, *Treasures of Art*, vol. 3, 114 (Tower) and 121 (Lansdowne Terrace).
- 20 See Davies, *National Gallery Catalogues*, 58–60.
- 21 See Davies, *National Gallery Catalogues*, 55–6.
- 22 Sebag-Montefiore and Stourton, *The British as Art Collectors*, 133.
- 23 The 10th Duke of Hamilton (1767–1852) married Beckford's younger daughter, Susan Euphemia, and built a special wing to house the Beckford Library.
- 24 For further discussion, see [Chapter 2](#) of this volume.
- 25 See Dakers, *Genius for Money*, 238.
- 26 Most of the pictures were transferred to the Tate Gallery in 1897.
- 27 See 'Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, Esquire, Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wilts. Inventory of Heirlooms. In accordance with Mr. Justice Fairwell's Order of 13th July, 1900, with Copy Order annexed', Fonthill Archives.
- 28 M. Whitehead, invoice, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 29 Quoted in Sebag-Montefiore and Stourton, *The British as Art Collectors*, 77.
- 30 As pointed out by Dakers in [Chapter 2](#) of this volume.
- 31 For further details of this commission and the fact that Morrison commissioned a second enamel portrait of Mabel 20 years later, also today in the Met's collection, see <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/767652> (accessed 14 February 2023).
- 32 As pointed out by Dakers in [Chapter 2](#) of this volume.
- 33 Anon, 'Obituary: Alfred Morrison', 7.
- 34 Avery-Quash, "Pre-Van Eycks", 31–8.
- 35 See Campbell, *National Gallery Catalogues*, 407–27.
- 36 See Avery-Quash, "A Gallery of Art" and Campbell, *National Gallery Catalogues*, 12–17, esp. 13–14.
- 37 See Campbell, *National Gallery Catalogues*, 104–9.
- 38 See Campbell, *National Gallery Catalogues*, 359–61.
- 39 For instance, his initials 'AM' were inscribed on an important clock produced by the illustrious Parisian firm Falize in 1881. For further details, see [Chapter 18](#) of this volume.

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Part II

Focus

Alfred Morrison at the 1862 London International Exhibition

Martin P. Levy

Introduction

Alfred Morrison (1821–97) was brought up surrounded by old master paintings, French eighteenth-century furniture, Sèvres porcelain, Etruscan vases and more, all acquired by his father James Morrison (1789–1857). Typical of many self-made men of the period, James combined a compulsion to assemble a large and important collection with a huge hunger for knowledge.¹ He was in contact with, and acquiring from, some of the leading manufacturers and dealers of the day: cabinet makers including T. & G. Seddon, George Morant and William Snell and well-known brokers and manufacturers such as Edward Holmes Baldock and Robert Hume.² Paintings and furniture were purchased from several significant collection disposals during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, for example those of Sir John Leicester, George Watson Taylor, Edward Gray (whose collection of paintings he bought in its entirety with the dealer William Buchanan, to whom Morrison was a silent partner) and William Beckford. A constant advisor over these years was his architect J. B. Papworth. Alfred inherited parts of the collection from his father, but much had already left Fonthill, while the collections in Harley Street and at Basildon passed to his elder brother Charles.³ Before 1857, however, Alfred was already developing into a voracious collector in his own right.

By the time he was in his early 30s, Alfred was amassing paintings, engravings, medals and autographs, reflecting his fascination with ‘royalty, aristocrats, distinguished politicians’ and so on.⁴ Even at this early stage, his collecting habits verged on the obsessive: he liked to acquire in bulk, concentrating on engravings, for example, when he realised that he was not rich enough to outbid buyers such as

Sir Richard Wallace (1818–90) when it came to paintings.⁵ But following his father's death, he himself became very rich and was able to compete on a grand scale, to his own taste.

A hugely significant and subsequently influential acquisition was the approximately one thousand pieces of Chinese porcelain, some probably part of the material looted in 1860 by British and French troops from the Old Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan) in Peking (now Beijing). A lack of documentary evidence suggests that the often-repeated story of how, in 1861, Morrison secured this collection may be somewhat apocryphal.⁶ But of greater significance here is the impact that these brightly coloured ceramics and enamels, for which he (and others) developed a real passion, had on nineteenth-century design through broadening the appreciation of Chinese ornament.⁷ The key figure here is Owen Jones (1809–74), to whom we shall return.

But the principal aim of this chapter is to show that the 1862 London International Exhibition was a significant moment in Morrison's development as a patron of contemporary art and manufacture, for which he was already becoming noted.

The 1862 International Exhibition

By July 1861, *The Cornhill Magazine* is writing colourfully and excitedly on the 'Prospects of the International Exhibition in 1862', announced by the Society of Arts in April 1858. In setting the scene, the magazine's writer approves that 'Pictures, rather illogically excluded from the Exhibition in 1851, will be properly introduced'. It notes that 'The Commissioners say, "All works of industry to be exhibited should have been produced since 1850." So that the Exhibition will be one showing the progress made during the last ten years.' But lower down the article, 'it is reported ... that cotton producers have no interest to exhibit ... [so] let electric telegraphs and photography, or revived *Della Robbia* pottery [presumably majolica], or colonial produce, or anything that is progressive, take its place'.

World's Fairs were competitive occasions, and *The Cornhill Magazine* strikes a note of thinly veiled nationalism when mentioning the 1855 Paris Exhibition. It recalls:

... what a farce the medal-giving was on that occasion. France named 208 jurors, and the other countries a total of 190. The jurors were summoned on 15 June, but that is a season when the

Frenchman does not like Paris; so the foreign jurors remained to do their work for the next three months, when the foreigner rather likes Paris, and the French jurors, for the most part, took themselves off to the seaside, and did not reappear till October, when the foreign jurors left for their respective homes.⁸

Beginning with the 1851 Great Exhibition, World's Fairs such as the one held in 1862 were mounted regularly for the rest of the century (and into the next), with others taking place in France, Austria, the United States, Australia and elsewhere.⁹ These sumptuous international events followed similar paths, each vying to outdo its predecessor in terms of scale and national prestige. But for the exhibitor, participation was less complicated: it was about building their businesses through reaching unprecedented audiences.¹⁰ Morrison was, without doubt, the type of wealthy, informed and passionate visitor whom exhibitors wished to encounter.

The 1862 exhibition ran from May to October and received more than 6 million visitors. The exhibition building itself (Figure 5.1), 'a mixed structure of brick, iron, glass, timber and stone, covering some 23½ acres, which in its main aspects ... presented frontages of unrelieved brickwork rising sheer from the footpaths of Exhibition Road, Cromwell Road and Queen's Gate', was much ridiculed at the time.¹¹



Figure 5.1 'International Exhibition of 1862. West Front – Main Entrance', *The International Exhibition 1862, Official Catalogue*, I, opp. p. 126.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy

The exhibition was built on the site of what is now Alfred Waterhouse's Natural History Museum (opened 1881). The museum stands today as a reminder of the exhibition's physical scale.

The run up to the opening, the first day and early weeks of the exhibition is described in some detail by *The Times*. Its reports record the colour of the event and add some specific details. In scenes that will be familiar to exhibitors at twenty-first-century trade fairs, on 16 April the paper notes:

If a chance visitor to the Eastern or Western Annexes, or the most complete section of the building – the English half – were asked to give his opinion, we expect he would unhesitatingly declare that it was next to impossible to make a show even by June. But those who see day by day the progress, which is made in a few hours, would be likely to take a more sanguine view.

The report on 22 April exclaims excitedly that the exhibition will 'not only be beyond all comparison the finest the world has yet seen, but that in no other Exhibition here or elsewhere have the great producers and art manufactures, English, colonial, or foreign, been so well and fairly represented'. But there were issues regarding display:

overcrowding of the nave has occurred since our last notice. At that time Elkington's trophy formed the terminal at the west end just abutting on the foreign side of the building ... Since Saturday this handsome object has been almost totally obscured by another very large and very handsome case, intended to enclose the beautiful silver work, rare jewellery, and plate of Messrs. Hunt and Roskell. It is not fair to either exhibitor ... that they should be thus compelled to blind and hide each other from public gaze.¹²

Turning to the 'foreign half' of the exhibition, *The Times* notes:

some noble groups of bronze statues from various countries, and some magnificent candelabra and columns in polished jasper and porphyry from Russia. A very fine collection of Berlin porcelain manufactures will be placed on raised counters under the western dome. Sèvres, Vienna, Berlin, and Dresden are all making great efforts to recover the ground which they lost in their general competition with English porcelain manufacturers in 1851, and again in 1855.¹³

English ceramic manufacturers who received notice include Minton, Copeland, Worcester.¹⁴

Conspicuously absent among the guests of honour, who arrived at the grand opening on 1 May (Figure 5.2), was Queen Victoria (1819–1901, reigned 1837–1901), whose husband Prince Albert had died the previous December. The prince consort (1819–61, who married the queen in 1840) had been the driving force behind the 1851 Great Exhibition and did much to encourage this later international exhibition too. The exhibition was opened by the Duke of Cambridge (1819–1904), Queen Victoria's cousin. The significance and ambition of the event can, to some extent, be measured by those who attended the opening celebrations, including the Crown Prince of Prussia and Prince Oscar of Sweden. There were mayors and sheriffs from across the country, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chamberlain and the Speaker of the House of Commons, together with peers and members of the House of Commons. Members of the public were admitted, through other entrances, between midday and 1.30 pm.



Figure 5.2 ‘Opening of the International Exhibition’, *Illustrated London News*, 3 May 1862, 449.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy

The opening ceremony, in all its pomp, was captured by the *Illustrated London News*.¹⁵

By the third week of the exhibition, large crowds were being attracted. On 16 May:

the number of visitors who passed into the Exhibition was 9,382, of whom 5,695 were season ticketholders, and 3,687 paid at the doors. To give a list of distinguished personages who were present would be like taking half-a-dozen leaves from the *Court Guide*, and we stop short, therefore, at names such as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the Duke and Duchess of Aumale.¹⁶

All the while, adjustments and installations continued apace: 'Minton's majolica fountain is rapidly rising above the eastern dais, and in a very few days its beautiful proportions will be one of the most attractive ornaments of this part of the building.' And Hunt and Roskell's trophy case had been removed from the nave, where it could not be properly appreciated (the overcrowding of this area is mentioned earlier) to a position nearby.

Those who entered from Cromwell Road would have been on the central transept, which was crossed at the top by the foreign nave to the west and British nave to the east (right, [Figure 5.3](#)). As *The Times* reports

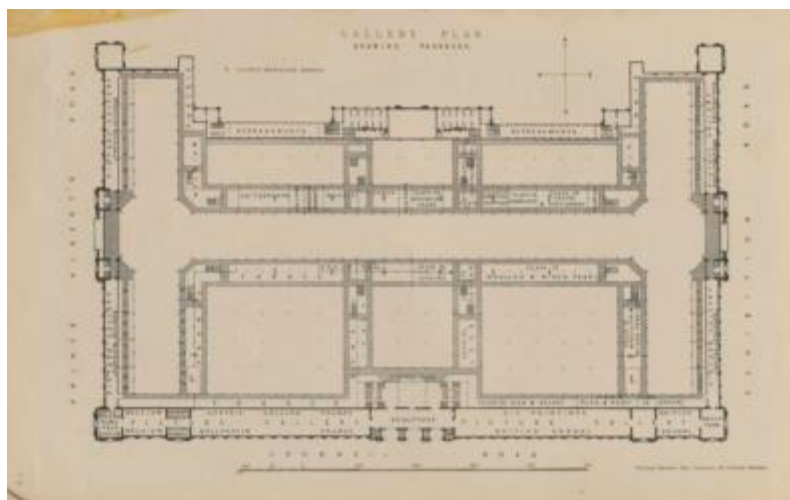


Figure 5.3 'Gallery Plan', *The International Exhibition 1862, Official Catalogue*, I, opp. p. 2.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy

on 6 May, a large part of the building 'is still filled with empty cases or crowded with exhibitors' assistants unpacking and arranging goods'. The lack of readiness ought to have been to the detriment of the exhibitors' commercial interests. However, the report notes:

Half of the objects in the beautiful collections of Berlin and Dresden china have found buyers. For almost every article shown by Minton and Copeland there are rival competitors, and yesterday the whole collection of Worcester enamels was taken by Phillips, of Bond-street. In the same way the finest specimens of engraved glass shown by Pellatt, Dobson and Pearce, and Copeland have all their claimants.

The Morrison family at the 1862 International Exhibition

No evidence is known to show that Alfred Morrison was present on 1 May, but as a lender (discussed later) and avid patron, he probably was. Likewise, his mother Mary Ann Morrison, née Todd (1795–1887), was a lender, and his brother Charles (1817–1909) acquired works from, and because of, the exhibition. Even if they arrived independently, it is easy to picture members of the family running into one another. Caroline Dakers has suggested that while Charles and his mother got on, there was no similar warmth between them and Alfred.¹⁷ But, as will be shown later, it can be surmised that Charles and Alfred may have consulted one another over purchases.

The British section to the right of the Cromwell Road entrance included precious metals, pottery and glass, as well as hardware, Sheffield steel and military engineering. The section to the left was dominated by France, with smaller areas devoted to other European contributions. Crossing past the sculpture displays on the west to east nave, visitors came to a massive furniture display in the British section to the right, together with displays from the Colonies. To the left were other European representations, together with ones from further afield, including from Russia. Around the outside of the building, and in the galleries, displays included paintings, drawings and watercolours.¹⁸ It can be deduced from what he purchased that Alfred Morrison made, presumably over multiple visits, a thorough tour of the exhibition building.

As an active collector, Morrison would doubtless have been aware of well-known lenders to the 1862 exhibition, including Princess

Sophie of Bavaria, Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli and members of the British aristocracy. Queen Victoria lent at least one carving. There were also illustrious, and likely competing, buyers. Individuals including the Duke of Northumberland, Lord Overstone (for whom the ‘unloved’ Overstone Park was built in 1862–4, from the designs of William Milford Teulon (1823–1900), and gutted by fire in 2001), and the immensely wealthy collector William Ward, Earl of Dudley (1817–85) of Witley Court (ravaged by fire in 1937).¹⁹ Another notable collector from the period, who bought at the exhibition, was the glove and leather manufacturer John Derby Allcroft (1822–92) of Stokesay Court, Ludlow, who acquired an elaborate side cabinet manufactured by Gillow and a pair of side chairs, en suite.²⁰ We know that William and Ellen Walters of Baltimore (then living in Paris) attended. The magnificent collection formed by Walters, and his son Henry, including acquisitions from several World’s Fairs, can now be seen at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.²¹

A report ‘from the *Telegraph*’ published in the *Birmingham Post*, after the exhibition’s closure, gives a flavour of its achievements. Entitled ‘The Chef D’Ouvres [sic] of the Exhibition’, the paper records:

Without the slightest disparagement of the hearty and generous manifestations of good feeling which have been shown by illustrious persons of our country, and by many distinguished visitors from other lands, we speak the simple truth when we say that some of the most important gems of the Exhibition have found their way to the possession of persons whose claim to recognition is not a patent of nobility.²²

Works singled out as having been left unsold, however, include a ‘rich enamel service’ belonging to Elkington & Co. and ‘crystal chandeliers ... on the stand of Messrs. Dobson and Pearce’. Also noted was John Gibson, for his *Tinted Venus* ‘finished ... years and years ago, for Mrs Preston’, of which more later.²³ These are but three of the exhibitors we know were noticed by Alfred Morrison and his brother Charles. Indeed, Alfred had patronised Dobson & Pearce prior to the exhibition, which suggests that he was already susceptible to the production of modern manufactures, if not yet on the scale that would develop over the coming decades. The acquisition in 1863 of his London residence in Carlton House Terrace was a catalyst for the commissioning of furniture designed by Owen Jones, and the purchase of a wide variety of works of art to fill its rooms.²⁴

Lower down the *Telegraph* article we read of:

The beautifully engraved glass tazza, with a chaste mounting of gold and turquoises ... from the stand of Dobson and Pearce. This perfect little gem, of the most refined class of workmanship, was, in fact, a commission from ... Mr. Alfred Morrison, who is well known as one of the most enthusiastic collectors of vertu in the present day. It will enrich his collection at Fonthill – a place long celebrated as a treasury of the arts.²⁵

The tazza received widespread praise. In the *Illustrated Catalogue* for the 1862 exhibition ‘Dobson & Pearce, Artists in Glass to the Queen, 19 St James’s Street, Piccadilly, S.W.—Ornamental glass, lustres, and gaseliers’ note:

1. The Morrison tazza, of very richly engraved glass, mounted in the finest gold and turquoise. ‘The most extraordinary specimen of art manufacture of its kind in the whole exhibition.’ – *Times*, May 17th, 1862. ‘Price 250 guineas; henceforth to reckoned, amongst connoisseurs, as one of the most precious gems of manufacture.’ – *Morning Post*, May 21st, 1862.²⁶

J. B. Waring states that the tazza ‘shone like a gem. Small as it was (about 10½ inches in height), there was nothing in the exhibition which perhaps excited more general admiration. It was beautifully engraved by Mr. Hills.’²⁷

The tazza is shown together with ‘3. The Morrison Water Jug, price 100 guineas; very exquisitely engraved, with water-lily and shell designs’ (Figure 5.4 bottom centre, left).²⁸ Not referred to in the *Catalogue* but clearly visible in Figure 5.4 is a tall ‘Venetian’ glass (66cm, 2 ft 2 in). It was embellished, according to Waring, with ‘the Greek Letters alpha and omega’.²⁹ Perhaps these should be seen as an early representation of Alfred’s ‘AM’ monogram, frequently found on pieces that he commissioned from this date on?

Alfred’s loan of the ‘Morrison Tazza’ was not the only contribution from the family, in advance of the exhibition’s opening. His mother made loans of British paintings. These included now-famous masterpieces such as John Constable’s *The Lock* and J. M. W. Turner’s *Pope’s Villa at Twickenham*.³⁰ Among the eight pictures recorded as having been loaned by Mrs Morrison was Frank Dillon’s (1823–1909) *The Colossal Pair, Thebes* (1856; Figure 5.5).³¹



Figure 5.4 'Specimens of Engraved Glass', *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition*, pl. 78.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy



Figure 5.5 Frank Dillon (1823–1909), *The Colossal Pair, Thebes*, 1856. Saint Louis Art Museum, 67.1989, Gift of J. Lionberger Davis, Count Cecil Charles Pecci-Blunt and Mrs. Eugene A. Perry in memory of her mother, Mrs Claude Kilpatrick, by exchange.

© Saint Louis Art Museum

This painting, now in the collection of the Saint Louis Art Museum, is of particular interest as the artist was the son of John Dillon (c. 1792–1868), James Morrison's business partner. The other paintings were by George Henry Harlow (1787–1819), *The Kemble Family (Henry VIII, Act II, Scene 5, the Trial of Queen Katherine)*, now in the collection of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, another Turner and works by Sir Charles Locke Eastlake (1793–1865) and Margaret Sarah Carpenter (1793–1872).³²

Several participants at the exhibition would become significant to Alfred Morrison over the following decades, but three should be singled out: the retail jeweller Robert Phillips (active from about 1839, as Phillips Brothers, until taken over by D. & J. Welby, 1902), the architect, designer and colour theorist Owen Jones (1809–74) and the cabinet makers Jackson & Graham (1836–85).

Morrison had already begun to take an interest in modern manufactures prior to 1862, as has already been mentioned. Robert Phillips of 23 Cockspur Street, London, whom Morrison records in his Memorandum Book sometime after September 1861 but presumably before the opening of the exhibition, would be his agent from the 1860s.³³ He also acted as a representative for Morrison at the exhibition, coordinating many (if not all) of his purchases. Phillips himself showed 'Works in gold, silver, coral, and precious stones' at the exhibition, although there is no evidence to show that Morrison bought from him on that occasion.³⁴ The six-page list of purchases by Morrison from the International Exhibition of 1862 (hereafter List), which is central to the present chapter, was (based on a comparison of the handwriting in other documents) certainly prepared by a clerk working for Phillips (see [Appendix](#) to this chapter, [Figures 5.18–23](#)).³⁵

When it came to fitting out Carlton House Terrace, Alfred Morrison turned to Owen Jones, whose designs were executed by the London cabinet maker Jackson & Graham (see [Chapter 8](#)). Both designer and maker were, in fact, already known to Morrison through his parents. In 1839, Jones had attended an 'at home' in Harley Street and is noted as 'Alhambra' Jones.³⁶ He designed an (unbuilt) 'Ornamental Dairy and Cottage' for Fonthill, exhibited in 1845 at the Royal Academy.³⁷ Jackson & Graham had supplied carpets to James.³⁸

In an obituary in *The Builder*, it was noted that Owen Jones first 'became known to [Jackson & Graham] through his work on the Alhambra', but prior to 1851 his connection with them consisted only in occasional orders for some of his clients.³⁹ Then, however:

when desirous of removing the doubts and fears of the Royal Commissioners for the Great Exhibition as to the colouring, he

applied to Messrs Jackson and Graham for the means to enable him to prove that the most delicate colourings of the richest products of the looms of Lyons, as well as carpets and other fabrics, would not be disadvantageously affected thereby, and they hung up a variety of coloured textile fabrics in the portion of the building experimentally finished to illustrate his views. They and Mr Jones were then thrown increasingly together in the ordinary pursuit of his profession; but it was not until after the 1862 exhibition that the firm began to have his professional assistance.⁴⁰

Although Owen Jones had been responsible for the decorative schemes at the Great Exhibition, on this occasion the task fell to John Gregory Crace (1809–89), assisted by his son John Diblee Crace (1839–1919).⁴¹ Nonetheless, Jones's work was in evidence, not least through the Greek temple erected to house a selection of modern sculpture (Figure 5.6).



Figure 5.6 Owen Jones, *Design for Greek temple erected at the International Exhibition, 1862*, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.1711–1912.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Jones also contributed to the stand of Birmingham and London glassmaker F & C Osler. Waring notes:

The design of this stand, itself a work of art of the greatest taste, was due to the well-known architect Mr. Owen Jones, who applied to it those charming novelties for lighting rooms which he has so successfully used at the Portland bazaar, and, more notably still, at Messrs. Osler's show-rooms in Oxford Street.⁴² [see [Figure 3.6](#)]

Charles Morrison

Notable (and indeed notorious) among the modern sculpture, displayed within the temple designed by Owen Jones, was John Gibson's *Tinted Venus*.⁴³ Charles Morrison was something of a collector, although not on the scale of his younger brother. But nineteenth-century photographs of Basildon Park, a house given to him by his father, show some exceptional paintings, many inherited, as well as significant contemporary sculpture that he himself had purchased. Among these acquisitions is a version of the *Tinted Venus*, on which Gibson began to work on 28 September 1863 ([Figure 5.7](#)).⁴⁴ The finished work, the fifth tinted version, was due to be dispatched from Rome at the end of May 1864.⁴⁵

The *Art Journal* reported the following year that 'Mr. C. Morrison sent "The Tinted Venus", by Gibson, and Tidemand's "Administration of the Sacrament in a Norwegian Cottage", exhibited at the "International 1862" to the Reading Industrial Exhibition held in 1865.⁴⁶ In fact, Charles Morrison's painting by the Norwegian painter Adolph Tidemand (1814–76) was a large version (55 × 77 in) of the *Administration of the Sacrament* and not shown in 1862.⁴⁷ His brother Alfred bought the smaller sketch called *Administration of the Sacrament to Sick Persons and Cripples in a Norwegian Hut*, which was exhibited at the International Exhibition in 1862, no. 1428 in the *Official Catalogue*.⁴⁸ This was the only picture shown by Tidemand that had not been loaned back for the occasion; among others, two of the works came from the National Gallery, Christiania, another from the Duke of Hamilton and a fourth from the Marquis of Lansdowne. Charles Morrison must have liked the small painting so much that he commissioned the larger version.

In the List ([Figure 5.18](#)), Alfred Morrison is noted as the buyer of the sketch for £150 but as 'Part of agreement for the Com^m Pictures To be called An ancients Scandinavian Duel[?]'. He was commissioning a much larger painting of Scandinavians fighting which would cost £1,000.



Figure 5.7 Interior at Basildon Park, c. 1910, showing Gibson's *Tinted Venus* and Story's *Cleopatra*.

Photograph © private collection

In March 1864, Tidemand wrote from Dusseldorf to Robert Phillips, at the agent's request, with an explanation of the painting. He had 200 copies printed for which he invoiced Morrison on 11 May 1864: 'there are traditions, songs and legends of such fights, which generally occurred at weddings, wakes and yule feasts; in short, whenever and wherever there were gatherings of the people'.⁴⁹ Charles Morrison's painting also appears to have cost £1,000. Tidemand wrote to Robert Phillips on 13 August 1862 with an effusive and lengthy description of the contents, also including a photograph of Alfred's commission.⁵⁰

That Charles and Alfred were both owners of works by Tidemand suggests that they may sometimes have looked at exhibits together. The catalogue of the hitherto largely overlooked Reading Exhibition, held close to Basildon Park, reveals further evidence that Charles had a collecting instinct. The *Reading Industrial Exhibition Catalogue* notes other loans made by Charles. In addition to the Gibson (1263) and the Tidemand (1264), other contributions include sixteenth-century carved Venetian bellows (1265), a tantalising – was it a Renaissance or

modern – ‘Enamelled Tazza’ (1266) and enamels by [Henry] Bone (1267 and 1268). These had presumably belonged to his father.⁵¹ No. 1272 is a ‘Marble bas-relief, “The Evening Star” by Palmer, an American sculptor’. At his death, Charles owned Palmer’s marble figure of a sleeping angel and his marble bust of a young girl dated 1863. Two works matching this description are in the collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Art.⁵² Alfred made one loan to Reading, which remains untraced: ‘1,275 The Aurora, copied from the original by Guido, in the Rospigliosi Palace, in Water Colour, by Signor Mariannecci [.] In beautiful carved wood and gilt frame, by Marchetti of Rome.’⁵³

Once also at Basildon Park were two notable works by the American sculptor William Wetmore Story (1819–95), acquired at the exhibition. The *Atheneum* reported: ‘Mr Story, the American sculptor, has sold his splendid statues of “Cleopatra” and “The African Sibyl” for 3000 guineas. The fortunate purchaser is Mr. Morrison.’⁵⁴ Jan M. Seidler records the significance of this acquisition for the sculptor: ‘it seems fair to say that the enthusiastic response to *Cleopatra* and *The Libyan Sibyl* [Figure 5.8]



Figure 5.8 William Wetmore Story (1819–95), *The Libyan Sibyl*, American, 1861. Marble, 134.6 × 70.5 × 115.6 cm (52.7 × 27.7 × 45.4 in). The sculpture was acquired by Charles Morrison for Basildon Park. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Erving Wolf Foundation, in memory of Diane R. Wolf, 1979 (1979.266).

© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

at the 1862 Exposition not only rescued Story's career from its frustrating stalemate but also injected it with enough forward momentum to send the sculptor back to Rome at the top of his profession'.⁵⁵

We know that Charles was the buyer of the Gibson, and given that the Storys were at Basildon too, it seems safe to assume that Charles was the 'Mr. Morrison' who bought *Cleopatra* and *The Libyan Sibyl* as well. But Seidler noted that she had not found any documentary record of the purchase, and none has come to light since. *Cleopatra* is now in the collection of the Los Angeles Museum of Art.⁵⁶

The Libyan Sibyl is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which also holds a later version of *Cleopatra*. This legendary prophetess, inspired by events leading up to the Civil War, was described by Story as 'my anti-slavery sermon in stone'.⁵⁷ Other sculptors at the 1862 exhibition, whom Alfred patronised soon after, were Giovanni Lombardi (1822–80) and Hiram Powers (1805–73) (see [Chapter 11](#)).

Purchases by Alfred Morrison at the 1862 International Exhibition

The List ([Figures 5.18–23](#)) made for Alfred Morrison in 1862 demonstrates the extent to which he took advantage of the opportunity to see, appreciate and acquire painting, sculpture (to a lesser extent), furniture, textiles and other works of art created by some of the leading artists and manufacturers of the day. He bought works from many countries and in a variety of media. Many of the individuals and firms from whom he bought had yet to establish the reputations that they would come to enjoy over the following decades. Morrison, in retrospect, seems prescient in those whom he patronised. He also bought work, for example from India, for whom no makers' names are recorded. He bought objects of the highest calibre, as befitted a man of enormous wealth, and showed a curiosity to pursue works of the finest quality and often originality.

Although nearly everything Morrison bought in 1862 was subsequently dispersed, looking at the List in conjunction with works recorded in the four-volume *Official Catalogue*, together with illustrations in *The Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the International Exhibition 1862*, the three volumes by J. B. Waring and elsewhere, elements of the collection can be reconstructed. While much of what he acquired later fell from fashion, it is evident that his taste aligned with that of many contemporary royal, aristocratic and plutocratic collectors.

The first items on the List (Figure 5.18) are paintings and water-colours. From Russia, Morrison is said to have bought five paintings and five watercolours, all by 'Swetochkoff' (Nikolai Sverchkov, 1817–98). Morrison's purchases are numbered 1,694: 'Snow Storm'; 692: 'Post Attackd by Wolves'; unnumbered: 'Bear Hunt'; 1,690: 'Returned from Wedding'; and 1,693: 'Mare & Foal'. However, the corresponding numbers in the *Official Catalogue* record four paintings, with different titles.⁵⁸ Morrison bought 1,690: *A Village Wedding-Train* and probably 1,692: *Return from the Bear Hunt*; 1,693 is entitled *Lost Travellers*; 1,694 is listed as by Sylvester Tchedin (presumably Sylvester Shchedrin, 1791–1830), *A View from Sorrento*, lent by HM the Emperor of Russia.⁵⁹ No watercolours are recorded in the catalogue. When Morrison's interest was piqued, he pursued works of art with a determination that would characterise his later patronage.⁶⁰ According to the List (Figure 5.18), 1694 and 1692 were sold together for £75. The unnumbered 'Bear Hunt' cost £100, 1690 and 1693 were sold, together, for £200, and the 'Water Color [sic] & Sketches' for £25. It is thus immediately clear that the documentary evidence for Morrison's acquisitions sometimes needs to be interpreted with caution.

The Building News and Engineering Journal, under the heading 'International Exhibition Pictures', notes 'many admirable pictures of the foreign schools, particularly by Russian artists'. Some of the colouring is criticised as 'too gay' but 'On the contrary, "An English Horse" by Nicholas Swertchkof [sic], and three other pictures by the same painter ... are excellent in every respect.'⁶¹ Although the whereabouts of the Sverchkovs from Morrison's collection, for which he paid a total of £400 (in excess of £38,000 in 2025), appear to be unknown, 1,690 *A Village Wedding-Train* can be identified in the *Illustrated London News* (Figure 5.9).⁶² Charles Morrison or his mother also liked Sverchkov and bought *A Russian Snow Scene with Man Driving Three Ponies in a Cart* sometime after the exhibition.⁶³

Next on the List (Figure 5.18) are works in pen and ink from Saxony, numbered 854–6. However, in the *Official Catalogue*, under Germany, there is a gap between 853 and 871, so presumably these were ex-catalogue.⁶⁴ Although there is again a discrepancy between the List and the *Official Catalogue*, one of the two paintings by the Belgian artist Adolf Alexander Dillens (1821–77), although now apparently lost, can be identified.

No. 1787, *Winter in Zeeland*, featured in the *Illustrated London News* (Figure 5.10).⁶⁵ It is already clear that Morrison's taste embraced sentimental subjects.



Figure 5.9 'Nickolas Swertchkof [Nikolai Sverchkov], *A Village Wedding-Train. In the International Exhibition*', *Illustrated London News*, 3 August 1862, 144.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy



Figure 5.10 'The International Exhibition: "Winter in Zeeland," By A. Dillens', *The Illustrated London News*, 18 October 1862, 417.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy

The correlation between the List and the *Official Catalogue* continues to raise questions. According to the former, Morrison acquired from the Danish painter H. Hansen, 'Interior N° 1515', which the catalogue lists as 'Christian IV.'s Study in the Palace of Rosenborg C. Sandberg, Esq. Copenhagen', presumably the lender.⁶⁶ Perhaps Morrison bought this from Sandberg or acquired a second version, as he did with a Minton ewer on stand (noted later). A painting by Hansen, inscribed on the stretcher 'Christian IV of Denmark's Study at Rosenborg' was sold at auction in 2025; might this be the Morrison picture?⁶⁷ The two paintings acquired from the Bavarian contribution cannot be identified, though Heinrich Burkel is possibly the artist.⁶⁸

But the next item on the List (Figure 5.18), 'Cain of Paris Wax Model of Rat Attacking Birds Nest', reduced from £130 to £84 (apparently untraced), was well recorded at the time (see Figure 5.11). In the *Official Catalogue*, this is listed as: 'Cain, Auguste 346 Linnets Defending their Nest Against a Dormouse' (exhibited by artist).⁶⁹ This work by the French artist Alexandre Cain (1821–94) was not only reproduced in the *Illustrated London News*, 1 November 1862, but was also selected by Waring as one of the 300 *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition of 1862* (Figure 5.11).⁷⁰

The wax, intended to be cast in bronze, was 48 cm (19 in) high and cost £100 (approximately £9,600 today).⁷¹ According to the List, the price was £130, reduced to £84. In admiring this work, Waring writes:

In such pieces the artist does not merely sit down before a lifeless model and copy it with mechanical fidelity, but is obliged to observe and study with care the habits of the animal he represents, and infuse into it that artistic feeling which lends value to the commonest objects.⁷²

Of Morrison's Norwegian purchases, the Tidemand is referred to earlier. He also acquired 'Picture by Ellesburg [sic] N° 450 [sic] Romsdal'. This is recorded in the *Official Catalogue* as 'Eckersberg. 1450 Romsdal, in Norway.' Romsdal appears to have been a favourite subject for Johan Frederik Eckersberg (1822–53). An example in oil on paper, dated 1857, is in the collection of the National Museum, Oslo.⁷³ Further purchases of paintings and sculpture are discussed in Chapters 2 and 11.

Turning to India, the *Official Catalogue* entries run to 289 pages. The sections that relate to Morrison's purchases include Class XXIV: 'Tapestry, Lace and Embroidery', Class XXX: 'Furniture and Upholstery, [etc...]', Class XXXIII: 'Working in Precious Metals' and Class XXXVIII:



Figure 5.11 'A Model in Wax for Bronze by A. Cain', *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition*, pl. 180.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy

'Paintings in oil and Water Colours and Drawings'.⁷⁴ Morrison's acquisitions from India, numerically the greatest, run from the last part of the first page of the List to the end of the second page (Figures 5.18–19). Further items are listed at the bottom of Figure 5.22 and the top of Figure 5.23.

Despite the numbers noted in the List, and the fact that the introduction to the 'Classified and Descriptive Catalogue of the Indian Department' claims that the aim 'has been to supply ... a correct guide to the articles actually exhibited', it has not proved possible to identify what Morrison bought.⁷⁵ The numbers in the List do not seem to tally with numbers in the *Catalogue*. But the List records a diverse range of work. There was a 'Gold & Silk Embroidered Cover' at the considerable cost of £19 (approximately £1,825 today), chair cushions and a 'Red & Gold Cover' for £25 (approximately £2,400). Cushions cost the equivalent of £400 a pair and £865 a pair. Other purchases include a 'Presse Papier damascene [?]', a 'Papier Machie [*sic*] Portfolio', boxes, card trays, 'Hydrabad [Hyderabad] Boxes', a 'Gold enamel Box' (at £145, or £13,925 today, the most expensive piece from this part of the exhibition),

seven pieces of 'Caligraphy [sic]', an 'Inlaid Bombay box', a 'Carved Soap Stone Tray, Agra', a 'Madras Rug', a 'Stone Bear / Gyah [Gaya?]', 'Picture of City of Allwar [Alwar]' and so on.⁷⁶

This last picture of Alwar is the only Indian purchase by Morrison for which a tentative identification can be offered (Figure 5.12). Item '7181 [8002]' in the *Official Catalogue* is: 'View of the western portion of the City of Ulwar [sic]', shown by courtesy of the 16-year-old Maharajah Sheodan Singh Bahdoor, 'the present chief of Ulwar, and a liberal contributor to the International Exhibition of 1862'.⁷⁷ This watercolour of Alwar was almost certainly the painting sold by Lord Margadale from Alfred Morrison's list of heirlooms on 15 December 1971 for £300.⁷⁸ When it was later sold Sotheby's in 2021 (for £149,000), its provenance was again confirmed as belonging to Alfred Morrison.⁷⁹

It would appear that Morrison spent some time in the spacious Indian section of the exhibition and accumulated artefacts reflecting the artistic range of the continent. The key to the plan shows the arrangement of cases, and one can picture visitors such as Morrison wandering from one to the next, making choices. There is nothing much to suggest why he took a particular interest in Indian production, nor is there any indication of personal or business connections with this part of the British Empire.



Figure 5.12 A panoramic view of Alwar, attributed to Ghulam 'Ali Khan, Company School, Delhi or Alwar, c. 1820, gouache on paper, 70.5 × 122.7 cm (27 ³/₄ × 48 ¹/₄ in). Inscribed in *nasta'liq* script in upper border 'The map of the city of Alwar, Chattri and Mahal together with a few other adjoining places', the painting with further minute inscriptions in *nasta'liq*, framed.

Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, Taimur Hassan Collection

However, Charlotte Gere has commented that the influence of Robert Phillips, who admired Indian work, may have been significant. Perhaps another explanation is that he simply found the material attractive; this would conform to how he appears to have collected over the decades that followed. Plate 50 in Waring shows ‘Specimens of Indian Lacquer-Work’. The pieces illustrated, notable for ‘the variety and elegance of the patterns with which they are painted ... [and] for the brilliancy of their colours’, might resemble some of Morrison’s papier-mâché purchases. Waring notes that although described as lacquer ‘[t]hese Indian productions are more properly painted papier-mâché’.⁸⁰

The Indian items noted lower down in the List include ‘Insignia of Royalty, Peacock Feathers ... & Silver Handle’, a ‘Jade Long Box Gold Inlaid’ with a similar leaf-shaped box, a ‘Shaped Octagon Jewelled [box]’ and so on. Once more, positive identification of now lost items cannot be made. But plate 16 in Waring illustrating ‘Articles for State & Personal Use’ includes a peacock-feather fan and a large silver-handled fan, which may resemble Morrison’s purchases. And an engraving in the *Official Catalogue* shows jewelled jade objects shown by India, including a ‘shaped octagon jewelled box’.⁸¹

The third page of the List (Figure 5.20) begins with ‘Fourdinois of Paris a Carved Ebony cabinet. Renaissance. Henri II. Inlaid with Plaques of Lapis Lazuli & Blood Stone. Ivory Drawers’.⁸² The price is noted as ‘Subject to 5% 35,000 fr £1400’ (equivalent to £134,450 today). Plate 214 in Waring illustrates this award-winning cabinet, the work of ‘M. Henry Fourdinois’, son of the firm’s founder (Figure 5.13).

The price was the highest on the List for a single piece, although it had in fact been acquired in advance of the exhibition. The *Art Journal* records that the ebony cabinet, which it also illustrates: ‘became the property of Alfred Morrison, Esq., of Fonthill, who lends it for the exposition as a *chef-d’oeuvre* of Art-manufacture in the nineteenth century’. Waring notes that the cabinet is of ‘carved wood, inlaid with ivory in the interior ... ornamented with beautiful carvings in low relief by M. Megret, and enriched with incrustations of lapis lazuli, bloodstone, and jasper’. It continues by stating that the carved panels are ‘in the best style of Cinque-Cento ornament’. Waring notes: ‘The cabinet was valued at £1,400, and we are glad to state was purchased by a well-known connoisseur in this country.’⁸³ This is further evidence that by 1863 Morrison’s position as a connoisseur/collector was already recognised. Thought to have been lost since 1921, the Fourdinois cabinet reappeared on the market in 2023, and was exhibited at *Treasure Houses, London* in June 2024 (see Figure 19.11).



Figure 5.13 'Ebony Cabinet By M. Fourdinois, Paris', *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition*, pl. 214.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy

That the neo-Renaissance style appealed to Morrison is demonstrated by an acquisition from another Parisian firm, Ferdinand Barbedienne (firm active 1839–1955). From Barbedienne, Morrison acquired '1 Tazza Limoge [sic] Enamel, Galatea' at a cost of 300 francs or £12. A tazza possibly matching this description survives but is dated 1863 (Figure 5.14).⁸⁴

No provenance for the surviving tazza has been established, but surely the one on the List (Figure 5.20) bears a close resemblance.

In around January 1864, Morrison paid Thomas Goode, representing Minton's, for '1 Finely painted majolica Ewer & Stand same as purchased by South Kensington Museum'.⁸⁵ This demonstrates, again, that Morrison went on acquiring works related to those he had first seen at the exhibition. On 9 October 1863, Phillips charged Morrison for various payments to Barbedienne, although not for a tazza.⁸⁶ But might Morrison once have owned the second tazza? Perhaps the note of a tazza on the List refers to payment for a version he had made, after an example



Figure 5.14 Charles-Ludovic Crétineau-Joly for Ferdinand Barbedienne (firm active 1839–1955), *Tazza*, 1863, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Juliet Flynt Marillonnet Gift and funds from various donors, 2022 (2023.153).

Photograph © Martin P. Levy

that he had seen exhibited? This was how Charles Morrison acquired Gibson's *Venus*.

According to the *Official Catalogue*, Frères Grohé of Paris (1827–84) exhibited 'Furniture of carved mahogany, ebony, &c., decorated with mosaics and gilt bronze'.⁸⁷ Morrison's listed purchases of three cabinets in the Louis XVI taste remain untraced. Morrison's interaction with Jackson & Graham is discussed at length by Clive Edwards in the present publication ([Chapter 8](#)). Waring (pl. 111) shows the magnificent '[Ebony & Ivory] Ormolu Cabinet' acquired by Morrison for £500 (approximately £48,000 today) (see [Figure 8.1](#)). The *Official Catalogue* notes 'An ETAGERE OF EBONY, inlaid with ivory', for which Morrison paid £80.⁸⁸

From Italy, Morrison patronised three significant manufacturers: Giovanni Battista Gatti (1816–89), who worked in Rome, and

Angiolo Barbetti (1805–73) and Pietro Giusti (1822–78), who both worked in Siena.⁸⁹ The description ‘Inlaid Buhl Cabinet’ does not seem to fit sufficiently comfortably with the ebony and ivory marquetry cabinet illustrated by Waring to suggest that this was acquired by Morrison.⁹⁰ The ‘Picture Frame’ purchased for £24 seems too high a price to be the one (now with mirror glass) that belongs to a Morrison descendant. It is, tantalisingly, stamped on the reverse ‘G.B. GATTI’ and inscribed in ink ‘7 1862 / Roma’. In the *Official Catalogue* under Gatti, along with an inlaid cabinet, is noted a ‘looking-glass frame’ (Figure 5.15). Is this a possible candidate?⁹¹

At the same exhibition, frames were acquired by the Duke of Hamilton and, a smaller one, by the Marquis of Northampton.⁹² The untraced Barbetti ‘Carved Walnut Tree Seat’ recorded in the List (Figure 5.20) might possibly have been the ‘carved bench’ listed in the *Official Catalogue*.⁹³ Giusti sold Morrison four ‘Carved Frame[s]’ that have not been identified. However, an idea of their appearance may be suggested by the smaller examples illustrated by Waring.⁹⁴ The text quotes the jurors’ praise for the ‘carved wood frames in the Renaissance style ... the models have been selected with the most perfect taste, and the execution leaves nothing to be



Figure 5.15 G. B. Gatti, *Frame*, Rome, 1862. Private collection.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy

desired'. Giusti also showed an album, including designs for small frames, at the 1862 London International Exhibition.⁹⁵

The descriptions on the List (Figure 5.20) for chairs acquired from Denmark, when read alongside the details in the *Official Catalogue*, are insufficient to suggest the appearance of these acquisitions, which also now appear to be lost.⁹⁶

The description of works from 'Algeria' on the List (Figure 5.20) is deceptive, and nothing related is recorded under the exhibits from the French colony.⁹⁷ What Morrison bought is described on the List as '2 Large Vases, Algerian Marbles ... Gilt Bronze Mounts', together with two columns (Figure 5.16). He also purchased '1 Oval Tazza D'. It seems likely that these vases and columns are the 'large vases [ewers], mounted in bronze-gilt', each standing on a tall column, illustrated by Waring.⁹⁸ These works, by the *Compagnie des Marbres et Onyx d'Algérie* founded in 1858 by Alphonse Pallu, cost the combined sum of £208 (approximately £19,975 today), less a 10 per cent discount (Figure 5.20).⁹⁹

From the, presumably Russian, 'Imperial Manufacture', according to the List (Figure 5.21) Morrison acquired more objects reflecting his



Figure 5.16 'Chimney Piece, Vases, &c. Exhibited by The Algerian Onyx Company, Paris', *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition*, pl. 164.

Photograph © Martin P. Levy

apparent taste for hardstones, including a pair of 'Rhodonite Tazzi on Porphyry pedestal [sic]', a 'D^o Inkstand Mounted', and a 'Tazza Agate on Grey Jasper Pedestal'; and from Sweden, a 'Red Porphyry Coupe', a 'D^o Butter Box' and '2 Paper Weights'.¹⁰⁰ None of these objects has been identified. In addition, on the List from Russia, there are several examples of 'Niello' and silver gilt (all unidentified). The 'Arab [Niello] bowl with handle' may tentatively be associated with work exhibited by J. P. Sazikoff of Moscow and St Petersburg, whose London agents were A. Skwarcow of Leadenhall Street, London. A plate in the *Official Catalogue* shows an example of the firm's work in the 'Persian Style', including a bowl with handle, based on Mamluk metalware.¹⁰¹

Ceramics were acquired from Minton, Kerr Binns, Worcester, 'Royal' Sèvres and 'Spain'. Under 'Kerr, W.H., & Co., *Royal Porcelain Works, Worcester*' the *Official Catalogue* notes: 'Porcelain, parian, and stone china' including 'Specimens of the Worcester ivory porcelain, consisting of dessert patterns, déjeuner sets, vases, &c'.¹⁰² Morrison acquired '1 Small Dejeunnè [sic] Sett [sic]' (Figure 5.20). The entries from Minton are far more extensively recorded in the *Official Catalogue*, with detailed descriptions running to four pages, including three plates illustrating exhibits.¹⁰³ Morrison acquired, for £42, a Minton 'Vase Celadon' (Figure 5.20). Under Parian, in the catalogue, we find, for example, 'A 13. Vase, No. 944, celadon ground, embossed grasses, wild flowers, flies, and birds' and 'A 15. Vase, No. 944, celadon ground, ornamented with honeysuckle and wild roseberry [sic] in gold, flies'.¹⁰⁴ Morrison's vase has not been found. Nor has it been possible to identify the '2 Plaques, Porcelain, painted insect' recorded under Spain on the List (Figure 5.21).

Further details of the acquisitions from Sèvres, briefly noted in the List, are to be found in the Sèvres archives.¹⁰⁵ The List (Figure 5.17) notes two enamel tazzas, ceramics – including cups (tasses à la reine) – and '1 Grande vase de Rimini'. The transactions recorded at Sèvres are all in the name of Robert Phillips, with no mention of Alfred Morrison; this confirms the role Phillips was playing for Morrison.¹⁰⁶ Although none of Morrison's Sèvres has been identified, the appearance of the 'Vase de Rimini' can be related to a pair in the collection of the Musée d'Orsay.¹⁰⁷ Further details are in a document of 'les pieces vendues' dated 1 September 1862: 'Le 17 aout M^{sr} Robert Phillips, 23 Cockspur St London SW / 1 vase de Rimini 1^{ere} fond jaune [... ces supports ... en or ...] / figures et attributs des arts 6375' with a reduction of 175, leaving 'net à payer 6200'. A vase, with attributes of the Arts, recorded in the *Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue*, probably represents the vase bought by



Figure 5.17 Sèvres at the International Exhibition, 1862, *Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue*, 211.
 Photograph © Martin P. Levy

Morrison.¹⁰⁸ The *tasses à la reine* were presumably two-handled covered cups, and the enamel tazzas may have been comparable to the tazza acquired from Barbedienne (see earlier). All in all, Morrison spent a little over £300 with Sèvres (around £28,800 today).

In addition to the enamel tazza from Barbedienne, Morrison also acquired a pair of ‘Gilt Candlesticks LXVI’ and some bronze sculpture. He also bought bronzes by Ferdinand Levillain (1837–1905), who also produced work for Barbedienne, by Nikolai Lieberich (1828–83), and by Isidore and Rosa Bonheur, the Bonheurs cast by Regner. For more information about these pieces see [Chapter 2](#) (Figure 2.4), [Chapter 9](#) and [Chapter 11](#).

Morrison bought tableware from Christofle (1830–present), including gilt candlesticks, wine coolers and a salver. Although described on the List (Figure 5.21) as ‘Louis XIII’, these might relate to the ‘portions of a dinner service, in the style of Louis XIV ... exhibited as specimens of the entire service’ or ‘A Large Set of Gilt Table Ornaments, in the style of Louis XIV’.¹⁰⁹

If Barbedienne and Christofle were among the most highly esteemed manufacturers in France, in England that accolade belonged equally to Frederick Elkington (firm *fl.* 1829–1963). Morrison's purchases from this pioneering Birmingham manufacturer included a gilt 'Silver Ice pail', '2 Gilt Arabesque or Persian Vases' and a 'Silver Gilt Tray to Match Coffee Sett'.

It is likely that it was through the 1862 London International Exhibition that Morrison met the Spaniard Plácido Zuloaga (1834–1910) and Frenchman Charles Lepec (1830–90), both of whom would go on to enjoy his sustained patronage and friendship. Zuloaga, who 'would produce some of his finest objects' for Morrison, exhibited 'Artistic furniture in steel, chased and embossed' including a damascened 'coffret', for which Morrison paid £43. Among other Zuloaga works acquired by Morrison over the following decades are a coffer dated 1871 and a pair of urns dated 1877, both in the Khalili Collection, and a table dated 1880, now in the British Royal Collection (see [Figures 14.3](#) and [19.12](#)).¹¹⁰

Charles Lepec's significant association with Alfred Morrison has been comprehensively published.¹¹¹ According to the List ([Figure 5.22](#)), Morrison acquired from Lepec '9 Plaques of Enamel. Reduced from 12000 to 9,000 [£]360' ([Figure 5.21](#)). On the following page are recorded 'Model of Coffrets & Enamel^d 2000 frs [£]80', and, bizarrely, a 'Sheeps [sic] Skin Coat' for £6. Also perhaps acquired at the same exhibition is a small enamel *Venus*, dated 1861.¹¹² The plaques remain to be identified, but over the following years Morrison acquired a number of plaques intended for coffers, including four now in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹¹³

Conclusion

The final page of the List ([Figure 5.23](#)) includes details of charges for packing, 'sundry' disbursements and payments for commissions. In total, Alfred Morrison spent a total of £7,557 15s 8d at the 1862 International Exhibition. The equivalent expenditure today would be approximately £725,000. To put this into further perspective, it might be suggested that today some of what Morrison collected remains out of fashion. That said, were the entire collection to come back onto the market, Alfred Morrison would be proved to have spent his money very wisely.

Consideration of Morrison's 1862 purchases show him to have been a man confident in his own taste. He was conscious of many of the more enterprising manufacturers of the age, arguably (broadly) somewhat

unambitious in his picture buying, but certainly a committed collector and patron. In his voracious buying, he was following in the footsteps of his father James, but with less of an eye on an established canon. Enough has also come to light to suggest that Charles Morrison's collecting habits might also merit further investigation.

Much new evidence about Morrison's activity at the 1862 London International Exhibition has been identified in this chapter. It is hoped, however, that as a result, further works of art will be identified as attempts continue to reconstruct this pioneering but now dispersed and largely lost collection.

Appendix to Chapter 5

Photographs (Figures 5.18–23) of documents recording Alfred Morrison's purchases at London International Exhibition, 1862. Fonthill Archives F/02/1128

International Exhibition 1862				
Bot for A. Morrison Esq.				
<i>Swedish</i>				
Paper	1	Painted Picture N° 1894. Snow Storm	75	-
"	1	" " 1892. " " " " by B. B.	100	-
"	1	" " " " Bear Hunt	100	-
"	1	" " " " 1890. Return from Hunting	200	-
"	1	" " " " 1893. Hunt & Feat	200	-
"	5	Water Color Sketches	25	-
Boxing, & Box & Lark	B°	N° 154 55. 56	27 1/2	10 10
Belgium	2	Paintings N° 177 & 80. Summer & Winter	500	-
"	"	originals original Price	500	-
"	"	The pair	1	-
<i>Denmark</i>				
1	Painting	Interior N° 135	100	-
"	"	original Price	115	-
Prussia	1	B° Catkins Flower B° 256	20	-
"	1	B° Return for Hunting B° 256	20	-
<i>Russia</i>				
Paper	Was Model.	Rat attacking Birds Nest	84	-
"	"	original Price	100	-
Hungary	1	Picture by Eschburg N° 410. Roadside	150	-
Austria	1	Sketch of the Sacrament, Part of a group	150	-
"	for the Em.	Picture taken at the Am. Am. Am.	150	-
<i>Scandinavian</i>				
Indian	1	Gold & Silver Embroider Cases N° 17	10	-
Collection	1	Chain Cushions (Sofas)	34	-
"	"	"	28	-
"	"	"	33	-
"	"	"	34	-
"	"	"	35	-
"	1	Piece of Scinde Embroidery	4	-
"	1	Red & Gold Case	25	-
"	1	Black Silks B°	8	-
Forward £ 1379. 0				

Figures 5.18–5.23 The list of Alfred Morrison's purchases at the International Exhibition, 1862.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

Inventory		Brought Forw ^d 1859 3.0	
Collected	1 Black Sea African — 1754	2	✓
"	4 Bepi Popier damascene 276 579	6	✓
"	2 Cigar Cases side 187 27	16	✓
"	2 Popier Machines, Portfolio 1351	1 10	✓
"	2 Boxes 1059 254	2 6	✓
"	2 Card Trays 1072 1073 254	2	✓
"	2 Gallanders 1001 45 44 274	1 12	✓
"	1 B ^o with Tray 10010	1 6	✓
"	2 Hyderabad Popier 1701 254	2	✓
"	1 B ^o Tray 10102	1 6	✓
"	1 Cigar Box 1071	1 8	✓
"	100 R. Round Popier 2 24 each		
"	2 Gold Enamel ^d Box	145	✓
"	B ^o Vase	75	✓
"	7/8 Calligraphy	2 9	✓
"	100 Indian Bombay Box	2 10	✓
"	2 Large Cigar Popier 1074 275 254	1	✓
"	2 Large Cigarette Box, India Stone	6	✓
"	2 Large Soap Stone Tray, Agua	2 5	✓
"	2 Bowl & Spoon of Elwan Marbles	1	✓
"	2 Madras Tray	5	✓
"	2 Madras Tray	4	✓
"	B ^o B ^o	4	✓
"	2 Envelope Box, Bombay Work	2 5	✓
"	2 Stone Bear (Gajah)	1 10	✓
"	2 Picture of City of Allwar	5	✓
"	B ^o Kaini Bugh	5	✓
"	B ^o State Provision	5	✓
"	6 Pictures (agha) 1074 1000	6	✓
"	2 Hyderabad Popier 1076 27	1 4	✓
"	2 B ^o Stone Vase	1 10	✓
"	2 Hyderabad Tray 1072	1 10	✓
Forward to 1859 17 6			

Figure 5.19

Brought Forward		Friday 17 th 6	
of Paris	a. Grand Ebony Cabinet. Renaissance	}	
"	Horn 11. Inlaid with Stags, of glass, Lapis		
"	+ Blood Stone, Ivory Ornaments		1400 - - v
"	Subject to 6% . 85.000 fr		
Globe Port	Cabinet. Louis XVI. = 5000	}	
"	1 D ^r = 6000		Net
"	1 D ^r = 2,500		Net 660. - - v
Jackson	1 Ebony and Ivory Stages	White	80. - - v
Graham	1 D ^r = Onyx Cabinet	"	500. - - v
Galle of	1 Inlaid Oak Cabinet, Flemish style	Peter	160. - - v
Horne	1 D ^r = Peter's Volume	"	24. - - v
Barthel	1 Grand Walnut Tree Chest	(Peter's 5%)	120. - - v
Spiegel			
Summa	1 Grand Frame. N ^o 51	Net	7. 10. - - v
"	1 D ^r = 56	"	7. 10. - - v
"	1 D ^r = 8	"	10. - - v
"	1 D ^r = 14	"	10. - - v
Summa	6 Chairs	(Order 27700)	
Algerian	2 large Vases, Algerian Marble	}	
"	Gilt Bronze Monuments		160. - - v
"	1 Column D ^r	"	24. - - v
"	1 D ^r (Order 12)	"	24. - - v
"	1 Oval Tazza D ^r " Subject to 10%	"	40. - - v
New Items			
Worcester	1 Small Porcelain Set	"	6. 10. - - v
Minster	a Vase Gladiolus	"	42. - - v
Ellington	1 Silver Ice Pick. Great Gift	Net	175. - - v
Imperial			
Manufact	1 D ^r Rhodinite Tazza on Porphyry Pedestal	225.	- - v
"	1 D ^r Inlaid, Monette	75.	- - v
"	1 Tazza Agate on Grey Jasper Pedestal	87.	- - v
"	1 Black Crystal Bust on D ^r	130.	- - v
		Brought Forward £ 5877. 3. 6	

Figure 5.20

Brought Forward £ 677 5 6		Royal
1 Case Nettle Work 2 Laps, 2 Spoons, Knife	24 - - -	Boys
1 Case Salt Box	24 - - -	
1 Case B. Bowl with Handle	15 - - -	
1 Silver Gilt B. " Spoon	15 - - -	
1 B. Tankard	16 - - -	
1 B. Nettle Bowl & Cover	14 - - -	
Book 1 B. B. Tankard & Cover	14 - - -	
Antique 1 Silver Gilt Silver Coffee Pot, Bowl,	60 - - -	King's
Tray 12 Cups & Saucers Bowl		
Tray 24 Large Damascene Glasses		King's
Shelley 1 1/2 Gilt Candlesticks Louis XIII 62 1/2		
1 B. Nettle	65 - - -	
1 B. Wine Cooler	700 - - -	
1 B. Small Salver	85 - - -	
1 B. B. dipping Spoon & Spoon	105 - - -	
Subtotal 5 2/6 1.050	90.10 - - -	French
Baron 1 Tazza Limoges Enamel, Galatie 300	19 - - -	Boys
Tray 1 1/2 Gilt Candlesticks Louis XVI	5.12 - - -	
Baron 1 Grande Bronze Group, Plutus & the		
Children on a Bronze Horse Biscuit	240 - - -	Boys
10% cash 6.000		
Antique 1 Bronze Group, the Crossing Riders to 1774	75 - - -	Boys
1 Rugged Calt	10 - - -	
Baron 1 Bronze Bull "Bonheur"	8.8 - - -	Boys
1 B. Partridge	8.5 - - -	Boys
1 Bull & Bear Bonheur	7.5 - - -	Boys
Antique 9 Plaques of Enamel, Biscuit from 1800 to 1820 360		
Spain 1 Copper Damascene	43 - - -	
2 Plaques, Biscuit, Painted Insects	13 - - -	
2 Empty Glass Cases	11 - - -	
Forward - £ 678 17 6		

Figure 5.21

b		Brought Forward £578.17 6	
✓	Royal } 1 Enamel C Tazza	250 ps	
✓	" } 1 Do "	250 "	
✓	" } 1 Do Taper Glass Vase. Bot 4000	400 "	
✓	" } 1 Do Do "	365 "	
✓	" } 1 Do Tazza	365 "	
✓	" } 1 Grande Vase de Rivinini	6375	
✓		7.500	312 4 2
✓	Frang. Co 14 Glass Indian Plates	250	6 - -
✓	Box for Castagn for D		2 - -
✓	Alington & Gilt. Analogue or Persian Vase		
✓	" Do 10%	150	- - -
✓	6 European Dagger	10.15	- -
✓	1200 Gilt Tray to Match Office lot	500 p	32 - -
✓	Two Silver Cady in Complete Set		
✓	of 2012 to 1883 - 10%		5.2.6
✓	Swedish } 10. Porphyry Cope redwood for the	13.10	- -
✓	Box } Do. Russian Box	1.1.0	- -
✓	" } 2 Paper Weights	1	- -
✓	London & Ben. 1000 Shingles		
✓	" } 1 Water Color Do	14	- -
✓	Japan Model of Coffin & Enamel	2.000 ps	20 - -
✓	Sherry Skin Coat	6	- -
✓	Alington & Co. Redwood to Match Persian Vase 1883		
✓	Subject to 10% Extra		
✓	Indian Insignia of Royalty. Parrots. Feathers		
✓	Ch. 5231 ~~1000~~ 1 Silver Handle	4.55.0	- -
✓	Inde long Box Gold Inlaid 1886	20	- -
✓	Do long Shaped Do 1887	1.10.10	- -
✓	Do Shaped Octagon Inlaid 1888	12.12	- -
✓	6 Kirby Brothers Ring 1884	70	- -
✓			
✓		Forward £778.9.2	

Figure 5.22

Brought Forward £7975 9 2		
a large Gilt & Engraved Jug 248	44 15	✓
" Salt Cellar 188	2 18	✓
" " 119	2 18 6	✓
" Knife, Engraved 119	4 15 0	✓
" " 161	4 8	✓
1 dozen Spoons to Order 250 each Spoon		
paid Duty on the above Spoons of Gold & Silver	11 13 6	✓
and previous things		
Stand for Paper Lancer	4	✓
Steel Coffers	80	✓
Malachite Box	21	✓
Cash paid to Ambrose for Corn	3	✓
" " " Mr Coffey " "	4	✓
Holland for Packing Embroidery	2	✓
Disbursements in forwarding Pictures		
(Near Hunt) to Fonthill	10	✓
to Laundry Disbursements for Remitting		
Goods, Pictures & Cases from Exhibition	2 5 6	✓
	<u>£7762 14 8</u>	
By sundry Discts to		
Foundations £1400 - 5%	70 0 0	
Banknotes " 120 - "	6 0 0	
Algerian Marble " 248 - 10%	24 16 0	
Crystal Gilt " 40 16 0 - 20%	8 3 0	
Large Bronze Run " 240 - 10%	24 0 0	
Stained Glass & Vase	42 0 0	
Photogenic " " " " " " " "	10 0 0	
" " " " " " " "	10 - -	
Bronze Group	10 0 0	
	<u>20419 0</u>	
	<u>£554 15 8</u>	
" By Cheques "		
" " " "	200 0 0	
" " " "	500 - -	
" " " "	200 - -	
" " " "	500 - -	
" " " "	500 - -	
" " " "	500 - -	
" " " "	5000	
	<u>6700 - -</u>	
	<u>£553 15 8</u>	

Figure 5.23

Acknowledgements

The author thanks Charlotte Gere for her helpful comments on a draft of this chapter; and for assistance, in various ways, he thanks: Richard Blurton, Neil Burton, Youssef Cassis, Caroline Dakers, Max Donnelly, Clive Edwards, Roberto C. Ferrari, Olivier Gabet, Olivia Horsfall Turner, Olivier Hurstel, Daniëlle Kisluk-Groseheide, Tim Knox, Dwight Lanmon, Lowell Libson, Lord Margadale, Jennifer Komar Olivares, Christopher Payne, Stacey Pierson, Emma Stuart and Jonny Yarker.

Notes

- 1 Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class*.
- 2 Snell online; Morant online; Seddon online; Westgarth, *A Biographical Dictionary*, 66–8, 120.
- 3 The author is grateful to Caroline Dakers for these details (verbal communication, May 2021).
- 4 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 226. John Forster (1812–76), a barrister and historian, was another noted collector ‘of engraved portraits of famous people’ (Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class*, 416).
- 5 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 227.
- 6 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 228–9. For recent scholarship on the looting of the Summer Palace and its impact in the West see Tythacott, *Collecting and Displaying China’s ‘Summer Palace’*. Regarding Morrison, see Hill, *The Yuanmingyuan and Design Reform*, 4, 57, 59, 61 and 62.
- 7 Throughout the 1860s, Morrison was buying Chinese ceramics (and more) from the New Bond Street dealer Henry Durlacher; see Westgarth, *A Biographical Dictionary*, 90–1. Accounts with details of Morrisons purchases from Durlacher are in the Fonthill Archives, F/2/1150. Another dealer noted in Morrison’s Memorandum book, in an entry dated 2 November 1890, is John Sparks (1854–1914): ‘Mr J. Sparks Japanese Fine Art Depot – 15 Duke St Manchester Square W’ (Fonthill F/01/1111); this suggests that Alfred’s interest in Asian art never waned. See Horsfall Turner, *Owen Jones and the V&A*, 99–139.
- 8 Anon, ‘Prospects of the International Exhibition in 1862’, 94–7; Anon, *Cornhill Magazine*, July 1861, 94–101. The author is grateful to Caroline Dakers for this reference. For a discussion of the complex reasons for both excluding fine art in 1851 and including it in 1862, see Bryant, ‘The progress and present condition of modern art’.
- 9 For a list of World’s Fairs, see Busch and Futter, *Inventing the Modern World*, 284–5.
- 10 See Levy in Busch and Futter, *Inventing the Modern World*, 34–49.
- 11 British History online. For contemporary opinions of the building, see Davis, ‘The Origins of the 1862 Exhibition’.
- 12 Anon, ‘The International Exhibition’, 22 April 1862, 7.
- 13 Anon, ‘The International Exhibition’, 22 April 1862, 7.
- 14 Anon, ‘The International Exhibition’, 22 April 1862, 7.
- 15 Anon, ‘The opening of the International exhibition, 3 May 1862’, 432–3; see also, for an extensive list of attendees, ‘The opening of the International Exhibition’, 11.
- 16 Anon, ‘The International Exhibition’, 17 May 1862, 11. Henri d’Orléans, Dule of Aumale (1822–97) was a French monarchist who lived in England between 1848 and 1870. Aumale would leave the Château de Chantilly to the Institut de France, to display his collection.
- 17 Verbal communication, July 2022.
- 18 A sense of visiting the exhibition is effectively given in Tongue, *3D Expo 1862*. This volume is illustrated with images made by The London Stereoscopic and Photographic Company.
- 19 Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, 415, 416. *Birmingham Post*, 8 November 1862, 7.

- 20 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. 3, pl. 236. Sotheby's, *The Contents of Stokesay Court, 28 September – 1 October 1994*, lots 142 and 143. For more on active collectors during the years surrounding the 1862 Exhibition, see Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class*.
- 21 Johnston, *William and Henry Walters*, 33–4.
- 22 Anon, 'The Chef D'Ouvres [sic] of the Exhibition', 7.
- 23 Anon, 'The Chef D'Ouvres [sic] of the Exhibition', 7.
- 24 See Anon, 'Treasure-Houses of Art', 140–4, 206–11, and Haweis, 'Mr. Alfred Morrison's house', 53–60.
- 25 Anon, 'The Chef D'Ouvres [sic] of the Exhibition', 7.
- 26 *The International Exhibition of 1862, II*, Class XXXIV, 78.
- 27 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. I, pl. 78 (text). The tazza may be the 'glass tazza, on slender stem and foot, delicately engraved with arabesque ornament, birds, etc., and mounted with metal gilt' recorded in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, dated 13 July 1900 (Fonthill Archives), p. 27, no. 222. Only a fragment of the tazza's top now survives; see Hajdamach, *British Glass 1800–1914*, pls 110–110B. This element of the tazza is now in the collection of the Stourbridge Glass Museum.
- 28 Present location unknown. But for comparison, see the Ailsa Jug now in the collection of the Corning Museum of Glass (86.2.43), and *The International Exhibition of 1862, II*, Class XXXIV, p. 78, no. 5.
- 29 *The International Exhibition of 1862, II*, Class XXXIV, 78.
- 30 *The International Exhibition of 1862, Official Catalogue of the Fine Art Department*, Class XXXVIII, 'Constable, J. / The Lock ... Mrs Morrison' and 'Turner, J.M.W., Pope's Villa at Twickenham ... Mrs Morrison.' The Constable was last sold at Christie's, London, 3 July 2012, lot 37, and the Turner at Sotheby's, New York, 25 January 2023, lot 153.
- 31 *The International Exhibition of 1862, II*, Class XXXVIII, no. 550.
- 32 *International Exhibition 1862, II*, Class XXXVIII, nos 186, 339, 367 and 478.
- 33 Culme, *A Directory of Gold & Silversmiths*, I, 364–5. Fonthill Archives, F/01/1111.
- 34 *The International Exhibition of 1862, II*, Class XXXIII, 55.
- 35 Fonthill Archives, F/02/1128. Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the patronage of Alfred Morrison', 194–223, specifically 199.
- 36 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 112.
- 37 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 229.
- 38 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 186.
- 39 Anon, *The Builder*, 9 May 1874, 385. And see [Chapters 3](#) and [8](#) for further discussion of Jones, the Alhambra and Jackson & Graham.
- 40 See Ferry, 'Printing the Alhambra', 175–88. The author is grateful to Clive Edwards for this reference.
- 41 Aldrich, *The Craces*, 101.
- 42 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. II, pl. 160 (text). According to *Black's Guide to London and Its Environs*, 1875, 202, at that date the Portland Bazaar, or German Fair, was situated at Langham Place, nearly opposite the Polytechnic Institution. In addition, according to the same source, Jones was also responsible for the 'London Crystal Palace Bazaar, north side of Oxford Street, near the Circus, with an entrance in Great Portland Street. Chiefly built of glass and iron ... with a roof of coloured glass.' The author is grateful to Clive Edwards for this reference. See also [Iron](#) online.
- 43 See Tongue, *3D Expo 1862*, 38–9.
- 44 Royal Academy: John Gibson, RA Papers, GI/9. The source is a series of transcribed and typewritten letters by Gibson to various correspondents, not actual handwritten letters. The author is grateful to Dr Roberto C. Ferrari for this reference.
- 45 Letter to 'Mrs I' – presumably Jane Lawrence, wife of George Hall Lawrence (the Liverpool 'magistrate and West India merchant'), 25 May 1864; Henry Moore Institute Library, Special Collections Dept, HMI/Special Collection 1/GIB. The author is grateful to Dr Roberto C. Ferrari for this reference. The present location of the Morrison *Venus* is unknown but see Sotheby's online for a note, based on the advice of Timothy Stevens, identifying the whereabouts of the known examples.
- 46 Anon, 'Reading Industrial Exhibition', 353. As this volume was going to press, a completely new document was found in the Fonthill Archives, listing Charles Morrison's pictures

- and statuary at Basildon, as valued by Tom Cox, June 14 1910 B/1/0850. This includes 'Tidemand, 1862 A clergyman about to administer the sacrament / The administration of the sacrament 56 × 77 inches.' This is obviously a large version of the small picture Alfred bought 1862.
- 47 Gallerix online.
 - 48 *International Exhibition of 1862*, Norwegian school, 216.
 - 49 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1131.
 - 50 Fonthill Archives, B/03/1864.
 - 51 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 52.
 - 52 Palmer online.
 - 53 *Reading Industrial Exhibition Catalogue*, 1865. Cesari Mariannecci (1859–82) is one of the watercolourist copyists for the Arundel Society; the Victoria and Albert Museum has 118 works by him (although not the Aurora). Even the printed images bought from the Arundel Society through the South Kensington Museum were often expensively framed. The author is grateful to Charlotte Gere for this information.
 - 54 Anon, *The Athenaeum*, 27 September 1862, 403.
 - 55 Seidler, 'A Critical Reappraisal of the Career of William Wetmore Story', 530.
 - 56 Seidler, 'A Critical Reappraisal of the Career of William Wetmore Story', 528. *Cleopatra and The Libyan Sybil* were sold at auction by Waring & Gillow, Basildon Park, Pangbourne, 26 October 1920, and following days, day 2, lots 371 and 372, respectively. See LACMA online.
 - 57 Metmuseum online.
 - 58 *The International Exhibition of 1862 Official Catalogue*, 228.
 - 59 A painting with this title, dated 1826, is now in the collection of the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia, see Shchedrin online.
 - 60 See Hurstel and Levy, 'The apotheosis of Charles Lepec'.
 - 61 Anon, *Building News and Engineering Journal*, 290.
 - 62 Based on Bank of England inflation calculator, available online, which gives £96.04 for October 2022. The author is grateful to Youssef Cassis for his advice on this matter. The same calculations will be made later. Many other works by Sverchkov are also recorded online: Sverchkov online.
 - 63 Inventory of pictures and statuary belonging to the late Charles Morrison, 1910, Fonthill Archives B/1/0850.
 - 64 *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 191, under 'B. – Paintings in Water Colours, and Drawings'.
 - 65 *Illustrated London News*, 18 October 1862, 417.
 - 66 *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 220.
 - 67 Bonhams (Marlborough, MA), 19 March 2025, lot 438.
 - 68 The German painter Heinrich Bürkel (1802–69) exhibited as no. 672 'Catching Horses', *Official Catalogue*, 183, the same title given in the 'list of purchases'. Might this be the painting exhibited in 1862, and could it be the one purchased by Morrison? Bürkel online.
 - 69 *The International Exhibition of 1862 Official Catalogue*, 173.
 - 70 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. II, pl. 180 (text).
 - 71 Bank of England online calculator.
 - 72 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. II, pl. 180 (text).
 - 73 Eckersberg 1 online; Eckersberg 2 online.
 - 74 *International Exhibition of 1862*, III.
 - 75 *International Exhibition of 1862*, III, title page *Illustrated Catalogue*, 'Preface'.
 - 76 There are two Indian painting with a Morrison provenance at the British Museum, but neither corresponds with the descriptions on the List: 1927-116-0-1 and 1927-116-0-2. The author is grateful to Richard Blurton for his advice.
 - 77 *The International Exhibition of 1862*, III, India, 274, under no. 7180 [5116].
 - 78 Christie's 15 December 1971, *Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures The property of the Rt.Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*, lot 114, £300.
 - 79 Sotheby's 27 October 2021 sale of the Carlton Rochell collection of Company School paintings lot 9 estimate £80,000 to 120,000. Sotheby's thought mistakenly that the label 'Fonthill Heirlooms' referred to the collections of William Beckford.
 - 80 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. I.
 - 81 *International Exhibition of 1862 Illustrated Catalogue*, III, Class XXXIII, 266.

- 82 Maison Fourdinois (1828–87); see Gabet, *‘La maison Fourdinois’*.
- 83 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. III, pl. 214. As Max Donnelly observes (email to author, 3 October 2023), Morrison may have been aware of the acquisition by the South Kensington Museum from the 1855 Paris Exhibition of a cabinet by Fourdinois (2692: 1, 2-1856): Fourdinois online.
- 84 Blairman online; it is noted here that Barbedienne was producing similarly decorated tazzas as late as 1869. According to a report in *Le Monde Illustré* (9 August 1862, 96), ‘Les émaux de Limoges lui sont rendus par M. Crétineau, un peintre comme Sèvres cherche et n’en trouve pas.’
- 85 See Levy, ‘Promoting and selling modern majolica’, vol. I, 191, and Figure 7.30.
- 86 Fonthill Archives. Higher up on this same account are items acquired in 1862, including ‘to Barbedienne for P^r Gilt Candlesticks’, presumably the ‘1 P^r Gilt Candlesticks Louis XVI’ in the list.
- 87 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue IV*, France, Class XXX, 133, no. 2874.
- 88 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue, IV*, Class XXX, 23, no. 5751. The cabinet illustrated by Waring is reproduced on p. 22.
- 89 For Barbetti and Gatti, see Chiarugi, *Botteghe di Mobiliari in Toscana*, I, 400–5 and 483–91, respectively.
- 90 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. III, pl. 295.
- 91 *The International Exhibition of 1862, IV*, Italy, Class XXX, 82.
- 92 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. III, pl. 295 (text).
- 93 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue, IV*, Italy, CLASS XXX, 81.
- 94 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. III, pl. 225 and text.
- 95 Chiarugi, *Botteghe di Mobiliari in Toscana*, vol. II, pls 369–72. The South Kensington Museum acquired an elaborate frame by Giusti from the 1862 Exhibition (8053:1-1862); Victoria and Albert Museum online. The author thanks Max Donnelly for this reference.
- 96 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue*, Denmark, Class XXX, Sub-Class A, 57.
- 97 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue*, under French Colonies, Algeria, 162.
- 98 Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture*, vol. II, pl. 164, and text. The tazza is perhaps the one recorded in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, International Exhibition of 1862, *Illustrated Catalogue, IV*, 23, no. 172 ‘A large circular tazza of Algerine onyx, on square ormolu plinth’. The columns may well be the preceding items ‘A pair of Algerine onyx half columns, with moulded caps and bases and square plinths’, 66, no. 747.
- 99 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue* (note 88), France, Class XXX, 2871 ‘Pallu A. & Co. Paris. – Article in Algerian onyx’. See Histoire Vesinet online.
- 100 Possibly recorded in the *Inventory of Heirlooms*, Fonthill Archives, 66, no. 748 ‘A pair of pink rhodonite flat-shaped circular tazza.’
- 101 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue, Russia, Class XXXIII*, 20.
- 102 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue, British Division, Class XXXV*, no. 6863.
- 103 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue, British Division, Class XXXV*, 6873, 114–17.
- 104 *International Exhibition of 1862, Illustrated Catalogue, British Division, Class XXXC*, 116.
- 105 The author is grateful to Clotilde Sablon du Corail, Cheffe du service des collections documentaires at Sèvres, for identifying the relevant documents.
- 106 Sèvres, U10/1, liasse 1, dossier 2.
- 107 Musée D’Orsay online.
- 108 *The Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue*, 211.
- 109 *Official Catalogue* (note 88), Class XXXIII, no, 3204, 145. See also *The Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue*, 65.
- 110 Lavin, *The Art and Tradition of the Zuloagas*, 53, cat. nos 1 and 2. Royal Collection Trust online.
- 111 Hurstel and Levy, ‘The apotheosis of Charles Lepec’.
- 112 Hurstel and Levy, ‘The apotheosis of Charles Lepec’, Figure 5.
- 113 Hurstel and Levy, ‘The apotheosis of Charles Lepec’, 34–47, 40, nos 6–9 on the list of works lent by Morrison for Lepec’s stand in Paris, and Figures 7 and 8.

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From Yuanmingyuan to Fonthill: buying Chinese ceramics in 1860s London and the invention of provenance

Stacey Pierson

Introduction

London in the 1860s was a paradise for ceramics lovers. There were multiple antiques dealers and shops selling old and new ceramics from around the world. There were also international exhibitions, auctions and displays in museums such as the newly founded South Kensington Museum in London, the future Victoria and Albert Museum. In addition, there was an increasing body of literature on ceramics, providing histories and connoisseurship information for collectors and dealers. Informed by the literature and displays, art collectors began to add significant ceramic assemblages to their collections and some would ultimately specialise in ceramics by the end of the nineteenth century. Artists were among the new collectors of ceramics, and paintings of the mid-nineteenth century, by such artists as J. M. W. Whistler (1834–1903) and D. G. Rossetti (1828–82), often featured ceramics and designs borrowed from ceramic decoration.¹ The preference of such artists was for ‘Oriental’ or Chinese and Japanese ceramics, particularly porcelains, which were becoming much more widely available at that time.

The ceramic collectors and collections of the 1860s were therefore varied, with collections ranging from the household effects of grand country houses to artists’ studios and the wider art collections of politicians and wealthy businessmen. Few in the mid-nineteenth century would focus on ceramics, but ceramics were increasingly seen as part of a well-furnished interior and a well-rounded collection. By the 1870s, Chinese porcelain in particular was being reframed as an

object for collecting, as opposed to furnishing, dining and display.² This coincided with a greater supply of global ceramics, such as Chinese and Japanese porcelains, available to buy as a consequence of Britain's wider engagement with the world through trade, colonial expansion and military activity. The beginning of the decade of the 1860s notably saw punitive action in China associated with the Second Opium War, which would bring a large number of a category of previously unseen ceramics onto the market: Chinese imperial porcelain.

Chinese porcelain had been in use in Britain and collected as curios or luxury objects from at least the mid-sixteenth century, with one of the earliest dated examples being the Lennard Cup, a Ming Chinese bowl with English silver-gilt mounts with a London hallmark of 1569–70.³ From the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the East India Company was founded, export porcelains from China and Japan arrived in greater numbers alongside the tea trade. But it was the forcible commercial exchanges of the mid-nineteenth century that would alter the secondary market for ceramics and induce a turn towards collecting on a wider scale. Arguably, the most significant event which precipitated this change was the burning, sacking and pillaging of the Old Summer Palace or Yuanmingyuan 圓明園 in Beijing during the month of October 1860.⁴ The lavish goods removed by British and French soldiers were auctioned, by convention, in China initially, then at auctions and art markets in London and Paris in 1861, bringing a fresh supply of very high quality porcelains to the attention of collectors. The exclusive, imperial source of the porcelains was attractive to collectors and often was attached to the pieces as a provenance – 'From the Summer Palace Peking' or sometimes 'from Yuen min Yuen', following news reports of the events in China.⁵ An effect was to exceptionalise ceramics that were associated with domestic China, specifically the court, and by extension to stimulate a greater interest in the Chinese origins of more familiar export ceramics, leading to a specifically identified category of collectible ceramic – 'Chinese' porcelain instead of just 'oriental'.⁶

After arriving in Britain in the early 1860s, these imperial ceramics thus changed the porcelain collecting and purchasing landscape in London. For those who could afford to buy in bulk, their arrival would also be a stimulus for developing major collections. These collections formed after the objects left China are seen as an attractive provenance today, especially those with plundered goods, where naming the new collection rather than their original location is a way to elide the violent origins of such objects in a time when plunder is at the forefront of object studies and management. One such collection was that of Alfred Morrison

(1821–97), the collector who probably amassed the largest collection of Yuanmingyuan porcelain in Britain, and then of Chinese porcelain generally in the 1860s. A prolific and very wealthy collector of many types of artworks, Morrison started with an inherited portfolio of properties and artworks and then went on to develop what became known as the Fonthill collection (*Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* today).⁷ His Chinese porcelain collection and the story of its development mirrors the circumstances of the London Chinese ceramics market in the 1860s, and in some ways was also a driving force in its expansion and growth in popularity. In this chapter, the background of the London market and collecting world of Chinese porcelain is explored, positioning Alfred Morrison at the centre of its development and in turn, telling the story of his Chinese ceramics collection along the way. Examples sold from his collection in recent years are also examined to help characterise the style of porcelains that came from Yuanmingyuan and, by association, Morrison's taste in Chinese ceramics and the legacy of this remarkable collection.

The Yuanmingyuan porcelains

The 'old Summer Palace' or Yuanmingyuan (Garden of Perfect Brightness) was a summer residence for the Qing emperors that was first built during the last years of the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662–1721) with palace buildings in a pastiche of European Baroque architectural style. The complex of palaces and gardens was expanded by Kangxi's successor, the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1722–35), and continued to be developed until the early nineteenth century.⁸ Eventually it would become the main residence for the emperors, and was therefore filled and furnished with imperial household goods and works of art. Most of the furnishings and artworks were contemporary with the site, but there were also plenty of antiques and treasures from earlier reigns. Reconstructing the original holdings is difficult because of the forced dispersal from 1860 and a lack of imperial inventories, but enough material survives with reasonably secure links to the Summer Palace that a general description of the objects can be given, including some lists of what was removed. There is also a painting of objects from the Yongzheng period (r. 1723–35) that features hundreds of collected objects, including ceramics, that recent research has linked to the Yuanmingyuan.⁹ The images in this painting, and the appearance of surviving objects connected with the site, demonstrate that the style and type of the objects (if not that of the architecture itself) was in keeping with that contained in other imperial



Figure 6.1 Ruby ground porcelain revolving vase with overglaze enamel decoration in *yangcai* style, China, Qing dynasty, Qianlong mark and period, 1736–95. Formerly in the Alfred Morrison collection and purchased from Loch by repute. Sold by Sotheby’s Hong Kong, 9 October 2022.
 Photograph courtesy of Sotheby’s

residences and government buildings such as the Forbidden City and Jehol. Qing imperial style across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was fairly consistent.

The Qing-period ceramics from the Summer Palace appear to have been mostly porcelains and encompassed a wide range of forms and functions, from simple tableware and storage vessels to more complex decorative jars, serving vessels and entertainment pieces such as revolving vessels, in which a vase encases another vase that can be turned to reveal decoration visible through elaborately pierced sides (Figure 6.1).

Some of the display pieces are truly massive, much larger than most porcelain vessels made outside China and Japan in the later eighteenth century, whereas others are smaller and more intricate. Among the antiques were imperial porcelains from earlier reign periods such as the Ming emperor Xuande (r. 1426–35) and even early twelfth-century Ru stonewares with subtle blue-grey glazes, made at the first imperial kiln in Henan province. Most if not all the contemporary porcelains were made in two locations – Jingdezhen at the imperial factory and

in the Forbidden City at the imperial craft workshops, managed by the Zaobanchu 造辦處 (manufacturing office) as part of the imperial household department. These workshops were established during the reign of the Kangxi emperor and were staffed by artisans from all over China and from Europe during a period in which the Jesuits were actively associated with the Qing court.¹⁰ The latter brought with them European artistic training and perspective as well as European materials and techniques. These materials and techniques were of great interest to the Qing rulers, who actively appropriated them in a form of what might be called artistic colonisation.

Technical virtuosity was a defining characteristic of Qing court arts generally and incorporating European elements into this was key to its appeal and purpose within Qing court visual and material culture. The revolving vases are a good example of this, but so is the production of a wide range of complex surface treatments and designs, including *trompe l'oeil*. Analysis of Qing court records demonstrates that such objects, including porcelains, were used as functional items as well as 'playthings', and technical virtuosity was key to this latter categorisation.¹¹ Among the more fantastic representations of this technical virtuosity combined with deceptive surfaces are the porcelains made for the palace which look like plates of food and are genuinely deceptive in photographs and through glass in the museum.¹² Whatever their functions, porcelains were not the most materially valuable objects in the Yuanmingyuan residences, but their vibrant visual appearance fitted in with an overall decorative scheme that made them part of the highly decorative visual background of Qing court life. Additionally, in a time before electric lighting, brightly coloured, glossy porcelains with twinkling metallic motifs and shimmering glazes would have helped to illuminate the spaces. The foreign militants who encountered these objects in the Yuanmingyuan palaces noted their lavish appearance. One of the French soldiers later recounted:

The walls, the ceilings, the dressing tables, the chairs, the footstools are all in gold, studded with gems ... There on supports of jade are two pagodas of enamelled gold ... alongside are more incense burners, torches, candlesticks, golden boxes, snuffboxes, embellished with precious stones, and enamelled miniatures, a jeweller's fevered dream.¹³

The porcelains were no less impressive even though, in 1860, decorated Qing porcelains were not unknown to spectators in Britain, who would

have seen often large and lavishly decorated export pieces in the Great Exhibition of 1851.¹⁴ The country houses of the aristocracy and returned members of the East India Company were also furnished with large and brightly coloured porcelains from China, Japan and Europe. But porcelain like this, made for export, was of much lower quality than that made for the Chinese court, and court wares also included monochrome-glazed porcelains which were generally unknown outside China until the plunder of the Yuanmingyuan.¹⁵ Most of the looting was carried out by officers, not ordinary soldiers, who would have been much less familiar with the objects than the officers and generals who ordered the plunder.¹⁶ The looters would likely have been drawn to anything that looked precious or valuable and, crucially, portable, which porcelains would have been, even the larger examples.

What was plundered?

The porcelains that can be identified as coming from the Yuanmingyuan are primarily vessels, usually vases and jars, though there are plenty of bowls and dishes that made their way out of the palace at that time. They range in date from the Kangxi to the Jiaqing periods (r. 1796–1820), feature ‘reign marks’, the usually six-character inscription on the base of vessels denoting imperial manufacture in the Qing period during a particular reign, and are decorated with overglaze enamels and underglaze cobalt blue to a lesser extent. Some have monochrome glazes covering detailed carved and incised decorations (Figure 6.2) or are threaded with dark crackle, and some represent the technical playthings discussed earlier such as revolving vases.

As a group they are brightly coloured, with often detailed, intricate designs and are very high quality, as would be expected of imperial porcelains. Even the rare blue and white porcelains were boldly decorated with a lavish use of cobalt blue on highly articulated forms. Bearing in mind that this characterisation represents what was purportedly looted, and in many cases not definitively identified as from the Yuanmingyuan, it does give a general picture of what was available for plunder and what was selected by the looters. That the porcelains were also appealing to buyers and collectors in the secondary market demonstrates that not only was their provenance attractive but also that their design fitted into a world where highly decorated objects were part of the material landscape for those who could afford it.



Figure 6.2 Carved porcelain jar with celadon glaze, China, Qing dynasty, Qianlong mark and period, 1736–95, identified as ‘The Fonthill “Dragon” Jar’. Formerly in the Alfred Morrison collection and purchased from Loch by repute. Sold by Sotheby’s Hong Kong, 8 October 2014.

Photograph courtesy of Sotheby’s

Chinese imperial porcelain in London

As noted previously, before 1861, it was possible to see export and exported Chinese porcelains in London and in Britain generally, and items made primarily for export had been consumed for several hundred years before this decade at most levels of society. In fact, throughout the 1860s and 1870s, export porcelain, which most consumers still thought of as simply ‘china’ or ‘oriental porcelain’ without identifying its intended market (‘export’), in the form of mass-produced Chinese blue and white porcelain and some enamelled wares, had become relatively inexpensive unless it could be reclassified as ‘old china’ and therefore as ‘antiques’. For example, the collector Louis Huth (1821–1905) purchased a Chinese blue and white ‘hawthorn jar’ for £25 in the 1860s. In 1905, this same

jar would sell for £6,000.¹⁷ Essentially, as a hangover from the turn away from chinoiserie at the end of the eighteenth century, increased local production of similar wares and changing attitudes towards China, Chinese porcelain became somewhat unfashionable by the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁸ Artists such as Whistler who used it as props in their orientalist paintings did so in part because it had become relatively cheap.¹⁹ To stimulate collecting and renewed interest, what was needed was exposure to a new kind of Chinese porcelain, and the Summer Palace loot provided this.²⁰ It came onto the market quickly, with auctions taking place in 1861, 1862 and 1863 in London, accompanied by exhibitions such as the International Exhibition of 1862, which had a China Court featuring Yuanmingyuan loot, and dealers' shops such as the Oriental Warehouse in Regent Street – where a young Arthur Liberty (1843–1917) worked before setting up his own shop in 1875.²¹

In response, Yuanmingyuan ceramics, or those purportedly from Yuanmingyuan, could also be read about in the specialist ceramics and design literature that was being more widely published in the 1860s. In the 1868 edition of his definitive book *A History of Pottery and Porcelain, Medieval and Modern*, Joseph Marryat (1790–1876) includes several references to 'Summer Palace' porcelain, and notes their sale early in the decade: 'Some beautiful specimens from the Summer Palace at Pekin were sold in July, 1862, at Christie's, and fetched high prices.'²² As Kate Hill has noted, Yuanmingyuan objects, including looted porcelain, had a notable impact on design and design education and literature in Britain.²³ One of the more important design books of the previous decade, Owen Jones's *Grammar of Ornament* (1856), had dismissed Chinese decoration, and the 'Chinese imagination' by association, but his mind was changed after seeing objects from Yuanmingyuan, and this led to a new book specifically on Chinese ornament that borrowed heavily from ceramics either from or related to those from Yuanmingyuan.²⁴

Press reports recounting the events at Yuanmingyuan also would have brought the porcelains to the attention of buyers, and dealers who advertised in the press promoted these objects as collectible. As Kate Hill noted in her study of Yuanmingyuan objects in the art market, dealers were excited by the prospect of new material that 'had not been allowed to leave Pekin'.²⁵ Hill also notes that sales were reported in the press, helping to generate further interest in the objects. Among the dealers who regularly supplied collectors with Yuanmingyuan or related porcelains were William Hewett (the Chinese Warehouse), J. James (Oriental China) and Henry Durlacher (Durlacher Brothers). Hewett was a generalist who sold a wide range of material, but in the 1860s,

James and Durlacher (1826–1902) specialised in ceramics. They also sold ceramics to Alfred Morrison, with Durlacher especially becoming a regular supplier to and conservator for him. The dealers such as Durlacher who sold ceramics from Yuanmingyuan purchased most of their material from auctions. As Eunmin Lim noted about the dealer Murray Marks (1840–1918), who would later join forces with Durlacher, he ‘was an active buyer of porcelain at numerous sales held between 1861 and 1864’.²⁶ Morrison would buy a lot from Durlacher in the 1860s, but these purchases were added to a large group of objects, including porcelains, that were possibly purchased privately in 1861, and this purchase or group of objects can be said to be the catalyst moment for Morrison’s Asian art collections and perhaps his collecting in general.²⁷

Morrison’s china

An oft-repeated story about Morrison’s first Asian art purchases notes that he bought a group of objects recently brought to Britain by Henry Brougham Loch (1827–1900), private secretary to Lord Elgin, who was one of the British diplomats imprisoned by the Chinese government in the events leading up to the sacking of the Summer Palace.²⁸ Morrison is said to have paid £400 for the objects in a sale negotiated at the Travellers Club.²⁹ There are no receipts or records of this sale in either the Fonthill Archives or Loch’s several archives. It has, however, become an important milestone in the collection history and a provenance benchmark for the ex-Morrison objects that come up for sale. While the Loch purchase cannot be confirmed, the sale of Elgin’s material on 18 May 1864 at Christie’s provides proof of a close association, and possibly a more reliable source of Yuanmingyuan porcelains.³⁰ Loch gave a description of what he saw at the Summer Palace in his memoir, which nonetheless does not mention any personal object acquisitions. There are also no references to such objects in the early press reports of Loch’s return to Britain in early 1861, but a photograph of him in London in March 1861 confirms he stayed in Britain after returning and so would have been present at the time of the alleged sale to Morrison.³¹ The earliest published reference to this purported private sale appears to be a *Birmingham Daily Gazette* article from 28 August 1917, ‘China from China’, which advertises a sale of manuscripts from Alfred’s collection at Sotheby’s and in reference to the house, Fonthill, notes: ‘The house ... contains innumerable treasures, among them being the collection of exquisite China made by the first Lord Loch at the looting of the Summer Palace at Peking in 1860.’³² Morrison

himself appears to have been the originator of this story, as the newly published diaries of one of his neighbours demonstrate. Julia Chafyn-Grove, who lived at the nearby house Zeals, in Wiltshire, kept a diary that covered the years 1864–5. During this time, she made several visits to Fonthill to see Alfred, who perhaps was hoping to be a suitor. Julia apparently ‘regularly took various guests to Fonthill to view his china’ and on one occasion noted in her diary that she drove her cousin ‘Alice to Fonthill House to see the china and engravings’, spending ‘three hours looking over his china and engravings ... lots of the china came from the Summer Palace at Peking’.³³ Morrison appears also to have told the same thing to Owen Jones who, in his book *Examples of Chinese Ornament Selected from Objects in the South Kensington Museum and other Collections* of 1867, noted in the preface that he had studied objects from the Summer Palace belonging to the South Kensington Museum and Alfred Morrison.³⁴ In both these cases the objects could well have been purchased from Durlacher, who had purchased Summer Palace objects at auction, but the Summer Palace provenance was clearly something Alfred mentioned to all who saw his pieces.³⁵ When the Morrison pieces entered the market starting in the 1930s, this story became codified as part of their provenance. The 1965 Christie’s sale catalogue, for example, notes: ‘The majority of the following pieces were taken from the Summer Palace, Peking, by Lord Loch of Drylaw.’³⁶

Whatever its merits, the Summer Palace–Loch–Morrison transfer story is now solidified as part of the history of the collections at Fonthill. That these objects were collected by Morrison is not disputed, and a close look at several that have been sold in the various sales of Fonthill material in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries gives an insight into what was available to Morrison in the 1860s, and thus to some extent his taste. Written descriptions and photographs provide important information about how some of these objects were displayed and therefore how Alfred lived with them. The rooms in which the displays were located were designed by Owen Jones, whom Alfred hired to create interiors at Fonthill and his London residence at Carlton House Terrace.³⁷ The aesthetics and taste reflected by these displayed Chinese porcelains is therefore filtered through that of Jones and the mid-nineteenth-century interpretation of sixteenth-century interior style that he created for Alfred at Fonthill, and the more contemporary orientalist version at Carlton House Terrace. Additionally, as with some of his other collected objects such as engravings or paintings, there is some evidence that he admired the Chinese porcelains as individual objects. As a member of the Burlington Fine Arts Club, for example, he participated as a lender

in one ceramics exhibition (Coloured Chinese Porcelain) along with exhibitions of works on paper (Rembrandt prints) and paintings (the Morrison Triptych).³⁸

The Yuanmingyuan porcelains and other objects Alfred acquired may well have been appealing because they were a large group that had a connection to an exciting news story. Coming from a Qing palace, they were also bold enough to look impressive in the grand, highly decorated interiors favoured by Morrison and Jones. A representative pair of giant so-called soldier vases from Alfred's collection was sold by Sotheby's New York on 20 March 2018 for \$275,000 (Figure 6.3).³⁹

One of this pair appears in photographs (c. 1891) of Morrison's saloon at Fonthill (see Figures 3.23 and 3.24) in which some of his collection of Chinese porcelain was displayed with other Chinese objects, engraved portraits and *objets d'art*. As the image demonstrates, the vases



Figure 6.3 'Soldier vases', Sotheby's New York City sale, Inspired: Chinese Art from the Collection of Gerson and Judith Leiber, 20 March 2018, lot 417.

Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's

are very large, 133.4 cm (52.5 in) high, and have bold, bright overglaze enamel decoration on a white porcelain ground. The style of decoration, with the motif of pheasants in a garden, framed by elaborate minor bands of floral grounds and motifs, is typical of their period of production, the first part of the reign of the Qianlong emperor (c. 1740), but unusual for this category of vase, ‘soldier’ vases or jars, which take their name from the equally large set of blue and white covered jars that were acquired by Augustus the Strong of Saxony (r. 1694–1733) in exchange for a regiment of soldiers.⁴⁰ While it is not known whether these vases came from the Yuanmingyuan, they are of the type that was used to furnish palaces in China, and are much more finely painted than similar examples made for the export market in the eighteenth century.

Also visible in the photograph are three covered jars with enamel decoration painted on a white background that is framed by ruby pink minor bands around the shoulder and above the foot (Figure 6.4).



Figure 6.4 One of a pair of lidded porcelain vases with overglaze enamel decoration, China, Qing dynasty, c. 1730. The pair was formerly in the Alfred Morrison collection, purchased from Loch by repute.

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 72.DE.62. CC0 1.0 Universal

Two of these jars now seem to be in the collection of the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, where they are described as coming from the collection of Lord Loch and then Alfred Morrison.⁴¹

Smaller pieces are just visible on some of the table tops, but for the most part, the Chinese porcelains in this room are large, grand and boldly painted, competing well with the equally bold non-Chinese objects and furnishings. This represents only a small proportion of the Chinese porcelain owned by Morrison, however. Many of the other pieces, which can be located in the Fonthill catalogues and sale catalogues from Christie's and more recently Sotheby's and other auction houses, reflect a similar style but are smaller in scale and more colourful and detailed in their decoration. Significantly, there are very few references to plain blue and white porcelain, which was out of favour in the 1860s but would later be accused of causing a 'chinamania' in the 1870s.⁴² Based on the Fonthill Archives and sale catalogues of the collection in the twentieth century, Morrison did not add much blue and white to his collection after the alleged Loch purchase. There are four lots of what appear to be export blue and white bowls in Christie's 1971 sale catalogue (lots 501–4), but generally no others appear.⁴³ It could be argued that there would not have been much blue and white available for plunder at Yuanmingyuan, as it tended to be used in less prominent areas of the court complexes, but it was certainly available to purchase outside China in the mid-1860s onwards, and so its absence in Morrison's collection does indicate a taste preference for polychrome enamelled wares. Indeed, beyond the large display vessels, almost every piece in the collection is enamelled and many have boldly coloured backgrounds in addition. When compared with Morrison's decorative arts collections and interiors as a whole, these Chinese porcelains reflect a love of surface treatment and colour. Much of the other material Morrison allegedly acquired from the Summer Palace also consisted of enamels – both cloisonné and painted metalwork vessels. The jades and bronzes also featured highly articulated surfaces.

Morrison's Chinese porcelains are almost all of Qing date. The Yuanmingyuan was plundered at the height of the Qing dynasty, but, as noted previously, its contents included plenty of antiques, such as Ming and earlier porcelains and works of art. Ming porcelains were available in Europe and Britain before the 1860s, but they were generally of a type mass-produced for export, decorated in blue and white and sturdy enough for long-distance shipping. Polychrome wares were more vulnerable and therefore relatively rare in the bulk shipments into Britain before 1860. Few if any examples of this generic blue and white appeared in Morrison's main collection at any stage, so it is clear that

he had a preference for polychrome enamelled Qing porcelain and not necessarily 'old' porcelain as a lot of the pieces he owned dated to the first half of the nineteenth century, the reigns of the Jiaqing (r. 1796–1820) and Daoguang (r. 1820–50) emperors. As noted earlier, his Chinese collection also included a lot of cloisonné enamelled wares which are aesthetically on a par with imperial enamelled porcelains. The arrival of porcelains and enamelled wares from Yuanmingyuan thus opened up a new category of Chinese luxury object that was clearly to Morrison's taste.

Within this taste category, Morrison managed to acquire many porcelains which are considered masterpieces today, not unlike some of his old master paintings, ancient maps, engravings and sculptures.⁴⁴ Several of the Chinese porcelains have been record breakers at auction, and their quality speaks to the impact such fine court ceramics would have had on the art market in the 1860s. Morrison was a prolific collector with a good eye, and he selected and purchased some of the finest examples available. To date, the ex-Morrison piece to achieve the highest price at auction was the large yellow ground, *famille rose*, double gourd vase, Qianlong period, that was sold by Sotheby's Hong Kong in 2010 for HKD 252,600,000.⁴⁵ At the time, this was a record-breaking price for a Chinese ceramic. This vessel has what can be seen as characteristic features for Qing porcelain in Morrison's collection: a boldly coloured ground, polychrome enamel decoration, an interesting shape and overall very fine quality. It is also attributed to Lord Loch, and therefore to the Yuanmingyuan. The next highest price achieved at auction for an ex-Morrison piece was also sold by Sotheby's Hong Kong: a Qianlong, ruby-ground, 'revolving vase' which consists of a vase encased in another vase that can be rotated to show the inner vase through open panels. This was sold in 2022 for HKD 177,463,000 and is also attributed to Loch and Morrison (Figure 6.1).⁴⁶ Vessels of this type in particular were made exclusively for the court and were not available on the market before the plunder of the Summer Palace. They are still very rare, and recently a new record price for a ceramic (of any time or origin) was set by a revolving vase that was sold in China by Poly Auctions in 2021.⁴⁷ The third highest price achieved by an ex-Morrison piece was realised by the sale of a slightly different type of imperial porcelain – a monochrome vessel. In 2014, Sotheby's Hong Kong sold an imperial Qing porcelain jar that was carved with an elaborate dragon design and covered with a pale celadon glaze. It was billed as the 'Fonthill Dragon Jar' and sold for HKD 94,000,000 (Figure 6.2).⁴⁸ Like the other two pieces mentioned previously, it too was attributed to Lord Loch. While it is not decorated

with overglaze enamels, it is nonetheless carved all over with an ornate design of a dragon amid clouds and waves, and its luminous celadon glaze mirrors the brightly coloured backgrounds seen on so many of the enamelled porcelains Morrison collected. Furthermore, like so many of the other porcelains, it has an imperial reign mark. This feature is significant as so much of the Chinese porcelain that arrived in Britain before 1860 did not have reign marks because they were made for export. Reign marks are mentioned in some of the early literature about Chinese ceramics in English, for example in Marryat (1857), who describes them as ‘characters’ and notes that ‘they are rarely found upon the variegated china’; but Morrison’s new collection would have been the first to amass a large number which featured reign marks.⁴⁹ In the 1860s, therefore, Morrison’s collection was unique. It complemented his taste in interiors, furnishings and artworks in general, but it also challenges the usual narrative of Chinese (and Japanese) porcelain in Britain during the 1860s and 1870s wherein the market was said to be saturated with cheap blue and white, and critics disdaining its popularity as a comment on its wider availability, which led to unchecked ‘chinamania’. In fact, the existence and contents of Morrison’s collection demonstrate that ‘chinamania’ was more of a literary and artistic phenomenon than a reflection of compulsive collecting.⁵⁰

Afterlife of Morrison’s china

The continuous references to Morrison’s Chinese porcelain collection and to Lord Loch demonstrate the still evolving afterlife of Morrison’s 1860s purchases. Morrison’s ownership of the pieces likely to have come from Yuanmingyuan became a formative stop in their object itinerary, joining a travel route that brought them to the Yuanmingyuan in the first place, having not been made for that particular palace, their subsequent forcible removal and then movement from China to Britain.⁵¹ Quite soon afterwards, they began to enter Morrison’s collection, perhaps in a large group purchased privately in 1861, and then were added to over time through purchases from Durlacher and others who also sold Yuanmingyuan porcelains and objects during the 1860s. Morrison’s collection was intact for over 50 years and thus his ownership was a main stopping point for the porcelains, and one which embedded them for a time in a distinctive location, not unlike their previous palace home in China. The interior design parallels are also notable: Yuanmingyuan buildings were designed to resemble European palaces and so were

many of the rooms at Fonthill. Here they also became part of a large art collection that was celebrated in Alfred's lifetime and would be handed down in the family as part of the Fonthill holdings. Alfred had himself inherited the property and some parts of the collections of his father, James Morrison, which included some Chinese and Japanese porcelains, perhaps inspiring Alfred to expand those holdings when an exciting new opportunity arose.⁵² Much of the collection was catalogued after Alfred's lifetime, and this became the basis for the naming of the collection after the house: the Fonthill Collection, and then later the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*.⁵³

The rebranding of the collection began when sales of property were necessitated in the early twentieth century and the next diaspora of Morrison's objects began. The first major auction was held in March 1936 at Christie's: 'Fine Chinese Enamelled Porcelain. The Property of J.G. Morrison of Fonthill House ... a part of the famous collection formed by the late Alfred Morrison, Esq., during the nineteenth century'.⁵⁴ Thirty-four lots of Chinese porcelain were sold at that time, followed by another sale in May 1936 in which furnishings, including one 'Chinese table', were sold. Among the Chinese porcelain lots were four large, covered enamelled jars (lots 20 and 21) that are very similar to four that appear in the 1891 photographs of the saloon at Fonthill House, with different covers (see [Figures 2.2, 3.23 and 3.24](#)). These would later be described as 'soldier jars', per the story recounted earlier, and are of the type used mainly for interior decoration, as at Fonthill. Another pair of similarly-decorated jars (lot 17), also appears in the same photograph, and there are six others for sale at the same time, which, when looked at generally, reveals a preference in these display jars for decoration with phoenixes. The quantities of similar types of porcelains also seems to support the suggestion that Morrison may have purchased over 1,000 pieces in one group from the Yuanmingyuan.⁵⁵ But interestingly, none of the lots is described in 1936 as coming from the Summer Palace or Lord Loch.

The next major sale was also held at Christie's, in 1965 including: 'Chinese 18th and 19th century porcelain' and 'Chinese Monochrome porcelain'. Like the earlier sale, this was a sale of household contents, which are described generally in the front of the catalogue as: 'The Collection of (various) formed by the late Alfred Morrison, esq., sold by order of his grandson ... removed from Fonthill House'. On p. 28, for the 31 May 1965 sale of the Chinese porcelain, however, the lots are prefaced with: 'The majority of the following pieces were taken from the Summer Palace, Peking, by Lord Loch of Drylaw, and subsequently sold to the late

Hugh Morrison Esq. [sic].’ In both Chinese porcelain sections, there were 47 lots, and among the pieces sold were two that came up for sale again in October 2022 at Sotheby’s Hong Kong: a pair of Qianlong mark and period *famille rose* ‘butterfly vases’, which are very rare; the only other known example was sold at Christie’s Hong Kong in 2008 and was also formerly in Morrison’s collection. This means that he owned three, and there are no exact equivalents today in the former palace collections in China or Taiwan. In both sales, Sotheby’s Hong Kong and Christie’s Hong Kong, the vases are attributed to Lord Loch ‘by repute’.⁵⁶

In the Christie’s London sale of 1971, ‘The Remaining Contents of Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire’, one section is dedicated to ‘Chinese porcelain’ with no references to Morrison or Loch. There are 60 lots, although some are Japanese and some are lacquer objects. Even though it is not a dedicated sale of Chinese porcelain, pieces from this sale are among those that have achieved record-breaking prices in recent auctions, including the large yellow double gourd that was for a time the highest price piece of porcelain in the world (discussed earlier).

These first three twentieth-century sales are all effectively house contents sales, and while Alfred Morrison is mentioned at times, the objects are presented as contents of the house, Fonthill. They are not presented as part of the famous art collection of Morrison, at least on the surface. This would change in the twenty-first century, however, with the sale in 2004 at Christie’s London being a milestone: ‘Chinese Porcelains and Enamels from the Alfred Morrison Collection, Fonthill House’. The reference to the house is still there, but it serves a different purpose now – as a grounding for a now dispersed collection whose collector’s name has been restored. The objects have been defined as a personal collection once more, and their reidentification coincides with collecting more frequently being the subject of scholarly research, including the collections of Alfred’s father James Morrison, which had been the subject of research by this volume’s editor, who also contributed an essay to the 2004 sale catalogue.⁵⁷

The objects sold in that sale were of course very similar to those sold previously, yet this sale was also a specialist one, focusing only on the porcelains and enamels. This further positioned Alfred’s collection of Chinese ceramics as singularly notable. There is no statement about the ceramics and enamels coming from the Summer Palace, which along with Loch is only mentioned in Dakers’s essay. This too is a departure from earlier practice. However, many of the same objects from the 2004 sale have come up again more recently and have had their provenance stated more specifically. One, which was lot 57 in the

2004 sale, is a large, blue ground *famille rose* 'lotus vase', Qianlong mark and period, that when sold again at Sotheby's Hong Kong in 2018 was given the specific provenance of both 'Collection of Lord Loch of Drylaw (1827–1900)' and 'Collection of Alfred Morrison (1821–97), Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire (no. 525)'.⁵⁸ The unverified Loch reference is somewhat surprising because in the interim, between 2004 and 2018, there were controversial sales of Yuanmingyuan material, such as the 'zodiac heads' sold by Christie's in 2009, controversially blocked by China, and at the same time, China was investigating the dispersal of Summer Palace objects worldwide and developing its own field of Yuanmingyuan studies.⁵⁹ Unlike Sotheby's, Christie's proved to be more cautious with subsequent sales of Morrison material, especially when such objects could be connected to dealers, such as Durlacher rather than Lord Loch. For example, another piece from the 2004 sale, lot 47, a small *famille rose* flask, Qianlong mark and period, was sold at Christie's Hong Kong in 2020, where the catalogue notes that it was purchased from Durlacher between 1864 and 1866.⁶⁰

Since 2004, Christie's has held one additional Morrison sale, but with fewer objects since much of the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* collection has now been sold. In 2010, Christie's Hong Kong held a sale of 'Imperial Treasures from the Fonthill Collection', returning once again to the house as owner, rather than Morrison. This sale was notable not for the porcelain that was sold but rather for a pair of cloisonné enamel cranes, which sold for a then record-breaking price. These were attributed to Loch 'by repute' in the catalogue and are the cranes Alfred was pictured with in the portrait of him painted by Plácido Zuloaga in about 1880.⁶¹ The two other lots in the sale were porcelains, both attributed to Loch 'by repute': a Jiaqing yellow-ground *famille rose* vase and a pair of Daoguang yellow-ground *famille rose* bowls.⁶² Sotheby's Hong Kong also had a limited sale of a single object in 2014: 'The Fonthill "Dragon" Jar', which sold for a record price for a monochrome (HKD 94,000,000). This was the Qianlong mark and period celadon-glazed jar decorated with a carved dragon in waves and clouds mentioned previously (Figure 6.2). Its branding as 'the' Fonthill dragon jar is clever as it singularises the piece and ties it firmly to its original English location. As noted earlier, the jar was first sold in 1971 and has subsequently been in multiple collections. In the 2014 sale, it was attributed to 'Collection of Lord Loch of Drylaw (1827–1900)' and 'Collection of Alfred Morrison (1821–97), Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire (no. 643)' as is Sotheby's practice, contrary to Christie's, which normally uses 'by repute' when mentioning a Loch provenance.

Conclusion

The Chinese porcelains collected by Alfred Morrison in the 1860s were the starting point for an impressive collecting career, and were acquired at a time when fresh material from imperial China was available for the first time as a consequence of military activity and plunder. The porcelains acquired in this decade are clearly of the type that could only have come from an imperial source, whether they were removed by Lord Loch or not. The story of their serendipitous purchase from Henry Loch has overshadowed their more likely source from dealers such as Durlacher, but this is a story that was promulgated by Alfred Morrison who was no doubt excited by their origins, and Loch's incredible story of imprisonment and survival.

Studying the porcelains as a collected group thus illuminates a singular period in the history of collecting Chinese ceramics in Britain, but also Alfred Morrison's taste and the physical spaces for such porcelains as could be found in Fonthill House and Carlton House Terrace in London. Fonthill would ultimately be the name given to all the collections, and the afterlives of Alfred's porcelains reveal a continuous association with that house. The sales of Fonthill objects beginning in the twentieth century also reveal the shifting identities of the porcelains after they entered Morrison's collection, going from household contents to objects in Morrison's 'famous collection' to Fonthill masterpieces. This non-linear and only partly physical trajectory can be framed as an itinerary in which physical movement and associated identity transformation is continuous, but with stops along the way which leave an imprint on the objects reflecting shifting locations and contexts. As this itinerary demonstrates, when it comes to the provenance branding of collected objects, especially for market purposes, the associations with the strongest mystique in a given time and place – whether this be a storied country house (Fonthill), a famous collector (Morrison), a treasure hunter (Loch) or the Chinese court ('imperial'), or a combination thereof – will inform the identification and titles of the objects. Like their movements, object identities are fluid and expedient. In the case of the Morrison Chinese porcelains, the allure of plunder seems to have underpinned their British owner's self-fashioned narrative.

Notes

1 Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums*, 62.

2 Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums*, 67.

- 3 This piece is in the Sir Percival David collection in the British Museum, PDF 695 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_PDF-695 (accessed 26 January 2024).
- 4 This series of events is widely published. A recent study that focuses on the plunder of the site and the dispersal of its contents is Tythacott, *Collecting and Displaying China's 'Summer Palace' in the West*.
- 5 For example, in Timbs, *The International Exhibition*, 'China', 320. For more on this exhibition, and Morrison's purchases from it, see [Chapter 5](#) of this volume, by Martin Levy. Kate Hill cites an example in the British Museum in 'Collecting on campaign', 251, fn. 127.
- 6 Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums*, 72–3.
- 7 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, chapter 17: 'Alfred Morrison, 1821–1897: Victorian Maecenas'.
- 8 For a comprehensive history of the architecture and gardens, see Y-T. Wong, *A Paradise Lost*.
- 9 This aspect of the painting was explored most recently in Ma, 'Recreating the Past'.
- 10 For an English-language study, see Curtis, *Glass Exchange between Europe and China*.
- 11 See Chen, 'The Origin, Development and Classification of Trompe l'oeil Porcelain'.
- 12 One of the most famous examples is in the collection of the Palace Museum Beijing and features a crab surrounded by fruits and nuts on a white plate: <https://intl.dpm.org.cn/Ceramicsis/1090.html> (accessed 24 January 2024).
- 13 Count D'Herrison, 'The Loot of the Imperial Summer Palace at Peking', in Robert S. Ball et al, *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Showing the Operations, Expenditures, and Condition of the Institution for the Year Ending June 30, 1900* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1901), 619. Cited in McLoughlin, "Rose-water upon his delicate hands", 103–4, fn. 26.
- 14 As can be seen in the vibrant watercolours produced by Joseph Nash: 'Watercolour view of the Chinese section at the Great Exhibition, including a cabinet, lanterns, tiles, screens and ornamental porcelain', Royal Collection Trust RCIN 919956, published in 1854. <https://www.rct.uk/collection/919956/the-great-exhibition-china> (accessed 24 January 2024).
- 15 Pierson, "True Beauty of Form and Chaste Embellishment", 76.
- 16 Hill, 'Collecting on campaign'.
- 17 Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums*, 65 citing Merrill, *The Peacock Room*, 170.
- 18 Chang, *Britain's Chinese Eye*, 78–9; 85.
- 19 Merrill, 'Whistler and the "Lange Lijzen"', 683.
- 20 Some imperial porcelain that had been given as gifts to George III was sold in the auction of the effects of Queen Charlotte in 1819, but it is very difficult to identify these pieces and therefore to assess their impact on collecting. Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums*, 52.
- 21 Hill, 'The Yuanmingyuan and design reform in Britain', 53. University of Glasgow, 'Arthur Lasenby Liberty'.
- 22 Marryat, *A History of Pottery and Porcelain*, 310.
- 23 Hill, 'The Yuanmingyuan and design reform in Britain'.
- 24 Sloboda, 'The Grammar of Ornament', 231; Hill, 'The Yuanmingyuan and design reform in Britain', 59. Owen Jones, *Examples of Chinese Ornament*.
- 25 Hill, 'Enamels "ancient" and "rare"', 3, citing the *Oxford Journal*.
- 26 Lim, 'Re-Collections and Movements', 131.
- 27 Kate Hill studied the receipts from Durlacher in the Fonthill Archives and determined that: 'In the years 1862–67, Morrison paid him £52,520 for 680 items: £28,030 for 156 European objets d'art, such as gold snuff boxes, and £24,489 for 524 artworks that are identified as Chinese, Japanese, and Oriental.' Hill, 'Enamels "ancient" and "rare"', 7.
- 28 Loch, *Personal Narrative*.
- 29 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 228.
- 30 Christie, Manson and Woods, 'Catalogue of a portion of the choice objects of art'.
- 31 In his memoir, Loch, *Personal Narrative*, 291, he noted that he arrived back on 27 December 1860.
- 32 Anon, 'China from China'. I am grateful to Haoyang Zhao for this reference.
- 33 Elias, *Zeals*, 158, 161.
- 34 Sloboda, 'The Grammar of Ornament', 233.
- 35 The earliest dated receipt from Durlacher for Chinese porcelain ('china') in the Fonthill Archives is from May 1863.
- 36 Christie's, *Important Chinese Porcelain & Cloisonne Enamels*, 31 May, 1965, catalogue, 28. The earlier sale in 1936 does not make reference to the Summer Palace, however.

- 37 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 229–31.
- 38 Pierson, *Private Collecting, Exhibitions*, 30, 34, 84. The nine ceramics loaned to the BFAC exhibition are listed in the exhibition catalogue Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Coloured Chinese Porcelain*. Morrison joined the Club in 1866.
- 39 Sotheby's New York City sale, *Inspired: Chinese Art from the Collection of Gerson and Judith Leiber*, 20 March 2018, lot 417.
- 40 Ayers, *Chinese and Japanese Works of Art*, nos 352–3.
- 41 'Pair of Lidded Vases' (Getty Museum), <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103SE8> (accessed 26 January 2024).
- 42 Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums*, 66, 68.
- 43 Christie's, "'The Remaining Contents of Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire', on the premises, Monday, November 1, 1971 and the following day', catalogue, 88–9.
- 44 The so-called Morrison Triptych in the Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, USA, demonstrates this quite clearly. <http://emuseum.toledomuseum.org/objects/55281> (accessed 26 January 2024).
- 45 Sotheby's Hong Kong, *Masterpieces of Qing Imperial Porcelain from J. T. Tai and Co*, lot 2126, 7 October 2010.
- 46 Sotheby's Hong Kong, *The Dr Wou Kiuan Collection part 2*, lot 3801, 7 October 2022.
- 47 'Imperial yangcai ruby ground phoenix vase', sold by Poly Auctions Beijing on 7 June 2021 for HKD 326,308,000. C. Wong, 'Record for world's most expensive ceramic'.
- 48 Sotheby's Hong Kong, 'The Fonthill Dragon Jar', lot 3901, 8 October 2014.
- 49 Marryat, *Collections towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain*, 114. By 'variegated' he means polychrome decoration.
- 50 Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums*, 66.
- 51 The reference here is to a theory of object movement that is increasingly supplanting that of 'object biographies', which are limited in their linearity. As Joyce, 'Things in motion', 29, defines it, itineraries are "the routes by which things circulate in and out of places where they come to rest or are active."
- 52 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 226.
- 53 Wang, *Chinese Antiquities*, 24.
- 54 Catalogue of 'Fine Chinese Enamelled Porcelain, the property of J. G. Morrison, Esq. of Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wilts., London, Thursday, March 19, 1936'.
- 55 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 229.
- 56 The first one sold at Christie's Hong Kong, *The Ping Y. Tai Foundation Collection of Important Chinese Art*, 3 December 2008, lot 2633. Subsequently, a pair was offered for sale by Sotheby's Hong Kong as part of the sale, *A Journey Through China's History, the Dr Wou Kiuan Collection Part II*, 9 October 2022, lot 3803.
- 57 Caroline Dakers, 'Alfred Morrison – Victorian Maecenas'. This would be expanded to a full chapter of the same name in Dakers, *A Genius for Money*.
- 58 Sotheby's Hong Kong, *Important Chinese Art*, 3 October 2018, lot 3611.
- 59 These were the bronze heads of animal fountain sculptures from the Haiyantang at Yuanmingyuan. Several had come up for sale in the early 2000s but it was the Christie's sale of Pierre Berge's collection in Paris, 2009, that coincided with China's more vocal restitution claims for Yuanmingyuan material. Wang, *Chinese Antiquities*, 24–7.
- 60 Christie's Hong Kong, *The Pavilion Sale. Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 8 October 2020, lot 334.
- 61 Reproduced in Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, fig. 54.
- 62 Christie's Hong Kong, *Imperial Treasures from the Fonthill Collection*, 1 December 2010, lots 2981 and 2982, respectively.

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Alfred Morrison and his Summer Palace collection: sources and interpretations

Katrina Hill

Introduction

In the autumn of 1860, the Anglo-French expedition to China plundered the Summer Palace of the Qing emperors, bringing the Second Opium War (1856–60) to a close. In the decade following this dramatic event, the collector Alfred Morrison (1821–97) assembled the most significant known British collection of artifacts from the estate. His collection is exceptional owing to its quality and size, the copious available evidence relating to its contents and display, and its preservation until the major Fonthill sales at Christie's in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.¹ This chapter looks at the sources and valuation of his Summer Palace pieces in relation to his wider collecting and the taste of his period. While Morrison's collection is plagued by the uncertainties and politics of its provenance, the lasting impact of his assemblage on the Chinese art market and Summer Palace scholarship is clear. Morrison's Summer Palace collection led British taste for Chinese cloisonné and *famille rose* porcelains in the late nineteenth century and long afterwards. Pieces from his collection still command eye-popping prices at contemporary auctions, owing to their beauty and quality of craftsmanship as well as their illustrious but complex provenance; and they provide a large body of evidence for the collections and taste of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) emperors, who ordered and lived among these pieces until the Summer Palace was plundered.

Alfred Morrison as a collector

Alfred was the second son of James Morrison (1789–1857), the textile magnate. He was not inclined towards business and instead established himself at Fonthill as a member of the landed gentry.² He was elected life governor of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and in the 1860s he was regularly mentioned in newspaper coverage of livestock shows.³ He was also chairman of the Land Loan and Enfranchisement Company, which extended loans for improvements to landed estates.⁴ But Alfred was and is known mostly as an art patron and collector. One art critic covering the International Exhibition of 1862 noted that Morrison already had a reputation for acquiring jewels of design:

The beautifully engraved glass tazza, with a chaste mounting of gold and turquoises, has disappeared from the stand of Messrs. Dobson and Pearce. This perfect little gem, of the most refined class of workmanship, was, in fact, a commission from Mr. Alfred Morrison, who is well known as one of the most enthusiastic collectors of vertu in the present day. It will enrich his collection at Fonthill—a place long celebrated as a treasury of the arts.⁵

Morrison came into his inheritance with the death of his father in 1857. He began collecting European *objets d'art* at an astonishing rate and was outgoing in art circles. In 1864, he was listed as a member of the organising committee for a festival celebrating the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth.⁶ In 1865, he loaned to the Reading Industrial Exhibition a copy of the fresco *Aurora* by Guido Reni (1575–1642). Sadly, it appears that he lent none of the Summer Palace pieces with which we associate him today, though other patrons contributed Chinese 'curiosities'.⁷ In 1866, he was appointed to the organising committee for the National Portrait Exhibition at Kensington, and he donated a baptismal font and pulpit to the Church of the Holy Trinity at Fonthill Gifford.⁸ He also commissioned designs from Spanish metalworker Plácido Zuloaga (1834–1910) and the French enamellist Charles Lepec (1830–88).⁹ The latter produced enamel miniatures of his wife, Mabel Morrison (1847–1933).¹⁰ Both men specialised in highly detailed work and splendid decorative effects achieved through damascening, carving, engraving, enamel painting and other difficult techniques. Morrison seems to have loaned some of their pieces to an exhibition in 1887, which a reporter described as a 'collection of work illustrating how closely the most skilful of modern workmen can hold their own against the

master minds of the past'.¹¹ This evidence situates Morrison's Chinese enamelled porcelain and metal, both imperial and export wares, as decorative pieces within his collection of elaborate polychrome luxury objects with glittering surface effects. The term 'imperial' is generally used in Western texts to identify objects made for the Chinese court, many of them bearing reign marks of emperors.

Alfred Morrison and Henry Loch

It is generally understood that Alfred Morrison bought most of his Summer Palace pieces from Henry Brougham Loch (1827–1900). Stacey Pierson writes in this volume ([Chapter 6](#)) about a well-known story of the transaction with uncertain origins: Henry Loch arrived in London with his share of the spoils in 1861, went to the elite Travellers Club in Pall Mall one evening and reportedly asked for the richest man in the building with the hope of finding a buyer. That man was Morrison, who purchased everything for a mere £400.¹² When some of Morrison's collection was sold in 1971, Geraldine Norman, then Sale Room Correspondent for *The Times*, wrote that Loch 'chanced to dine with Alfred Morrison, who agreed to take the lot off his hands for £400. The deal was sealed with a glass of port,' and that the sale 'comprised roughly half the spoils, together with some items collected elsewhere'.¹³ This writer has been unable to confirm the source for her information. Caroline Dakers suggests instead that the two men knew each other and that a deal arose without the glass of port. She has also written that Morrison might have purchased over 1,000 pieces from Loch, a number surely intriguing to Chinese art specialists.¹⁴ While there may be no concrete evidence for the transaction, by 1907 the story seems to have become ingrained in the public consciousness. A newspaper feature on a shooting party at Fonthill described the collection thus:

The house was rebuilt by the late Mr. Alfred Morrison, and now contains most exquisite china, including the collection made by the first Lord Loch in China. Lord Loch revenged himself from having been carried about Pekin in a cage and led out for execution day after day by annexing some of the most valuable treasures of the Summer Palace when it was looted by the French and British troops. This collection Mr. Morrison acquired some years ago: if the china were sold to-day at Christie's probably many single pieces would fetch much as was originally paid for the lot.¹⁵

As the writer predicted, some of these items were sold in recent decades for thousands and millions of pounds.

Since a significant portion of Morrison's Chinese objects is understood to have come from Loch, the collection cannot be said to represent Morrison's taste exclusively. In fact, the transaction seems to have provided impetus for Morrison's acquisition of further imperial wares in the 1860s, since the bulk of receipts for Chinese objects in the Fonthill Archives date to the years 1863 through 1867. But did Loch himself select the items at the Summer Palace or is the taste of another actor in this drama operant? The diplomat had been held hostage for three weeks and was released to British forces during the plunder on 8 October in poor health.¹⁶ Possibly, he would not have been well enough nor inclined to sit through an auction and put together the most valuable British collection known today through bidding. Certainly, the cost would have been quite large, and one cannot imagine that the British Army would have made him pay for the material after being taken prisoner. Moreover, Loch had little to say about the art treasures at the Summer Palace, whether out of bitterness and anger towards his jailors or discretion on behalf of his plundering comrades. In his memoir of the 1860 war, he did not speak of the artworks kept in the Summer Palace and mentioned the auction only in passing; but after his release he seems to have enjoyed a walk among the gardens, where he saw on a marble balustrade 'beautiful blue inlaid enamel vases with imitation flowers, made of the blood, cornelian, jade, and other valuable stones' and 'magnificent bronzes in different parts of the gardens, larger than life, of lions and other animals, but there was one of exceptional beauty of a cow lying down, the workmanship and design of which were very fine'.¹⁷ He is probably referring to the gilded bronze ox installed by the Qianlong emperor (1711–99, r. 1736–95) on Kunming Lake near the Seventeen Arch Bridge.¹⁸ Loch's interest in the enamels foreshadows the taste of connoisseurs in Britain, and his remarks suggest that if he did put the collection together, he would have chosen the large cloisonné pieces for which Fonthill is known.

However, it is more likely that General Sir James Hope Grant (1808–75), the commander of ground forces in China, decided that as recompense for his suffering, Loch should be allowed to take home a large group of spoils through which he might later raise money. If this is the case, Grant probably directed his prize agents to select the most fabulous objects for him. Henry Knollys (1840–1930), aide-de-camp to Grant, states in his book *Incidents in the China War of 1860*, a publication of Grant's letters and journals, that the general appointed three prize

agents: Colonel Mark Walker VC (1827–1902), Major Henry Wilmot (1831–1901) and Captain the Hon. Augustus Anson (1835–70), who together conducted the auction and kept accounts. Walker's order book shows that they took control of the spoils:

G.O.

Camp near Peking, 9th October 1860

1. The whole of the property without any reserve, taken possession of by the officers at the Summer Palace of the Emperor will be handed over to the Prize Agents by 5 ocl. [sic] this day at the Joss house in rear of the [illegible] Staff House; Articles purchased from the French are alone exempt from the operation of this order.¹⁹

Walker was a professional soldier who had lost an arm in the Crimean War (1853–6) and was widely recognised for his bravery. His will reveals a solid family man of comfortable means, but no significant property, who bequeathed his medals and portrait to his regiment.²⁰ He was made a prize agent as Quartermaster General, not as a man knowledgeable about art. But the other two agents came from prominent and wealthy families. The aristocratic Wilmot family had owned their Chaddesden estate in Derbyshire since the Renaissance, and Henry Wilmot became a baronet in 1861. His lengthy obituary noted a 'valuable collection of Cloisonné enamel and embroidery preserved at Chaddesden Hall'.²¹ The Anson family seat was Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire, which is famed for its 'Chinese House' and other follies created in the eighteenth century.²² The library even holds an original copy of *Travels from St. Petersburg* by Scottish physician John Bell (1691–1780), who described therein a visit to the audience hall in the Changchun Yuan (Joyful Spring Garden) of the Kangxi emperor (1654–1722, r. 1662–1722), west of Beijing, with a Russian diplomatic mission in the early eighteenth century.²³ Such knowledge of the imperial gardens outside Beijing and their political importance, gleaned from the writings of diplomats and missionaries, may have factored in the British Army's decision to seize the Summer Palace in 1860. Whether or not this is true, Anson was a cultured man from a family with a long-standing interest in China and Chinese things, who also seems to have brought home enamels himself. Four cloisonné jardinières attributed to the Summer Palace are in the collection of Shugborough Hall, now a National Trust property.²⁴ As the heirs to large estates, Anson and Wilmot would have known a great deal about the arts and could easily have made a valuable collection on Loch's behalf, if the diplomat did not choose the items himself.

As for the Loch–Morrison deal, this writer has not been able to confirm whether it unfolded in exactly the manner suggested by Ms Norman. There is no evidence that Loch or Morrison visited the Travellers Club during the 1860s. The London Metropolitan Archives holds the records of the Travellers Club, but does not have any documents dating to the period in question that might yield some evidence of a meeting: no entry of either name in a guest book, no record that either Loch or Morrison were members, nor any set of rules stating that men who were not members of the club could dine there. Such records may have existed at one time, but have since been lost or destroyed.²⁵ Newspaper stories dating to the period in question do show that Loch came to London in late 1860. Carrying dispatches from Lord Elgin, he paid a visit to Windsor Castle on 29 December and left the next day.²⁶ On 14 February, Queen Victoria held a levee at St James's Palace, and Henry Loch was reported to have appeared.²⁷ Christie's Archives, London, holds a catalogue for their sale of 'Summer Palace' spoils on 27 May 1861, which bears the handwritten note 'Mr. Loch, Lord Elgin's Secretary' on the cover. This shows that the diplomat was selling his spoils in the neighbourhood: Christie's is a five-minute walk down Pall Mall and around St James's Square from the Travellers Club. Seven lots of rock crystal and cloisonné were consigned by Loch, possibly because he needed to raise cash. The interest in the material among connoisseurs present at the sale is reflected in the sketches of the cloisonné 'kylin' (Lot 184), a vase with dragon handles (Lot 186) and a round box (Lot 187) in the margins.

Christie's sold all seven objects for a total of £294. This number suggests that if Loch did sell the bulk of his collection for £400, he lost the chance for potentially huge earnings; although in 2025 this would equal the handsome sum of £44,600. The amount he would have received at auction can be estimated on the basis of textual evidence. The total number of Fonthill lots with reign marks offered by Christie's in the sales of 1965, 1971, 2004 and 2010 is 140.²⁸ However, the art dealer Henry Durlacher (1825–96) sold some of these to Morrison. Since it is difficult to determine exactly how many Summer Palace pieces Morrison acquired from the dealer, owing to the vague descriptions of pieces in sales receipts held by the Fonthill Archives discussed later, the author offers a rough estimate of 30 pieces, solely for the sake of argument, which would leave 110 pieces with reign marks from Loch. The average price of three objects comparable to those in the Morrison collection that Durlacher purchased at Christie's, a vase enamelled with a floral scroll on a yellow ground (£99.15), a bowl enamelled with flowers on a crimson ground (£19), and a cloisonné moon flask with flowers on a lapis lazuli

ground and gilt handles (£49.70), is £55.95.²⁹ Since $£55.95 \times 110$ is £6,154.50, which equals roughly £686,200 today, the rumoured private sale seemingly did not yield Loch the highest possible earnings (if £400 is the correct sum), even taking into account any commission Christie's received and the risks inherent in any auction.³⁰ If the Christie's sales represent only a portion of the Loch pieces in the Morrison collection, then the loss is even higher. One might also note here that Morrison got an extremely good deal at £400, for receipts in the Fonthill Archives show that he regularly spent hundreds and even thousands of pounds on small groups of artworks. For instance, on 4 September 1863, he purchased two enamelled vases from Henry Durlacher for £600.³¹

Scholars have hoped to find a receipt for the sale, which might document the pieces involved, and one may someday turn up, but there is a potential explanation for the lack. Apart from obvious reasons, such as passage of time, Loch may have wished to dispose of the material with discretion. Diplomats had no claim to war prize, since this was distributed as an incentive for soldiers. Although British Army regulations stated that men had some claim to prize upon capturing a military target, if the seizure was deemed legal, the appropriation and sale of spoils at the Summer Palace violated military regulations for prize distribution.³² Knollys quoted Grant on the point:

Strictly speaking, I had of course no right to take this step ... I wrote to Mr Sidney Herbert, Secretary of State for War, informing him of my intention ... In course of time I received an answer from Lord John Russell, saying that 'I had taken a grave responsibility upon myself;' but her Majesty had, under the circumstances stated by me, approved of what I had done.³³

The plunder itself was also entirely extralegal, since war had never been declared against China and a prize court had not been established. Edward St Maur, the 12th Duke of Somerset (1804–85) and head of the Royal Navy, noted the issue in the margins of a letter from Henry Cadogan Rothery (1817–88), Registrar of the Admiralty Court, to Lord Clarence Paget (1811–95), Secretary to the Admiralty, concerning a prize treaty between the British and French: 'no legal prize court can be established and no proclamation can be issued without a formal declaration of war'.³⁴ Moreover, members of the China expedition knew the spoils belonged to Queen Victoria (1819–1901, r. 1837–1901), as the Rev. Robert J. L. M'Ghee (dates unknown), chaplain to the forces, stated in his war memoir: 'This treasure, which of right belonged to the Crown,

Sir H. Grant undertook to divert to the fund for prize-money for the troops', and the British Army presented only a handful of trophy pieces to the queen.³⁵ Owing to these legal and political circumstances, Loch might have wished to dispose of the material quickly, leaving no record and avoiding a glittering, high-profile sale that could have offended the queen.

Alfred Morrison and Henry Durlacher

Since no itemised receipt for the fabled transaction is known to exist and Morrison acquired more imperial pieces from dealers thereafter, identification of objects from Loch among the Fonthill collection is difficult.³⁶ However, analysis of receipts in the Fonthill Archives yields some information about the nature and valuation of Morrison's Chinese art purchases in the 1860s. Henry Durlacher (1825–1902) sold a huge number of artworks to Morrison during the 1860s, while also managing the repair, cleaning, regilding and mounting of various pieces. The receipts show that Morrison purchased, among many items, roughly 112 objects described as enamel and likely Chinese, 64 of which are called 'cloisonné' and another 23 of which are termed 'surface enamel', probably meaning that the enamel was painted rather than inlaid. Morrison also purchased 24 jades and numerous pieces of 'Oriental china', distinguished only by colour and general shape categories such as 'bottle', 'vase' and 'basin'. Among them are many bowls of varying ground colours, which are probably the palace bowls enamelled with floral medallions seen in the Fonthill sales.³⁷ These Chinese purchases were combined with many snuffboxes and other Western decorative artworks. The numerous transactions with Durlacher, represented by almost 70 receipts, suggests that their relationship was central to Morrison's collecting, but Morrison also acquired Asian objects from other dealers in line with the fashion for this material.

For instance, he purchased a 'very fine screen of green jade on carved stand', from Charles Bernard Annoot (1825–89) in 1863, and Chinese enamels from the Oriental Warehouse of Arthur Lasenby Liberty (1843–1917) in 1864 (Figure 7.1).³⁸

In June 1890, he bought from dealer Arthur W. Knapp 'fine cloisonné vases', and from the firm of Halstaff and Hannaford 'A pair of peacock blue cloisonné vases'.³⁹ From Thomas W. Woodgate, he purchased a 'pair of fine Enamel Storks on Stands' and an 'Indian box' for £645 in 1864 (Figure 7.2).⁴⁰ These are quite possibly the Yongzheng-period crane



Figure 7.1 Receipt dated 3 August 1864 from Arthur Lasenby Liberty's Oriental Warehouse for a Chinese enamel cup and plate.

Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128

censers sold at Christie's Hong Kong in 2010, since cranes and storks are easily confused.⁴¹

Some evidence of Durlacher's efforts on Morrison's behalf can be found in a catalogue for Mr Phillips, the auctioneer. In an essay on the market for Summer Palace material in Europe after the war, Christine Howald notes that large 'Oriental jars' earned the incredible price of £585 at a Phillips Summer Palace sale on 18 April 1861, reproducing the lot entry.⁴² It is worth mentioning within the discussion here that in the left margin appears a handwritten note: '585 £. King against Durlacher' and to the right is written 'For Morrison'. It seems that a bidding war had taken place, with Durlacher acting for the collector. Another text shows Durlacher seeking out pieces with Morrison's tastes in mind. On 2 August 1886, the dealer wrote of a 'pink vase' among a group of 'Oriental china', which he hoped to show the connoisseur. A receipt dated the same day shows the sale of a 'pink oriental china vase' with two more vases and a 'pilgrim bottle' for £375. The *Inventory of Fonthill*

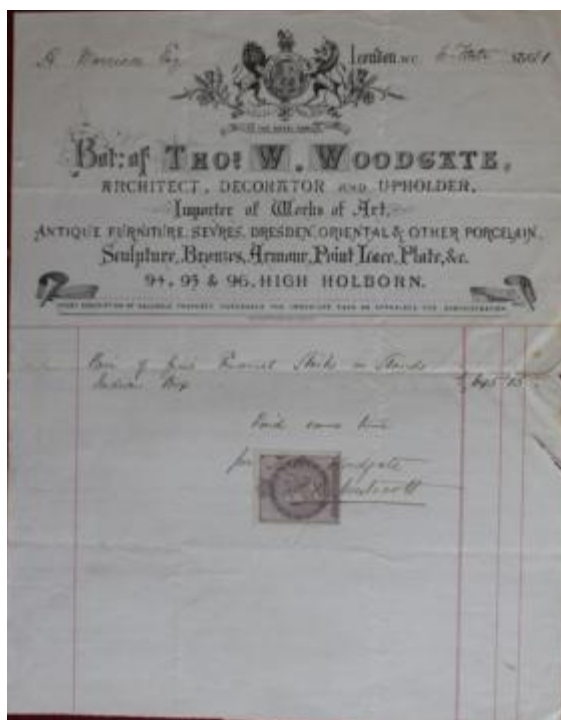


Figure 7.2 Receipt dated 6 October 1864 from Thomas W. Woodgate for a pair of enamelled storks and an Indian box.

Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128

heirlooms, discussed later, shows that Morrison favoured pink-ground porcelains.⁴³

No objects listed in the Durlacher receipts are attributed to the Summer Palace; however, some are priced and described in a manner that suggests they could be imperial or they are attributed to the estate in other sources. For instance, Durlacher purchased a gold box and cover for £215 on 1 December 1862 at Christie's. The auction house catalogued it as '109 A MASSIVE OVAL BOX AND COVER, OF FINE GOLD, the surface covered with filigree work, on the lid a group of fruits and foliage formed of precious stones in relief, containing two fine specimens of matrix of sapphire and ruby.'⁴⁴

The sale comprised a large assemblage of objects consigned by the firm of Remi, Schmidt & Co., which had displayed the group at the Great Exhibition in 1862. Although it is not attributed to the Summer Palace in the catalogue, the item was later loaned by Mabel Morrison to an 'Exhibition of Ancient and Modern Jewellery' at the South Kensington

Museum in 1872. The *Morning Post* attributed the piece to the imperial estate:

Mrs. Alfred Morrison, whose excellent taste in jewellery has been mentioned in former notices, exhibits a Chinese gold box, which is interesting as having been taken from the Summer Palace. The surface of the box is covered with filigree-work, on the top are fruits and leaves of various precious stones, and inside the box is a large specimen of the root of the ruby and another of asterias sapphire, with chatoyant lustre.⁴⁵

On 2 November 1863, Durlacher included a 'gold embroidered throne cover' for £65 in a receipt with several pieces of cloisonné and porcelain. This is probably one of the numerous imperial drapes, throne pillows and altar covers of yellow silk embroidered with five-clawed dragons in gold thread that were taken from the Summer Palace, then sold, exhibited and donated to museums after the war.⁴⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Garnet Wolseley (1833–1919) wrote of the interest they held for men in his war memoir: 'The cushions upon the chairs and sofas were covered with the finest yellow satin embroidered over with figures of dragons and flowers. Yellow is the Imperial colour, and none but those of royal birth are permitted to wear clothes made of it.'⁴⁷ His widow later donated embroidered yellow silks taken by Wolseley to the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁴⁸ When the Colchester Garrison Grand Ball took place in 1863, the decorations featured imperial golden silks:

The whole was canopied with elegant yellow silk drapery, on which were elaborately-worked dragons, taken during the Chinese war from the Emperor's Summer Palace at Peking, and kindly lent for the occasion by Brigade-Major Baldwin ... The principal entrance at the top of the staircase displayed a most magnificent and valuable cloth of gold curtain, with Chinese figures and flowers wrought in floss silk, taken from the royal palace at Peking, also the property of Major Baldwin.⁴⁹

In light of these activities and the numerous Summer Palace textiles offered for sale in the decade after the war, it seems likely that the throne cover is from the imperial estate.⁵⁰ Another receipt in the Fonthill Archives, dated 27 September 1866, shows '2 small oriental basins & covers purchased at Capt Negroni's sale'. The display and auction of extensive Summer Palace spoils taken by the French officer Captain

Jean-Louis de Negroni caused a sensation in London in the years 1865 and 1866.⁵¹ One of many reviews reported: 'A collection of jewellery, precious stones, enamels, jade, robes, watches, and other articles of taste ... particularly wealthy in state robes of dazzling splendour, affording a good idea of Chinese art.'⁵²

There are also items, both imperial and non-imperial, that seem to match those offered at Christie's in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. According to a receipt of 20 November 1863, Durlacher sold Morrison '2 enamels, kylins' for £296.15. These are possibly the pair of *qilin*, a type of fabulous beast, sold by Christie's in 1965 as Lot 131: 'A pair of cloisonné enamel incense burners and covers, in the form of fabulous Buddhistic lions, standing, their top knots forming the covers, their mouths open, decorated with flowering branches in colours on turquoise grounds, with green manes and tails, the rectangular bases decorated with trellis-work, stiff leaves below—21" high—Chi'en Lung.' A receipt of 22 March 1865 shows '2 cloisonné enamel boxes & covers' for £70, which could be the pair of round cloisonné boxes with a floral scroll on the exteriors and prunus blossoms scattered over a 'cracked ice' ground inside, which were sold as Lot 26 in 2004. A receipt of 27 September 1866 shows 'Two surface enamel basins and covers (yellow),' which may be the 'Pair of Yellow-Ground Enamelled Copper Circular Bowls and Covers' dated to the eighteenth century and sold as Lot 18 in 2004. A 'Pr. cloisonné (lapis) enamel basins' sold for £35, according to a receipt of 17 July 1864, could be the 'Pair of Fine Cloisonné Enamel and Gilt-Metal Blue-Ground Octagonal Jardinieres', dated to the Qianlong period and sold as Lot 35 in 2004. The 'Pr. Oriental china (blue & gold) vases', sold for £65 in a receipt of 23 December 1864, may be the 'Pair of Rare Gilt-Decorated Blue-Ground Mallet-Shaped Bottle Vases', mark and period of the Jiaqing emperor (1760–1820, r. 1796–1820), sold as Lot 51 in 2004. So Morrison seems to have acquired objects from the Summer Palace through both Loch and Durlacher.

Display of the Fonthill collection

Undated photographs in the Fonthill Archives give us another perspective on the Morrison collection. These show the kinds of impressive enamelled porcelain and metal vessels that became available in Britain only after the 1860 war, when they created excitement in the marketplace and exhibitions. Massive cloisonné vessels were offered at the 1864 estate sale of artworks belonging to James Bruce, the 8th

Earl of Elgin (1811–63), who served as the leading diplomat of the China expedition.⁵³ Although they were not attributed to the Summer Palace, their size and quality, evident from catalogue entries, raise the possibility that they came from the estate. One newspaper story on the auction expressed the general excitement around these objects:

The following were the most important articles: Enamels: 67 and 68. An incense burner, of extraordinary size, on three feet, surmounted by masks of metal gilt, with mask and ring handles, enamelled with flowers in colours on turquoise ground, the cover of enamel, pierced, and surmounted by a kylin of metal gilt, 3ft. high; and the companion incense-burner, on three feet, enamelled with flowers and ornaments, in brilliant colours on turquoise ground, the cover of enamel, pierced, and surmounted by metal gilt kylin, 3ft. 2in. high; £139 (Hewett).⁵⁴

The Hon James Frederick Stuart Wortley (1833–70), who had served as an attaché to Lord Elgin, acquired ‘very large and magnificent copper enamels’.⁵⁵ The Rev. James M’Ghee noted the removal of such pieces from the Hall of Audience in his war memoir:

This hall was a separate building, not attached to any other; its length was about 120 feet, its breadth about 80. At each end stood one of those enormous and splendid enamelled bowls, which the army has presented to Her Most Gracious Majesty, at Major Probyn’s request, who took them from the hall himself—minor spirits, being deterred from touching them by their vastness, were contented with some smaller and more suitable memento. But a difficulty is just thing for Probyn; he contrived to get them away when no one else thought of attempting it.⁵⁶

M’Ghee here referred to General Sir Dighton Macnaghten Probyn (1833–1924) of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, Indian Army. The Royal Collection holds no record of such a gift; however, there is a letter from Elgin to the foreign secretary Lord John Russell (1792–1878) of 5 June 1861, in which he mentions an enamel vase in conjunction with an imperial *ruyi* sceptre for the queen:

I am informed by Lieutenant General Sir H. Grant that he is the bearer of a Joey stick selected by General de Montauban and of an enamel vase set apart by the army from the spoils of the

summer palace at Pekin for presentation to Her Majesty, and he has requested me to endeavour to ascertain from Your Lordship how this presentation should take place.⁵⁷

Of course, Elgin may have been referring to another bowl or vase entirely. Only a pair of large cloisonné jardinières at Buckingham Palace approach the size of the bowls mentioned by M'Ghee, but there is no evidence that these came from the Summer Palace.⁵⁸ They are also decidedly decorative and seem better suited to a pleasure palace than a hall for official business. Whatever the case, the stories of enamelled gifts for the queen underscore the importance of this material for the British.

A photograph in the Fonthill Archives (Figure 7.3) shows a large cloisonné cistern with a pond scene, which is one of a pair sold at Christie's as Lot 100 in 1971.⁵⁹ Behind this is an enamelled *guan* wine jar and a garden seat at left, as well as a cylindrical cloisonné *ding* tripod censer from an imperial *wugong*, or five-piece altar set, which the author discussed in a previous publication.⁶⁰ The *ding* was sold in 2022 through



Figure 7.3 A cloisonné cistern and *ding* censer with an enamelled *guan* jar and garden seat.

Undated photograph of the interior of the conservatory. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1143

Sotheby's, which attributed the piece specifically to Loch and identified it as the enamel 'kui dragon' tripod incense burner, mark and period of Qianlong, which had been sold as Lot 133 at Christie's London in 1965.⁶¹ The exact circumstances in which the Morrison piece was split from its set and the current location(s) of the remaining parts are unknown to this writer. Many such *wugong* in enamelled metal and porcelain were taken from the Summer Palace. During the Qing dynasty, a *wugong* altar garniture almost always included a *ding* incense burner, two *gu* beaker vessels and two candlesticks. One cloisonné set of the Kangxi period, reputedly from the Summer Palace, is in the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, New South Wales.⁶² Many of these altar garnitures were broken up by soldiers during the plunder, so one can find in auction and exhibition catalogues of the period a number of candlesticks from cloisonné *wugong*. A Christie's sale on 15 May 1862 featured Lot 119, 'A pair of handsome large altar candlesticks, with flowers in brilliant colours, on turquoise ground—18 in. high', and their sale on 21 July 1862, featured Lot 73, 'A pair of beautiful small altar candlesticks'. Two cloisonné candlesticks from a *wugong* set, possibly taken in 1860, were acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum during the 1870s.⁶³ Soldiers and diplomats brought *wugong* pieces from China because as sacred objects they were often massive and imposing, decorated in brilliant colours and gilded, which gave them clear value for Europeans.

Diplomats and soldiers affiliated with the 1860 campaign acquired large pieces of cloisonné and porcelain, some of which were attributed to the Summer Palace in texts of the period. Large imperial vessels, such as those in the Fonthill photograph, were then integrated into the décor of wealthy homes.⁶⁴ Sir Richard Wallace (1818–90) acquired two imperial cloisonné pagoda-shaped incense burners well over a metre high, which he displayed in his smoking room. Curators of the Wallace Collection date the pair to the Qing dynasty and trace them to William Rudolph Landstein (1840–81), a Polish businessman operating in Hong Kong who owned them until about 1869.⁶⁵ In 1888, Lady Cecilia Annabella Repton (1817–1902) sold through the auction house Phillips, Son & Neale (formerly Mr Phillips), massive vases linked with the Summer Palace:

... a magnificent Chippendale Room ... suites of furniture of the Louis XIV, XV, and XVI periods, and others of the Empire period, old oak panelling, a marble mantelpiece inlaid with old Wedgwood plaques, designed by Flaxman for the Princess Clotilde ... a fine eight-fold gold ground leather screen, painted in 32 panels in subjects after Watteau and Hondekoeter; a fine pair of 5 ft. high

Oriental jars, from the Summer Palace, also other specimens of Sevres.⁶⁶

This mixing of porcelain with rococo and neoclassical décor was in keeping with the tastes of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In a report on the sale, the *Globe* stated that the vases earned the highest bid, exceeding the prices for Chippendale furniture, fashionable ginger jars and other large Chinese vases, noting: 'a pair of magnificent oriental jars and covers, 4ft. 6in. high, richly enamelled in long-tailed birds, subjects and figures. These jars were put up at 200gs., and after a brisk competition were knocked down to Mr. Robson.'⁶⁷ In keeping with this fashion, Morrison acquired a giant incense burner taken by a soldier from the palace, which was exhibited at the London International Exhibition and auctioned twice at Christie's in 1862 and 1863 as a 'stove from the emperor's library'.⁶⁸ This splendid piece was sold as part of the Fonthill collection at Christie's in 1965.⁶⁹

The well-known 'Fonthill Heirlooms' were art treasures among Alfred's collection that were to remain at Fonthill after his death, listed in a room-by-room inventory of 1900.⁷⁰ The Chinese pieces have achieved fame among collectors owing to their quality, as well as their provenance at Fonthill and attribution of many to the Summer Palace. The inventory shows where the heirlooms were kept at Fonthill and which pieces were identified as imperial at the time.⁷¹ No reign marks on imperial cloisonné pieces were mentioned and the only vessels explicitly identified as imperial were attributed to the Qianlong reign, with the exception of a pair of vases in the dining room said to be 'enamelled with flowers and foliage, in pink and green on imperial yellow ground'.⁷² Although a number of yellow glazes were produced within and outside imperial workshops, British collectors applied the general term 'imperial yellow' to yellow-glazed porcelains they linked with the Chinese emperor, on the basis of nineteenth-century British porcelain texts and the remarks of soldiers who wrote about the plunder of the Summer Palace.⁷³ The inventory includes 101 porcelains described as 'Kien Lung'.⁷⁴ Although no supporting evidence, such as reign marks, is given for the Qianlong attribution, phrases such as 'enamelled with arabesque foliage and flowers in colours', 'insides painted with bats in red' and 'circular panels of flowers', call to mind many imperial Qianlong *famille rose* porcelains that appeared in the Fonthill sales.⁷⁵ However, later cataloguing by Christie's revealed that many pieces in the collection actually bore reign marks of the Jiaqing (1782–1850, r. 1796–1820) and Daoguang (1782–1850, r. 1821–50) emperors.

The 'Kien-Lung' pieces were clearly prized vessels. Among the huge quantity of porcelains in the dining room were two cabinets holding a total of 25 pieces identified as 'Kien-Lung Dark Ruby Coloured Porcelain', including 'A vase, with a band of pomegranate branches, with flowers and fruit'.⁷⁶ These were certainly among the 'Imperial Famille Rose Porcelains' with 'Red Grounds', identified as mostly 'from Lord Loch', which were sold at Christie's in 1971. The ruby-ground vase was then catalogued as a Jiaqing mark-and-period 'famille rose baluster vase ... Enamelled in the Chinese taste with a flowering and fruiting pomegranate tree'.⁷⁷ The room also held two cabinets with 26 pieces of 'Kien-lung Porcelain, on pale yellow ground'.⁷⁸ Among these, 'A pear-shaped bottle with arabesques, foliage and flowers, and down curved lip' is probably the well-known Jiaqing mark-and-period vase with unusual *ruyi*-head lip.⁷⁹ A large number of pink-ground 'Kien-lung' porcelains 'enamelled with arabesque foliage and flowers in colours' are found throughout the house, often displayed in groups.⁸⁰

In the vast saloon, the contents of which cover nine pages of the inventory, Morrison combined eighteenth-century French furniture, European sculpture, a huge amount of 'Old Chinese Porcelain' and a few of his largest and best-known cloisonné pieces. Among the porcelains, 'A vase, with red and gold handles, enamelled with arabesque foliage and flowers, on blue ground—Kien-lung',⁸¹ may be the magnificent Qianlong mark-and-period vase showing a lavish lotus scroll on a rich deep-blue ground and gold *ruyi* handles with pendent *wan* symbols sold in 2004 (Figure 7.4).⁸² Other porcelains were export wares with bird-and-flower imagery. Several 'mirror-black' and 'red ground' pieces spoke to the fashions for black and red glazes reigning at the time, which will be discussed later. Among the cloisonné was a 'globular koro and cover, with scroll panels of flowers on trellis pattern ground, with dolphin handles, mounted in metal gilt'.⁸³ This is likely the same censer displayed at the London International Exhibition in 1862, then sold at Christie's in 1965.⁸⁴ The billiard room held export 'mandarin jars' with a fantastic array of 28 cloisonné pieces. These included the pair of shallow bowls with Qianlong marks and gilt dragon tripod feet, sold in 2004,⁸⁵ as well as 'A pair of large vase-shaped koro and covers, on tripods, with metal gilt dragons' heads, and handles chased as clouds'.⁸⁶ These fantastic and highly unusual pieces were sold in 1965.⁸⁷

The placement of large cloisonné pieces within spaces devoted to entertaining is in keeping with the practice of wealthy collectors during Morrison's day.⁸⁸ By contrast, in Mabel Morrison's boudoir, 38 pieces of 'Old Chinese Porcelain' were placed among European furniture

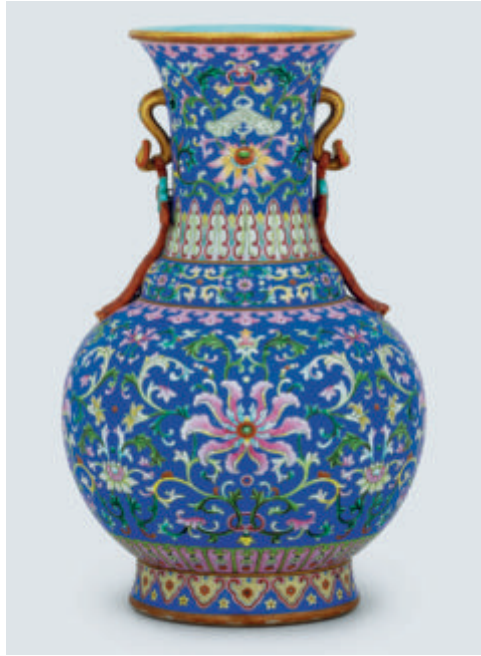


Figure 7.4 A *famille rose* vase bearing a Qianlong mark, once in the Alfred Morrison collection. Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 57. Photograph © 2004, Christie's Images Limited

decorated with marquetry, ormolu and stone inlay. None of the pieces were described as 'Kien-lung' and a significant portion were export pieces with typical bird-and-flower decoration. It seems that more valuable pieces were kept in rooms for entertaining.

Another document in the Fonthill Archives reveals the way in which family members displayed some of Morrison's Chinese objects after his death. In 1918, an inventory was made of the contents of 9 Halkin Street, in Belgravia, built for Alfred's son Hugh Morrison (1868–1931) and his wife, Lady Mary Morrison (1870–1934).⁸⁹ In the margins of the typed inventory, 'H' has been handwritten next to the many pieces, indicating that they were Fonthill Heirlooms. The list, organised by room, shows that the couple lived in London among Chinese things. Porcelain and cloisonné were everywhere, apart from the 'Business Room', where the only decorative objects were four bronze statuettes of African game by Antoine-Louis Barye (1795–1825) and 'J. Hachnel', who was probably Julius Heinrich Haehnel (1823–1909).⁹⁰ This suggests that Hugh, elected to Parliament that very year, associated Chinese porcelain with leisure time and conjugal spaces. The types of Chinese objects in each

room varied with the function of the space. Mention of specific objects here is restricted to those marked 'H', which can be identified (tentatively in cases) or compared with Fonthill pieces in Christie's sale catalogues. In the entrance hall was a 'circular dish, 17 ½"', of turquoise Cloisonné enamel decorated Dragons and flowers, with gilt metal rim and 3 pierced feet' (Figure 7.5).⁹¹ This was later catalogued as an eighteenth-century "'dragon" dish', with *chilong* (hornless dragons) among Buddhist emblems and archaistic feet.⁹²

The inner hall held majestic carvings in marble and porphyry contrasting dramatically with a pair of *famille rose* 'mandarin' vases painted with 'fabulous birds and large flowers' on a 'black ground', their covers topped with kylin.⁹³ Three similar jars were sold in 2004.⁹⁴ In the library were cloisonné vessels and ruby-ground porcelain jars. Alfred Morrison had acquired many ruby-ground pieces, including two sets of the Yongzheng period (1678–1735; r. 1722–35). One pair is pictured in the frontispiece of the 1971 sale catalogue and the other was sold in 2004.⁹⁵

In cabinets, the Morrisons displayed sets of export dishes described as *famille rose* or 'egg shell', featuring bird-and-flower imagery or domestic scenes within decorative borders. A significant number were Fonthill Heirlooms.⁹⁶ In the 'Long Drawing Room' were the largest items. There were sets of oviform *famille rose* vessels with birds and flowers and large cloisonné pieces: 'Two large square low tables, of turquoise



Figure 7.5 A large cloisonné and gilt-bronze tripod eighteenth-century 'dragon' dish, once in the Fonthill collection, Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 48.

Photograph © 2004, Christie's Images Limited

cloisonne enamel, 24" wide, with a chequer and flowers decoration', a 'globular cistern, 29" dia, of cloisonne turquoise enamel' and cloisonné incense burners identified by the Japanese term 'koro', one reaching the height of 4 ft.⁹⁷ The tables may have been sold at Christie's in 1971, along with the cistern, which was catalogued as a 'massive cloisonne-enamel cistern or fish bowl—29 ½ in ... Decorated with flowering plants and trees issuing from a blue rock work on a turquoise key-pattern ground.'⁹⁸ The incense burner may be the very same 48 in turquoise-ground incense burner with a mark of the Qianlong emperor (1711–95, r. 1736–95) that was sold in 1965.⁹⁹

In Lady Morrison's sitting room, smaller cloisonné and porcelain pieces were combined with Japanese black lacquer. There was a pair of cloisonné garden seats and 'A beaker shape vase of old Cloisonne enamel, 6" high, with grotesque masks and arabesque decoration, on a turquoise ground.'¹⁰⁰ This is likely the Qianlong mark-and-period archaistic *zun* vase with large *taotie* masks on a turquoise key-fret ground sold in 2004.¹⁰¹ There were also 'A Cloisonne enamel flat bowl and cover, 7" dia, with floral decoration, on a turquoise ground' and a similar bowl.¹⁰² This may be the pair of Qianlong-period covered bowls with prunus on a turquoise 'cracked ice' ground sold in 2004, although the latter were said to be 7½ in in diameter.¹⁰³ The porcelain included mostly *famille rose* dishes with typical bird-and-flower decoration and colored borders, but also sixteen porcelains described as 'black' or 'black ground', with painted decoration. Among these were three covered 'oviform vases ... 17½" ... decorated with poultry and flowers, in various shaped panels'.¹⁰⁴ There was also a pair of square-shaped black vases, 12¼" high, of Chinese porcelain, decorated with foliage in green, with gilt handles, which was sold in 2004.¹⁰⁵

The distribution of Chinese objects within the Morrison residence in London reveals that a distinct aesthetic had crystallised in relation to this material in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both within the Morrison family and in the wider circles of elite collectors. First, more substantial objects were displayed in large rooms devoted to entertaining, rather than private spaces, as might be expected. Second, many mass-produced and non-imperial *famille rose* wares were included in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, along with rare pieces produced for the Chinese court. However, the Morrison family had already established a ranking of wares within their collection.

Alfred Morrison displayed separately yellow- and red-ground vessels then attributed to the Qianlong emperor, for the rarity and technical virtuosity of red and yellow glazes had been recognised since

the early days of porcelain connoisseurship in Britain.¹⁰⁶ The value he placed in imperial red porcelains carried over into non-imperial ruby-ground export wares. Moreover, the splendid enamelled porcelains that we associate with Fonthill and the Summer Palace were kept at the Fonthill estate. Today, these 'imperial' pieces are now valued so high above popular and export wares as to constitute an entirely different market.

Finally, the inventories reveal a preference for painted *famille rose* wares over blue-and-white, monochrome and *famille verte* pieces, which were avidly acquired by other great collectors of the period. However, Hugh and Lady Mary Morrison shared the popular taste for *famille rose* export pieces, particularly those with a ruby ground. Ceramics expert Suzanne Valenstein has written that ruby-ground 'vases and covered jars were made by the thousands in China and were then sent as three, or five, piece "sets" to the West to become the pride of eighteenth-century European homes'.¹⁰⁷ Black-ground porcelains were also eagerly collected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The connoisseur Sir William Bennett (1852–1913) wrote of 'certain remarkable specimens such as are occasionally met with in the *famille noire*, with plum blossom decoration; or like that masterpiece of Chinese porcelain decorated with sprays of cherry blossoms on a black ground, once the gem of the Salting collection, but now unfortunately gone'.¹⁰⁸ Bennett himself owned many 'black' porcelains, as did John Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913); and these may be seen in catalogues of their collections.¹⁰⁹ Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919) and Benjamin Altman (1840–1913) owned both ruby- and black-ground vases, which are in public collections today.¹¹⁰ Linda Rosenfeld Pomper has written a history of the European taste for *famille noire* porcelains, in which she suggests that these resembled Japanese lacquer and were absorbed into the aesthetics of Japonism.¹¹¹ The lacquered objects in Lady Morrison's sitting room provide some evidence for this view. Konstanze Knittler has written that the intense interest in *famille noire* porcelains among collectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as William Lever (1851–1925), was founded partly on the misconception that they dated to the Ming or early Qing period, when in fact many had been produced in the nineteenth century.¹¹² Problems of dating and identification were experienced widely among early collectors apart from Alfred Morrison and his 'Kien-lung'.

Conclusion

Alfred Morrison engaged in the kind of prodigious collecting that was financially possible and fashionable for men who made and inherited large fortunes in the long nineteenth century. The British empire and Industrial Revolution had given rise to a new class of wealthy commoners, who assembled vast collections of museum-quality artworks at breathtaking speed. At the same time, British Army operations overseas, particularly in Asia, brought new kinds of artworks to the attention of connoisseurs. Morrison's sweeping acquisition of treasures from the Summer Palace during the 1860s is fully in keeping with this new kind of collecting, which embraced the arts of China, Japan and India, as new and exotic. With access to vast funds, Morrison was able to assemble the largest and most valuable specimens of the enamelled metalwork and porcelain that were favoured within this new cluster of collecting cultures that looked to the East in the later Victorian period. Apart from the unresolved provenance questions, this cultural context raises another issue: what specific role did Morrison's collection play in the formation of the Chinese imperial art market? In other words, did participants in the market – both collectors and dealers – look to his pieces as a standard for valuation and provenance? Inherent in this question is the deeper issue of how valuation of Chinese imperial art developed in a market that emerged and flourished quickly, owing to the dramatic circumstances of its formation; and how it mirrored or departed from the aesthetics of the Chinese court owing to varying knowledge levels and aesthetic priorities. Collectors in this new field were scrambling to understand products of a court culture with which they were largely unfamiliar. In this situation, they may have looked to a leading British collector for guidance. While these and other questions remain unsolved at this point, Morrison certainly owned one of the greatest Chinese collections ever formed in Britain, which still influences the taste for Qing dynasty enamelled wares today.

Notes

- 1 Christie's London, Sale of 31 May 1965; Christie's London, Sale of 18 October 1971; Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100; Christie's Hong Kong, 1 December 2010, Sale 2838. Complete titles for all Christie's sale catalogues are keyed and listed by date in the bibliography.
- 2 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 225–47.
- 3 Anon, 'Royal Agricultural Society of England', 3; Anon, 'Mr. James Rawlence's Ram Sale and Letting', *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 8 August 1864, 8; 'Bath and West of England Society', 9.

- 4 Anon, 'Land Loan and Enfranchisement Company. Authorised Capital, £295,000', *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 11 May 1861, 8.
- 5 Anon, 'The Chef d'Oeuvres of the Exhibition', 7.
- 6 Anon, 'Tercentenary of the Birth of Shakespeare', 1.
- 7 Anon, 'Reading Industrial Exhibition', 5.
- 8 Anon, 'The Portrait Exhibition', 4; Anon, 'New Church at Fonthill Gifford, Near Salisbury', 11.
- 9 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 241–2; Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the patronage of Alfred Morrison', 194–223.
- 10 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, acc. nos. 2010.33, 2018.74.
- 11 Anon, 'The Saltaire Exhibition. The Art Exhibits', 2.
- 12 Norman, 'Ch'ien Lung pieces', 16; Dakers, *Genius for Money*, 225–47, 228–9.
- 13 Norman, 'Ch'ien Lung pieces'.
- 14 Dakers, *Genius for Money*, 229.
- 15 Anon, 'Persons and Places. From Last Night's Papers', 3.
- 16 Knollys, *Incidents in the China War*, 108, 131.
- 17 Loch, *Personal Narrative*, 170.
- 18 Wong, *A Paradise Lost*, loc. 4731 of 5427, Kindle.
- 19 Cavalry Brigade order book of Lt. Col. C. P. B. Walker, 17 February–6 November 1860, WO 147/2, UK National Archives, Kew.
- 20 Gen. Sir Mark Walker, undated will, proved 17 October 1902, District Probate Registry, Canterbury, no. 205a.
- 21 Anon, 'Death of Sir Henry Wilmot', 13.
- 22 Cousins, 'Shugborough', 33–73; McDowall, 'Imperial plots?', 17–33.
- 23 Shugborough Estate, Staffordshire, National Trust, inv. no. NT 3187988. Bell, *Travels from St. Petersburg*, 2: 5–6.
- 24 Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire, National Trust, inv. no. NT 1270952.1–4.
- 25 I would like to thank Dr Jessica Ayres, Archives Officer at the London Metropolitan Archives, for researching this issue on my behalf. Her acuity and thoroughness were greatly appreciated from a distance. The reference codes for the files consulted are LMA/4519/B/01, LMA/4519/B/03/004, LMA/4519/A/04/001, LMA/4519/B/15/001 and LMA/4519/B/15/002.
- 26 Anon, 'Her Majesty, &c. from the Court Circular, Windsor Castle, Dec. 29', 4.
- 27 Anon, 'Her Majesty's Levee. From the Court Newsman', 7.
- 28 Christie's London, Sales of 31 May 1965, 18 October 1971, 9 November 2004 (Sale 7100); Christie's Hong Kong, 1 December 2010 (Sale 2838).
- 29 Christie's London, Sale of 21 July 1862, Lot 58; Sale of 30 May 1862, Lot 231; Sale of 1 December 1862, Lot 97.
- 30 Measuring Worth Foundation, Purchasing Power Comparator, <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/> (accessed 30 June 2024).
- 31 Letters, accounts and vouchers, 1862–71, Fonthill Archives, Folder F-2-1128. All receipts for the Durlacher–Morrison transactions discussed in this chapter are contained within this folder.
- 32 *Queen's Regulations*, 291.
- 33 Knollys, *Incidents in the China War*, 192.
- 34 China Expedition: Agreement with France, on Joint Captures, 1859, ref. no. TS45-195, UK National Archives, Kew.
- 35 M'Ghee, *How We Got to Peking*, 293.
- 36 Caroline Dakers and John d'Arcy. Conversation at the Fonthill Archives, 20 August 2015.
- 37 Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lots 27, 29, 31, 43.
- 38 Letters, accounts and vouchers, 1862–71, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 39 Letters, accounts and vouchers, 1889–90, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1133.
- 40 Letters, accounts and vouchers, 1862–71, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128.
- 41 Christie's Hong Kong, 1 December 2010, Sale 2838, Lot 2983.
- 42 Howald, 'The power of provenance', 257.
- 43 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 32–3, 49–51.
- 44 Christie's, Sale of 1 December 1862, Lot 109.
- 45 Anon, 'The Loan Exhibition of Jewellery', 3.
- 46 Hill, 'Complicated Objects', 120–2, 131–7.

- 47 Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China*, 236.
- 48 Victoria and Albert Museum, London, acc. nos T.134–140-1917, T.142-1917, CIRC.66–75-1917.
- 49 Anon, 'Colchester Garrison Grand Ball', 3.
- 50 For silks attributed to the Summer Palace, see Christie's London, Sales of 5 July 1861, 1 April 1863, 20 July 1863, 3 August 1871.
- 51 For contents of the collection, see *Catalogue of Capitain de Negroni's Collection*. The extensive newspaper coverage and advertising of the exhibition and sale includes Anon, 'Chinese exhibition at the Crystal Palace', 6; 'Sales by Auction', *Morning Post*, 5 June 1866, 8.
- 52 Anon, 'Chinese exhibition at the Crystal Palace', 6.
- 53 Christie's London, Sale of 18 May 1864, Lots 63–8. Tythacott, 'Exhibiting and auctioning Yuanmingyuan', paras 4–10.
- 54 Anon, 'The Earl of Elgin's collection of works of art', 3.
- 55 Hill, 'The Yuanmingyuan and design reform', 55–6.
- 56 M'Ghee, *How We Got to Peking*, 204.
- 57 Lord Elgin to Lord John Russell, 5 June 1861, Lord Elgin (Special Mission), FO 17/359, UK National Archives, Kew.
- 58 Rufus Bird (former Deputy Surveyor of the Queen's Works of Art, Royal Collection Trust), email message to the author, 27 June 2011; Rachel Peat Underhill, Curator of Decorative Arts, Royal Collection Trust, email message to the author, 5 April 2024. UK Royal Collection, inv. no. RNC 2107-8.
- 59 Photographs of conservatory, n.d., Fonthill Archives, F/2/1143.
- 60 Hill, 'Enamels "ancient" and "rare"'.
61 *A Journey Through China's History: The Dr Wou Kiuan Collection Part II*, Sotheby's Hong Kong, Sale of 8 October 2022, Lot 3806.
- 62 Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, New South Wales, obj. no. A6080.
- 63 Victoria and Albert Museum, London, acc. nos 1469–1870, 510–1875.
- 64 Hill, 'Enamels "ancient" and "rare"': Weber, 'The reception of Chinese cloisonné', 187–221.
- 65 Wallace Collection, London, inv. nos OA2367, OA2368.
- 66 *Morning Post*, 3 February 1888, 8.
- 67 'Sale of Decorative Furniture and Porcelain', *Globe*, 8 February 1888, 7.
- 68 Hill, 'Complicated Objects', 217–18; Hill, 'The Yuanmingyuan and design reform', 57–8; Christie's London, Sale of 30 June 1862, Lot 141; Sale of 11 June 1863, Lot 210.
- 69 Christie's London, Sale of 31 May 1965, Lot 102.
- 70 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 240.
- 71 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 1900, Fonthill Archives, F/5/1180.
- 72 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 31.
- 73 Hill, 'Complicated Objects', 63, 94, 199, 200, 238, 364, 375, 377.
- 74 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 32–7, 41, 42, 48–51, 54, 57–9.
- 75 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 33–4.
- 76 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 33–5.
- 77 Christie's London, Sale of 18 October 1971, Lots 55–63. Lot 61 was the pomegranate vase.
- 78 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 35–7.
- 79 Christie's Hong Kong, 1 December 2010, Sale 2838, Lot 2981.
- 80 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 32–3, 49–51.
- 81 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 58.
- 82 Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 57.
- 83 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 59.
- 84 For discussion of the censor at the exhibition, see Hill, 'The Yuanmingyuan and design reform', 57–8. Christie's London, Sale of 31 May 1965, Lot 135.
- 85 Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 33.
- 86 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison, 29.
- 87 Christie's London, Sale of 31 May 1965, Lot 134.
- 88 Hill, 'Enamels "Ancient" and "Rare"'.
89 Trollope, *Inventory & Valuation*, Fonthill Archives, M/2/1403.
- 90 Trollope, *Inventory & Valuation*, 74.
- 91 Trollope, *Inventory & Valuation*, 81.
- 92 Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 48.

- 93 Trollope, *Inventory & Valuation*, 82.
- 94 Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 13.
- 95 Christie's London, Sale of 18 October 1971, Lot 29; Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 14.
- 96 For similar pieces, see Christie's London, Sale of 31 May 1965, Lots 13, 14, 17–19, 26.
- 97 Trollope, *Inventory & Valuation*, 70.
- 98 Christie's London, Sale of 18 October 1971, Lots 12, 101.
- 99 Christie's London, Sale of 31 May 1965, Lot 133.
- 100 Trollope, *Inventory & Valuation*, 65.
- 101 Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 45.
- 102 Trollope, *Inventory & Valuation*, 67.
- 103 Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 26.
- 104 Trollope, *Inventory & Valuation*, 65.
- 105 Christie's London, 9 November 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 6.
- 106 Hill, 'Complicated Objects', 182–3.
- 107 Valenstein, *A Handbook of Chinese Ceramics*, 256–7.
- 108 Bennett, 'Note on the decorative value of famille verte', 538.
- 109 Gorer, *A Collection of Rare Old Chinese Porcelains*, nos 5, 15, 37, 38, 41, 94–6. Black-ground porcelains appear in the frontispiece and two other unnumbered colour plates. Bushell and Laffan, *Catalogue of the Morgan Collection*, plates XLVII–LII, LVII.
- 110 See, for example, Frick Collection, New York, inv. nos 1915.8.18, 1915.8.19, 1915.8.21, 1915.8.52, 1915.8.53, 1915.8.54, 1915.8.57; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. nos. 14.40.60a, b, 14.40.184, 14.40.232, 14.40.235, 14.40.403a, b.
- 111 Pomper, 'Famille-noire porcelains', 118.
- 112 Knittler, 'Fakes or reinventions?', 110–15; Knittler, 'William Lever's collecting of famille noire'.

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5 July 1861

'Catalogue of a Very Choice Collection of the Finest Old Japan Lacquer (Including Specimens of Great Rarity and Beauty) Received from That Well-Known Traveller and Connoisseur, Robert Fortune, Esq. and Some Magnificent Enamels, Bronzes, &c., from the Summer Palace at Peking, which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, at their Great Rooms, 8, King Street, St. James's Square, on Friday, July 5, 1861.'

30 May 1862

'Catalogue of an Assemblage of Oriental, Sevres, Dresden, and Chelsea Porcelain, Delft and Wedgwood Ware, Porcelain, Jades, and Bronzes, from the Summer Palace; Clocks, Candelabra, French Bronzes and Decorative Furniture, Also Some Ornamental Objects and Chippendale Furniture, the Property of Joseph Humphrey, Esq., which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, at their Great Rooms, 8, King Street, St. James's Square, on 30 May, 1862.'

30 June 1862

'Catalogue of an Assemblage of Sevres, Dresden, Oriental, and Other Porcelain, Japanese Bronzes and Lacquer Work, Decorative Furniture, Tapestry; Carvings in Ivory and Wood, and Some Magnificent Enamels from the Summer Palace at Peking, which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, at their Great Rooms, 8, King Street, St. James's Square, on June 30, 1862.'

21 July 1862

'Catalogue of a Very Choice Collection of Ancient Chinese Porcelain Enamels and Carvings, and Jade, Including Specimens of Extreme Rarity and Beauty, and all Brought from the Summer Palace at Pekin by an Officer; also a Very Beautiful Vase, of the Finest Old Sevres, a Pair of Magnificent Bronze Busts of Henry IV, and Sully and a Pair of Ebony and Or-Molu Pedestals of the Time of Louis XIV, which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, at their Great Rooms, 8, King Street, St. James's Square, on July 21, 1862.'

1 December 1862

'Catalogue of the Splendid Collection of Chinese and Japanese Works of Art, Contributed to the International Exhibition by Messrs. Remi, Schmidt & Co.; the Carved Furniture, Jewellery, &c., from Ceylon; Mr. Harry Emanuel's Trophy; a Large Collection of Beautiful Ornamental Objects Exhibited in the Zollverein and French Courts; and Splendid Billiard Table, Willoughby; Also, a Fine Collection of Old Silver and Silver-Gilt Plate, which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, at their Great Rooms, 8, King Street, St. James's Square, on December 1, 1862.'

1 April 1863

'Catalogue of a Large and Valuable Assemblage of Oriental Porcelain, Beautiful Inlaid Bombay Work, Carvings in Jade, Ivory, and Wood; Bronzes, Fabrics, and Curiosities; Including Some Choice Specimens from the Summer Palace, which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, at their Great Rooms, 8, King Street, St. James's Square, on April 1, 1863.'

11 June 1863

'Catalogue of an Assemblage of Fine Old Oriental, Sevres, Dresden, and Vienna Porcelain, Beautiful Old French Furniture, Clocks and Candelabra, Carvings in Ivory, Bronzes, Magnificent Chinese Enamels, Marble Statuettes, which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, at their Great Rooms, 8, King Street, St. James's Square, on June 11, 1863.'

20 July 1863

'Catalogue of a Very Choice Collection of Ancient Chinese Enamels, Bronzes, Carvings in Jade, and Porcelain, Collected During the Two Years' Occupation of Tiensin, All from the Summer Palace and Pekin, which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, at their Great Rooms, 8, King Street, St. James's Square, on July 20, 1863.'

3 August 1871

'Catalogue of a Handsome Suite of Carved Indian Furniture, Japanese Curiosities, Chinese Enamels and Porcelain, Marble Busts, Bronzes, Old Danish Silver Tankards and Cups, Also, some Capital Cigars, The Property of a Nobleman, which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, at their Great Rooms, 8, King Street, St. James's Square, on Thursday, August 3, 1871.'

31 May 1965

'Catalogue of Important Chinese Porcelain & Cloisonné Enamels the Property of The Rt. Hon. The Lord Margadale of Islay, a Collection of Fine Chinese Jades and Hardstones the Property of Miss A. L. Soffer and Fine Chinese Ceramics and Jades the Properties of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Harewood and from Various Sources ... Monday, May 31, 1965.'

18 October 1971

'The Collection of Chinese Enamelled Porcelain, Cloisonné and Canton Enamels and a Jade Brush Pot Formed by the Late Alfred Morrison, Now Sold by Order of The Rt. Hon. The Lord Margadale of Islay, T. D., Removed from Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire ... Monday, October 18, 1971.'

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8

Alfred Morrison's furniture for Fonthill and 16 Carlton House Terrace: designed by Owen Jones and manufactured by Jackson & Graham

Clive Edwards

But so long as people will invest their money on old furniture, simply because it has a 'crust' on it, just so long will the beautiful works of a firm like Jackson and Graham be appreciated only by collectors who can enjoy pure art, as illustrated in luxurious furniture, for its own beautiful sake.¹

Introduction

This chapter examines the works of Jackson & Graham (in conjunction with Owen Jones) as the main furniture suppliers to Alfred Morrison and his houses at Fonthill, Wiltshire, and 16 Carlton House Terrace, London. It is intended to consider not only the objects themselves but also the methods of design and production. Jackson & Graham was among a few elite businesses during the latter half of the nineteenth century that were able to carry out all manner of furniture, furnishings and decoration. These included businesses such as Gillows, Holland and Sons, and Wright and Mansfield. Jackson & Graham worked with the foremost designers of the time and was able to complete important contracts. Alfred's commission was the epitome of their approach, and resulted in some of their most important and remarkable work.

The firm of Jackson & Graham

The partnership of Thomas Charles Jackson (1791–1848) and Peter Graham (1810–77) was established at 37 Oxford Street, by taking over the business of J. Richards & Co., linen drapers and upholsterers.² John Richards (1776–1837) ran a linen drapery business at this address from at least February 1810 to 1836.³ A notice in *The Age* in January 1836 stated: ‘JACKSON and GRAHAM (successors to JOHN RICHARDS and CO.) having purchased the remaining part of the Superb and Extensive Stock comprising nearly every requisite for Furnishing, beg to announce, preparatory to re-building the premises early in February that they shall now be selling off without reserve, at an enormous sacrifice.’⁴

They clearly prospered, as by 1839 they were listed at premises, 37 and 38 Oxford Street (numbering before 1880) as well as 18 Newman Street. Indeed, their trading style as complete house furnishers and decorators was established by their trade card, which described the business thus: ‘Upholsterers, Carpet Manufacturers, Furniture Printers and Interior Decorators’. Their success continued, so that by 1855 they had added No. 35, Oxford Street, and by 1866 their address included 29, 33, 34, 35, 37 and 38 Oxford Street, as well as premises in Perry’s Place, Freston Place and Newman Yard. By this date, they now designated themselves more illustriously as ‘upholsterers, cabinet-makers, carpet manufacturers, interior decorators and importers of French silks, bronzes and ornamental furniture’. By 1872, there were yet further additions to the enterprise, but on 27 June 1882, financial pressures forced them to cease business temporarily. An unsettled period ensued, which was only finally resolved by the takeover of the firm by the rival company Collinson and Lock, in 1885.

The designers

The importance of Jackson & Graham as one of the leading furniture makers and interior decorating firms in the nineteenth century is undeniable. Part of this achievement was in their successful employment of superior designers who set the standards for exhibition pieces, as well as for the less exalted productions. Initially, during the 1850s, Jackson & Graham was seemingly one of the few businesses to employ a permanent design staff, but by the 1860s the employment of designers was becoming a common occurrence in the higher-end furniture trade. The result was that competition among manufacturers often meant that the designers were very well rewarded for their contributions. It is revealing to find

that 'In many instances the actual cost of designs exceeds that of the production of the pieces themselves.' Writing in 1864, William Burges noted that 'every firm for the most part keeps a designer who is paid an annual salary varying from £100 to £400 and sometimes even more'.⁵ Twelve years later, Pollen identified Jackson & Graham as an example of a large firm, who were said to pay chief designers about £700 per year:

... to this should be added the large sums paid to architects such as Owen Jones for special designs over and above what is constantly in demand for the usual requirements of trade. From £1000 to £1500 per annum may be spent in this particular matter without its being looked on as an unusual outlay.⁶

The firm employed designers of the highest calibre, including a number of prominent architects. These included Thomas Collcutt, Christopher Dresser, R. W. Edis, Owen Jones (see further later), Bruce Talbert and Peter Graham himself. As the potency of French design was widely recognised at the time, it is not surprising that the firm also employed French nationals as designers. These included Eugène Prignot (after 1849), Alfred Lormier (after 1850) and Messrs Rémond, Polisch, Gallaud and later Thomas Jacob (after 1870).⁷ Inevitably, there was also an in-house design team on the permanent staff. The important role of these highly regarded designers to the firm's commercial success was recognised early on by commentators. The remarks in the *Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue* of the 1851 exhibition noted that 'it is quite evident from the examples here shown, that Messrs. Jackson and Graham employ artists of no common order to furnish them with designs for their manufactures; and to this circumstance may be traced the large amount of business carried on by the firm'.⁸

This arrangement between Jackson & Graham and Jones was not always well received. In 1869, the *Building News* discussed the decorations of the contractor and politician Sir Morton Peto's Kensington home, and chastised the upholsterers Jackson & Graham for the quality of their interior decoration work. Even though the firm employed distinguished designers, the architectural press still played out the arguments about the loss of control of work from the architect to the 'upholsterer'. They wrote scathingly that:

The decorations were unfortunately taken out of the architect's hands and given, together with the furnishing, to Messrs. Jackson and Graham, a firm of upholsterers whose reputation for the

quality and artistic excellence of their goods stands deservedly high, but whose notions of decoration appear to consist in the indiscriminate application of Mr. Owen Jones's objectionable crudities. In the case we refer to the delicate Italian modelling of the plaster ceiling appeared cheek by jowl with coarse quasi-Moorish flat ornaments, and the whole rejoiced in the tender colouring which graces St. James's Hall and the buffet at the Charing Cross Station!⁹

Nevertheless, the high regard in which Owen Jones was held in by many others is evidenced by the creation of a committee to commemorate his work. Alfred Morrison hosted a meeting at his house on 11 May 1874 which was attended by leading figures in the design world, including Henry Cole, Digby and T. H. Wyatt, George Aitchison, Christopher Dresser and Forster Graham (of Jackson & Graham), to discuss a memorial to Jones. Alfred was elected to the executive committee, and he later lent 44 items to the exhibition of Jones's work held as part of the International Exhibition in London later the same year. 'Many drawings illustrate designs for the decoration of rooms lent by Messrs. Jackson and Graham; the more notable are for rooms in the mansion of Mr. A. Morrison.'¹⁰ A catalogue was produced entitled *Catalogue of Works by the Late Owen Jones*, which included detail of designs for drawing room inlays and decoration at Fonthill as well as a list of sofa, chairs, tables and other items.

The production of furniture and woodwork at Jackson & Graham

By way of an introduction to the manufacturing processes of the firm, the comments by Peter Graham given in *The Record of the International Exhibition 1862*, are helpful. He explained how designing and making furniture was not a simple process. He pointed out how 'The style and principle of construction have first to be studied, then the proportions of all the parts, the materials to be used, whether various woods with the introduction of marbles, metal enrichments, bronzed or gilt, ivory, paintings on porcelain, buhl, or marquetry, inlaying or carving.' He concluded:

...some articles may depend mainly upon form and construction for their decorative character, and others require aid from the art of the sculptor or ornamentist only; but, generally, the manufacture of decorative furniture may be said to be the application of fine art to articles of utility, and no department of industry affords wider scope for its application.¹¹

Factory organisation

By 1872, the internal layout of the new manufacturing part of the business of Jackson & Graham had each floor of their building as a large open space arranged in gallery form, partly lit by large light wells. Upholsterers occupied the skylit top floor, 'artists' the second, while the first floor was used for showrooms. The development and construction work of the new build were undertaken by Jackson and Graham themselves.¹²

The firm was among a limited number of important makers that developed a system that combined high crafts skills in conjunction with machinery for the more basic processes. Indeed this arrangement was often discussed in the press, as well as in the trade. During an early factory visit on 27 June 1857, the *Lady's Newspaper* reporter noted the machinery in particular: 'several ingenious machines worked by steam power, for shaping, perforating, sewing, morticing, and turning tends to economise production to its utmost practical extent'.¹³ Twenty years later, John Fraser, a cabinet maker, in his report of cabinet making to the Society of Arts, noted that Jackson & Graham's 'work has been nearly all done by machinery and illustrates the advantage of wood-working machinery to the cabinet manufacturer'.¹⁴ Indeed the firm advertised their machinery and its benefits to their customers: 'extensive Manufactory adjoining, with machinery worked by steam power, is fitted with all means and appliances to ensure superiority and economise cost'.¹⁵ Again in 1878, the *Illustrated London News* noted that their productions were 'aided by a "Corliss" engine in each of their manufactories together with all the most recent and best mechanical devices'.¹⁶

Timber converting

Once cabinet making was ready to begin, timber logs had to be converted to appropriate sizes. A description from 1876 showed that at that time the firm had a timber yard with large quantities of imported woods including American walnut, mahogany, beech and American ash.¹⁷ These large logs were lifted by a 6 ton crane and lowered into a sawmilling area in the basement of the building. In this area there was a 40 horsepower steam engine operating three sawing machines: one horizontal, one perpendicular and one ribbon type. In addition, there were planing machines in the same area.¹⁸

The fact that Jackson & Graham employed steam power for the preparatory parts of the work is evidence of both their modern approach

to business and the scale of the enterprise. In terms of cost effectiveness, the application of steam power to preparatory work meant that the more expensive construction and decorating processes were attended to by superior craftsmen. This ensured that valuable and experienced labour was not 'wasted' on unskilled work. In these instances the machine became an enabling mechanism that redistributed the nature of work, allowing craftsmen more time to attend to the skilled art of cabinet making and to be relieved of the repetitive aspects of the job.¹⁹ The application of steam-powered machines was novel enough in 1855 for Digby Wyatt to remark that in Jackson & Graham's workshops 'A steam engine, and machinery for various purposes connected with cabinet-making, have recently been erected and put into operation.'²⁰ In the rooms above the timber converting shop, the belting from the steam engine was connected to turning lathes and spindle moulders, which were used to cut and shape legs for cabinets and tables.²¹

The practice of economy in timber conversion, essential when dealing with expensive and valuable timbers is evident in one example Pollen recorded, where the saw blade was not set wider than its own thickness, thus saving on sawdust waste, but requiring an operator to wedge the plank open to permit the saw's passage.²² More especially he noted the cutting of veneers: 'One plank of wood has to be cut into very thin slices, twelve being cut with a saw, or from eighteen to twenty-two if it is cut with a knife.'²³ The requirements of such a workshop were backed up by an engineer's bench, a fine-hair endless saw (band-saw), a mortise and tenon machine and a mitring machine.²⁴ All these machines were clearly involved in the repetitive but necessarily accurate preparatory work.

Joinery

The joiners' shop was situated next to the sawing and cutting-out shop to allow for easy movement of prepared parts. It was in the joiners' shop that much of the large-scale architectural woodworking was undertaken, which included important commissions for interior building projects such as panelling, doors, stair-railings and balustrades. Pollen commented favourably on some ebony wall panelling that was being set up at the time of his visit, which had small 'mouldings [rebates?] cut into them for stringing and ovals to be inserted'. He reported that these 'mouldings' were cut by cutters that had been made especially for the job and fitted to the steam moulding machine. An example of the high quality and detail Jackson & Graham applied to woodworking is also demonstrated by the method of fitting panelling, which was held in the stiles and rails

by a rebate and iron buttons, allowing for any potential movement from within the panels.²⁵ In addition to the architectural woodwork, the joinery rooms also prepared chair and sofa frames ready for upholstery, as well as preparatory carcass work for cabinets and tables. Pollen added an interesting proviso: 'using ebony over large surfaces, it is found that the lengths required for the continuous rails cannot be procured free from knots or faults; and particular kinds of wood (pear and other material) are stained and prepared, to supplement the ebony in these instances'.²⁶

The attention to detail, already seen in the panelling example, was to be a continuing source of praise and a hallmark of Jackson & Graham quality.

Marquetry

The importance of the marquetry decoration process in the Alfred Morrison commission and in interpreting Jones's design is evident in both the furniture and interiors. Marquetry is the process of covering a surface with various selected veneers to create a design or picture in the manner of an applied jigsaw puzzle. It differs from inlay, where decorative timbers are let into spaces cut into solid surfaces. Pollen has a detailed discussion of Jackson & Graham's elaborate marquetry process 'in patterns of Oriental character' that he saw in a cabinet being produced in the factory.

The little columns of an inch and a half diameter are entirely covered with reticulated pattern in different woods, As the shafts are tapering, so the reticulated patterns have to be graduated in size from top to bottom. This is a feat of most difficult execution, nor is this the only difficulty in this portion of the design. The marquetry in this instance of these columns has to be wrapped round each circular shaft; and each edge, therefore, of every portion of pattern and groundwork has to be sawn out with bevelled edges, so that when rolled, the inner edges meet and the outer edges remained in contact, which would not be so were they not bevelled: the contrary would happen in that case, and the outer edges would start in sunder [*sic*]. These columns were two feet and some inches high, and the little reticulations of pattern recurred many dozens of times. The conditions of which I speak had to be carefully observed in the case of each. The pattern, too, was graduated, as above stated, so that they had to be sawn out by separate cuttings – a most laborious and costly operation.²⁷

Interestingly, even this level of skill was augmented by specialist machines. For example, the veneering table was made of metal and heated by steam or gas-burners, and while it did not necessarily improve the skill of the cabinet maker, it certainly assisted towards a more successful end product.²⁸

The incredible quality and accuracy of the firm's marquetry workmanship was often commented upon in other quarters. In the *Illustrated Catalogue of Paris International Exhibition 1878*, the author wrote in glowing terms of their cabinet work, where

the inlays are in many cases so fine as to present the appearance of delicate pencilled work: and to crown the whole, the workmanship is so perfect that even with the aid of a magnifying glass scarcely the slightest imperfection is to be found anywhere. In addition to the inlaying, some of which is solid, much of the ivory is engraved in the most delicate manner.²⁹

Appreciation of the firm's work and a comment on the role of 'mechanical agencies' in achieving this degree of quality was made by *The Magazine of Art* in 1879. This discussed the work produced for the home of Alfred Morrison at Carlton House Terrace. The workmen involved were praised: 'To Messrs. Jackson and Graham belongs the credit of having secured the services of workmen who by mechanical agencies, were able to cope with the difficulties of the intricate task set by Mr. Owen Jones.' The report went on to judge the marquetry, saying that 'It has a character of its own and is possibly the apotheosis of machine-made marquetry. It is so accurately produced as to almost overpower one with a sense of hopelessness of escape from never-ending precision.'³⁰

Although this rather gloomy assessment was supportive in the main, some were less enthusiastic. A reviewer from the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, writing on the exhibits at the Paris Exposition in 1867 noted the furniture from Fonthill: 'This firm [Jackson & Graham] shows some beautiful work, chiefly in ebony inlaid with ivory ... The inlay in this stall [display stand] is too freely used, producing a greyness of effect, ruining, in fact, the ebony ground, which ought never to be subordinate to the inlay.'³¹

In retrospect, this sort of incredible quality work was a commercial dead end, as so few clients could afford it, but on another level, it certainly ensured that the name of Jackson & Graham was always associated with the highest quality art workmanship.

By 1855, the firm apparently employed 250 workers with a wage bill of £400 per week.³² By 1875, the number employed had grown to between 600 and 1,000 hands, varying upon the time of the year and quantity of orders. As was the case with the designers the firm employed, Jackson & Graham had local and continental workmen on the payroll. Pollen noted that 'The cabinet-makers' shop abounds in works of laborious and difficult execution such as this, and several foreigners, French, Danes, and men of other nationalities are amongst the workmen of these finer operations.'³³

The sculptor Auguste Willms explained the importance of French designers to Jackson & Graham, some of whom had been employed since the late 1840s:

E. Prignot was at the head of a group of artists which included Rémond, Polisch and Gallaud: three very clever decorators. They were engaged by the firm of Jackson and Graham, for whom worked also the brothers Guéret, skilful wood carvers, and who brought over from Belgium a staff of excellent cabinet-makers for the execution of special works.³⁴

Comments made by craftsmen in the *Artisans Reports* on the 1878 exhibition are revealing of the physical price to be paid by the makers of the intricate work for which the firm was so well known. One cabinet designed by Lormier, for example, was inspected with a magnifying glass and caused H. R. Paul to comment on the marquetry 'which receives so much attention'. It was cut by a Mr Reich, 'one of a clever family who have cut the greater part of the marqueterie in the English section'. The Reich family was clearly important in this narrow field, with H. Reich working for Morant Boyd and Blandford, Victor Reich working for the firm of Wright and Mansfield, Charles Reich for the cabinet maker T. Jacob and Albert Reich for Jackson & Graham. Paul also noticed the strain upon workmen that this intricate labour might bring about. He commented upon the cabinet work executed by a Mr Petersen, 'who suffered mental injury in consequence of the severe study required for the execution of this difficult work'.³⁵

Ole Petersen (1837–76) was almost exclusively engaged upon the exhibition works of Jackson & Graham. He was

the maker of the large ebony and ivory cabinet the lower part of which was exhibited at Paris; and when complete was subsequently exhibited at Vienna. He also made a large inlaid cabinet

designed by the late Owen Jones for Alfred Morrison Esq. and a very elaborate but smaller cabinet designed by Mr. Lormier for H. Brassey Esq. M.P.³⁶

The report continued by noting that 'Mr. Petersen, who, unhappily, suffered mental injury in consequence of the severe study required for the execution of this difficult work, and died just as it was at the point of being completed.'³⁷ For particular praise, Pollen also singled out another Dane named Andersen, who was an employee of eight years standing and a specialist in difficult marquetry work.³⁸

Prussian-born Charles Sprewitz was another identified cabinet maker employed by the firm. In this case he stamped his name on some items that he made, including one for the Alfred Morrison commission. This is an oval centre table in burr amboyna which has the inside of the frieze stamped C. Sprewitz. Sprewitz, aged 39, emigrated to the United States on 22 June 1868 on the SS *Atalanta*, with his wife and two children. Later, in New York, he patented a veneering machine (No. 477,158. June 14, 1892).³⁹

The *Cabinet Maker* in an 1882 report on the evidence of furniture makers to the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction noted how

In answer to a question as to foreign workmen, Mr Paul somewhat surprised the commissioners by a statement to the effect that a leading exhibit at the late Paris exhibition shown by an English firm, was produced entirely by foreign workmen. The designer was a Frenchman, a Dane and a German did the cabinet work, and the marquetry was also cut by a German. This in conjunction with *foreign* wood and *French* polish, made the article anything but English.⁴⁰

An idea of the time involved in the production of these exhibition quality items was noted in *The Architect* in 1878. Commenting on Lormier's Renaissance cabinet for the 1878 exhibition, mentioned earlier, they noted: 'some idea of the costliness of this piece of furniture may be formed, when it is stated that it occupied nearly the whole time of one cabinet-maker, one inlayer, one engraver, and one marquetry-cutter for nearly three years in labour alone'.⁴¹

Criticism of the alleged lessening of skills and a loss of enjoyment in work was commented upon by H. R. Paul. Discussing a chimney-piece, mantle shelf and so on, displayed by Jackson & Graham in Paris at the 1878 exhibition (but not for Alfred Morrison), Paul considered

the workmanship faultless and without the slightest defect. He went on to bemoan the denigration that had recently been made of British workmen, arguing that ‘this is an article which, I believe, represents a greater number of difficulties overcome, a larger effort of patient skill, than any other single piece of woodwork in existence’.⁴²

The products: furniture and interior woodwork by Jackson & Graham for Alfred Morrison

Early purchases from Jackson & Graham at the London International Exhibition, 1862

Alfred Morrison purchased at least two items from the 1862 London Exhibition from Jackson & Graham.⁴³ The first was a cabinet in ebony and ivory with metal ornaments, for which he paid £500.00 (Figure 8.1) This cabinet was described in *Cassell’s Illustrated Exhibitor*:

A cabinet of ebony, inlaid with ivory, the centre inclosed [sic] by doors, with oval medallions of hymeneal subjects, in bronze, highly chased and gilt, the ends open and rounded, the plinths, columns,



Figure 8.1 Ebony and ivory cabinet with ormolu detail and onyx top.

J. B. Waring. *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862* (v. 1). London: Day & Son. Plate 111.

and frieze all enriched with mouldings and ornaments of bronze, finally chased and gilt, and surmounted by a slab of the finest Algerian onyx.⁴⁴

The second item was an ebony and ivory étagère (which was purchased for £80) that was commended by the 1862 Exhibition Jury as follows: 'A small etagere in ebony inlaid with ivory, in quiet and perfect taste, and may serve as a model in the midst of that exuberance of richness without reason which furniture manufacturers so constantly produce.'⁴⁵ However, it was at Fonthill, from about 1862, that the major commissions began.

The Fonthill commission

Jackson & Graham worked with Owen Jones on the Fonthill commission from about 1862 to 1866.⁴⁶ Much of the furniture supplied reflects Owen Jones's published 'propositions' on design that he explained in his *Grammar of Ornament*, published in 1856. For example, Proposition 13 reads: 'Flowers or other natural objects should not be used as ornaments, but conventional representations founded upon them sufficiently suggestive to convey the intended image to the mind, without destroying the unity of the object they are employed to decorate.'⁴⁷ The marquetry detail on the furniture he designed often confirms this approach.

This commission emphasises the significance to our understanding of Jones's work, in that he said the study of Alfred Morrison's collection 'opened his mind to a world of new ideas with regard to colouring as practiced in decorative art'.⁴⁸ This awakening encouraged Jones to modify the opinions on Chinese art that he had initially espoused in his *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856). This change in attitude resulted in his publication of *The Grammar of Chinese Ornament* in 1867.

Detail of staircases in Fonthill

The Builder, in a review of the work of Owen Jones at Fonthill, noted how 'the first fruits of [this amended approach by Jones] which are to be seen in the decoration of the staircases at Fonthill House, in which the purest Greek forms are united with the delicate tones of colour in the finest specimens of Chinese egg-shell pottery'.⁴⁹

'New' room for display at Fonthill

The Builder again explained: 'For the convenient display of a portion of these choice [Chinese ceramic objects], a room was built, decorated, and fitted up by the firm in question [Jackson & Graham], from Mr. Jones's designs, in the Cinquecento style, of which it forms an exquisite example.'⁵⁰ In fact, there is no evidence that Jackson & Graham undertook any building work for this commission.⁵¹ The author and journalist G. A. Sala later commented upon the use of the Cinquecento label for the cases, saying that they 'are surely more akin, by the mother's side, to the Gothic, and, by the father's, to the Mauresque'.⁵²

This set of display cabinets was made up to fit the semicircular bay in the room ([Figure 8.2](#)).⁵³ The eight doors in the lower part of the cabinet incorporate the Alfred Morrison monogram 'AM' in ivory marquetry.⁵⁴ The use of this monogram in various formats is also found in other commissions including those by Brocard, Zuloaga, Falize and Minton (see [Figures 18.10](#) and [19.3](#)).⁵⁵



Figure 8.2 Ebony and ivory inlaid display cabinet, with glass doors, c. 1863. 268 × 307 × 28 cm. (8.9 ft × 10 ft × 11 in)

Photograph © 2004, Christie's Images Limited

For the Paris Exhibition of 1867, Jackson & Graham displayed an upright case and other items from this room ‘for works of art [being] part of the fittings for a room for Mr. Morrison of Fonthill House’, which occasioned an award for the firm and a gold medal for Jones.⁵⁶ A complementary piece was the ebony and ivory inlaid display cabinet-on-stand, which has an upper section with two pairs of glazed doors, divided by inlaid columns with scrolled capitals and with turned feet, a base with panelled cupboards decorated with flowering vines and the monogram ‘AM’. The marquetry panels and column decoration are the same as the cabinet mentioned earlier with some slight rearrangement of the central motifs.

Other parts of the room were also noted in the press. *The Builder* pointed out that ‘the chimney-piece and fittings are entirely of ebony, inlaid with ivory, and the ceiling is of wood, panelled and inlaid, the mouldings being black and gold’.⁵⁷

The heirlooms list of 1900 still listed the dining room (formerly the ‘new room’) with the following items:

263 A range of eight tall show cabinets of ebony, inlaid with ivory, with glazed doors and looking glass backs.

264 A pier glass, in frame *en suite*.

265 A chimney glass, in arched top frame *en suite*.⁵⁸

Caroline Dakers discusses the fate of these pieces in [Chapter 19](#).

Other rooms

Designs for the drawing room planned for Fonthill were shown in the exhibition of Owen Jones’s works held at the 1874 London International Exhibition, after his death.⁵⁹ These included details of dining room inlay (item 64) and the decorative scheme of the drawing room (items 65 and 100). On 1 July 1864, Jackson & Graham invoiced Alfred Morrison for a suite of furniture in rosewood for a bedroom, bed curtains of French chintz and an ebony and enamel coffret, £290 5s. 4d.⁶⁰ The satisfactory completion of this commission led to a much more important one, namely the furnishing and decoration of 16 Carlton House Terrace, London.

The 16 Carlton House Terrace commission

The descriptions of Alfred Morrison’s interiors published between 1879 and 1883 (extracts are given later) make it possible to visualise the

furniture in the rooms around these times. However, we do not know what happened to the items until they began to appear at auctions in the later twentieth century.

Jackson & Graham and Owen Jones began work on the internal decorations, furniture and fittings in about 1865–6. Much of the original decorative scheme still survives in the house and known examples of furniture from the commission include a magnificent display cabinet, at least one, possibly two, sofas, several armchairs, a side chair, two writing tables, a small marble-topped table, some panelling, two fire screens and a piano. Receipts survive for 10 (or 16) February 1866 (£2,500 on account) and 9 July 1868 (£5,000 on account).⁶¹

In May 1874, *The Builder* published an extensive obituary of Owen Jones. There was a section devoted to his work with Jackson & Graham:

But by far the most important and complete work in which he was associated with Messrs. Jackson and Graham is the decoration and furniture of the London house of Mr. Alfred Morrisson [*sic*] in Carlton House-terrace. Here the woodwork of the panelling, dado, doors, architraves, and window-shutters in the outer and inner hall, staircase, and all the rooms on the ground and first floors, are inlaid from designs by Mr. Jones, with various woods of different kinds, the colours of which were carefully selected by him, with a view to perfect harmony of colouring. The walls are hung with the richest Lyons silks, all specially designed by him, and coloured to harmonise with the ceilings, which may be described as perfect, in the proportions of their geometrical divisions and the designs and colouring of their decorations. The chimney-pieces, too, grates, and fenders; the carpets, and the furniture, which is all marquetry, were designed by Mr. Jones, and are in perfect keeping with each other. Unfettered by any limit with regard to cost and working with the full confidence of Mr. Morrisson [*sic*] in his artistic genius, this work was a labour of love to him, and he lavished upon it all his thought and all his knowledge, with this result, — that there are no accidental effects, and there are no defects, either in the association of colours or forms, or the unity of scale in the details of the different objects entering into the composition of a great harmonious whole. We may, indeed, say that no work of equal magnitude of an analogous character, and exhibiting at the same time such perfection of execution in all respects, is known to us, and it forms a monument to the genius of Owen Jones, and an example of the perfection with which such works can be executed in this

country when entrusted to proper hands, cost not being regarded. We must guard ourselves, however, from having it supposed that we desire all decoration to be of this character. The absence from it of the human form, of animal form altogether, must prevent it from being regarded as of the highest class of art. In its own way, however, and within its own limits, this particular work is perfect.⁶²

Henry Cole was one of the first visitors to the new house. Writing in his diary on 22 May 1870, he succinctly summarised what he saw: ‘To Mr. Morrison’s ... his house filled with marquetric designed by Owen Jones ... mixture of Greek and Moorish, perfect mechanical work.’⁶³ Later contemporary commentators eventually published reports on the furniture and the interior. Three authors in particular give good descriptions of the interiors. These are Moncure Conway in his *Travels in South Kensington* (1882), Mrs Haweis in her *Beautiful Houses* (1882) and Florence Caddy’s *Lares and Penates* (1881). In addition, *The Magazine of Art* published two anonymous articles on the house titled ‘Treasure-Houses of Art’ in 1879.

The pivotal role of Jackson & Graham in the execution of this commission was commented on by Moncure Conway in *Travels in South Kensington*. It gives a clear picture of the unique role of the firm at that time.

But in pursuing inquiries as to the means by which the exceedingly bold designs of Owen Jones for ornamentation with the colors of woods could be carried out (and the inquiries were not confined to this country), Mr. Morrison found that no house out of London was prepared to undertake a task that necessitated importations of select woods from all parts of the world. In Mr. Forster Graham, Owen Jones found a man able to enter into his ideas and to give practical effect to them.⁶⁴

Conway continued with his praise, noting that ‘there is nothing in this house not harmonious with its purpose. Every chair is as philosophically as it is beautifully constructed, and nearly every one is different from the other—one suggesting the perforated chairs of the Delhi palaces [Figure 8.3], and another the old Saxon throne in Westminster Abbey.’⁶⁵ It is notable that all three known chairs have different marquetry.

It is likely that these armchairs were exhibited in the 1874 *Catalogue of Works by the late Owen Jones*, an exhibition within the London International Exhibition of that year. No. 200 in the exhibition was ‘Arm



Figure 8.3 Armchair designed by Owen Jones and made by Jackson & Graham, c. 1867–70. Mahogany with veneers of mahogany, purpleheart, ebony, harewood and holly-wood, gilded decoration, modern velvet upholstery and brass castors, 96.6 × 64.8 × 66.1 cm (3.2 × 2.1 × 2.2 ft).

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Chair (Drawing Room). Exhibited by Mr. Alfred Morrison' and No. 201 was 'Arm Chair (Hall). Exhibited by Mr. Alfred Morrison'.

One commentator, referring to a suite supplied to Alfred Morrison and displayed in the Owen Jones Memorial Exhibition, wrote that:

One great charm of this suite of furniture is that it is impossible to assign it to any other period than its own. It is of white wood, richly inlaid, but is far from being a slavish imitation of the traditional marqueterie. On the contrary, it marks a bold departure from conventional forms.⁶⁶

The sofa (Figure 8.4) would appear to be closely linked to the side chairs mentioned earlier, and is clearly a more elaborate version of the sofa that Jones designed for James Mason (1824–1903) of Eynsham Hall, Oxfordshire, in about 1873.⁶⁷

Conversely, Christopher Dresser, in a lecture at the 1874 Exhibition of Owen Jones's works, was rather disparaging about his chair designs. Dresser complained, not without good reason, how:



Figure 8.4 Chaise longue designed by Owen Jones and made by Jackson & Graham, c. 1867–70.

Photograph © James Graham-Stewart

...the structure ... showed a wrong treatment of wood – an over-elaborate inlay, the furniture appearing to have been designed for the inlay, and not first constructed, and then the constructed wood decorated. The wood was carved about in any direction. A chair should be made strong with the best wood possible then made as beautiful as possible.⁶⁸

Here there are echoes of Pugin's exhortations of honesty in design, whereby the construction of an item is evident and subsequently decorated and not the other way around.

Not only was the firm's principal, Forster Graham, praised by Moncure Conway for his personal contribution, but the unrivalled quality of workmanship and judicious selection of materials was also eulogised:

In the dado, jambs, chair boarding, we found no carved work, but simply the most exquisite combinations of ebonized and many coloured woods ... Trees of every land and clime of the earth have sent their hearts, and without a particle of pigment being used on any of them, they gather to form rosettes on the chimney pieces, cappings for the dados, and finest featherings around the doors. The tables and chairs of several rooms are of the tarsia work of forms untouched by staining or metal.⁶⁹

Further praise for the house and the quality of the Jackson & Graham workmanship was made by Mrs Haweis in 1882. She wrote, prophetically perhaps, that:

The decorations, under exceptionally favourite circumstances, occupied four years. The ceilings are very fine; the doors, wainscots, and many suites of furniture throughout the house are made from the finest marquetry of inlaid natural woods, and satisfactorily answer the common complaint that modern workers cannot or will not do the good work which ancient workmen did. The designs are often capital and the technical part as perfect as possible. The cost must have been tremendous, and as similar effects can be easily got by cheaper methods the solid perfection of miles of conscientious inlaying is scarcely likely to be matched in the future.⁷⁰

Thirdly, Florence Caddy, author of one of the first home management books (*Household Organization*, 1877), wrote of the interior in some depth in her later work titled *Lares and Penates*. In the chapter titled ‘The Millionaire’s Townhouse’, she takes the reader through most of the rooms in 16 Carlton House Terrace, referring to Alfred Morrison with



Figure 8.5 Detail of marquetry woodwork in the first-floor drawing room at 16 Carlton House Terrace.

Photograph © 2020, Christie's Images Limited

the alias of Mr Fitzmaurice. She sets the scene in the opening paragraph, referring to Owen Jones's inspiration for the design work:

The entire woodwork of the walls, doors, and dados is all *en suite*, inlaid and polished through every room; and yet, as in the Alhambra itself, no two apartments are alike. The unity in the whole design makes this unique among houses, the whole having been begun and finished under one plan, and carried throughout with one taste.⁷¹

All three authors take an imaginary tour round the house in their writings. After entering through a vestibule and inner hall, the first room encountered was the study on the right.

The study (later known as morning room)

The study was situated on the right of the hall and featured nearly black architectural woodwork inlaid with stripes of pale woods and a row of inverted anthemions under the dado rail. Caddy particularly noted the 'highly polished dado and deep dado-rail executed in variously coloured woods and inlaid in the manner of the Spanish renaissance'. She further commented upon 'The mantelpiece [which] is a continuation of the dado, and the pier-glass is framed in the same style, which is further carried out in the doors, whose inlaid ivory handles are set in star-shaped discs, likewise of ivory.'⁷²

The Magazine of Art also praised the mantelpiece noting how 'On the mantelpiece is set an oblong mirror, flanked on each side by tall cylindrical columns of grey wood, topped with carved and gilt boxwood capitals on which rests a superstructure of marquetry, crowned by a succession of inlaid Greek honeysuckles etc.'⁷³ The author of this article also noticed Jones's 'Propositions' in use: 'the shapes of the legs, arms, and the backs of the chairs all show evidence of Mr Owen Jones's immovable faith in gentle flowing lines, and excepting where the exigencies of utility search themselves in respect of flat and straight surfaces for tables and such-like curved lines are always employed'.⁷⁴

Jones clearly influenced Charles Lepec in the design of the impressive fireplace in the drawing room, while Jackson & Graham must also have had an input in fitting the fireplace into the woodwork surrounds.⁷⁵ Might it be suggested that Lepec executed the fireplace to Jones's design? The decoration is uncharacteristic of what we know of Lepec's work.

The furniture in this room probably included a 'Table, in Inlaid Woods' (no. 81) and a 'Writing table, in Inlaid Woods' (no. 85).⁷⁶ There was also an important oval top table with an ebonised edge and a panelled border with strapwork and scrolling foliage, raised on a central column with four engaged columns. The interlaced 'AM' monogram to the top of the table identifies it as part of the commission for Alfred Morrison. The table was exhibited at the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle. It was described as 'composed of the choicest materials, and exhibiting the perfect workmanship, this [table] is one of the most beautiful and truly chaste examples of decorative furniture at the Paris exhibition'.⁷⁷ The 1867 committee recorded that 'MM. Owen Jones et Lormier, dessinateurs de ces beaux objets, ont depuis longtemps habité les connoisseurs à admirer leur talent.'⁷⁸

The dining room (interior destroyed by fire in 1933)

Mrs Caddy singled out the 'chairs [that] differ from those in the other rooms, being of ebony inlaid with ivory rosettes; their covers are red morocco, fastened with brass studs. Ebony prevails in the dado-rail and wainscot'. She went on to point out that 'besides the round breakfast-table and oblong dining-table, this room is furnished with five large Florentine tables of inlaid marbles'. The room also had two long dinner wagons.⁷⁹

The library

Mrs Haweis evidently considered this room more like a gallery (Figures 8.6a and 8.6b). She commented that this room is 'remarkable as containing no books, [but] is a museum of interest by reason of its cases of rare Roman and Phoenician glass and porcelain'.⁸⁰ Indeed, the major feature of the room was the 'bookshelves' that were used to display some of Alfred Morrison's collection. Conway noted how 'in the library the bookshelves which do the duty of a dado around the room, have alternate doors of glass and wood and the latter are adorned with the foliation over 2 feet high, growing from the bottom of the panel and leafing out at the top, which cannot be surpassed by any ancient marquetry'.⁸¹

The chimneypiece surround has almost identical pilasters to the bookcases. It was noted by Conway, who mentions 'the chimneypiece here may be regarded as a large arched cabinet, with fire grate beneath, having two wings, in which are contained specimens of porcelain from Persia and Cashmere'.⁸² A similar panel is in the Victoria and



Figure 8.6a Detail of the overmantel on the west wall of the former library at 16 Carlton House Terrace.

Photograph © 2020, Christie's Images Limited



Figure 8.6b Marquetry decoration of one of the cupboards flanking the hearth on the west wall of the former library, 16 Carlton House Terrace.

Photograph © 2020, Christie's Images Limited

Albert Museum, part of a series of dismantled pieces collected with the intention of reassembling one of the cabinets originally fitted between the windows in the library of Carlton House Terrace.⁸³

Staircase

The grand sweeping stairway to the left of the door leading into the library was also of interest to reviewers. Mrs Haweis noted the ‘great winding staircase with a solid balustrade of polished woods far handsomer than rails’. Apparently the original balustrade had been renewed. Caddy also noted how ‘the dado, of ebony and other woods, is inlaid and polished like the rooms; and in lieu of banisters, the dado is repeated on the outer side of the stairs. This forms a noteworthy and elegant feature in this altogether remarkable house.’⁸⁴ The first-floor landing had a dramatic display where ‘Between two large and richly carved square chairs on the first landing stands a tall clock by Zuloaga, in metal and red raised enamel.’⁸⁵

The tea-room

Described by Caddy as ‘A small room over the vestibule, called the “Tea-Room,” is one of the most delightful in the house.’ She then comments:

The chairs of carved sycamore were made for the use of the Empress Eugénie in the imperial pavilion in the Paris Exhibition of 1867. They are upholstered with exquisite French embroidery of flowers on white silk, which is protected for daily use by coverings of white lace on pale yellow. Between the windows and the fireplace there is a cabinet of ivory, etched in relief, and the relief gilt; this has the effect of a delicate gold lace, or filagree, on ivory.⁸⁶

She also mentions how ‘the frame of the pier-glass is inlaid like the dado’.⁸⁷ Mrs Haweis was also effusive about this space: ‘The tea-room fascinated us more than any in the house, for here began the lace collection. We have not time to examine or describe what is hidden away in coffer of mother-o’-pearl, silver, and carved cedar which stand under every cabinet and table.’⁸⁸

The drawing room

Moving to the first floor, this L-shaped room with its two chimneypieces was the largest in the house, and clearly impressed Conway with the quality of the work and materials for the drawing room (Figure 8.5):

...in the dado, jambs, chair boarding, we find no carved work, but simply the most exquisite combinations of ebonized and many-coloured woods. Some of these, as the Indian holly, are so fine that the grain is invisible to the closest inspection. Other woods are so soft and beautiful that they have the surface of petals ... without a particle of pigment being used on any one of them, they gather to form rosettes on the chimney-pieces, cappings for the dadoes, and finest featherings around the doors – white golden, red, cream-coloured, brown, and these of every shade.⁸⁹

The woodwork of the marquetry dado of the L-shaped upstairs drawing room was poetically described by Conway as being ‘a necklace surrounding the room’ (Figure 8.7).⁹⁰ Mrs Caddy was more matter of fact, noting how ‘the effect of the blended primitive colours on these damask hangings forms the sweet, pale neutral hue of pinky grey, that best enhances the contrasted outlines of the inlaid work of ebony and sycamore, rosewood, ivory, and silver’. She continued by commenting how ‘The dado is of the most finely marked satin-wood, elaborately inlaid; this woodwork is carried up and down the divisional arch of the rooms.’⁹¹

Caddy also mentioned the piano and other woodwork: ‘The pianoforte is inlaid like the dado and the furniture; the action is by Erard’ (Figure 8.8).⁹² Mrs Haweis simply noted the piano ‘in an inlaid case designed by Owen Jones’.⁹³ In a later (1889) discussion on pianos generally, Mrs Haweis thought she had ‘hardly [ever] seen a really picturesque piano case’, stating that ‘Even Mr Alfred Morrison’s inlaid case designed by Owen Jones is rather staring [*sic*] than refined. Indeed, the whole outline requires modification.’⁹⁴

The Magazine of Art mentions ‘the marvel of cabinet work by Messrs Jackson and Graham in the opalescent drawing room’.⁹⁵ This appears to be the same cabinet that Pollen enthused about in his visit to the factory (mentioned earlier). Mrs Caddy says:

The glory of the house, and of the firm that made it, was proudly displayed by their foreman. It is a cabinet of inlaid wood, polished

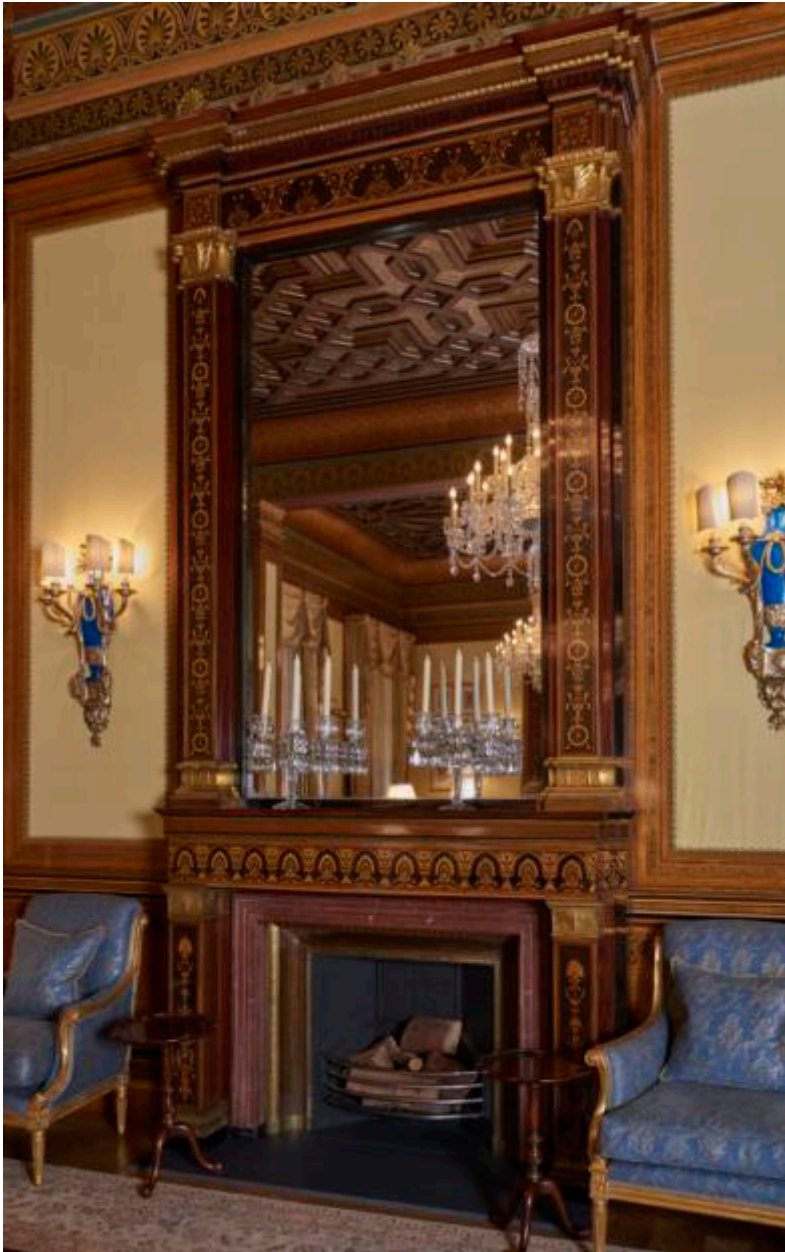


Figure 8.7 Drawing room mantelpiece and surround on the west wall of the former library, 16 Carlton House Terrace.

Photograph © 2020, Christie's Images Limited



Figure 8.8 Erard piano photographed at Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth, now in Sewerby Hall, Yorkshire.

© Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth

and wrought to a perfection not less than marvellous. In the front are triple groups of ebony columns, a prodigy of veneering, in that the shafts taper delicately to the capitals, and their pattern of inlaid cruciform rosettes tapers with them so subtly as to be imperceptible to the casual observer. A panel in the lower part of the cabinet is made of a million separate pieces, in an elaborate design which will bear the closest investigation, as scrutiny only shows its surpassing excellence. The foreman claims for this cabinet the rank of the best piece of workmanship in the world, old or new, and he is very likely to be right. The cost of this masterpiece was £6000.⁹⁶

Finally, Caddy noted ‘The folding doors leading to the morning-room are wonderful specimens of inlaid satin-wood, shaded, but not hidden by their sumptuous Byzantine portieres; these are as drapery to Venus.’⁹⁷

The boudoir or morning room

Caddy was again impressed with the fine quality of the work in the morning room, which by the time of her visit was already 12 years old:

The doors and dado are of ebony and mahogany, with bands of ivory and violet-stained sycamore. The designs of these inlaid borders are fine, and as well carried out as it is possible for the best workmanship in the world to execute them. So well was this done twelve years ago that no repairs have been required, and nothing has been done to the polish since it was first laid; and, as the foreman of the works said, never will be. The chairs and other furniture are all designed by Owen Jones, in the same style, and as perfectly carried out by Jackson and Graham. This includes the writing-table, with round sliding cover, and the blinds over the lower window-panes: these, throughout the house, are of inlaid woodwork, about two and a half inches thick, pierced in bold arabesques.⁹⁸

Haweis was more excited about the lace collection though grudgingly tells us that the furniture in the boudoir is ‘inlaid with woods of strong contrast’ (Figure 8.9).⁹⁹ It is en-suite with a sofa in an English private collection, which has a pencil inscription with Alfred Morrison’s name.

A delicate fire screen probably from this room has ornament that relates to the furniture already discussed.¹⁰⁰ Blairman’s notes that a fire



Figure 8.9 Centre table designed by Owen Jones and made by Jackson & Graham, c. 1867–70. 71 cm (28 in) high, 137 cm (54 in) diameter.

Photograph © H. Blairman & Sons Ltd.

screen identified as 'No. 199 Inlaid Screen (Boudoir)' was included in the *Catalogue of Works by the Late Owen Jones* at the London International Exhibition, 1874.

Mrs Morrison's private sitting room

This room was furnished with tables of inlaid ivory and ebony. In addition, Mrs Haweis draws attention to 'One of the most curious features of the house – an enormous cabinet, filled with a pretentious service of Minton's ware – occupies one wall of the room in which the wide distinction between technical perfection and real artistic worth points a very wholesome and instructive moral' (Figure 8.10).¹⁰¹

The central arch of the cabinet is duplicated in the architecture of the interior of the house, in the shape of the doorcases and chimneypieces. The ground-floor library chimneypiece surround has almost identical pilasters, topped by palmette acroteria. Harris Lindsay notes the quality of this cabinet:



Figure 8.10 Inlaid cabinet designed by Owen Jones for Alfred Morrison: made of various woods, including ebony, purpleheart, holly and sycamore, the glazing of the central upper part framed in gilt-bronze. c. 1865–70. 3.47 m × 2.40 m × 65.5 cm (11.4 ft × 7.10 ft × 2.1 ft).

Photograph © Harris Lindsay

For example, the top arched section, seen from the side, is veneered and banded; the glazing is bevelled on each side of the glass; the lower doors are laminated, so that they do not split or warp; the interior and shelves of the upper part are veneered and banded, to match the exterior main fields; and the interior of the lower part, generally not visible, is also finely veneered and panelled.¹⁰²

The height of the lower part is consistent with the height of the dado in the first-floor rooms of 16 Carlton House Terrace.

Print room

Caddy also described the print room ‘over the drawing room’ and ‘of nearly equal size’, where ‘the trellised ceiling is of rosewood, and rosewood portfolio stands encircle the room’.¹⁰³

While these interiors were seen by selected guests, and written up in the specialist press, the products of this commission were also seen in international exhibitions that displayed Jackson & Graham’s prowess as cabinet makers and woodworking artists as well as Owen Jones’s prowess as a designer.

Exhibition displays

Through Jackson & Graham, Alfred Morrison sent examples of the work they undertook for him to the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris, and also to the International Exhibition in Vienna in 1873. The designer, Owen Jones, won gold medals on both occasions. Among items Jackson & Graham displayed on their stand in Paris (1867) were:

- A cabinet for china, in the Louis XIV. style, in ebony, inlaid with ivory.
- A case for objects of art, in ebony, inlaid with ivory, in the cinquecento style.
- A large oval table of amboyna, with rich marqueterie of various woods.
- A ditto ditto Writing table.
- A ditto ditto mounted with ormolu.
- A small amboyna cabinet inlaid with various woods.¹⁰⁴

George Sala specifically noted that the Paris display included ‘their magnificent oval marqueterie table with a centre-piece in amboyna wood, manufactured for Mr. Alfred Morrison, of Fonthill’.¹⁰⁵

The *John Bull* magazine also recorded that for the 1867 Paris exhibition:

They send nine pieces in all, and these include an upright case of ebony, inlaid with ivory, for works of art (part of the fittings of a room for Mr A. Morrison of Fonthill House), charming little *étagère* (the capitals capitally carved), and a table of amboyna wood inlaid with other woods and forming a lovely piece of colour. In the ornamentation of the upright case the hand-writing of Mr Owen Jones is obvious.¹⁰⁶

In the 1873 Vienna exhibition, they showed a cabinet designed by Owen Jones for Alfred Morrison. Journalists were particularly taken with it. *The Builder's* correspondent considered that the marquetry was very successful:

In a large cabinet, of architectural design, by Mr. Owen Jones, a novel and very beautiful effect is produced, without the aid of carving or engraving, by the ornamentation of the pilasters, columns, panels, and friezes with inlaid ornament of various woods. This cabinet, which has been made for Mr. Alfred Morrison, is 7 ft. wide and 8 ft. high, and is in two stages. The lower portion consists of a centre panel, 2 ft. 6 in. square, with two side panels, 1 ft. wide by 2 ft. 6 in. high, separated by pilasters, 6 in. wide. The whole of the panels and pilasters are elaborately inlaid with holly, grey wood, orange wood, and purple wood, on an ebony ground. Below the panels is a moulded base and skirting; above runs an inlaid frieze and cornice, the different members being in different-coloured woods. The upper stage of the cabinet is equally in three divisions, the centre division being glazed in front of the pilasters. Separating the divisions are detached columns, carrying a frieze and dentilled cornice. The cornice is arched over the centre division and encloses an elaborately-inlaid spandrel. The general character of the composition may be called Italian; but in the ornamentation an attempt has been made to combine the purity of Greek forms with Italian playfulness, and with a tinge of Orientalism in the colouring of the several portions. As a piece of cabinet work, it is perfect. There are thousands of small pieces of wood here combined with an accuracy truly marvellous.¹⁰⁷
[Figure 8.11]



Cabinet—Ebony inlaid with Ivory: Jackson and Graham.

Figure 8.11 Cabinet by Jackson & Graham designed by Owen Jones, *Art Journal*, Vol. XII, 1873, p. 280.

Another comment was not quite as complimentary. After discussing the woods used in the cabinet, it was said by the *Furniture Gazette* that ‘although the combination is highly effective, the brilliancy is almost offensive; but placed elsewhere, and when the prominent purple wood has been toned down by exposure the effect will probably leave very little to desire’.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the craftsmanship was clearly unbeatable. The cabinet was described in a report by Fred Smith (a building society manager) as ‘a masterpiece ... the most rigid scrutiny on my part failed to expose a single flaw’.¹⁰⁹

It is fascinating to read that Bernhard Ludwig, a furniture manufacturer based in Vienna, wrote in his report that he

must further notice a bookcase constructed to the order and design of Owen Jones, which for design and colour, may be designated a prophetic piece of ‘furniture of the future’. For as you looked at it you were made aware of a totally new tendency which made you actually nervous. As to the work of this piece itself, it was executed with masterly skill.¹¹⁰

Afterlife

The fame of the furnishings and interiors of 16 Carlton House Terrace was not only discussed in the literature and exhibitions of the time. Visits were arranged to view the interiors, including an 1885 Architectural Association tour of where the visitors saw ‘the cabinet inlays, tables, couches, chimneypieces, chairs &c., [that] are generally in that semi-Saracenic style which Owen Jones had made his own. They were carried out very ably by Messrs. Jackson and Graham.’¹¹¹

Even in its demise, when the house was vacated in around 1898, its pedigree was very important. A sale announcement in *The Builder* noted:

16, CARLTON HOUSE-TERRACE. – This house is offered for sale. It was erected for the late Alfred Morrison, and decorated for him by Jackson & Graham. The decorative work was designed by Owen Jones, who completed it shortly before his death on April 19, 1874. The designs and drawings had been exhibited in the Vienna Exhibition. They constitute the most important scheme of interior decoration carried out by Owen Jones in conjunction with the firm we mention, and may be compared with their joint work also for Alfred Morrison at Fonthill House.¹¹²

The furniture of Carlton House Terrace was also dispersed, and various pieces have passed through dealers and auction houses in the past 30 years or so.¹¹³

Fonthill House was demolished in 1921, and the furniture was likewise removed and gradually dispersed. Some ivory and ebony cabinets from Fonthill were sold for £45 to the one-time mayor of Shaftesbury, R. W. Borley, for his residence – Barton Hill House in Shaftesbury, Dorset. The sales were conducted by John Walton of Mere. Of this sale, a local newspaper rather sorrowfully recorded on 21 July: ‘Fonthill House, which next week will be sold literally in pieces ... as builder’s material ... The catalogue contains just four hundred lots including ... oak and mahogany doors, some of them inlaid ... bookcases, carved mantelshelves ... marble stairs, chandeliers.’¹¹⁴ An oak and parcel-gilt table for Alfred Morrison, with a circular table and a geometric aventurine and jasper top, was also sold from Fonthill House.¹¹⁵

In 1972, the *Inventory of Historical Monuments* noted of Barton Hill House: ‘Inside, some rooms have marquetry fittings, reputedly from Fonthill Abbey.’¹¹⁶ These were subsequently sold by Dorset

County Council in 1984 via the dealers Haslam and Whiteway, the Fine Art Society and Sotheby's.¹¹⁷

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Martin Levy for reading this chapter and offering thoughtful comments on it; also to Neil Burton and Caroline Dakers for information on the Jackson & Graham references in the Alfred Morrison archive.

Notes

- 1 Anon, 'Messrs. Jackson and Grahams' exhibits', 151. Related to a private view in the firm's London showrooms of the exhibits planned for the 1878 Paris Exhibition.
- 2 See further Edwards, 'Jackson and Graham'.
- 3 T. C. Jackson died in 1848, but his son joined the firm, as an apprentice (as per T. C. Jackson will) and apparently became a partner. Things didn't appear to have worked out as Thomas's father might have hoped, as the Jackson & Graham partnership was dissolved on 12 November 1859 with the withdrawal of T. Jackson (jnr), but it continued from that date under the same name with the original partner Peter Graham and his brother Forster Graham (1829–88) as the other partner.

John Richards's stepdaughter Emma Parker (Later Newton) married Peter Graham on 28 December 1842. Thanks to Martin Graham for this information from his family history researches.
- 4 Classified advertisement, *The Age*, 10 January 1836.
- 5 Burges, 'Art applied to industry', 298.
- 6 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 161.
- 7 Rémon and Polisch prepared designs for the ceramic plaques in Prignot's cabinet displayed at Paris Exhibition in 1855. See Willms, *Industrial Art*, 8.
- 8 Anon, *Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue*, 187.
- 9 Anon, 'Interior decoration – the drawing room', 121. Owen Jones had decorated the interior of the St James's Concert Hall as well as the restaurant in the station.
- 10 Anon, 'Exhibition of the works of Owen Jones', 25.
- 11 Graham, 'Furniture', 490.
- 12 Anon, 'Extension of premises for Messrs. Jackson and Graham', 278.
- 13 Anon, 'Exhibitions', 413.
- 14 Fraser, 'Report on cabinet making', 430.
- 15 *Post Office Directory*, London, 1866, Advertisement.
- 16 Anon, 'The Paris Exhibition', 473. The Corliss engine invented in 1849 by George Corliss was a very efficient source of power especially for belted operations.
- 17 Pollen 'Furniture and woodwork', 133.
- 18 Pollen 'Furniture and woodwork', 133.
- 19 Ettema, 'Technological innovation and design economics in furniture manufacture', 197–223.
- 20 Wyatt, 'On furniture and decoration', 308.
- 21 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 134.
- 22 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 133.
- 23 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 142.
- 24 The mortise and tenon machine was in the course of being set up when Pollen visited in 1875.
- 25 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 136–7.
- 26 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 183–4.

- 27 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 195–6.
- 28 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 143.
- 29 *Illustrated Catalogue of Paris International Exhibition*, 200–1.
- 30 Anon, 'Treasure Houses of Art II', 141.
- 31 Working Men's Club, Modern industries', 80.
- 32 Wyatt, 'On furniture and decoration', 306–8.
- 33 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 149.
- 34 Willms, *Industrial Art*, 8.
- 35 Paul, 'Cabinet making', 414.
- 36 Anon, 'Death of Mr. Petersen', 237.
- 37 Paul, 'Cabinet making', 414–15.
- 38 Pollen, 'Furniture and woodwork', 149.
- 39 Sprewitz also stamped his name on an amboyna card table with fine marquetry decoration, (Hartley's Auction, 16 September 2020, lot 646) and an amboyna side table (Sotheby's New York, 16 October 2009).
- 40 Anon, 'Technical education', 201. See also *Royal Commission on Technical Instruction Second Report*, 214.
- 41 Edis, 'Furniture at the Paris Exhibition', 230.
- 42 Paul, 'Cabinet making', 414–15.
- 43 Fonthill Archives, F/02/1128.
- 44 *Cassell's Illustrated Exhibitor*, 75.
- 45 Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, 1863, 3.
- 46 An undated estimate of account for works at Fonthill House including in the new room ebony cases, chimneypiece, furniture, carpets, curtains, bedsteads and various minor items £4,232 is in Fonthill Archives, F/2/1121.
- 47 Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, 6.
- 48 Anon, 'The late Mr Owen Jones', 385.
- 49 Anon, 'The late Mr Owen Jones', 385.
- 50 Anon, 'The late Mr Owen Jones', 385.
- 51 See Neil Burton, [Chapter 3](#) of this volume.
- 52 Sala, *Notes and Sketches of the Paris Exhibition*, 350.
- 53 The heirloom inventory of 1900 lists as fixtures 'DINING ROOM./ 263 A range of eight tall show cabinets of ebony, inlaid with ivory, with glazed doors and looking glass backs./264. A pier glass, in frame, en suite/265 A chimney glass, in arched top frame, en suite.'
- 54 *Illustrated Spring '84*. Exhibition catalogue (London: The Fine Art Society, 1984), no. 40. See also Christie's, London, 29 January 1987, lot 239; Christie's, London, March 4, 2004, lot 209; Sotheby's London, 11 October 2006, lot 131. Other elements from the room that passed anonymously through Christie's South Kensington in the late 1970s included the narrow cabinet, in the John Scott collection, exhibited by the Fine Art Society in Fine Art Society, *Architect-Designers*, 12–13. More recently, the Toledo Museum of Art (2006) acquired an identical cabinet, and a private collector acquired a larger cabinet, lacking some elements, also from Christie's South Kensington, 13 November 2007, lot 159.
- 55 See Anon, 'Monograms', 817, for a contemporary discussion on monograms and polygrams.
- 56 Anon, 'Artistic furniture' (*The Builder*), 187. The *Catalogue for the Paris Exhibition 1867* notes "A case for objects of art, in ebony, inlaid with ivory, in the cinque cento style". Appendix, 96. It is possible that this is the cabinet illustrated in Payne, *British Furniture 1820–1920*, 274. The cabinet, now in the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford, is uniquely inscribed Peter and Forster Graham and dated 1866.
- 57 Anon, 'The late Mr Owen Jones', 385 The fireplace was moved to Barton Hill House in the early part of the twentieth century and subsequently sold by Dorset County Council in 1984, Sotheby's, London, 17 February 1984, lot 95. Thanks to Christopher Payne for this reference. See also sales: Christie's, London, 29 January 1987, lot 239 and 13 November 2007, lot 159, for ebony bookcases from Fonthill, each inlaid with the ivory AM monogram). The building work undertaken by Jackson and Graham was invoiced at £2,500 for the new room at Fonthill.
- 58 Estate of the late Alfred Morrison Esq., Fonthill House, *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 1900.
- 59 London International Exhibition and Jones, *Catalogue of Works by the Late Owen Jones*. Jones also designed decorations for the drawing room and free-standing furniture: see *Catalogue of Works*, no. 64 – Details of Drawing Room Inlays, no. 65 – Decoration of Drawing Room at

- Fonthill House, no. 100 – Decoration of Drawing Room at Fonthill. This catalogue included a list of sofas, couches, chairs, tables and designs for carpets. The present location of the drawings is unknown.
- 60 Invoice from Jackson & Graham for £290 5s 4d for ebony and enamel coffret and suite of rose bedroom furniture etc. dated 1 July 1864, Fonthill Archive.
 - 61 Alfred Morrison archive, NB 18/6/24.
 - 62 Anon, 'The late Mr Owen Jones', 385.
 - 63 Cited in Darby, *The Islamic Perspective*, 98.
 - 64 Mr Forster Graham was the principal of the firm of Jackson & Graham, London.
 - 65 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 158.
 - 66 Anon, 'Owen Jones Memorial Exhibition', *Journal of the Society Arts*, 1874, 763.
 - 67 Harris Lindsay notes a sofa in an English private collection which has a pencil inscription with Alfred Morrison's name. The sofa is possibly no. 73 in London International Exhibition and Owen Jones, *Catalogue of Works by the Late Owen Jones*, 'sofa in Inlaid Woods. Designed for Mr. Alfred Morrison.' See http://www.harrislindsay.com/media/files/4073__owen_jones_cabinet.pdf (accessed April 2025).
 - 68 Anon, 'The works of Owen Jones', *The Architect*, 1874, 159.
 - 69 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 156.
 - 70 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 54–5.
 - 71 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 265.
 - 72 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 267.
 - 73 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art I', 142.
 - 74 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art I', 142.
 - 75 See Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the Patronage of Alfred Morrison', 195–223, esp. fig 20.
 - 76 London International Exhibition and Owen Jones, *Catalogue of Works by the Late Owen Jones*, n.p.
 - 77 Yapp, *Art Industry*, Pl. CXXV.
 - 78 Anon, *Illustrated Catalogue of Paris International Exhibition*, 24. As Peter Graham was a juror, the table was *hors de concours*.
 - 79 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 281.
 - 80 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 55.
 - 81 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 156.
 - 82 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 156.
 - 83 Victoria and Albert Museum, Bookcase (W.43:1970): height: 99.5 cm, width: 38.7 cm, depth: 7 cm (dismantled). (3.3 ft × 1.3 ft × 2.5 ft). See also H. Blairman & Sons, *Furniture and Works of Art* (2002), no. 13, now in Minneapolis Museum of Art.
 - 84 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 268.
 - 85 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 269.
 - 86 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 270.
 - 87 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 269–70. The pavilion and its interior are briefly described in the *Illustrated London News*, 27 April 1867, 422.
 - 88 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 57.
 - 89 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 155–6.
 - 90 Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 156.
 - 91 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 277–8.
 - 92 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 278.
 - 93 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 58.
 - 94 Haweis, *The Art of Decoration*, 324.
 - 95 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art II', 210.
 - 96 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 278–9.
 - 97 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 278.
 - 98 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 271–2.
 - 99 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 58.
 - 100 With H. Blairman & Sons, 2022. See a second screen: lot 57, John Scott Collection, *The Fine Art Society Volume 8*.
 - 101 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 59. Messrs Harris Lindsay note that the locks are recorded in the Chubb Archives as having been supplied on 15 September 1869.

- 102 Courtesy of Harris Lindsay, London: <http://www.harrislindsay.com/browse-categories/41/very-large-inlaid-cabinet-desi/1-41> (accessed 3 April 2025).
- 103 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 275.
- 104 Anon, *Catalogue of the British Section*, 96.
- 105 Sala, *Notes and Sketches of the Paris Exhibition*, 350.
- 106 Anon, 'Artistic furniture' (*John Bull*), 206.
- 107 Anon, 'Some fine furniture', 241.
- 108 Anon, 'Furniture at the Vienna Exhibition', 151. This confirms the often extraordinary brightness of some marquetry effects when new.
- 109 Society for the Promotion of Scientific Industry, *Artisans' Reports Upon the Vienna Exhibition*, 8.
- 110 Anon, *Reports on the Vienna International Exhibition of 1873 Part I*, 615.
- 111 Anon, 'No. 16 Carlton House Terrace', *The Builder*, 1885, 265.
- 112 Anon, 'Miscellaneous', *The Builder*, 1898, 178.
- 113 See [Chapter 19](#) in this work.
- 114 Darby, 'Fonthill House', 232.
- 115 Christie's, Sale on the Premises, 1 November 1971, lot 163.
- 116 'Shaftesbury', in Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset*, 55–76.
- 117 Single display cabinet with glass door, c. 1863, the yellow silk lining of later date; 264.2 × 73.1 × 25.4 cm. (104 × 29 × 10 in) Blairman. Two door section, c. 1863, 266.0 × 115.0 × 41.0 cm. (104 × 45 × 16 in) Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Gifted 1952 by Mrs Laura Purdie of Dunedin. A square upright display cabinet from the suite was exhibited at The Fine Art Society, *Architect Designers: Pugin to Mackintosh*, 1981, no. 6.
Two door panels were sold at Sotheby's, London, 19 April 1985, lot 124 (private collection, London). Lots 125–9 were further architectural elements. Curved cabinet offered Christie's, London, 29 January 1987, lot 239; Christie's London, 10 July 2003, lot 80; Christie's, London, 4 March 4 2004, lot 209; Sotheby's, London, 11 October 2006, W06782, lot 131.

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Stampeding cattle, absurd horses and high-bred sheep: Alfred Morrison as patron and collector of animal art

Alison E. Wright

Good gracious, madam, do take care of yourself! that drove of cattle will run you over in another minute if you don't look out.
Review of H. W. B. Davis's *A Panic*, 1872¹

Introduction

At the beginning of 1865, Alfred Morrison bought two exquisite sixteenth-century drawings: pen, watercolour and bodycolour on vellum, approximately the size of life and gorgeously, vividly coloured. One depicts the tremulously outstretched left wing of a European blue roller (Figure 9.1), the other is a study of the whole dead bird viewed from the back and above, flattened out, its beak pointing up like a knife from a sightless head.² The drawings (both in private collections) are beautiful, startling, slightly uncanny transcriptions of nature, isolated as specimens against a plain background. Both are wonderfully preserved: in the wing, shocking blue bands of feathers still glow centuries after the pigment was laid down, against a motley array of paler blue, turquoise, a deep inky grey and sunset orange and yellow. The individual feathers softly press and slide against each other, faintly ruffled as if the dead bird had only just stopped moving.

Morrison bought the pair as a 'Dead Jay' and the 'Wing of a Kingfisher', and lent both for exhibition in 1869 as studies of a kingfisher, a native bird whose darting bright blue plumage is one of the most surprising and evocative sights of the British countryside.³ The desire to own such beautiful works of art was surely entwined with his admiration for the miraculous beauty of real birds, though in this case



Figure 9.1 Attributed to Hans Hoffmann (c. 1530–91/2), *Wing of a Blue Roller*, c. 1570s–80s. Watercolour and bodycolour heightened with white on vellum, 18.9 × 23.8 cm (7.4 × 9.4 in). An imitation, with significant variations, of the famous watercolour by Albrecht Dürer.

Photograph © 1982, Christie's Images Limited

the name of the artist to whom the works were attributed, Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), was probably the deciding factor.⁴ The drawings are two of several known versions of Dürer's watercolour studies of a *Dead Blue Roller* and *Wing of a Blue Roller* (c. 1500–12), the most admired of which, believed to be the originals, are in the Albertina, Vienna.⁵ Many of the extant versions are copies by the later German artist Hans Hoffmann (c. 1530–91/2), who produced a number of sheets which follow the originals closely, some so similar to each other that they were evidently traced from a common source. Morrison's two drawings, however, which are now generally thought to sit within the wider group of copies and versions by Hoffmann, are remarkable exceptions to this rule. Not only are they of particularly high artistic quality, with an unusually strong preservation of their vivid colours, but they also diverge considerably from the Albertina studies. The view from the back is a unique variant of the usual forward-facing study, and the wing follows neither the outline nor exact coloration of Dürer's earlier watercolour.⁶ In fact, both appear to be direct, closely observed studies

of a different specimen, an older bird of the same species, studied by Hoffmann (an able artist in his own right) under the inspiration of Dürer's work.

The studies of the blue roller in the Albertina have long been celebrated as magical works of art by one of the most admired artists of all time, and Morrison's ownership of his versions, both in terms of their general acceptance as Dürer at the time and their quality and interest for us today, can be recognised as a coup.⁷ To many there will seem to be little connection between these works and the artworks which are the main subject of this chapter, the mostly British, mostly eighteenth- and nineteenth-century animal paintings in Alfred Morrison's collection. Animal painting, however, was immensely popular in Britain in this period, and for those aware of its longer history, Dürer was certainly counted among the genre's most eminent forebears, an inspirational figure for those who most passionately looked to the natural world as a subject for art, such as the Pre-Raphaelites and the writer and artist John Ruskin.⁸ Morrison, who had an eclectic taste for animal subject matter of all kinds and in whose collection animal subjects and motifs were a recurring theme, was probably alive to these currents.⁹

More typically, however, animal painting was (and is) dismissed as a minor genre, largely concerned with recording the appearance of pets, prize breeds and racehorses, and in a completely different silo to 'high' art. In 1892, the artist Philip Burne-Jones (son of Edward) painted Morrison's portrait in the music gallery at Fonthill, under the gaze of the most spectacular and eye-catching of his patron's animal pictures (see [Figure 3.19](#)). The enormous *A Panic* by Henry William Banks Davis (1833–1914) ([Figure 9.2](#)), exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1872, measured just under 8 by 16 ft, or 236 by 480 cm. Burne-Jones wrote that the Morrisons' art gallery was 'depressing':

I had never quite realised what unlimited wealth – combined with bad taste – could achieve. Do you remember that vast canvas, of life-size cows coming full tilt at one, with a thunderstorm raging in the background? It got on my nerves, & I wondered whether my portrait wd [sic] look like the Cow picture when it was done.¹⁰

Morrison's taste had its critics, as this book shows, but Burne-Jones's repugnance is intriguing and demands further explanation. What was it about *A Panic* that caused such a strong reaction – and can we be as open to what animal art as a wider genre offered its viewers as we are to the beauty and sensuality of Dürer's blue roller wing?



Figure 9.2 Henry William Banks Davis (1833–1914), *A Panic*, 1872. Oil on canvas, approx. 236 × 480 cm (92.9 × 189 in).

© Beverley Art Gallery and EYRC

Morrison's first significant encounter with animal art is likely to have been in his father James's renowned art collection of Old Masters, assembled from the early 1830s when Alfred was still a youth. In fine paintings such as Aelbert Cuyp (1620–91)'s *Cattle and Figures in a Rocky Landscape* and Karel Dujardin (1626–78)'s *A Woman Spinning in a Landscape* (both date unknown, Sudeley Castle), he would have found a model for agricultural and working animals depicted unapologetically, with beauty and detail, as one of the main subjects of an artwork.¹¹ Morrison does not seem to have collected in this area himself, though he did purchase Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625)'s *Village Market* (also called *A Cattle Fair in a Dutch Village*; 1615, unlocated) in 1864, and owned a landscape-and-cattle subject by a contemporary artist, Thomas Christopher Hofland (1777–1843), *A View on the Thames with Richmond Bridge* (date unknown, unlocated), which looked back to seventeenth-century Dutch cattle paintings.¹² He also bought an imposing portrait of Charles III of Spain with a hunting gun and dog, attributed to Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) (see [Figure 10.15](#)). There is no complete inventory of Morrison's collection, so there may have been other old pictures. As Caroline Dakers notes in [Chapter 19](#), the extensive sale of the contents of Basildon Park in 1920 by Alfred Morrison's son Archie included some works known to have belonged to Alfred, and other items could also have once been in his possession; the sale included Melchior d'Hondecoeter (1636–95)'s *Garden Scene with Birds* and Dutch and French animal paintings.¹³ Morrison may have felt unable to compete with his father's collection, as Susanna Avery-Quash suggests in [Chapter 4](#), but perhaps

there was also an aesthetic discrepancy between the animals he wished to celebrate and the more 'picturesque' rough and knobbly creatures painted by the Dutch Masters. The revolution in 'improved' animal breeding in Britain from the mid-eighteenth century had trained large sections of society to value a quite different aesthetic: for agricultural animals, an emphasis on size, fat, symmetry and smoothness; for the sporting set, high breeding and a smart and sleek appearance.

Alfred Morrison was both an agriculturalist and a sportsman, and well accustomed to sizing up animals by these criteria. Described in an obituary as 'a model squire and a perfect country gentleman', he was absorbed by countryside management and pursuits.¹⁴ He expended much effort on an exceptional stable; one neighbour, a keen horsewoman herself, was clearly impressed in 1864 by 'his horses of which he has about 26 or so! Some very handsome & all in perfect order', while another commented acidly in 1878 on his decision to maintain '33 hunters valued at 300 apiece and never to ride any of them'.¹⁵ His interests did not benefit all the animals he kept, however, as a bag from one (admittedly newsworthy) afternoon's shooting shows: 'On Friday, January 8th, A. Morrison, Esq., with 12 and 13-gauge guns, of Purdy's make, killed as follows: – 67 widgeon, 22 ducks, 2 teal, 31 coots, 7 water hens, 1 swan, and 1 snipe, making a total of 131 birds; time of shooting, 3½ hours.'¹⁶

Most notably, Morrison was one of the leading breeders of Hampshire Down sheep in an important period of that breed's development. The Hampshire Down was a modern breed, developed by farmers in the early nineteenth century to combine the best features of the old hardy sheep of Hampshire and Wiltshire (which had long been essential to farming on the chalk downlands, as their dung was needed to make the unproductive soil fertile for crops) with the tastiness of the popular 'improved' Southdown breed.¹⁷ The increasing demand for meat in the nineteenth century had shifted the emphasis in sheep farming, and the old breeds, the Old Wiltshire, Old Hampshire and Berkshire Nott, were unceremoniously cross-bred to extinction to produce a much more efficient model. The Hampshire Down in the middle decades of the nineteenth century was a heavy, remarkably fast-maturing and easily fattened animal with a blocky, squared appearance, reared in a radically intensive process using high-energy foodstuffs such as turnips, mangolds, cabbages and oilcake to produce lambs ready for market at 15 weeks old, and ram lambs that could service ewes in the summer of the year they were born, at only seven to eight months old. Contemporaries marvelled at how humans had seized control of a natural process, one writing 'I have often declared a Hampshire

Down ram lamb, as he appears in the sale-ring ... late in July or in early August, to be one of the wonders of the world.'¹⁸ To some of us today, attuned to the ill effects of humans' exploitation of other species, the creation of the Hampshire Down is a queasy example of the manipulation and commodification of a living creature in the pursuit of meat and profit, with (as one writer casually put it) 'less of the food being lost in mere existence'.¹⁹ Among his peers however, Morrison's achievements were admired. Rather than concentrating purely on production, which involved rapid disposal of the majority of a farmer's stock every year either by sale or slaughter, he established a remarkable breeding flock (numbering 1,900 sheep on its final dispersal in 1884), which allowed him to concentrate on selecting and improving the quality of future generations and which was held up as a model for other farmers. His success was publicly marked in an impressive prizewinning record for rams and pens of fat lambs at agricultural fairs.²⁰

The lack of documentation and the dispersal of much of Morrison's collection, as noted throughout this book, means there is an incomplete record of his animal artworks.²¹ This chapter reconstructs his collection as far as possible from extant works, sale catalogues (with many works known only from a listed title) and photographic records. The first section examines his contemporary commissions and purchases of animal paintings and sculpture, the second turns to his distinctive taste for Georgian animal art and the third focuses on Morrison's most important patronage relationship with an animal artist, H. W. B. Davis, whose work for Morrison raises significant questions as to what makes a charismatic animal artwork tick and why we respond to them as we do.

Collecting contemporaries

The second half of the nineteenth century, when Morrison was forming his collection, saw the realisation of animal and sporting art as one of the most prominent and prolific art genres in Britain. The most famous animal painter of the mid-nineteenth century, Sir Edwin Landseer (1802–73), had transformed the genre with his virtuosity and his popularisation of subject matter ranging from sporting scenes to comic and historical works, becoming a household name in the process with the mass audience for prints after his paintings. Landseer was even offered (and turned down) the presidency of the Royal Academy (RA) in 1866, but he was only one of many well-known animal painters producing innovative and well-regarded work (the presidency, incidentally,

was given instead to Sir Francis Grant, himself a sporting and society portraitist). Looking at just one year of the RA's Summer Exhibition, 1872, when H. W. B. Davis exhibited *A Panic*, we also see numerous sporting and cattle subjects by the prolific exhibitors Thomas Sidney Cooper and Richard Ansdell; a major biblical work, *Daniel in the Lion's Den* (1872, Walker Art Gallery), by Briton Rivière, the man widely seen as Landseer's heir; and *Cradle of the Sea-Bird* (unlocated), a 'singularly wild, unfamiliar' and 'original' picture by the landscape and animal painter Peter Graham.²² An article titled 'Rural Life at the Academy' in *The Field*, meanwhile, explicitly permitted readers to view the Summer Exhibition through a sporting lens, reassuring them that 'the Chase is never without honour in the Royal Academy; and this could scarcely fail to be the case under the countenance of so good a sportsman as the President [Francis Grant]'.²³ Less sanguinely, a few years later the *Daily Telegraph & Courier* complained about 'the excessive number of Dutch pugs at the Royal Academy ... Surely it cannot be the ambition of the Academicians to convert their Exhibition into an advertisement of the Dog Show', and 'protest[ed]' the 'squander[ing]' of the Academy's wall space on 'the display of huge, staring, garish pictures of masters of foxhounds ... full of men in scarlet coats on horseback, and dogs, all standing stock still to be stared at and yawned over'.²⁴ Some animal painters and pictures became genuine public sensations. The French animal painter Rosa Bonheur (1822–99) was one of the leading international artists of the day, and the greatly admired military paintings of Elizabeth Butler (1846–1933), many of which focused their emotion through the horses serving alongside British soldiers, saw her explicitly numbered among contemporary animal painters.²⁵

Alfred Morrison was to become a significant collector of contemporary paintings, assembling a highly individual collection especially strong in landscapes, including examples of the Hudson River School, unusual Scandinavian pictures and almost 30 works by the Pre-Raphaelite landscape painter John Brett (1831–1902) (for discussion, see [Chapter 2](#)). His taste for animal pictures, however, preceded these developments. Indeed, his first known commissions in the genre were made before the inheritance of his great wealth on his father's death at the end of 1857, and constitute some of his earliest collecting activity. Seen against the thriving contemporary animal painting scene just described, they were conservative: three horse paintings fully in the long tradition of British horse portraiture, commissioned from George Bouverie Goddard (1832–86), a sporting painter and illustrator who could not have been more local, living at

the time in Tisbury, Fonthill's closest village.²⁶ 'Favourite', the Property of Alfred Morrison, Esq, High Sheriff of Wiltshire (date unknown, unlocated), which was exhibited at the RA in 1857, may have been the earliest, as it was presumably the picture described in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* as *A grey horse, in a stable*, there dated 1855, and noted elsewhere as made in 1853 (suggesting the date was only semi-legible).²⁷ In or around 1856, Morrison also commissioned a complementary pair of paintings, *A Grey and Dark Bay Hunter with Spaniels in a Wooded Landscape* (Figure 9.3) and *Three Hunters near a Stream in a Wooded Landscape with a Heron Taking Flight* (1856, private collection; both measuring approximately 72 × 86 cm (28.3 × 33.9 in)). One of these was doubtless the piece exhibited at the RA as *Hunters, the Property of D. [sic] Morrison, Esq., Fonthill Park, Wiltshire*, in 1856.

The paintings record the appearance of animals of which Morrison must have been extremely proud, and the timing coincides with his enlargement of the stable block at Fonthill in 1855 (see Chapter 3).



Figure 9.3 George Bouverie Goddard (1832–86), *A Grey and Dark Bay Hunter with Spaniels in a Wooded Landscape*, c. 1856. Oil on canvas, approx. 72 × 86 cm (28.3 × 33.9 in). Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

They are not adventurous pictures but nor are they merely documentary, demonstrably looking back to prototypes established by the animal painters George Stubbs (1724–1806) and Sawrey Gilpin (1733–1807), which elevated and romanticised individual horses as prized possessions and sensitive beings. While the portrait of *Favourite* was set in a stable, the pair of paintings of hunters aim at a wilder and more natural presentation, taking the animals outside into a picturesque wood (probably, Morrison's estate). In *A Grey and Dark Bay Hunter with Spaniels*, Morrison's hunting horses and dogs commune with each other free of human constraint, the unsaddled grey hunter bending its melancholy head to gaze into the eyes of two collarless spaniels. A human hand is not far away, however: all four display their fine conformation and suspiciously well-groomed and untangled coats, as well as giving an impression of fine breeding and well-mannered discipline.

Goddard was more than a jobbing local painter, having spent time in London, where he practised sketching animals at the zoo and became an accomplished draughtsman and illustrator for *Punch*; much later, he would go on to national recognition as the painter of two enormous and ambitious animal paintings, the 14-ft (approx. 425cm), life-sized *Lord Wolverton's Bloodhounds* (1875, unlocated) and *The Struggle for Existence* (1879, Walker Art Gallery), a Darwinian painting of wolves fighting in the snow.²⁸ For Morrison, though, Goddard's sporting credentials may have been his biggest attraction. He was a keen sportsman who had hunted with most of the Wiltshire packs of hounds, and who maintained his connection with Morrison's neighbour at Fonthill Gifford, the ardent horsewoman Lady Theodora Guest (née Grosvenor), into the 1880s.²⁹ Morrison commissioned no further works when Goddard rose in fame, though his patronage must have been somewhat significant to the young artist, inasmuch that the painting of *Hunters* was his first work to be accepted for the RA's Summer Exhibition.

Morrison's next documented purchases of contemporary animal art, at the International Exhibition of 1862, were quite different. The significance of the International Exhibition in Morrison's collecting career is discussed here by Martin Levy ([Chapter 5](#)), who notes several purchases testifying to Morrison's fondness for animal subjects, including a virtuoso wax model of *Linnets Defending their Nest against a Dormouse* by the French artist Auguste Cain (see [Figure 5.11](#)), and his considerable outlay on paintings and watercolours by the Russian animal painter Nikolai Sverchkov (1817–98), a specialist in horse portraiture, dashing troikas, carriage drives and snowy hunting scenes. At least four of the Sverchkov paintings that Morrison seems to have bought were (at least

in part) animal subjects: *Return from the Bear-Hunt*, *A Village Wedding-Train* (see [Figure 5.9](#)), *A Mare and Foal* and 'Post. attackd. by Wolves' (dates unknown, unlocated); as well as two by the Bavarian genre and animal painter Heinrich Bürkel (1802–69), *Catching Horses* and *After the Chase* (dates unknown, unlocated).³⁰ His choices reveal a fascination with the hunting culture and wild fauna of the continent, where bears and wolves still roamed. The *Return from the Bear-Hunt* may be the very large painting which can be seen in the top left corner of the photograph of the picture gallery in about 1891 (see [Figure 3.22](#)), and which appears to show two horses straining to pull a load through snow, with several heavily clad figures behind. The composition and painterly treatment of the snowy ground show a strong resemblance to several surviving paintings by the artist, including one of hunters using a sled to haul home a dead bear (compare also [Figure 5.9](#)).³¹

Morrison's collection of contemporary animal art continued in this broad-ranging, apparently rather miscellaneous manner. His interest in classic animal and sporting portraits can be seen in Arthur John Elsley (1860–1952)'s *A Long-Haired Retriever* (1885, unlocated), listed elsewhere as a 'Black Retriever', which was probably a commissioned portrait of one of Morrison's gundogs (the artist's name appears in Morrison's memorandum book on 29 November 1885); and also in John Alfred Wheeler (1821–1903)'s *Portrait of 'Ormonde' with Fred Archer up, in a Landscape* (1887, unlocated), a typical sporting picture commemorating a leading jockey, a remarkable racehorse and the pair's triumph in the prestigious English Triple Crown in 1886.³² Ormonde was owned by Hugh Grosvenor, 1st Duke of Westminster, son of Morrison's neighbours the Marquess and Marchioness of Westminster, and does not appear to have had any direct connection with Morrison, though he was interested enough in the horse to keep a newspaper clipping of its pedigree in his memorandum book. Morrison owned two paintings of masters of foxhounds by the high society painter Francis Grant (date unknown, private collection), and, at the other end of the scale, *Horses and a Colt* (date unknown, unlocated) by William Edward Millner (1849–95), an obscure painter of rural genre who spent his career in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire.³³ Henry Maurice Page (1845–1908)'s *Alarmed* (1888, unlocated), compared with the same artist's *Put to Flight* (1889, Museum of Croydon), is likely to have been the large painting of ducks startled from a reedbed, presumably by gunshot, seen displayed as an overdoor in the picture gallery at Fonthill in about 1891 (see [Figure 3.21](#)).³⁴ It may have been purchased specifically to fit this space, as its date coincides with the completion of these new galleries (see [Chapter 3](#)).

Alongside sporting and domestic animals, Morrison had a great fondness for representations of exotic creatures. One intriguing piece, referenced only in one of Mabel Morrison's sales, is a large picture of *Lion Cubs* (approx. 84 × 109 cm, 33 × 43 in; date unknown, unlocated) by Joseph Wolf (1820–99), an acclaimed German natural history illustrator who worked in Britain from 1848 and spent much of his time drawing rare species for the Zoological Society of London.³⁵ Wolf was renowned for the realism of his studies of living animals, which emphasised natural posture and behaviour; he worked largely on paper, but also produced some large, detailed oil studies and finished paintings. Might Morrison's appreciation of Wolf have extended further into contemporary zoo art? As noted earlier, the extensive sale by Archie Morrison of items from Basildon Park in 1920 included some pieces which certainly had belonged to Alfred. Among the listings were William Huggins's (1820–84) *Study of a Lion with a Bone* on panel (approx. 30 × 41 cm, 12 × 16 in; 1852, unlocated) and several drawings of animals by John Macallan Swan (1846–1910): both artists were specialists in big cats and other large zoo fauna.³⁶ Alfred's possible ownership of these pieces has to remain speculation, however.

Morrison's enthusiasm for animal art can also be seen in his sculpture collection, in which animals formed one of the major themes, and which Alex Kader discusses in detail in [Chapter 11](#). Several of these animal sculptures were extremely large and prominently displayed. The two most striking, in terms of interior displays, were H. W. B. Davis's large bronze *Trotting Bull* (1872, private collection; see [Figure 11.9](#)), a probable commission from one of Morrison's favourite artists; and the Italian animal sculptor Giovita Lombardi (1827–76)'s life-sized marble *Two Goats* ([Figure 9.4](#)), which Kader shows was probably purchased in 1863.³⁷ The *Trotting Bull* is a vigorous, finely crafted piece which was much admired on its exhibition at the RA in 1872 and won a medal at the Vienna International Exhibition in 1873.³⁸ In the early 1880s, it was located at Morrison's town house, 16 Carlton House Terrace, where it evidently made an impression on several visitors as the unusual centrepiece of a remarkable display in the inner hall (see [Chapters 3](#) and [11](#)), and was later moved with other sculptures to Fonthill and set either in the porch or outside the house.³⁹

Lombardi's *Two Goats* was also displayed in a prime if rather incongruous position by 1891, when it was photographed in the new saloon at Fonthill in front of an elaborate mirrored and swagged niche, in a room otherwise showcasing Chinese porcelain and marble statues of human figures (see [Figures 2.2](#) and [3.23](#)). Two marble versions are



Figure 9.4 Giovita Lombardi (1827–76), *Two Goats*, by 1863. Marble, 132 × 82.5 × 61 cm (52 × 32.5 × 24 in). Sefton Park Palm House, Liverpool.
© Naomi McAllister, Palm House Team

known, one of which (thought to have been Morrison's) was exhibited in the International Exhibition of 1865 at Dublin, then at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867. It won the Grand Prix d'Honneur, though one reviewer at Dublin disapproved of the spectators' admiration for 'the elaborate painstaking and the dextrous chiseling [*sic*] ... displayed in the rendering of the hairy coats of the animals', doubting that 'the subject, taken alone, [was] either worthy of or suited to the material [marble]', or the title of 'fine art'.⁴⁰ Lombardi's finely observed and heroic portrayal of the bleating mother goat may have particularly appealed to Morrison because of the close physical resemblance between goats and sheep, though Morrison did not own many sheep artworks, despite his devotion to breeding Hampshire Downs.⁴¹

Other large sculptures were displayed outside Fonthill House, the most remarkable of which, not strictly an animal subject but by the renowned *animalier* sculptor Antoine-Louis Barye (1795–1875), was *Theseus and the Centaur* (see [Figure 11.10](#)), another work purchased in 1862 at the International Exhibition, and discussed in detail by Kader as

a highly significant example of Barye's work in its own right. It is seen in a photograph of the south front of Fonthill House in about 1880, flanked by a pair of enormous winged lions by Ferdinand Barbedienne (1810–92), which were bought at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867 (see [Chapter 2](#) and [Figures 3.2](#) and [19.17](#)). The animal presence outside Fonthill continued with a large eagle with outstretched wings in statuary marble (date unknown, private collection) and a life-sized bronze *Crouching Lioness* ready to pounce (see [Figure 11.11](#)), a commission from the German animal sculptor Julius Heinrich Hähnel (1823–1909).⁴²

Alongside the ostentatious declaration of his tastes which these larger pieces represented, Morrison had a penchant for smaller *animalier* bronzes: intimately scaled and often very finely crafted artworks, popular with collectors, which allowed him to surround himself with a menagerie of sculpted animals. The craze for mantelpiece-sized bronzes of animals started with Barye, whose large, wild, Romantic bronzes, often depicting violent conflicts, had caused a sensation at the Paris Salon in the early 1830s, and who later founded a commercial workshop to sell smaller, decorative pieces directly to the public.⁴³ Morrison, whose enthusiasm for Barye had probably begun with his purchase of the large-scale *Theseus*, also owned five small bronzes by the artist which Kader suggests he may have bought in Paris in 1867. These included *Eagle with Outstretched Wings and Open Beak* (first issued c. 1862, unlocated; seen in [Figure 3.23](#)) and four of his most popular big cat subjects: a small version of his celebrated, brutal *Lion au serpent* (*Lion with serpent*, also called *Lion Crushing a Serpent*), first modelled at almost 2 metres (6 ft) long in 1832 and exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1833; *Lion assis* (*Seated lion*), modelled in about 1847, inspired by a monumental sculpture that Barye modelled for the Tuileries; and *Lion qui marche* (*Walking Lion*) and *Tigre qui marche* (*Walking Tiger*), modelled in about 1840–1, a complementary pair often issued together.⁴⁴ Morrison's fondness for small bronzes of big cats was also displayed in a striking earlier cast of a *Tiger Ecorché* (after 1500, Fitzwilliam Museum) associated with the sculptor Willem Danielsz van Tetrode (1530–87) (see [Chapter 11](#)).

In addition to the group of Baryes, Morrison acquired a substantial collection of other small bronzes. Several were purchased at the International Exhibition in 1862, including three casts listed as modelled by 'Bonheur' and cast by Regner: a dramatic *Bull and Bear* combat (see [Figure 2.4](#)), modelled by Isidore Jules Bonheur (1827–1901, brother of Rosa and like her a specialist in animals); a 'Bull' attributed in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* to Rosa Bonheur, which Kader has tentatively identified in [Chapter 11](#); and an unidentified 'Partridge'.⁴⁵

Kader has also newly identified the purchase at the same exhibition of a 'Group, Fox Coursing' with a bronze by the Russian sculptor and animal specialist Nikolai Lieberich (1828–83) of a Cossack watching his dogs fight over a fox, visible on the mantelpiece in the music gallery in [Figure 3.19](#); nearby it in the same photograph is another Lieberich, with the grandiose title *Russian Bear killed by the Tsar near Lisina 9 March 1865* (private collection) (Morrison also bought a 'Ragged Colt', unlocated, by the same artist in 1862). As with Morrison's choice of animal paintings from the International Exhibition, there is a discernible attraction towards action, drama and the glamour of foreign hunting culture.

In terms of a single artist's work, however, Morrison's most significant group of animal bronzes was made by Julius Heinrich Hähnel, whose life-sized *Crouching Lioness* has already been noted. Kader, who discusses Hähnel and the group in greater detail, notes that it was a remarkable collection, perhaps the most comprehensive ever formed by a single collector of this relatively obscure artist's work. The group of bronzes comprised 11 works, and would have risen to 12 had a (presumably also life-sized) lion, commissioned in 1866 as a pendant to the *Crouching Lioness*, been completed. The *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* lists eight small bronzes by Hähnel, including a giraffe, a dromedary, an eagle, a leopard group and lions in various poses, while the Fonthill gallery photographs (see [Figures 3.20](#) and [3.23](#)) show another two pieces, *Ostrich with a Lizard* ([Figure 9.5](#)) and a group of hippopotamuses.⁴⁶

Morrison's enthusiasm for Hähnel is idiosyncratic and intriguing. As Kader outlines, Hähnel worked in Britain from 1849 to 1855, gaining at least one devoted supporter, the sculptor Thomas Woolner, who pressed other British patrons to collect his works; Morrison knew Woolner and could have become aware of Hähnel this way, though the timing is uncertain. These precise and finely made bronzes differ from Barye's work and, for example, Isidore Bonheur's *Bull and Bear* in being less stylised, less centred in conflict and tension, and in having a more zoological emphasis. The animal bodies are solid, weighty and believably but not entirely elegantly posed, strongly suggestive of studies from life.⁴⁷ Some are especially striking, such as the *Ostrich with a Lizard*, a strange, asymmetrical piece playing on the bird's elongated form and awkward gait, and a fine example of Morrison's taste for the unusual. In buying these pieces, and in commissioning two spectacular, technically challenging showpieces from Hähnel in the life-sized lions (albeit one of which was unrealised), Morrison championed an artist who combined fine craftsmanship and flair with a marked naturalism, and who, like Morrison, was fascinated by the physicality and movement of real animal bodies.



Figure 9.5 Julius Heinrich Hähnel (1823–1909), *Ostrich with a Lizard*, c. 1870–80. Bronze, 57 × 33 × 29 cm (22.4 × 13 × 11.4 in). This sculpture was owned by Alfred Morrison's acquaintance, Thomas Woolner, who was commissioned to sculpt Mabel Morrison (see [Figure 11.4](#)).

Photograph © 2013, Christie's Images Limited

Earlier British animal and sporting art

One of the most distinctive aspects of Alfred Morrison's collection of animal art was his enthusiasm for British animal and sporting artists of the Georgian era, which he must have largely collected retrospectively – though some could have been very early contemporary purchases. This was the art of Morrison's youth (he was born in 1821), and it is not surprising it should have been formative. His father James was an active art patron in the same period, owning works by John Constable and J. M. W. Turner, and, as Dakers notes in [Chapter 2](#), Alfred was already engaged with art as a teenager, writing appreciatively about two major artists of the time, David Wilkie and Benjamin Robert Haydon, while at Edinburgh University in the 1830s.⁴⁸

Animal painting was officially one of the lowest genres in the academic hierarchy of art promoted throughout the Georgian era, but it

also grew to become one of the most popular, partly thanks to the British obsessions with sport and animal breeding in this period, and partly to a sharp boost in quality from the revolutionary anatomical studies of Stubbs, whose *The Anatomy of the Horse* was published in 1766.⁴⁹ This flourishing established a set of widely recognised and therefore collectable artist names, familiar to later generations through paintings in private homes, sporting literature, prints and auctions, and codified in the first major studies of British sporting and animal art by Sir Walter Gilbey (*Animal Painters of England From the Year 1650*, first published in 1899) and Walter Shaw Sparrow (*British Sporting Artists from Barlow to Herring*, 1922).

Morrison's acquisition of these works may have been largely a matter of appropriate mural decoration for a country house and for a man of his interests. In the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* made following his death, most are located in minor positions, the bedrooms and corridors of the second floor and the back staircase landing, with a selection of the largest horse portraits in the 'Primrose Bedroom' on the first floor, presumably a man's room. It is something of a puzzle that these pictures, rather than the more ambitious contemporary landscapes by H. W. B. Davis and others (in some cases commissioned by Morrison himself), were designated as heirlooms of 'artistic and intrinsic value or merit', but the remaining family members' artistic preferences may have been taken into account.⁵⁰ The pictures encompass several of the leading animal painters of their day, including at least two paintings each by Benjamin Marshall (1768–1835) and John Frederick Herring (1795–1865). Marshall's *A Gentleman Mounted on a Chestnut Hunter* (date unknown, private collection) is a typical example of why the artist was a favourite of sportsmen: horse and rider immaculately turned out, the steed jaunty and gleaming, the man nonchalant and at ease under an expanse of moody sky.⁵¹ Herring started his career as a painter of racehorses, and Morrison's painting of 'Cossack', a *Chestnut Racehorse, in a Loosebox* (date unknown, private collection) is a handsome, trim portrait presumably made before Cossack, a Derby winner, retired to stud in around 1852–3; the timing is right for Morrison to have followed this horse's career, but there is no known connection with his stable.⁵² Morrison may also have owned two other racehorse pictures by Herring, and certainly possessed a small painting of *An Old Horse and Two Dogs, in a Stable* (date unknown, unlocated), which may have been one of the artist's later, Landseer-influenced farmyard scenes, from a period when the artist was patronised by Queen Victoria.⁵³ Also in this vein, Morrison owned four small portraits of horses by the animal and battle painter

Abraham Cooper, RA (1787–1868) and a hunting drawing either by the popular sporting illustrator Henry Thomas Alken (1785–1851) or his son, (Samuel) Henry Alken jnr (1810–94).⁵⁴

Other works in Morrison's collection are more distinctive and suggest a deeper engagement with the range of animal painting from this period. The earliest horse painting inscribed with a date that Morrison definitely owned was Charles Towne (1763–1840)'s *A Dark Bay Hunter in a Landscape with Huntsmen and Hounds on a Road Beyond, a Church in the Distance* (1816, private collection; Figure 9.6), a sensitive portrait of a velvety, gleaming and watchful horse in a delicate and highly detailed landscape.⁵⁵

Its still quietness is typical of Towne, a prolific Liverpool artist whose work often emulates Stubbs. It is possible that Morrison might have owned a painting by Stubbs too: a 'List of Pictures &c sent to Fonthill' drawn up by the dealer Marseille Middleton Holloway in 1863 includes an entry for a 'White Horse and Lion' by Stubbs which could be a painting, a drawing or a print, and the Basildon sale of 1920 lists a Stubbs *Gentleman with a Horse and Dog* (date unknown, unlocated).⁵⁶ Morrison also seems



Figure 9.6 Charles Towne (1763–1840), *A Dark Bay Hunter in a Landscape with Huntsmen and Hounds on a Road Beyond, a Church in the Distance*, 1816. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

to have owned a large drawing (38 × 48 cm, 15 × 19 in) of *A Highland Landscape with Cattle* by Robert Hills (1769–1844), a talented animal watercolourist and extensive exhibitor in the first half of the nineteenth century, and he certainly bought *A Lion's Head* by the orientalist painter John Frederick Lewis (1804–76), probably one of the artist's early, fine, close-focus watercolour studies of lions, made in the 1820s.⁵⁷ Further references to Georgian artists in later inventories and sales of family holdings, which might or might not have been passed down from Alfred Morrison, offer a tantalising possibility of an even broader interest in the era. These include several pieces by or attributed to 'Sartorius', probably John Nost Sartorius (1759–1829); two paintings of hunters by Henry Barnard Chalon (1770–1849); a painting of a sportsman with horse and dogs dated 1809 by Edwin Cooper (1785–1833); watercolour studies of birds by John Frederick Miller (1759–96); and sporting and animal prints after Stubbs, Marshall, James Northcote (1746–1831), George Morland (1763–1804), James Barenger (1780–1831) and William and Henry Barraud (1810–50 and 1811–74).⁵⁸

Most remarkable, however, was Morrison's collection of works by James Ward (1769–1859), the leading animal painter in Britain in the first decades of the nineteenth century and a contemporary of Morrison's at the end of his career. Morrison probably first saw his work as a boy in 1832, when his father bought a painting titled *Milking* (1831, unlocated).⁵⁹ Later, he may have been aware of Ward's enormous, now-famous painting of *Gordale Scar* (c. 1812–14, Tate), a limestone gorge near the Malham estate James Morrison bought in 1852; Malham was inherited by Alfred's brother Walter, and Alfred himself had a hand in running the estate in the 1850s.⁶⁰ James Morrison's purchase of a Ward is testimony to the latter's high standing in the art world of the time: though an artist who divided opinion, he was an ambitious painter who pushed at the boundaries of animal painting, was elected a Royal Academician in 1811 and had loyal patrons among the nobility and royalty.⁶¹ A specialist in animal portraiture, his work is distinguished by its wiry, vivid anatomical articulation and the nervous emotional expression of his animals, which often seem about to dash off.

Alfred Morrison's collection of Wards was extensive: approximately 50 oils, drawings and watercolours (perhaps also some prints). The group comprised at least two large-scale finished paintings and a large and varied group of studies, from sheep, cattle and pigs to a glint-eyed monkey and an irascible turkey, including a striking series (seven in oil, two in chalk) of a sleeping or dead lioness, studied from different angles and with particular attention to foreshortening (Figure 9.7).⁶²



Figure 9.7 James Ward (1769–1859), *Reclining Lioness*, possibly c. 1816. Oil. Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

When Morrison acquired these works is unclear. The only purchase I have found documented is of a ‘Picture – Mare and Foal by Ward’ in 1868, though curiously there is no further record of this particular work in the collection.⁶³ He could have bought groups of small oils or works on paper at substantial sales of Ward’s work held in 1841, 1860 and 1862, though none match the group at Fonthill exactly, or perhaps acquired works directly from Ward’s son or wife during the artist’s last illness or after his death in 1859. An 1841 sale from Ward’s studio would have been very early but possible, especially given his family’s connection to Ward, and includes several potential matches among the drawings, while a posthumous sale in 1862 of Ward’s patron Thomas Garle lists a number of modestly sized breed portraits in oils, made for an important early project for the Board of Agriculture in around 1800, which might be the source of some of Morrison’s small oils of cattle and pigs.⁶⁴ The closest match is the posthumous sale of Ward’s studio in 1860, which lists a series of lioness studies; the correct number of oils – seven – are listed, and some are described as ‘Sleeping’, ‘couchant’ and ‘foreshortened’.⁶⁵

The group of works is miscellaneous, varying in type of animal, treatment, size, media and date. They are not the artist’s biggest or most

elaborate pieces, though the two largest known paintings, *A Wire-Haired Terrier Watching a Rat Hole* (1807) and *A Horse in a Loose Box* (1827, both private collection), are sensitive anatomical and psychological portrayals of working animals set in realistic, highly detailed interiors. Most, instead, show Ward as an artist excelling in charismatic, sensual and animated animal studies. Several are concerned with the delineation of breed characteristics: cattle display their near-straight backs, oblong bodies and wary eyes; four small oils of pigs allow a comparison between rougher, old-fashioned 'native' breeds and the bulbous, dished-faced Asian pig, which British breeders used to develop the fatter modern breeds familiar today. Other pieces are more lyrical: a calligraphically elegant study in blue of a dead heron, recalling Hoffmann's blue roller wing; a tender 1814 drawing of a sleeping three-day-old lamb in black chalk, a mass of ungainly limbs and hooves (Figure 9.8).

The set of lioness studies are particularly notable, not only reflecting Morrison's fondness for representations of big cats, but also perhaps showing his interest in the working methods of a favourite artist, as Ward



Figure 9.8 James Ward (1769–1859), *Three-Day-Old Lamb*, 1814. Black chalk on paper. Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

works his way methodically around the rare and beautiful animal that has been made available to him. Rendered with heady, sensual strokes of paint to depict the deep tawny fur and powerful musculature, the best of the studies tangibly evoke the artist's physical, unguarded closeness to an awe-inspiring wild beast.⁶⁶

Henry William Banks Davis and *A Panic*

Morrison's relationship with H. W. B. Davis broke the mould of his other animal art purchases and commissions, leading to the creation of major, experimental works by a leading contemporary animal artist, which he proudly displayed in his most important galleries cheek to cheek with his most admired contemporary paintings.

Born in 1833, Davis entered the RA Schools at 19 to study sculpture, then turned to landscape painting and later 'landscapes with animals', a well-recognised category in the nineteenth century.⁶⁷ A family relocation to Boulogne in around 1858 marked the beginning of a long connection with northern France, which provided many of his subjects (including at least three of Morrison's). His acquaintance with Morrison probably began when his name first appears in Morrison's memorandum book, between 1 October and 20 November 1864, and it seems likely that the first picture of his that Morrison bought was *The Strayed Herd. Dunes de Condette, Artois* (approx. 152 × 305 cm, 60 × 120 in; 1865, unlocated), the only piece Davis exhibited at the R.A. Summer Exhibition the following year. One review noted Morrison had already 'purchased it on the easel for 1,100 guineas'.⁶⁸ *The Strayed Herd* was no minor work but a turning point in Davis's career, a piece which amazed critics and was even reviewed as 'one of the marvels of the Academy'.⁶⁹ The following year, Morrison bought, or, we can guess, commissioned Davis's *Spring Ploughing – Artois* (1866, unlocated), a painting of the exact same dimensions as *The Strayed Herd*, and, again, the only piece Davis exhibited at the RA that year (Figure 9.9).⁷⁰ This painting can be seen in a photograph of the music gallery at Fonthill, next to an as-yet unidentified animal subject with semi-naked figures rounding up a group of horses in shallow water (see Figure 3.19). A third large painting, *Approaching Thunderstorm, Flocks Driven Home, Picardy, France* (113 × 243 cm, 45 × 96 in; c. 1869, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum), was acquired possibly soon after (Figure 9.10); it can be seen in the centre of the right-hand wall in another view of the music gallery (see Figure 3.20).⁷¹ Most spectacularly, Morrison commissioned *A Panic* in 1872, and



Figure 9.9 Henry William Banks Davis (1833–1914), *Spring Ploughing*, 1866. Oil on canvas, approx. 152.5 × 305 cm (60 × 120 in). Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's

presumably also Davis's bronze *Trotting Bull* of the same year, noted earlier, which is based on the black bull at the centre-left of *A Panic*; this was a major departure for the artist, drawing on his early training as a sculptor, and bears the hallmarks of Morrison's encouragement of his favourite artists to embark on large and technically challenging projects. In addition, though not further discussed here, he bought *Early Summer* (119 × 183 cm, 47 × 72 in; 1876, unlocated), a woodland scene with Devon cattle (which Davis recorded as 'an experiment with mastic varnish & turpentine but not liked'); and, at an unknown date, *Shepherd and Sheep*, and *Figures Harvesting* (69 × 45 cm, 27 × 17.5 in; date unknown, unlocated).⁷²

I have been unable to locate an image of *The Strayed Herd*, but there are numerous contemporary descriptions which testify to its effect on viewers. The *Illustrated London News* called it 'the most remarkable' of the landscape and animal pictures in the RA's Summer Exhibition:

Few persons who remember this artist's small, very minutely and delicately wrought studies of the herds and peculiar scenery of the Pas-de-Calais and some neighbouring districts ... would anticipate from the same hand so sudden an increase in size, and with it commensurate breadth of execution and effect, as are found in 'The Strayed Herd, Dunes de Condette, Artois' (560) – a large herd of oxen and cows, headed by a wild-looking master bull, lowing to each other as they find themselves at evening, far from familiar ground, among the rolling sand-hills.⁷³

Davis had been quietly admired for several years for his skill as an animal painter and for his mastery of fine detail, his painting at first owing much to the Pre-Raphaelites. What most startled the critics in 1865 was the sudden transformation of his style. Though his painting remained full of pleasing and specific local detail (aspects that were also sure to appeal to Morrison, with his love of finesse), it had been radically recast on a grand scale, and with a new breadth and swagger, especially noticeable in the 'bold' sky and the treatment of light.⁷⁴ Several reviewers connected this with the influence of Rosa Bonheur, the preeminent French animal painter, whose large-scale, vigorous, romantic yet realistic pictures had first astounded British critics in the 1850s and become both well known and highly popular.⁷⁵ The *Press* declared, 'a Bonheur has arisen in Great Britain in the person of Mr. Davis'.⁷⁶

Bonheur's magisterial and highly acclaimed paintings of many of the same northern French landscapes and animals on which Davis worked made her an obvious model for the young artist. A review a year earlier had already noted 'a too close study of Rosa Bonheur's style to be healthy for Mr. Davis's originality', but was it a coincidence that his style changed just at the moment that Morrison became interested in his work?⁷⁷ It seems significant that Davis's transformation as an artist followed a very similar pattern to that of the landscape painter John Brett, who in the same period, with Morrison's encouragement, shifted from an early career as a Pre-Raphaelite landscapist working on a minute scale, to larger canvases and broader, atmospheric treatments.⁷⁸ *The Strayed Herd*, exhibited not long after Davis and Morrison had met, clearly marked a departure in scale and breadth, and this was pushed yet further in the following year's *Spring Ploughing – Artois* (Figure 9.9), depicting a team of five heavy horses ploughing through thick furrows of mud on a dramatic diagonal. The composition and title are direct references to Bonheur's *Labourage Nivernais* (*Ploughing in Nivernais*; 1849, Musée d'Orsay), while the large, showy horses, spiritedly tossing their heads and stamping at the ground, were also indebted to the heavy white draught horses in Bonheur's best-known painting, the monumental *The Horse Fair* (1852–5, Metropolitan Museum of Art).⁷⁹ Both works had been exhibited in London, and critics were well aware of Davis's borrowings.⁸⁰ Though many admired *Spring Ploughing* and enjoyed the magnificence of the proud horses 'with grandly-arched neck and full crest', others thought the painting too derivative and grandiose.⁸¹ In comments that were echoed by other publications, the *Sporting Gazette* grumbled:

The horses are exaggerated, and by no means faultlessly drawn specimens of the breed, copied in pose, in manner, and even in colour, from the well-known examples of Mdle. Rosa Bonheur. The crests of the plough team are absurdly high, and their legs would scarcely carry their carcasses, while the two colts galloping down a bank on the right are absolutely and absurdly out of drawing.⁸²

Criticism of animal painters often focuses on inaccurate anatomical draughtsmanship, but the emphasis on ‘absurdity’ and excess insinuated that Davis had misunderstood the essential character of the agricultural scene, mixing in racier, even sporting elements; one critic described the horses as ‘curvetting and prancing with all the magnificence of studs in a royal progress’.⁸³ If *The Strayed Herd* and *Spring Ploughing* were influenced by Davis’s meeting with Morrison (and *Spring Ploughing* could easily have been a commission), this rather feeds into an impression of Morrison as a patron beguiled by excess and grandeur, who pushed artists and craftspeople towards impressive effects which were not without absurdity.

Davis was appreciated for his ability to capture naturalistic movement and behaviour, but in his work for Morrison this seems to have been ramped up to the extreme end of the scale, selecting moments of heightened emotion in order to portray animals in exaggerated, visually interesting poses and configurations. Though he did not cross, like Landseer, into anthropomorphism, reviews of *The Strayed Herd* describing the ‘distracted expression’ of the cattle, ‘quite conscious of having broken bounds’, and ‘the speculative and puzzled dashes some of them make who are lost and know it’ suggest Davis also manipulated their appearance to enhance the impression of consciousness and cognition.⁸⁴

Approaching Thunderstorm, Flocks Driven Home, Picardy, France (Figure 9.10), one of Morrison’s few sheep artworks, is another painting which emphasises and idealises the intelligence and social bond of the animal actors, with several of the ewes warily watching the dark approaching cloud and others standing protectively over their lambs. Though Davis’s shaggy, long-legged and mixed-colour sheep are quite distinct from fat, intensively reared Hampshire Downs, with their stocky shape, black or brown faces and tight fleeces with wool over the top of the head, this painting’s romanticised celebration of sheep may suggest it was a commission.⁸⁵ Davis literally elevates sheep as an artistic subject, the painterly treatment of the texture and colour of their fleeces being particularly lavish in the group of mixed-colour ewes on top of the hillock, while sensorially rich details evoke the real animal: the thick,



Figure 9.10 Henry William Banks Davis (1833–1914), *Approaching Thunderstorm, Flocks Driven Home, Picardy, France, c. 1869*. Oil on canvas, 113 × 243 cm (45 × 96 in).

© Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth.

headly fleece contrasted with the tender, fine fuzz on the head and ears; the fringe of eyelashes over a downcast eye.

In 1872, Davis undertook his most important and elaborate commission for Morrison: the stupendously large *A Panic* (Figure 9.2), depicting a herd of cattle stampeding directly at the viewer, apparently terrified by a thunderstorm.⁸⁶ The picture is confrontational and illusive. The weight and solidity of the bodies thundering forward, the sense of arrested movement and the mass of jutting horns all push the cattle nearer to the viewer, while a couple of confused life-sized cattle in the foreground bring the action to the very front of the picture plane, one turning its huge head to stare right at us.⁸⁷ Davis's treatment of the two main figures is especially vivid, richly coloured and textured: a brown-black shorthorn bull dashes out at the head of the herd with a rolling eye and foaming mouth; a white cow next to him hurtles forwards, caught in an almost impossible moment with her head down and her whole weight on her two front hooves. These two cattle are emphatically present and three-dimensional, Davis bringing his training as a sculptor to bear – the bull even has a literal sculpted counterpart in the bronze *Trotting Bull*.

A Panic is a work of a completely different order from the rest of Morrison's animal pictures. Its scale and the number and size of the animals make it a truly unusual piece, its earnestness endowing it with an inherent ridiculousness, and it has baffled those attempting to reconcile it with the more exquisite and refined examples of Morrison's collecting.⁸⁸ Despite some misgivings, however, *A Panic* was taken seriously by

contemporaries. It was exhibited favourably at the RA in 1872, where it was described as ‘the largest, and most conspicuous picture perhaps of this year’s exhibition’ and ‘a masterpiece about which every one [*sic*] is speaking’ (though ‘never was [opinion] more diverse’).⁸⁹ Reviews were united in praise of Davis’s draughtsmanship, the realism of the cattle and the painting’s power, though several were critical, voicing particular disappointment with the large expanse of flat, unrelieved dark sky, his atmospheric treatment of weather having been especially admired since *The Strayed Herd*.⁹⁰ The dark sky does indeed flatten the depth of the scene, creating an uneasy contrast with the cattle insistently pushing forward, but this can be seen as a consequence of Davis’s pursuit of a different effect to his usual pastoral painting: a confrontational and sensational impact, accessible to the broadest of audiences, through the simulated thrill of a close encounter with real animals.⁹¹ The power and proximity of the cattle are not subtle, one reviewer writing, ‘Mr Davis could not have brought them nearer than he has done. We feel that they are just upon us, and that we are in danger of being carried away.’⁹² The *Reading Mercury* was even more exuberant, inaccurately describing the mixed group of cattle as ‘a herd of mad bulls, who... look as though they were on the point of dashing out of the frame, and plunging headlong into the brilliant assemblage of visitors in the Burlington galleries’.⁹³

These comments suggest viewers’ willingness to enter into the spirit of the painting’s presentation as a *trompe l’oeil*, a sensational and entertaining work that allowed them to fantasise about cattle rampaging through the Royal Academy. The animals’ charisma and life force gave the painting a distinctive, unusual personality and appeal; one reviewer perceptively noted that ‘[t]he artist does not make a direct appeal to human sympathy ... and possibly the strangeness of the scene ... adds somewhat to the difficulty of appreciating the artist’s work at its true value’.⁹⁴ It encouraged different kinds of engagement and attachment than other artworks. ‘A Panic Panegyrised’, a comment piece in the ‘country gentleman’s newspaper’, *The Field*, explicitly stepped away from discussing the painting’s ‘technical merits’ to expound, at length, on modern cattle-breeding principles. The preferred breeds of the day, the writer argues, were widely recognised as ‘artificial in the highest degree’, and ‘could never exist in anything like a natural state of things where the elements and the antagonistic races [predators] had their full play’.⁹⁵ Overbreeding, overfeeding and intensive rearing had weakened stocks and threatened the future of modern breeds: ‘ease and grease are showing themselves to be as dangerous as the ancient foes ... some essential vital force has been impaired’. The writer calls on farmers

instead to study the hardier 'original type' from which British cattle developed, and suggests they could do little better than look at '[t]he really pure tribes' depicted in *A Panic*: 'To go from an English showyard animal to see this picture is like passing from the heated Islington hall [a reference to London's prime live cattle market], smelling of gas and sawdust, to some breezy mountain side, with clear pure air and all the sights and sounds of nature uncontaminated by man.' In fact, this review shows that for many people it was impossible to look at the painting and not think of breed portraiture or meat markets. Another review described the group as 'fine specimens of different bovine breeds', and yet another thought the cattle had been actively scrubbed up: there was 'too smooth and sleeky a cleanliness about the animals to be quite natural ... the very fright of the animals would have sweated them so intensely as to have caused dust, or mud ... to stick ... to their coats'.⁹⁶

Why did Morrison commission a painting like this? It made a statement, defiantly and unapologetically elevating animals as an artistic subject in a way that flattered (or wilfully indulged) his country gentleman persona, possibly to the point of being uncomfortable for his family or guests. In sponsoring a work of such sensational and populist appeal, however, Morrison was involved in the creation of a peculiar and, for the artist, an innovative artwork that seems designed to have had a life outside Morrison's possession of it. Following its inclusion in the RA Summer Exhibition in 1872, it may not have been displayed at Fonthill for some time. In November of that year, it was exhibited at Mr A. Hasse's Fine Art Galleries at Leeds.⁹⁷ In February 1874, it was again on display, at Whaite's Fine Art Gallery in Manchester, followed in May by a run at G. T. Dimmock's Norwich and Norfolk Fine Art Galleries, where it was noted that the painting was being engraved in mezzotint by Charles Lewis at over a metre (more than 3 ft) long: a considerable outlay for its producers, which must have been justified by anticipation of good sales.⁹⁸ Shortly after this print was made, Georg Zobel made a print of *Spring Ploughing*, which also would have required Morrison's permission.⁹⁹ This would appear to have been a publicity campaign on Davis's behalf in which Morrison was keen to participate. Davis's gain from the two pieces he made for Morrison in 1872 (*A Panic* and *Trotting Bull*) was considerable, resulting in his appointment as an Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA) the following year; he was appointed an Academician only a few years later. He repaid Morrison's patronage by getting him onto the coveted list of non-artist invitees to the annual RA Dinner.¹⁰⁰

As *A Panic*, unlike the bulk of his contemporary paintings, was on Morrison's *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, his widow Mabel was required

to keep it, presumably in situ as it was too unwieldy to move easily. The process by which it was then acquired by the businessman and philanthropist John Edward Champney (1846–1929), who presented it in 1921 to Beverley Art Gallery (of which he was a major benefactor), is unclear, but coincides exactly with Hugh Morrison's disposal of various other 'heirlooms' ahead of the demolition of his father's Fonthill House (Chapter 19).¹⁰¹ As the gallery's curator and colleagues suggested to me, Champney may have seen the painting as a good fit for Beverley because of the centuries-old importance of cattle to this small market town set in predominantly agricultural lands, and especially because of the Westwood, a vast pasture bordering the town, from which cows still occasionally wander into Beverley's streets.¹⁰² *A Panic's* public gallery life today is strengthened by the local identification with cattle, and actively embraces the appeal and charisma of the animals. It was until recently displayed alongside an injunction to visitors to 'Moo like a cow', leading to some unusual encounters.

Conclusion

Animal art will never be seen as the most remarkable part of Alfred Morrison's truly remarkable collections, but his enthusiasm for it was a constant backdrop to his more focused collecting activity, and gave impetus and character to his acquisitions of contemporary paintings and sculpture. As a sheep breeder, horse owner and sportsman, he commissioned and collected paintings and other artworks that would provide appropriate decoration for a country residence and to reflect and celebrate his own animal interests. Those interests, however, were far from narrowly focused – either on his own animals or, for example, glorifying the achievements of British agriculture. He bought paintings and bronzes by continental artists, was very keen on depictions of lions and other wild creatures and, in his patronage of H. W. B. Davis, gave considerable support and encouragement to an artist who spent much of his career painting French rather than British animals and landscapes. His collection was eclectic but guided by definite preferences, the chief of which was clearly for the animal figure in and of itself, without allegory, narrative or much of the human world on show, but represented with careful attention to physical form, texture and expression – and, perhaps most importantly, enlivened by an appreciation of dynamic movement and physical capability. Animal bodies were a source of absorbing interest for him and something he knew a lot about, a locus of meaning, identity and pleasure.

Many people feel somewhat at a loss when looking at these kinds of artworks, searching for the higher artistic meaning beyond what seems to be self-evident and rather 'low' subject matter. There is also a queasiness connected to the poor treatment animals and the natural world receive at human hands, and an assumption that many representations of animals idealise human-approved characteristics (beauty, strength, breeding, obedience) while ignoring the more complex or coerced realities of animal lives, resulting in art that is sentimental and undemanding. As Morrison understood, however, animal bodies are replete with meaning, expression and complexity, and have their own drama. In *A Panic*, the bombastic scale and intense focus on the immense cattle – and nothing else – bring sensory and sensual animal presence vividly and provokingly into the human spheres of the art gallery or the home. Pictures like this, moreover, are not merely abstracted ideals, but were made with reference to real animals with specific histories and multifarious associations for their viewers. Our attitudes to those animals and our entangled relationships with them, today, are also key to how we respond to these pictures now. If we acknowledge our complicated responses of affection, awe, distaste and guilt when we look at them, we may learn a lot.

Notes

- 1 Anon, 'A Panic Panegyrised', 502. Thanks to the British Newspaper Archive (<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>) for the great majority of newspaper references in this chapter.
- 2 A receipt for the pair from Alfred Morrison's dealer Thomas Miller Whitehead, 8 Duke Street, St James's, dated 31 January 1865, is in Fonthill F/2/1128. Both drawings have since been sold and are in private collections; see Koreny, *Albrecht Dürer*, 62–3, 90–1; Christie's, *Important Old Master Drawings*, lot 107; Turner, *Master Drawings*, 144–6.
- 3 Lent to the Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition of 1869, to which Morrison (a founder member of the club) also lent 20 prints; *Albert Dürer and Lucas van Leyden*, 16, cat. nos 131–2; Turner, *Master Drawings*, 146 n.12.
- 4 Whitehead's receipt (see n.2) also notes a provenance guaranteed to pique Morrison's interest: the 'Esdaile, Beckford & Hawkins Collections', though only the renowned print collector William Esdaile (1758–1837) appears to have been a safe attribution; the drawings were included in his sale of 1840 (for provenance, see Turner, *Master Drawings*, 146; Koreny, *Albrecht Dürer*, 62, 90). When Morrison lent the pair of vellums in 1869, the connection to Esdaile was noted. An extensive sale of part of John Heywood Hawkins's collection in 1850 includes 'An elaborate drawing in colours of a dead bird, dated 1515', attributed to Dürer, which is described as having belonged to Sir Thomas Lawrence, but this is probably a separate work as the drawings seem to have been sold together until they left Morrison's collection; Sotheby's, *Engravings; Drawings*, lot 298. I have not been able to discover a connection to William Beckford, the former owner of Fonthill Abbey.
- 5 For a full discussion of the history of Dürer's bird studies, their copies and other versions, see Koreny, *Albrecht Dürer*, 40–93.
- 6 Another version of Morrison's wing, in reverse, is discussed in Koreny, *Albrecht Dürer*, 73 n.8.
- 7 As well as lending the watercolours to exhibitions, Morrison proudly showed them to important visitors, such as George Eliot and her partner George Henry Lewes, who were shown the *Wing* in May 1874; Haight *The George Eliot Letters*, vol. 6, 162 n.7.

- 8 Payne, *John Brett*, 1, 38; Lyles, *Turner and Natural History*, 9–10, 41–2, 65–6.
- 9 Though not discussed here, there are also numerous animal motifs in Morrison's porcelain collection, and a number of animal subjects among his Indian miniatures, as well as his much-admired Yongzheng-period crane censers (see front and back covers). For Morrison's sympathy for Pre-Raphaelite art, see Dakers, '1872: Alfred Morrison's purchases'.
- 10 Quoted in Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 235.
- 11 Other relevant pictures in James Morrison's collection include works by Paulus Potter, Philips Wouwermans, David Teniers, Nicolaes Berchem, Adriaen Van de Velde, Gaspard Dughet and others, many of which are now on display at Sudeley Castle. See *A Catalogue of the Pictures in the III National Loan Exhibition*, cat. nos 4, 5, 19, 22, 74, 76, 82, 83, 85, 89, 92, 94, 96, 97, 100, 101, 104, 108.
- 12 Christie's, *Important Old Master Pictures*, lot 5; a pendant Brueghel village street scene bought at the same time, featuring horses and cattle but less prominently, is noted by Emily Burns, [Chapter 10](#) of this volume. Morrison also owned five small panel paintings of *Butterflies*, *Beetles*, *Insects and Flowers* by 'J. Breughel'; Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 110A. The Hofland was sold at Christie's, *Fine English Pictures*, lot 87.
- 13 Waring and Gillow, *Antique and Modern English and Continental Furniture*, lots 553, 556, 620, 637.
- 14 Anon, 'The death of Mr. Alfred Morrison', 2. Morrison's Memorandum book (Fonthill Archives, F/1/1111) testifies to a consistent and consuming interest, containing numerous references to horses, stables, vets, wheat types and sheep sales.
- 15 Diary of Lady Theodora Grosvenor (later Guest), 28 August 1864, and the Duke of Westminster, quoted in Dakers, *Fonthill Recovered*, 148, 154.
- 16 Anon, 'Wild fowl shooting at Fonthill Lake', 8.
- 17 The information on Hampshire Downs in this paragraph is taken from Bowie, 'New sheep for old'.
- 18 John Wrightson, *Sheep Breeds and Management*, 2nd edn, 1895, quoted in Bowie, 'New sheep for old', 23.
- 19 Stewart, *The Domestic Sheep*, 60.
- 20 Anon, 'Dispersal of the Fonthill flock', 6; Anon, 'Dispersal of the remainder of the Fonthill Hampshire Down breeding flock', 8.
- 21 Mabel Morrison, for example, must have been responsible for the anonymous sale of one of Alfred's John Brett paintings (lot 33) at Christie's, *Catalogue of Good Modern Pictures and Water Colour Drawings*, in 1900, listed in a large section of works from 'Different Properties' (lots 11–95). This section also included numerous contemporary animal paintings, but it is impossible to determine if any were Alfred's.
- 22 Anon, 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy', 18 May 1872, 486.
- 23 Anon, 'Rural life at the Royal Academy', 439–40.
- 24 Anon, 'Royal Academy [fourth notice]', 3.
- 25 Anon, 'A few pictures', 205.
- 26 Goddard was born in Salisbury, and his address in the RA Summer Exhibition catalogues of 1856–7 is given as Tisbury, where his father was a chemist, see Anon, 'The fine arts in Salisbury', 5.
- 27 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, Fonthill Archives. Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings*, 31.
- 28 Anon, 'Obituary [Mr. George Bouverie Goddard]', 10.
- 29 See, for example, Anon, 'Forthcoming bazaar', 13; Goddard, 'Meet of the Blackmore Vale Hounds at Charlton Horethorne', 6, 8; Anon, 'The late Mr Bouverie Goddard', 371.
- 30 For Robert Phillips's List of Alfred Morrison's purchases at the International Exhibition (Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128) and a discussion of the items identified here (reproduced in [Figure 5.18](#)), see Levy, [Chapter 5](#) of this volume. Titles in italics in my text are from the *International Exhibition 1862*, 185, 230, cat. nos 672, 675, 1690, 1692, 1693A. Could 'Post. attackd. by Wolves' have been cat. no. 1693, *Lost Travellers?* Two Sverchkov watercolours (not in the *Official Catalogue*) are listed in one of Mabel Morrison's sales of Alfred's collection as *Sleighing, in Russia – a pair*; Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 38. An unattributed *Mare and Foal*, which could possibly be the Sverchkov painting, is listed in Waring and Gillow, *Antique and Modern English and Continental Furniture*, lot

559. Bürkel is not named on Phillips's List, but the titles 'Catching Horses' and 'Return fr. Hunting' are a close match to the exhibited titles. *Catching Horses* may have resembled two versions of his *Pferdefang in der Puszta* (*Catching Horses in the Puszta*) recently offered for sale: Neumeister, *Privatsammlung Karl Wormser*, Munich, 6 December 2017, lot 403, <https://www.artprice.com/artist/4319/heinrich-burkel/painting/14696397/pferdefang-in-der-puszta> (accessed 27 October 2024); Hampel, *Impressionism & Moderne, Gemälde 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 25 March 2021, lot 958, <https://www.artprice.com/artist/4319/heinrich-burkel/painting/23398473/pferdefang-in-der-puszta> (accessed 27 October 2024).
- 31 See Chapochnikova and Gouriévitch, *Nikolai Egorovitch Svertchkov*, 32, 41–3, 45 (and colour plates), cat. nos 3, 42, 44, 45, 49, 53. Another painting Morrison bought is titled in the receipt as 'Snow Storm', but this was probably a smaller work as it is given a lesser value in the receipt.
 - 32 The Elsley (approx. 75 × 62 cm, 30 × 24 in) is listed in Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings*, 71; and was sold by Christie's, *The Remaining Contents of Fonthill House*, lot 551. In a likely local connection, in the same period Elsley also painted a pair of portraits of Morrison's neighbours at Pythouse, Vere Fane Benett-Stanford (exhibited R.A. 1886, unlocated), former MP for Shaftesbury, and his wife Ellen (1885, Brighton and Hove Museums). The Wheeler is listed in Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings*, 70, and was sold by Christie's, *The Remaining Contents of Fonthill House*, lot 559. A painting of the same subject by Wheeler dated 1886 was sold by Christie's, 24 February 2005; <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4431070> (accessed 10 November 2023). For Wheeler see Mitchell, *The Dictionary of British Equestrian Artists*, 456–7.
 - 33 Both Grant paintings are listed in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 11. The Millner was sold by Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 83. For Millner, see <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-1471803> (accessed 10 November 2023). Morrison could also have owned *Hunter in a Stable* by the equestrian painter Harry Hall (c. 1814–82), listed in the Basilidon sale of 1920; Waring and Gillow, *Antique and Modern English and Continental Furniture*, lot 549.
 - 34 Listed in Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 84 (approx. 74 × 124 cm, 29 × 49 in).
 - 35 Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 97. For Wolf, see Schulze-Hagen and Geus, *Joseph Wolf*.
 - 36 Waring and Gillow, *Antique and Modern English and Continental Furniture*, lots 558, 574, 949, 965.
 - 37 The Lombardi was sold by Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 113. Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 207–8. <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/16767/lot/122/> (accessed 10 November 2023).
 - 38 Meynell, *The Modern School of Art*, vol. 2, 73.
 - 39 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 54. *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 23.
 - 40 Anon, 'The Dublin International Exhibition', 176.
 - 41 In addition to those discussed in this chapter, in the 1860s Morrison bought an artist's proof of a print, *Sheep*, by the Belgian animal painter Eugène Verboeckhoven (1798–1881), and *Moutons attaqués par un aigle* ('Sheep attacked by an Eagle'), by Léopold Flameng (1831–1911) after Charles Verlat (1824–90). Receipts for the International Society of Fine Arts Exhibition, dated March 1866, and from Holloway, dated 20 February 1869; Fonthill Archives, F/2/1128, F/2/1129; see also *Catalogue of the First Exhibition of Modern Works of Art*, cat. no. 76.
 - 42 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 23, mss nos 159, 162.
 - 43 For a discussion of Barye's life and works, see Pivar, *The Barye Bronzes*, 1–26.
 - 44 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 63, mss nos 706, 708, 712, 715. Poletti and Richarme, *Barye*, A50–4, A56, A61, A70; Pivar, *The Barye Bronzes*, 17, 122–6, 128, 131, 141, A37–41, A43, A48, A58, A186.
 - 45 List of Alfred Morrison's purchases at the International Exhibition compiled by Robert Phillips, Fonthill F/2/1128. *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 63, mss nos 713–14. The bronze by I. J. Bonheur is a reduced version of his famous large-scale sculpture of about 1857, later acquired by the Luncheon Club of the New York Stock Exchange.

- 46 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 63, mss nos 705, 707, 709–11, 716–18. For Hähnel's *Ostrich*, see <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O35006/ostrich-with-a-lizard-figure-group-hahnel-heinrich-julius> (accessed 12 November 2023). For the hippopotamuses, see <https://www.artnet.com/artists/julius-heinrich-haehnel/two-hippopotami-1lmB-ixurTjuhrWTGWO> Uyw2 (accessed 7 July 2024).
- 47 Kader notes that Hähnel studied animals at London Zoo during a period when he was living in London from 1849 to 1855.
- 48 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 51–4, 110, 112, 193–4.
- 49 Wright, 'Animal and Sporting Painting in Britain'.
- 50 As Dakers notes, Alfred's grandson John Granville Morrison, 1st Lord Margadale, a sportsman with an agricultural estate to run, was responsible for the retention of many of his grandfather's animal pictures and bronzes when vast portions of the rest of the collection were being jettisoned (see [Chapter 19](#)).
- 51 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 9. Morrison also owned *A Huntsman and a Pack of Hounds* (date unknown, unlocated) by Marshall (also listed in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 9). *A Groom with a Racehorse* by Marshall, unverifiable as one of his pictures, is listed in Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings*, 31. For sporting appreciation of Marshall, see, among others, Sparrow, *George Stubbs and Ben Marshall*.
- 52 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 11. Johnson, *The Racing Calendar for 1852*, 287–8.
- 53 *An Old Horse and Two Dogs* was sold by Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 70A. There is an oil study of a racehorse attributed to Herring, currently with Morrison's descendants, which is not included in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, while the *Portrait of a Racehorse with Jockey up* by Herring listed in Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings*, 31, might be the same work as Alfred's *A Race Horse and Jockey*, listed without artist in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 11.
- 54 Abraham Cooper: *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 9. 'H. Alken': Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 10. Other works by Alken which may or may not have been Alfred Morrison's are listed in Waring and Gillow, *Antique and Modern English and Continental Furniture*, lots 16, 571, 663.
- 55 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 9.
- 56 Receipt dated 19 August 1863; Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129. Waring and Gillow, *Antique and Modern English and Continental Furniture*, lot 642.
- 57 The Hills drawing is included among several items, the 'Property of a Lady', which also included one of Morrison's works by John Brett; Christie's, *Catalogue of Modern Pictures of Henry Walter*, lot 112. There is a receipt for the Lewis lion from Holloway, dated 12 May 1868, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129, noting it was bought in the Stanfield sale; Christie's, *Catalogue of the Whole of the Remaining Works of that Highly Distinguished Artist, Clarkson Stanfield*, lot 694 (in a section with other watercolours). For a comparable lion's head by Lewis, see Tate, inv. No. T01006.
- 58 Waring and Gillow, *Antique and Modern English and Continental Furniture*, lots 475, 522, 547–8, 626–7, 629, 946, 959, 967. Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings*, 10, 31, 45, 47, 70–1, 74.
- 59 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 110.
- 60 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 198–9, 208. One of Morrison's drawings by Ward was a sheet of cattle studies inscribed as depicting the Gisburn herd portrayed in Gordale Scar; Nygren, *James Ward's Gordale Scar*, 44, cat. no 18.
- 61 Nygren, *The Art of James Ward RA*.
- 62 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 9–12; Christie, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lots 41–2, 96; Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings*, 13–14, 35–6. For prints possibly in Morrison's collection, see Waring and Gillow, *Antique and Modern English and Continental Furniture*, lots 541, 666; see also lot 950, a Ward watercolour of a bull.
- 63 Receipt from Holloway, dated 21 March 1868; Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129. The painting could possibly be the unattributed *Mare and Foal* listed in Waring and Gillow, *Antique and Modern English and Continental Furniture*, lot 559.
- 64 *Ward's Gallery of Paintings*, cat. nos 39, 40, 54, 65, 105, 113, 144, 203, 243, 247, 256, 259, 309, 349, 352. Christie's, *Catalogue of the Valuable Collection of Ancient & Modern Pictures*, lots 8, 16, 17, 24, 36, 43–4, 48, 52–5, 71, 73. For Ward and the Board of Agriculture project, see Nygren, *The Art of James Ward RA*, 12–15.

- 65 Foster, *A Catalogue of the Pictures, Drawings & Sketches*, lots 110, 115, 118, 122, 126, see also lot 17.
- 66 The heron and lioness studies may have been studies for a major painting, *Lioness Disturbed (Lioness with a Heron)* (1816, unlocated), for which see Gates, *James Ward RA*.
- 67 Anon, 'Royal Academy New Associates', 158. Anon, 'Mr. H. W. B. Davis, R. A.', 8.
- 68 Anon, 'The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, London', 122. *The Strayed Herd* was sold by Mabel Morrison, by Christie's, *Catalogue of Important Modern Pictures and Water-Colour Drawings*, lot 110.
- 69 J. B. A., 'French Exhibition', 518.
- 70 Sold by Mabel Morrison at Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 64 (as *Labourage au Printemps*). Sold at Sotheby's, *The British Sale*, lot 55.
- 71 Sold by Mabel Morrison at Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 111; bought together with John Brett's *Christmas Morning, 1866* (1868), possibly at this sale, by Sir Merton Russell-Cotes. The title *Approaching Thunderstorm...* is as given in Davis' label on the reverse of the frame (see Mark Bills in Olding, *Waterfield and Bills, A Victorian Salon*, 43, cat. no 10), and in the Christie's sale (where it is dated 1866, not 1869). Curiously, however, there is a strong correspondence between the painting and a piece exhibited at the RA in 1869 as No. 362, *A squall from the sea: Mont St. Frieleux, Picardy*. This painting did not attract much attention on exhibition, though a rare notice – aside from the prominence given to the sea – might describe Morrison's picture: 'effects artistically observed and recorded of a squall from the sea, shown by the windy drift of the fine sand of the dune disturbed by a flock of sheep, and by a canopy of suddenly-condensed rain-cloud lifting towards the horizon where the sea sleeps in silvery sunniness and restored calm' (Anon, 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy' 29 May 1869, 551). This piece is also praised by a contemporary biographer of Davis in the middle of an otherwise unbroken sequence of works owned by Morrison: *The Strayed Herd, Spring Ploughing, A Panic and Trotting Bull*; Meynell, *The Modern School of Art*, vol. 2, 73.
- 72 *Early Summer: Members' Methods of Procedure*, 1876; Royal Academy Archives, RAA/LIB/4/1. Described in Anon, 'The Royal Academy of Arts', 517. Sold by Mabel Morrison at Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 65. *Shepherd and Sheep*: sold by Mabel Morrison at Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 66.
- 73 Anon, 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy | The landscapes, etc.', 490.
- 74 Anon, 'The Ninety-Seventh Exhibition of the Royal Academy', 331.
- 75 Anon, 'Royal Academy [Third Notice.]', *Globe*, 2; Anon, 'The London Art-Season', 245. Weisberg, 'Rosa Bonheur's reception in England and America', 1–13.
- 76 J.B.A., 'French Exhibition', 518.
- 77 Morrison does not seem to have bought any Bonheur paintings, but owned the small bronzes modelled by her and her brother discussed here, and there are prints after her works which could have been his listed in Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings*, 73–4.
- 78 For Morrison and Brett see Dakers, [Chapter 2](#) of this volume; Payne, *John Brett*, 89–98, 108. The dimensions of Brett's largest painting, *Seashore with Seagulls* (1872, unlocated), which Morrison owned, exactly match those of Davis's *The Strayed Herd* and *Spring Ploughing*. Davis's name also directly follows Brett's in Morrison's Memorandum book, and all three men were members of the Savile Club.
- 79 *Spring Ploughing* was later sold from Morrison's collection as *Labourage au Printemps*; Christie's, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Pictures*, lot 64.
- 80 For the exhibition history of both works, see their institutional online catalogue entries.
- 81 Anon, 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy', *Illustrated London News*, 12 May 1866, 474; see also Anon, 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy', *Sunday Gazette*, 6; Anon, 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy', *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 6; Anon, 'The Man About Town', 371.
- 82 Anon, 'The Man About Town', 371.
- 83 Anon, 'Royal Academy Exhibition. Third Notice.', *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 3.
- 84 Anon, 'The Royal Academy. Third Notice.', *Morning Post*, 6; Anon, 'The Royal Academy. [Third Notice.]', *Spectator*, 696; Anon, 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy. Third Notice', 3.
- 85 For Hampshire Down conformation, past and present, see Bowie, 'New sheep for old', 16, and the Hampshire Down Breeders' Association website: <https://www.hampshiredown.org.uk/> (accessed 13 November 2023).

- 86 Its status as a commission, previously uncertain, is indicated by two reviews: ‘The picture, we hear, is a legitimate “commission”’ (Anon, ‘Royal Academy’, 6); ‘He should give more work to the sky before the picture takes its place in Mr. Morrison’s gallery’ (Anon, ‘Royal Academy. (Third Notice)’, *Evening Mail*, 3).
- 87 Here, as with the works noted earlier, there was a debt to Bonheur, borrowing the subject as well as compositional elements from *The Stampede* (*Bousculade de boeufs écossais*; exhibited 1867, Private Collection); Fowle, ‘Picturing the Highlands’, 43. Another possible influence was James Ward’s *A Group of Cattle or Landscape with Cattle* (1821–2, Tate, inv. no. N00688), also known as *Alderney Bull, Cow and Calf*, an enormous, life-sized, spectacular showpiece, which had been much exhibited since its creation, including at the International Exhibition of 1862 (for discussion, see Wright, ‘Animal and Sporting Painting in Britain’, 131–42). Ward’s painting, to which Davis’s bears some resemblance, was bought by the National Gallery in 1862 and was well known. Could Morrison’s fondness for Ward have influenced Davis to look to this painting as a model, too?
- 88 See, for example, Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 234–5; Dakers, ‘1872: Alfred Morrison’s purchases’.
- 89 See, for example, Anon, ‘Royal Academy’, 6; Anon, ‘The Royal Academy [Second Notice]’, 4.
- 90 Anon, ‘The Royal Academy’, *John Bull*, 323; Anon, ‘Royal Academy (Third Notice)’, *Evening Mail*, 3.
- 91 See the discussion of sensational Georgian animal art displays in Wright, ‘Animal and Sporting Painting in Britain’, 116–42.
- 92 Anon, ‘The Royal Academy [Second Notice]’, 4.
- 93 Anon, ‘The Royal Academy’, *Reading Mercury*, 2.
- 94 Anon, ‘“A Panic”’, *Norwich Mercury*, 5.
- 95 Anon, ‘A Panic Panegyrised’, 502.
- 96 Anon, ‘“A Panic,” by Mr. Davies [sic]’, 7; Anon, ‘Royal Academy’, 6.
- 97 ‘“A Panic!” “A Panic!”’, 1.
- 98 Anon, ‘“A Panic”’, *Manchester Evening News* (17 February 1874), 2; ‘Magnificent Picture’, 1; ‘“A Panic”’, *Manchester Evening News* (16 May 1874), 5; ‘“A Panic,” by Mr. Davies [sic]’, 7. An etched progress proof of Lewis’s print is at the British Museum, reg. no. 2010.7081.6127.
- 99 *London International Exhibition of 1874*, 100, cat. no. 4185.
- 100 Morrison first appears on the invitation list in 1878 (Royal Academy Archives, RAA/SEC/25/1/18). These places were much sought after so it is not surprising it took so long (if Davis had indeed been trying since 1873), but once on the list invitees often stayed on it, and it was a mark of great social distinction; my thanks to Mark Pomeroy, Archivist of the Royal Academy, for this information.
- 101 As Caroline Dakers shows in [Chapter 19](#), there were various points at which Hugh Morrison was allowed to dispose of items from the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*. The only reference to *A Panic*’s disposal so far discovered in the Fonthill Archives is in a list of items to be sold, some of which were on the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, attached to an undated letter of about 1921; several of the items on the list, but not *A Panic* (listed here as *The Stampede*), were then included in the sale by Phillips, Son & Neale on 14 June 1921 (Fonthill Archives). *A Panic* was therefore presumably still at Fonthill in 1921 and may have been considered for the Phillips sale before passing (possibly in a direct sale) to Champney. My thanks to Caroline for sharing these findings. See also Dakers, *Fonthill Recovered*, 171.
- 102 My thanks to Hannah Willetts, curator, and her colleagues at Beverley Art Gallery for sharing their knowledge.

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'Fine old pictures': on the trail of Alfred Morrison's Old Masters

Emily Burns

Time failing us ... we repass the fine old pictures on the staircase, and, having smashed the tenth commandment into bits, go home.

Mary Haweis, 'Mr. Alfred Morrison's House', 1882¹

Introduction

As the second son of self-made businessman James Morrison (1789–1857), who died the richest commoner in Britain, Alfred Morrison (1821–97) grew up surrounded by his father's exemplary picture collection. In addition to collecting paintings by modern British masters, including Constable, Turner and Wilkie, James developed a wide-ranging collection of European Old Masters which he displayed at his country estate, Basildon Park, Berkshire, and his townhouse on Upper Harley Street, London.² Walking through these properties, and those of the Morrisons' elite social circle, Alfred would have become familiar with historic French, Dutch, Flemish and Italian paintings – including masterpieces by Claude, Rembrandt, Rubens and Parmigianino – that aligned with his father's generation's 'Orléans collection' taste.³ Although the majority of the family art collection was passed down to his elder brother, Charles (1817–1909), Alfred's inheritance of the Fonthill estate comprised some first-rate Old Master pictures such as *Head of a Rabbi* by Rembrandt and *Queen Henrietta Maria* by Sir Anthony Van Dyck.⁴ Alfred went on to form a superior fine and decorative art collection – worthy of his millionaire status – which featured a small but significant number of Old Master paintings.

This chapter will throw light on Alfred Morrison's Old Master painting collection, most of which has now been widely dispersed across the world. Through analysis of surviving records and select case studies, it will address Morrison's taste in historic paintings, and investigate the modes of display of Old Masters in his country residence, Fonhill, and his London townhouse, 16 Carlton House Terrace.

Alfred Morrison and Old Master painting

Morrison is known for his voracious appetite for collecting Chinese porcelain, enamel work, cabinets, prints, autographs and some contemporary painting.⁵ Indeed, one obituary relates: 'He himself was chiefly known as a collector of object d'art—not pictures—and of autograph letters.'⁶ His Old Master collection was small by comparison, and arguably not his pre-eminent area of interest. He chose to have catalogues made for his collections of autograph manuscripts and engraved prints, not for his Old Masters.⁷ Yet Morrison was active in collecting Old Masters from an early stage, acquiring high-quality items, and hung the pictures in prominent locations in his houses. In fact, Morrison reportedly collected too many pictures to be displayed on the walls of his properties.⁸ His pride in his paintings was publicly demonstrated by his openness to exhibiting his pictures over the years, at the Royal Academy, New Gallery and Burlington Fine Arts Club.

Morrison's Old Master collection also bears the collector's quirky habit of repeat or blanket-buying specific themes or types. Going against traditional English landed gentry practice, he seemed less concerned with amassing portraiture of his own family, preferring to collect portraiture of European aristocracy and royalty. This thread of portraiture and biography ran through his Old Master painting, print and medal collections, as well as explaining his passion for autographs of famous figures. Rather than an outlier, his Old Master paintings, therefore, should be viewed as an integral part of Morrison's approach and identity as a collector.

With his father's pictures as a foundation, several other influences helped form Morrison's collecting habits and taste in Old Master painting. His studies and travels around Europe and North America opened his mind to Western history and the breadth of historic and contemporary art available. His patronage-friendships with artists such as John Brett (1831–1902) and craftsmen such as Plácido Zuloaga (1834–1910) provided a forum for artistic engagement, and also some of

his more unusual acquisitions. Morrison was no doubt also influenced by discussions held with clientele of clubs he attended, such as the Reform Club, the Burlington Fine Arts Club and the Savile Club.

Fonthill was only a short distance from a number of country houses such as Longleat, Longford Castle and Wilton House. Wilton, in particular, was home to one of the most splendid historic house collections in the country. Although Morrison would have been familiar with the house and its collections from an early age, his connections there were augmented through marriage to Mabel Chermiside, who was the daughter of the rector of Wilton. The legacy of William Beckford's collection would have also weighed heavily closer to home, back at Fonthill.

Pictures at Morrison's country estate: Fonthill

In 1850, when Alfred was 29 years old, his father formally offered him the Fonthill Park estate of 3,254 acres, the house and its contents, rental income and other investments.⁹ Alfred took up residence in The Pavilion, which had been the kitchen wing of Fonthill Splendens, and renamed it Fonthill House. The property had been recently renovated and doubled in size by the architect David Brandon.¹⁰ James's will of 1852 confirmed Alfred's ownership of the Fonthill estate, along with further land in Hampshire and South Wales and future inheritance of securities, and by 1852 he had taken over the management of his father's estates. Alfred's holdings in investments increased after his father's death in 1857, and his income steadily grew over the subsequent decades.

The Fonthill estate boasted a rich history of artistic patronage and art collecting. Alfred, like his father, bought back items that had been in Alderman William Beckford's collection at Fonthill Splendens. These included two paintings of the first Fonthill House, now reattributed to the Italian artist, Antonio Joli (c. 1700–77). The works are assumed to have been commissioned by Beckford and were dispersed by his son at the sale of 1823, before being acquired by Alfred who completed the circle by displaying them at Fonthill House, the last surviving wing of Splendens.¹¹

Unfortunately, no inventory was made of the Fonthill collections when they passed to Alfred Morrison, and no further list was made until Christie's *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* of 1900, three years after Morrison's death.¹² This was only a partial inventory, however, concerning items deemed family heirlooms that were not to be sold.

Yet a few surviving descriptions and images record the appearance of the house interiors at intervals during Morrison's occupancy, and later inventories and sales and exhibition records can help trace collection items that did not feature in the list of heirlooms.

Early records of Morrison's collections at Fonthill include an account by Lady Theodora Grosvenor (1840–1924) after a visit with her parents the Marquess and Marchioness of Westminster in the summer of 1864. We know Morrison was already an active collector of Old Master paintings by this date, and that in June he had acquired a village street scene by Jan Brueghel the Elder at the posthumous sale of Johann Moritz Oppenheim (1801–64).¹³ Yet, following a trip to see his horses in the stables, Theodora reports that Morrison took time to show them his extensive porcelain and enamel collection, but does not reference any pictures or other collection items.¹⁴ Her brother, the Duke of Westminster (1825–99), visited in 1878 and was evidently not impressed by Morrison's artistic taste, and attitude: 'Mr A is an eccentric individual with peculiar views on most things ... to denounce all art and artists except those of which he himself approves (and there [*sic*] are a queer lot).'¹⁵

A picture gallery at Fonthill is mentioned in passing in some accounts from the 1880s. In 1881, Florence Caddy (of whom more later) mentioned the picture gallery as a key feature of Fonthill.¹⁶ In a letter of 22 October 1885, Morrison's near neighbour Madeline Wyndham was more specific, noting, when giving details of a recent party at Fonthill: 'There was most beautiful music given in the picture gallery.'¹⁷ By this date at least one of three new galleries commissioned by Morrison in 1884 from Gordon and Lowther were built. Photographs of the interiors of the galleries made in about 1890 reveal a full display of Morrison's contemporary painting collection, with no Old Masters to be seen. These photos of the new gallery spaces are the only existing images of Fonthill's interiors, so researchers must turn to visitors' descriptions, inventories, and exhibition and sales catalogues to identify and map the layout of Morrison's collections there.

Pictures at Morrison's London townhouse: 16 Carlton House Terrace

In 1863, having inherited the Fonthill Park estate and other properties from his father, Morrison acquired the lease of a large London townhouse, 16 Carlton House Terrace, from the Crown Estate.¹⁸ He had the interiors

lavishly decorated by Jackson & Graham and Owen Jones, and filled them with his fine and decorative art collections and new work by Charles Lepec and Plácido Zuloaga. The house decoration was still progressing when Morrison married Mabel Chermiside on 11 April 1866, so the couple took temporary lodgings in Harley Street.

Carlton House Terrace is a grand Grade-I listed scheme of two symmetrical stucco-faced blocks of terraced houses overlooking St James's Park.¹⁹ Broadly designed by John Nash (1752–1835) and superintended by his principal assistant James Pennethorne (1801–71), the 'dwellings of the First Class' were part of a partially realised project to relandscape the site and surroundings of George IV's opulent palace, Carlton House, which had been demolished in 1826.²⁰ Alfred Morrison was the first occupant of No. 16.²¹

The layout of the main rooms at Carlton House Terrace can be deduced from later plans of 1899 and 1934 (see [Figures 3.8](#) and [3.9](#)).²² Furthermore, four contemporary accounts, of 1879, 1881 and 1882, record No. 16's interiors in detail and throw some light on the pictures that were kept there, and their hang.²³

The Magazine of Art

The first of the accounts is a description of the house's interiors published in two parts in *The Magazine of Art* (1879).²⁴ The article praises the 'precision' and 'excruciation' of the handicraft involved in the 'metal work, glass works, pottery, pictures, or wood-work' on display, yet only mentions one picture specifically: 'a circular oil painting ... one of many in Mr. Morrison's possession' by the modern painter, Richard Dadd (see [Figure 15.1](#)).²⁵ The picture's precise location is not given, and photographs included in the article only show isolated objects, not composite interiors. Indeed, the only other reference to paintings in the house, 'oil paintings, chiefly modern, adorn the walls of the staircase', indicates that Old Masters did not feature prominently in the displays at this time.²⁶

Travels in South Kensington

Much like *The Magazine of Art*'s piece, Moncure Conway's account of his visit in 1881 focuses almost exclusively on the decorative work of Owen Jones, and no pictures are mentioned. His descriptions do,

however, offer some further insight into the room decorations. He was impressed by the large drawing room with a view of St James's Park, commenting that 'one of the best features of this drawing-room is, that it is not "stuffed" with things', unlike 'some houses, where an idea seems to prevail that the model for a reception-room is a museum'. This is an interesting and amusing statement to read by those who know of Morrison's insatiable shopping habit for both historic and contemporary art and artefacts, and problems with finding enough space to display his burgeoning collections.²⁷

Lares and Penates and Beautiful Houses

Two accounts of the townhouse's interiors give more insight into Morrison's picture hang. In 1881, in a chapter entitled 'The Millionaire's Town House', Florence Caddy (1837–1923) relates the plush interiors of 'the "Porphyry House" on Carlton House Terrace' owned by a so-called Mr Fitzmaurice (literally meaning 'son of Maurice', a play on Morrison).²⁸ A year later, a second account of the interiors of 'Mr. Alfred Morrison's House' was given in *Beautiful Houses: Being a description of certain well-known artistic houses* by 'Mrs Haweis' – the artist and writer Mary Eliza Haweis (née Joy, 1848–98).²⁹

Caddy reveals her understanding of the distribution and mode of display of Morrison's pictures across his town and country properties: 'The picture-gallery is one of the features of the country seat, so that not many are retained in the town house.' She states that those at the London residence numbered 'just a few favourites, and some specimens that are not easily classified, besides the "old masters" in the vestibule, and those that adorn rather than cover the walls of the staircase'.³⁰ This division of the location of old and modern pictures across town and country seats was an established pattern of elite display that went back centuries.³¹

Both authors commented on some of Morrison's Old Masters in the vestibule space near the house's entrance. This entrance display appears to have consisted almost exclusively of Old Master portraiture. Caddy describes an 'oblong vestibule' off the inner hall, which is 'hung with dark pictures, mostly portraits of the Elizabethan period, and various subjects by Ravenstein, Van der Helst, Vincenzo Foppa, and others'.

'Ravenstein' and 'Van der Helst' can be presumed to refer to the Dutch portrait painters Jan van Ravesteyn (c. 1572–1657) and Bartholomeus van der Helst (1613–70). It seems that Morrison used an agent, 'Durlacher', to acquire the Ravesteyn panel painting 'Portrait of the



Figure 10.1 Jan Anthonisz. van Ravesteyn (c. 1572–1657), *Portrait of a Lady, Half-Length, in a Black Dress with Lace Trim and Pearl Ornaments*, signed with initials and dated ‘Anno. 1631 JVR’ (upper right), oil on panel, 71.2 × 61.6 cm (28 × 24¼ in).

Photograph © 2010, Christie’s Images Limited

Queen of Bohemia’ from the collection of ‘Albert Levy, Esq’ at Christie’s, London, 6 April, 1876.³² The signed and dated painting was later sold by Morrison’s widow Mabel through Christie’s in 1899.³³ The painting sold through the auction house again in 2010, as ‘Portrait of a lady’.³⁴

The Foppa panel painting of an unknown man can be tracked through the Morrison collection across almost a century (Figure 10.2). It was acquired by Morrison’s agent Marseille Middleton Holloway or his son Marseille Holloway from Prince Napoléon’s sale in 1872, then appears in the heirlooms list of 1900, and eventually left the Morrison family collection in a Christie’s sale of July 1965.³⁵

Although Caddy does not identify any further pictures in the vestibule display, the prevalence of Old Masters, with their distinctive darker patina, over modern works in this space is indicated by her reference to ‘dark pictures’, and her subsequent note that the works were ‘well in keeping with the general bronze hue’ of the wood-panelled ante-room.³⁶

A contender for one of the ‘Elizabethan period’ portraits in the vestibule display is, of course, the panel portrait of Elizabeth I attributed to Lucas de Heere in the heirlooms inventory.³⁷ Edward Town and



Figure 10.2 Vincenzo Foppa (active 1456–1515/16), *Portrait of a Gentleman*, ?oil on panel, 58.4 × 44.5 cm (23 × 17.5 in).

Photograph © 1965, Christie's Images Limited

Jessica David of the Yale Center for British Art have recently carried out technical and archival examination of the work and reattributed it to Elizabeth I's serjeant painter, George Gower (c. 1538–96).³⁸ The bust-length portrait shows the queen in a red velvet dress and copious jewels, turning slightly to meet the gaze of the viewer. It is in excellent condition, possibly owing to it being painted on a single board of oak, and Gower's distinctive approach is evident in the heavy articulation of lines around the eyes and nose and the cool tone of shadows along the forehead and cheekbone. Town and David argue that the quality of the paintwork and the quantity of the materials in the picture point towards it being the primary version of a new portrait type that Gower made of the queen.³⁹ They support Sir Roy Strong's suggestion that the occasion for the new likeness to be taken was the recommencement of marriage negotiations with the Holy Roman Emperor concerning the union of Elizabeth I and his brother the Archduke Charles of Austria.⁴⁰ It seems the portrait entered the Esterházy collection, from which Morrison acquired the work by 1890, the date of a damaged label on the reverse of the panel.⁴¹ The Esterházy collection link originates from the Grosvenor Gallery exhibition catalogue of 1914, which gives the painting's provenance as 'formerly in the Collection of the Prince Esterhazy', meaning either Prince Esterházy Nikolaus III (1817–94) or



Figure 10.3 Attributed to George Gower (c. 1538–96), *Elizabeth I*, c. 1567, oil on panel, 45.7 × 33 cm (18 × 13 in), Private collection, sold Christie's 2 July 2024, lot 3.

Photograph © 2024, Christie's Images Limited

Prince Esterházy Pal Antal Miklós (1843–98).⁴² Could the portrait have entered Morrison's collection in time for Caddy to view it on the staircase of 16 Carlton House Terrace in 1881?

Other pictures once in Morrison's collection that have sold through Christie's over the years may be among the portraits Caddy saw in the oblong vestibule. These include a *Portrait of a Lady*, previously identified as Louise de Lorraine (1553–1601), which was in Morrison's collection by 1878 when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy as by François Clouet (Figure 10.4). The painting is missing an attribution in the heirlooms inventory, and has now been reattributed to Jean Decourt (c. 1530–after 1585).⁴³

Another potential picture for this setting is a portrait of a man, identified in the heirlooms list as 'A Reformer', and in later exhibitions as of Theodore Beza (1519–1605).⁴⁴ The work is now identified as a *Portrait of a Merchant* by Corneille de Lyon (1500/10–75).⁴⁵ Both pictures remained in the family by descent until their sale through Christie's in 2016.⁴⁶

Morrison had also acquired a portrait of Thomas Cromwell after 1879. It was missing an attribution by the time it was recorded in the



Figure 10.4 Jean Decourt (c. 1530–after 1585), *Portrait of a Lady*, with indistinct date ‘155[...]’ (upper right), oil on panel, 20 × 14.5 cm (7⅞ × 5¾ in). Photograph © 2016, Christie’s Images Limited

picture gallery in the heirlooms inventory, then ascribed to ‘School of Holbein’ by 1937, and as ‘English School’ when sold through Christie’s in 2007.⁴⁷ Another ‘English School’ portrait once in the Morrison collection, albeit depicting a much earlier Tudor monarch, is a portrait of King Henry VII, which also passed through Christie’s in 2007.

Haweis gives more specific detail about the hang of the ‘fine old pictures’ at 16 Carlton House Terrace in her 1882 account. She observes that ‘the first thing that strikes the entering visitor’ is a ‘fine chest’ (possibly the table with vases mentioned by *The Magazine of Art*) and the second is a seventeenth-century royal portrait: ‘the splendid portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria by Claude Le Fèvre’ (Figure 10.5).⁴⁸ ‘Le Fèvre’ refers to the artist also known as Claude Lefèvre (1632–75).

Morrison bought this striking portrait of Henrietta Maria in black mourning attire from Walter Benjamin Tiffin (1795–1877) in about 1852, when it was attributed to Philippe de Champagne (1602–74).⁴⁹ Henrietta Maria (1609–69) was the daughter of Henry IV of France and Marie de Medici and wife of Charles I, who was executed in 1649. The mourning portrait combines both loaded symbolism and sensitive brushwork. Haweis’s account praises the skill of the portrait painter: ‘the



Figure 10.5 ‘J.R.’, *Portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria in Mourning*, oil on canvas, 1650s, bears initials and date ‘JR: fecit 165*’ (lower left), 89.2 × 75.4 cm (35½ × 29⅞ in).

Photograph © Bonhams

touching delineation of a face once beautiful, worn by sorrow, but always noble and royal’.⁵⁰ The exiled queen in widow’s weeds is shown holding her place in a book inscribed with the words ‘Death is advantage’, while a single wilting rose rests on the table beside her. A dying flower is a vanitas symbol for the fading of youth and beauty and inevitable death. Roses are also a symbol of love, purity and the Virgin Mary, and could be interpreted as indicating the Catholic queen’s piety. Additionally, the rose could also represent the rose of England – her husband, but also hope for her son, the future Charles II.

Morrison exhibited the work as by ‘Claude Le Fevre [sic]’ at the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition of 1879 (no. 157), and at New Gallery in 1888–9 (no. 70).⁵¹ The picture remained in his collection until his death, appearing in the 1900 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* as by ‘Le Fevre [sic]’. It was sold at Christie’s in November 1971, where it was reattributed to Philippe de Champagne.⁵² The picture has since sold through Bonhams, where it has been reattributed yet again, to Cornelis Janssens van Ceulen, also known as Cornelius Johnson (1593–1661).⁵³ Speculation should be cast on this and previous attributions, however, as the picture bears a faint inscription of initials and date, which have

been made out to read: 'JR: fecit 165*', which does not correspond with Johnson's initials in either language. The portrait certainly carries characteristics that align with Johnson's portraiture including the high positioning of the sitter's head on the canvas, the almost 'beady' rendering of the eyes and evidence of an assimilation of the elegant portraiture style of his fellow painter at the English court, Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641). The chance of the pair meeting for the sitting is possible, as Henrietta Maria spent the 1650s in exile in France, and Johnson is also recorded as working in mainland Europe during that decade, in Middelburg, Amsterdam and Utrecht, where he died.

Yet if we were to allow the possibility that the faint 'J' initial could be a 'T', another name to introduce to the reattribution is the painter and copyist Theodore Roussel (1614–89).⁵⁴ Roussel was a second-generation Flemish immigrant and nephew to Cornelius Johnson. He spent nine years as an apprentice to Johnson, before becoming an assistant to Van Dyck.⁵⁵ Little is known about Roussel's life and career, and it is possible that following the death of Van Dyck in 1641 and the subsequent outbreak of the Civil War and execution of King Charles that he, like Johnson and other artists linked to Van Dyck's studio and the court, crossed the Channel to work on the Continent.⁵⁶

An alternative reattribution of the *Queen Henrietta Maria in Mourning* is to John Michael Wright (1617–94). Wright spent many years on the Continent during the 1640s and 1650s, including over 10 years in Rome and time in Brussels, before settling in England. That he might sign his last initial as an 'R' rather than a 'W' is not unfathomable, given that he was recorded variously as 'Michele Rita',⁵⁷ or 'Juan Miguel Rita', while in Italy and Flanders, before reverting to an Anglicised 'Wright' or 'Writus' on his return to England.⁵⁸ It is likewise possible that he could have crossed paths with the exiled queen; like her, he was a connoisseur and collector, and a Roman Catholic. Like many in-demand artists and artisans during this period, Wright worked for both Royalists and Parliamentarians, and went on to be patronised by Henrietta Maria's son, Charles II. Stylistically, the portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria also aligns with Wright. This can be seen in the comparable moulding of the brow and nose in a posthumous portrait of Oliver Cromwell's daughter Elizabeth Claypole and in a portrait of Mrs Salesbury, which also features similar handling of the eyebrows, hooded eyes and eye sockets.⁵⁹ Morrison owned at least one other painting by J. M. Wright, a *Portrait of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, sold by Mabel in 1899, and probably a version of the portrait held in the National Portrait Gallery collection.⁶⁰

In her account of 16 Carlton House Terrace, Haweis also refers to the Van der Helst picture mentioned by Caddy. She identifies it as a small portrait of the Dutch diplomat Hugo Grotius (or Hugo de Groot, 1583–1645), and locates it as hanging opposite the portrait of Henrietta Maria in the entrance hall. The picture is listed in the Fonthill picture gallery in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*.⁶¹ A portrait by Van der Helst of Grotius has not been traced, though several versions by Michiel Jansz. Van Mierevelt (1566–1641) broadly fit the description, as do other similar portraits such as variants depicting Jacob Cats in black dress and a white lace collar.⁶²

Among the ‘other interesting pictures’, notably both ‘ancient and modern’, which ‘crowd the walls’, Hawais picks out ‘a very early work by *Beltraffio*’ (meaning Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio, c. 1467–1516), which she deems ‘a particularly interesting study of *Italian* costume in 1467’.⁶³

This panel picture appears in the 1900 heirlooms list, where it is given to either ‘Bernardino di Conti, or Beltraffio’ (the former being Bernardino dei Conti, c. 1450–c. 1525), and identified as ‘Portrait of the wife of Ludovico Sforza, called “Il Moro,” in black fringed dress’ (Figure 10.6). It later appears in a 1937 Christie’s inventory as ‘Bernardino



Figure 10.6 Bernardino dei Conti (1496–1522), *Portrait of a Lady*, ?oil on panel, 74.9 × 57.2 cm (29½ × 22½ in).

Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby’s, Inc. ©

dei Conti', where the sitter identity is demoted back to 'Portrait of a Lady', and it was subsequently sold under the same title and attribution at Christie's in 1965, and sold again in 1990 and in 1993. In 1965, the work was highlighted and illustrated in a *Burlington Magazine* review of 'an exhibition of recent acquisitions at Agnew's (until 10 April)':

Another impressive Italian Renaissance picture is the Bernardino dei Conti profile portrait of a lady (fig. 89), from the Morrison collection. It is entirely linear and decorative in conception – an approach to portraiture which later came into its own in our Elizabethan age. No doubt a parallel can be drawn between Milanese society in the early sixteenth century and our own fifty years later, which would account for the similarity.⁶⁴

At the time of Caddy's visit, the drawing room contained only watercolours. 'The only paintings in the drawing-room are a French miniatures water-colour picture of "Psyche's Dream," by Polier, on a side table ... and two water-colour studies at Capri, "Moonlight" and "Twilight," by Talmage White, standing on easels.'⁶⁵ In the library, among – according to Caddy – an 'abundance of old Chinese porcelain, busts of Goethe and Voltaire', both authors record a single contemporary oil-painting, Frederic Leighton's *Summer Moon*.⁶⁶ Could this be one of Morrison's 'few favourites'?⁶⁷

Both Caddy and Haweis sighted further paintings on the staircase, in a display that apparently contained more Old Master pictures than at the time of *The Magazine of Art* assessment a few years before. Haweis reports 'fine old pictures on the staircase',⁶⁸ and that the staircase walls were 'studded with pictures by *Holbein* and his school, some in very fine early *Renascence* [sic] frames, besides modern pictures by *Macallum*, *Brett*, and others'.⁶⁹ The 1900 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* lists three possible paintings by Holbein in Morrison's collection, and several pictures attributed to his school.⁷⁰

Caddy's comment that Old Master pictures 'adorn rather than cover' the staircase walls indicates that the display was not dense but intended as complementary to the wall coverings and other decoration.⁷¹ This is in keeping with Conway's observation about the house not being 'stuffed'. The tension between Morrison's compulsive picture-collecting habit and the esteem he held for showcasing other decorative wall coverings is conveyed by a comment made by John Brett in a lecture for the Architectural Association, published in *The Builder*: 'I know a man whose house was finished by Owen Jones. He is very fond of pictures, but has to keep them piled up in stacks for fear of spoiling his walls'.⁷²

Furthermore, while the picture displays in the townhouse were not extensive, Caddy documents the Morrisons' penchant for framing and hanging decorative art on chains 'as pictures': 'Magnificent examples of Spanish lace are set on crimson velvet and framed as pictures', 'crimson velvet panels, each set with thirteen plates of egg-shell china, and hung by chains as pictures' and 'one picture (for these framed works are, and are treated as pictures) is of lace made of silver and gold thread'.⁷³ Haweis similarly notes textiles hung like pictures: 'the walls are covered with *Indian* shawls and ancient brocades of immense value—pictures in themselves'.⁷⁴ Hanging these works of fine and decorative art by chains instead of nailing them to the walls would have protected the expensive fabric wall coverings from damage. As other commentators would point out about both Morrison's London and country seats, Caddy eloquently acknowledges how the interiors, art collection and decoration at the London townhouse were presented all of a piece:

Where all is excellent, and all *en suite*, it is difficult to particularize the best things. All these dados, hangings, and furniture are but as background to the works of art, though even here it is invidious to distinguish one thing as a work of art more than another. The whole picture is perfected together, each apartment in an organized whole, a symphony.⁷⁵

Caddy also makes a revealing comment about the changing nature of the displays at 16 Carlton House Terrace at that moment in time: 'It is impossible to give even a catalogue raisonné of the treasures of this house, as they are entirely changed every fortnight, so vast is the reserve of treasure.'⁷⁶ Nevertheless, it seems that as far as the picture hang was concerned, there was little change in the year between Caddy's and Haweis's visits.

A major movement of pictures occurred after Alfred's death in 1897, when Mabel swiftly sold off No. 16 and much of its contents, save for the heirlooms, which were collected together at Fonthill. The broad stylistic range of paintings sold by Mabel include *Portrait of Sir Isaac Newton*, which Morrison had bought from the collection of the Earl of Hardwicke in 1881; a Breughel panel painting of *Butterflies, Beetles, Insects and Flowers*; *Portrait of Madame de Maintenon* by Mignard; *St. Francis of Assisi* by El Greco; and *Head of a Saint* by Ribera.⁷⁷ The 1900 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, listing room by room at Fonthill, thus does not necessarily indicate the location of Morrison's Old Masters in his properties during the preceding decades. Yet, as the next section of

this chapter will show, surviving traces left on some of the pictures reveal their past display locations, reflecting the tastes and preferences of their owner.

Labels and locations

Case study 1: *Cosimo I de' Medici in armour* Agnolo Bronzino (1503–72), c. 1545, in the Morrison collection from 1872 to 1971

Arguably the finest Old Master picture in Alfred Morrison's collection was Agnolo Bronzino's striking martial portrait *Cosimo I de' Medici in armour* (Figure 10.7). Agnolo di Cosimo, known as Bronzino (1503–72) was the pre-eminent painter of mid-sixteenth-century Florence, and court painter to Cosimo I de' Medici (1519–74), the second Duke of Florence and later the first Grand Duke of Tuscany. Coming from a different branch of the ruling Florentine Medici family, Cosimo rose to power after the assassination of the former Duke, Alessandro de' Medici. Building on research by Robert Simon in the 1980s, recent technical analysis by the



Figure 10.7 Agnolo Bronzino (1503–72), *Cosimo I de' Medici in Armour*, c. 1545, oil on poplar panel, inscribed on the tree trunk at lower right: COS ... MVS / MEDICES.DVX / FLOR., 86 × 66.8 cm. (33⁸/₁₀ × 26³/₁₀ in) Inv. No. 78.1996, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased with funds provided by the Art Gallery of New South Wales Foundation 1996.

© Art Gallery of New South Wales, Diana Panuccio

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, has confirmed that the painting is the prime autograph version of Bronzino's three-quarter-length image of Cosimo I de' Medici.⁷⁸

The painting has unbroken provenance, set out by Robert Simon and Dredge et al., and outlined briefly here.⁷⁹ The duke commissioned this portrait, through Pier Francesco Riccio, for Paolo Giovio's gallery of portraits of illustrious figures displayed in his 'Museo' near the site of Pliny the Elder's villa at Borgo Vico on Lake Como, Italy.⁸⁰ The painting remained in the possession of the Giovio family until 1860, when a descendant, Giorgio Raimondi Orchi (1846–60), sold the picture to the cousin of Emperor Napoléon III, Prince Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte (1822–91), best known by his nickname 'Plon-Plon'.⁸¹ After residing for over a decade in the Palais Royal, Paris, and a brief period spent at Claridge's, London, the painting was sold to a certain 'Holloway' for £341 6s 0d on the second day of the prince's sale at Christie's, London, 10 May 1872.⁸² This buyer was presumably Marseille Middleton Holloway (1809–97) or his son Marseille Holloway of Holloway & Sons, who supplied Morrison with paintings, sculpture, autograph manuscripts and engraved prints.⁸³ The portrait progressed by descent to Hugh Morrison (1868–1931), then to John Granville Morrison, 1st Baron Margadale of Islay (1906–96). Lord Margadale consigned it with other collection items for sale at Christie's, on 26 November 1971, when it was bought by the dealer Cyril Humphris for 3,000 guineas.⁸⁴ The work passed on to a private collection by 1993, and was with Sotheby's, New York, in February 1993, Simon Dickinson Ltd, London, in June 1995, and then Olsen Carr Art Dealers, Sydney, from whom it was purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, on 31 January 1996, where it remains.

Morrison's acquisition of the work aligned with his interest in historic portraiture, and specifically that of elite sitters of European courts, a taste which is reflected in his patterns of collecting of engraved prints, autograph manuscripts, coins and medals.

Other painted portraits of monarchs or military figures in armour recorded in Morrison's collection include a three-quarter-length portrait of William II in armour by Willem Wissing (1656–87) and a bust-length profile portrait of a military commander in damascened armour with a white collar and red sash by Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), previously attributed to Titian (Figure 10.8).⁸⁵ Both of these paintings are on canvas, which is uncharacteristic of Morrison's usual preference for panel supports.

Morrison showed an early penchant for the style of Bronzino and portraits of the Medici family, buying two panel paintings then attributed



Figure 10.8 Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), *Portrait of a Military Commander*, bust-length in profile, in damascened armour with white collar and red sash, oil on canvas.

Photograph © 2009, Christie's Images Limited

to Bronzino at the sale of John Rushout, Baron Northwick's collection in 1859: a portrait of a boy thought to be one of Cosimo I's children and a portrait of Bianca Capello (or Capella, as it is spelt in several of the sources, 1548–87), the second wife of Cosimo I's son, Francesco I de' Medici (Figure 10.9).⁸⁶

Both of these works were recorded in the picture gallery in the list of heirlooms of 1900.⁸⁷ This group of portraits, plus other acquisitions such as a portrait of Elisabeth of Valois by Sir Antonio Mor, also point to Morrison's interest in portraits showing sitters in highly detailed costume.⁸⁸

Given that, according to John Brett, Morrison's collecting of paintings surpassed the available wall display space, one can assume that those pictures which did make it to display were held in the collector's high esteem. Yet with so few surviving written records and images of Fonthill and Carlton House Terrace interiors to survive, deducing the picture hang is a challenge. The *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* made after Morrison's death records the Bronzino of Cosimo I in the Chippendale Room at Fonthill, along with two enamelled flower vases and three other pictures: a portrait of Queen Elizabeth then attributed to Lucas de Heere, a portrait of Henry, Lord Darnley, and a 'House in Nuremberg,



Figure 10.9 Alessandro di Cristofano Allori (Italian, 1535–1607), *Portrait de Bianca Capella*, oil on panel, 85.5 × 68 cm (33.7 × 26.8 in).

Photograph © 1965, Christie's Images Limited

in which Albert Durer was born' by H. Schoenfeld.⁸⁹ However, by the time the heirlooms list was made in about 1900, Mabel Morrison had sold off the London house, and its contents had been sold or returned to Fonthill. The given location of the Chippendale Room, therefore, does not necessarily indicate the Bronzino's location at the time of Alfred's death or in the decades before.

Fortunately, a label affixed to the back of the Cosimo I de' Medici panel provides another lead (Figure 10.10).⁹⁰ It bears the inscription:

Portrait of Cosimo de [Medi]ci
by Bronzino –
28/12/87 – No. 1 Drawing Room Landing

Accounts based on this label to date have made the assumption that the location given, 'Drawing Room Landing', is at Fonthill House.⁹¹ This is likely because Fonthill was known to be Morrison's primary seat, and the 1900 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* locates it there.⁹² However, the drawing room at Fonthill was on the ground floor, with no landing to



Figure 10.10 Label on verso of *Cosimo I de' Medici in Armour* panel.

© Art Gallery of New South Wales

speak of. The Chippendale room, where it was recorded in 1900, was situated on the first floor at Fonthill, but there is nothing to suggest this room could be defined as a 'drawing room landing'. This leaves the possibility that the label of 28 December 1887 relates to Morrison's other property, 16 Carlton House Terrace, which, as we have seen, did have a landing corridor at the top of the stairs before the drawing room (see [Figure 3.9](#)). The portrait of Cosimo I was not noted in Haweis or Caddy's accounts of 1881–2, yet their descriptions were made a few years before the new galleries at Fonthill House were finished. The new displays inevitably precipitated a reshuffle of art collections within and across Morrison's properties in 1888, and this label dated three days before the turn of the new year fits such a timeline.

The presence of 'No. 1' on the label indicates that this was not a unique label, but part of a numbering system used to keep track of works during a decant or rehang. It is unclear whether any significance should be read into the Bronzino being the first in the numbering sequence, given that the drawing room landing is not typically one of the first rooms in a house to be inventoried; it was most likely the first (or possibly only) painting to be encountered on the drawing room landing. To make sense of this 1887 picture hang, more labels on the back of ex-Morrison collection paintings need to be identified.

Case Study 2: *A Member of the Froschl Family* by Hans Mielich, c. 1539/40. In the Morrison collection from 1859 to 1980

At the same time as acquiring the two Bronzino portraits in the Baron Northwick sale of 1859, it seems Morrison also bought a portrait of the Northern School then attributed to Christoph Amberger (c. 1505–62).⁹³ The painting remained in the family collection until the 1st Baron Margadale sold the work, and after passing through dealers it was acquired by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, in 1984.⁹⁴ The picture appeared with the Amberger attribution in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* and again in the 1937 Christie's catalogue, but was reattributed to Hans Mielich (1516–73, [Figure 10.11](#)) by Kurt Löcher in 1967.⁹⁵

Mielich was the leading painter in mid-sixteenth-century Munich and court painter to Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria. He was also an accomplished miniaturist. The painted coat of arms on the reverse of the panel identifies it as the pendant portrait to Hans Mielich's *Portrait of a Woman*, separated in the 1559 sale and now in the Schroder Collection, London.⁹⁶ Despite clues in the heraldry, such as the frog identifying the man as from the Froschl family, the sitters remain unidentified, and the present painting goes by the title *A Member of the Froschl Family*. The work is



Figure 10.11 Hans Mielich, *A Member of the Froschl Family*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, oil on panel, 1539/40, 1984.66.1.

© National Gallery of Art, Washington CCO

acknowledged as one of Mielich's fine early portraits, made before he was influenced by the Renaissance and Mannerist art he saw in Rome. For a collector who became known for prizing art and artefacts linked to identifiable historical figures, it seems that at this early point in his Old Master collecting, Morrison purchased the portrait purely for its quality and (albeit inaccurate) attribution.

Another characteristic of the reverse of the picture, pertinent to this chapter's investigation, is the presence of labels and inscriptions recording the painting's location at Fonthill from the time of the heirlooms list in 1900 and other locations. One label notably matches the same hand and black and brown ink of the Bronzino inscription (Figure 10.10). The label (Figure 10.12) has been transcribed and published in the National Gallery of Art catalogue as follows:

Alfred Morrison Esqre W92
Portrait of a Man in black cap &
dress by Amberger /
28/12/87 No. 2 Rt. [or Dr.?] Hank [or Frank?] Eumer Hall⁹⁷

While the format of the first three lines of the label is in keeping with that of the Bronzino, the transcription of the last line does not fit the convention



Figure 10.12 Label on verso of Hans Mielich, *A Member of the Froschl Family*.

© National Gallery of Art, Washington CCO

of stating a location within a property. Although the handwriting is hard to make out, it is here suggested that it reads '28/12/87 No. 2 Rt. Flank. Inner Hall'. The 'Inner Hall' is a space mentioned by Caddy during her visit six years before, and is visible on the 1899 plan (see [Figure 3.8](#)). The 'Rt.' is most likely to indicate the right side ('Flank') of the hall, rather than a title of a person as suggested in the published transcription.⁹⁸ The presence of this inscription and its similarity to that of the Bronzino label suggests that this painting was part of the new picture hang scheme of Morrison's London house following the completion of the Fonthill galleries.

The text in the label's top right corner is more likely to be 'No. 92' than 'W92', with the handwritten 'N' in a similar format to the 'No. 2' on the line below. This perhaps indicates all the pictures were first numbered in black ink in their previous site and the new location was subsequently given in the brown ink. In this picture's case, it is possible it could have moved around within the London house, or from Fonthill over to London.

Case Study 3: *Madonna and Child* by Marco d'Oggiono (fl. 1487–1524), c. 1490. In the Morrison collection until 1965

In addition to large amounts of portraiture, Morrison also collected some religious art. Shortly after the collector's death, in 1899, a *Madonna and Child* by Marco d'Oggiono (fl. 1487–1524) from Fonthill was exhibited in the Burlington Fine Arts Club ([Figure 10.13](#)). The work was among the Morrison heirlooms reserved in 1900, where it is recorded in the picture gallery, and is also listed in the 1937 Christie's inventory. Marco d'Oggiono was a follower of Leonardo da Vinci, and was recorded in his studio in Milan in 1490. The painting shows the influence of Leonardo in style and technique. The composition is also reminiscent of Leonardo's work: the positioning of the Madonna's hand is similar to that of the master's *Lady with an Ermine*; the reaching pose of the baby reminiscent of that in the *Madonna of the Yarnwinder*; and the view through the window recalls the background of so many of Leonardo's works. Its quality duly recognised, the painting was the first picture displayed in 'The Large Gallery' at the Grosvenor Gallery Winter 1914–15 show, and also subsequently appeared at Birmingham City Gallery in 1955. Lord Margadale sold the work through Christie's in 1965, and the painting was acquired by Auckland Art Gallery in 1966, where it remains.⁹⁹

Investigation into the painting has revealed some interesting discoveries. First, the frame is identical to that around the portrait of



Figure 10.13 Marco d'Oggiono, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1490, tempera on panel, 655 × 530 mm. Auckland, City Art Gallery, inv. N. 80. (M1966/1).
© Mackelvie Trust Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased with the assistance of the National Art Collection Fund, 1966

Queen Elizabeth I (Figure 10.3).¹⁰⁰ This suggests that Morrison had at least some of his Old Master paintings reframed, presumably so to look resplendent in a new hang scheme. It also shows that despite not cataloguing his Old Master collection and in some cases reportedly letting the canvases pile up, Morrison cared enough for his Old Master paintings to invest in their presentation in matching highly decorated gold frames. Could they have been commissioned when Morrison first moved to the London house, and might this example be (inaccurately) one of the ‘very fine early *Renascence* [sic] frames’ that Haweis reports in 1882?¹⁰¹ Or was this frame update part of the 1887 collection reshuffle?

The panel verso features further clues as to the painting’s previous life. The picture appears to have entered the Morrison collection attributed to Lorenzo di Credi (c. 1458–1537). One undated label in flamboyant hand states ‘40. Virgin & Child / L. de Credi’, and another similarly states ‘The Virgin & Child by / L. da Credi’ (Figure 10.14). There is no record of when the picture entered Morrison’s collection, but it may well have been the *Virgin and Child* by Credi sold by Fosters at their premises in Pall Mall in 1842.¹⁰²



Figure 10.14 Label on verso of Marco d'Oggiono, *Madonna and Child*.

© Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

The second label is evidently in the same format as those affixed to the Bronzino and Mielich panels:

Alfred Morrison Esq^{re} No. 81
 The Virgin & Child by
 L. da Credi.
 28/12/87. No. 8 Bottom Staircase

Here, as with the Mielich label, the top right corner survives to reveal a number: 'No. 81'. The lower section is mercifully clearer than other examples, indicating the work was one of at least eight works located near the base of the staircase. If this location is indeed referring to the London house, then it would have continued Morrison's taste for showing 'fine old pictures' on the staircase, as reported by Haweis and Caddy.

Case Study 4: *Charles III in Hunting Dress* by Francisco de Goya (1746–1828), c. 1786. Remains in the Fonthill collection

One important picture acquired by Morrison is a full-length portrait of Charles III of Spain (1716–88) standing in hunting dress in a landscape with his gun dog curled up at his feet (Figure 10.15). The large painting was bought as, and is still attributed to, the Spanish artist Francisco de Goya (1746–1828), and was one of the highest value objects listed in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* of 1900.¹⁰³ The painting's subject aligns with Morrison's taste for European royalty, and Charles III's legacy as a successful, cultured and enlightened ruler may have especially appealed. However, the suspect circumstances of its origin and firmness of its attribution have been the subject of some debate.



Figure 10.15 Francisco de Goya, *Portrait of Charles III*, oil on canvas, 210.8 × 121.9 cm (83 in × 48 in). Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

The catalogue entry accompanying the work for the National Loan Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1914 cast aspersions on the painting's provenance:

This portrait was looted from the Prado and taken to Paris during the Napoleonic Wars; after Waterloo the question arose of returning the picture to Spain, resulting in its being brought to England by Placido Zuloaga.

A similar picture is in the Prado at Madrid, and replicas in the collection of the Duke de Fernan Nunez. Though the Director of the Prado considers the picture there by Goya's hand, it has often been questioned, and the appearance of the reputed original is of the greatest interest.¹⁰⁴

However, recent research has revealed a rather different narrative describing how the painting entered Morrison's collection. The picture

appeared on the market in London in 1873 when it was sold through Christie's as part of the collection of the diplomat the 1st Baron Dulling and Bulwer (1801–72), who had been the British ambassador to Spain between 1844 and 1848. The painting was bought by the dealer Durlacher, apparently on behalf of Morrison, as was his habit.¹⁰⁵ Entitled 'Portrait of Charles III', the portrait was given the provenance note: 'From the Russian Convent at Madrid and the Collection of King Louis Philippe.'¹⁰⁶ The Grosvenor Gallery's account of Zuloaga's involvement can therefore be dismissed as a spurious anecdote attached to the painting at the time of the 1914 exhibition.

If the Fonthill painting came from the Spanish Royal Collection, then it has a good chance of being an authentic work by the hand of Goya. The version of the portrait now in the Prado also came directly from the Spanish Royal Collection in 1847, and while it was initially recorded as a copy ('copia de Goya'), since 1900 it has been catalogued as an original work by Goya.¹⁰⁷ Recent removal of oxidised varnishes has revealed a work of high quality created with a technique that indicates the portrait was painted in front of the model.¹⁰⁸ Whichever is the prime version, it is of course possible that both paintings are by the master's hand.

Although enigmatic in its early history, the Fonthill Goya hosts a helpful clue as to its place in Morrison's painting collection. A label inscribed in black and red ink on the reverse of the picture matches the hand, date and format of others identified in this chapter (Figure 10.16). It reads:

Alfred Morrison Esq^{re} No.[??]
Whole length portrait of Charles 3rd of
Spain by Goya
28/12/87. No. 2 Lobby Door to Library Door

This location is unquestionably within Carlton House Terrace, on the ground floor in the space just outside the library at the foot of the grand staircase. This would have been a prominent spot at the heart of the house, and so the swaggering royal would have been encountered by most visitors to Morrison's London residence, striking the tone of his collection.



Figure 10.16 Label on retro of Francisco de Goya, *Portrait of Charles III*.

Photograph © José Delamano¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

By the end of his life, Alfred Morrison had accumulated an exceptional collection of Old Master paintings. While this part of his collection was comparatively small compared with his holdings of, for example, porcelain, it nevertheless contained a number of superior pieces. As a mark of this quality, masterpieces of Morrison's Old Master collection have made it to major private and public art institutions as far afield as the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and the Frick, Pittsburgh, in the United States.

Paintings were some of the earliest works of art that Morrison collected. His pictures range from joyous and colourful compositions such as Marco d'Oggiono's *Madonna and Child*, Simon Bening's *Adoration of the Magi* and Rubens's *Portrait of the Princess of Condé*, to stern and sombre portraits including Bronzino's *Duke Cosimo I de' Medici*, Hans Mielich's *A Member of the Froschl Family* and *Queen Henrietta Maria in Mourning*. Yet analysis of Morrison's pictures reveals patterns in his taste and collecting. Morrison's Old Master collection reflects his strong preference for royal, courtly or military figures,

which extended across his collections. Another thread that runs through his pictures, whether of the northern or southern European school, is examples of acute detail and decoration. This extends from Hans Mielich's meticulous rendering of his subject's features to the careful detailing of lace and gauze in the portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria and Van Ravesteyn's *Portrait of a Lady*. Several of the portraits likewise display elaborate costume, a standout being *Elisabeth of Valois* by Sir Antonio Mor. Similarly, as a collector of armour himself, Morrison may have enjoyed the carefully painted damascene armour and the play of light on metalwork showcased variously in his Bronzino, Wissing and Van Dyck portraits.¹¹⁰

Morrison's collection numbers a high proportion of panel paintings. This may reflect his preference for early paintings from a period when wood was the standard support, or, more likely, he particularly appreciated the patina or aesthetic of old panel paintings. He would have been familiar with the historic panel painting collections displayed in nearby country houses such as Longleat, Longford Castle and Wilton House.

Though Morrison may not have invested in cataloguing his collection of Old Master paintings, as he did for other collections, there is evidence that he had some of his paintings displayed in bespoke gold frames. This luxurious framing suggests that he was mindful of their presentation as a group and their status within his wider collection and display. Surviving labels on the backs of at least three of his panel paintings reveal tantalising glimpses of a hang plan around 28 December 1887. The locations listed point to the possibility of these pictures being displayed prominently in Morrison's London town house, 16 Carlton House Terrace, while his contemporary painting and decorative art collection were redisplayed in new galleries at Fonthill.

Notes

- 1 Haweis, 'Mr. Alfred Morrison's house' in *Beautiful Houses*, 60.
- 2 The first Old Master painting James Morrison purchased was *The Rape of Europa* by Claude Lorrain, in 1831. He went on to collect works by Hobbema, Cuyp, Rubens, Poussin and Parmigianino, and Rembrandt's *Portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels* (now in the collection of the National Gallery, London). Cited in Sebag-Montefiore and Stourton, *The British as Art Collectors*, 180–1. Gustav Waagen also recorded his visits to the London house in *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, vol. 2, 260–3; and Basildon, in Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain*, vol. 4, 300–12.
- 3 For more on the historic context of British taste in Old Masters and collecting practices, see Susanna Avery-Quash, [Chapter 4](#) of this volume.

- 4 Now thought to be by Fernand Bol after Rembrandt. Listed in the picture gallery as '44. Rembrandt or (F. Bol.) A Jewish Rabbi, with folded hands, in banded turban and robe with jewelled clasp—on panel, 39 in. by 31¼' in Anon, *Estate of the Late Alfred Morrison, Esquire, Inventory of Heirlooms*. In accordance with Mr. Justice Fairwell's Order of 13th July, 1900, with Copy Order annexed', 1900, 4 (henceforth known as the heirlooms inventory). It was later recorded as 'A Jewish Rabbi, by Ferdinand Bol' in Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings, etc.* (annotated copy), 26 (a catalogue of the collections of Alfred's grandson in the new Fonthill House/Little Ridge, henceforth known as the 1937 Catalogue). The Van Dyck portrait of Henrietta Maria was listed in the heirlooms inventory as by 'Van Dyck' and on the Staircase: '13. Henrietta Maria, in orange coloured dress, lace collar, and sleeves, wearing pearls—half length, in panel', 1900, 2; and in the 1937 Catalogue as 'School of Sir A. Vandyck/ Portrait of Henrietta Maria in youth/ Three-quarter length, in yellow dress with white lace collar and cuffs and pearl rope, her hands crossed in front', 33. It left the collection in Christie's, *Fine English Pictures c.1700–c.1850*, 23, lot 83: 'Van Dyck/ Portrait of Queen Henrietta, three-quarter length, wearing a yellow dress and white lace collar and cuffs/ 41 × 31 in. (104.1 × 78.7 cm.)'.
- 5 For example, his obsessive collecting of nearly 30 paintings and sketches by John Brett. These other areas of Morrison's collecting are explored in other chapters in this publication.
- 6 Anon, 'Death of a well-known art collector'.
- 7 For example, the picture collection took up 11 pages in the heirlooms inventory made after his death, while porcelain and enamels took up much of the remaining 67 pages.
- 8 Brett, 'Daylight in the dwelling-house', 459.
- 9 The deed of settlement of 23 November 1850 included 'pictures prints statues maps books jewels coins medals articles of vertu plate china glass and other household goods and furniture now in or about ... Fonthill', Fonthill Estate Archives, cited in Dakers, *Fonthill Recovered*, 360, n.71.
- 10 See Brandon and Wyatt, Drawings for Fonthill House, 1848–9, Dept of Prints and Drawings, Victoria and Albert Museum, D.467–541, illustrated in Caroline Dakers, [Chapter 2](#) of this volume.
- 11 The paintings are now in a private collection. See Jeannie Chapel, 'The early paintings of Fonthill', 221–6. The works 'View of a mansion, with river, bridge, and wooded hills-in panel' and 'View of the same mansion, with winding river in the foreground-in panel' are recorded in the Morning Room in the heirlooms inventory, 1900, 2.
- 12 Heirlooms inventory.
- 13 Christie's, London, 4 June 1864, lot 7, £141 15s to Holloway (Morrison's art agent); by family descent until 1998; sold through Sotheby's, *Old Masters Evening Sale*, lot 51. Morrison also purchased the pendant picture by Brueghel, *A Cattle Fair in a Dutch Village* in oil on copper, for £115 10s at the Oppenheim sale.
- 14 Theodora's remarks are cited in Dakers, 'Fonthill in the nineteenth century', in Dakers, *Fonthill Recovered*, 148.
- 15 The Duke of Westminster's remarks are cited in Dakers, 'Fonthill in the nineteenth century', 154.
- 16 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 275.
- 17 Of Clouds House, East Knoyle. Madeline Wyndham's remarks are quoted in Dakers, 'Fonthill in the nineteenth century', 153.
- 18 Morrison was granted a 97-year lease from 10 October 1864. Prior to leasing 16 Carlton House Terrace, Morrison had kept a bachelor apartment at 34 St James's Square, London. See Dakers, 'Fonthill in the nineteenth century', 130, and 1861 Census.
- 19 The Duke of York's Column was erected in between the two terraced blocks in 1834.
- 20 Alan J. Clark, 'Notes on the history of nos. 6, 7, 8 & 9 Carlton House Terrace', 297.
- 21 The list of tenants of No. 16 given in the Survey of London is incorrect: 'Carlton House Terrace and Carlton Gardens', in Gater and Hiorns *Survey of London*, 77–87. A receipt of 22 February 1864 from the Lucas Brothers in the Morrison Archive indicates that No. 16 was still being worked on; the house was valued for insurance in 1864; and his lease began on 10 October 1864. See Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 296, ns.38 and 40. Furthermore, the Crown Estate records contains a letter dated May 1865 (CRES 65) from Morrison's solicitors Ashurst Morris and Crisp about his acquisition of the lease of the newly built house constructed by Sir Henry Morton Peto. In addition, a surviving block plan in the National Archives (WORK 32/214),

- possibly of the 1860s, shows the eastern end of Carlton House Terrace unbuilt. I am grateful to Caroline Dakers and Neil Burton for this information.
- 22 CRES 65. See Neil Burton, [Chapter 3](#) of this volume.
 - 23 An earlier account, a diary entry by Henry Cole of 22 May 1870, records the 'house filled with marquetry designed by Owen Jones', but does not reference other works of art on display. See Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 232.
 - 24 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art – I', 140–4; Anon., 'Treasure houses of art – II', 206–11.
 - 25 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art – II', 206, 210. For more on Morrison's collection of works by Richard Dadd, see Nicholas Tromans, [Chapter 15](#) of this volume.
 - 26 'Treasure houses of art – I', 143.
 - 27 Conway, 'Owen Jones', in *Travels in South Kensington*, 153–61.
 - 28 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house'.
 - 29 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 53–60.
 - 30 'Mr. Fitzmaurice's collection of prints, however, which ranks only second to that in the British Museum, is lodged in the town house'. Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 275.
 - 31 For example, see the change in distribution of contemporary and historic paintings in the 10th Earl of Northumberland's properties – Northumberland House, Syon House and Petworth House – during the seventeenth century, and the shift in priorities of art display from the town (Egremont House) to the country (Petworth House) shown by the second and third Earls of Egremont. See Burns, 'Painting, Patronage and Collecting in England' and 'Decoding the country house archive'.
 - 32 Christie's, *Ancient & Modern Pictures and Water-Colour Drawings*, 63, lot 357. The Ravesteyn was the only lot Durlacher is recorded as purchasing at Levy's sale.
 - 33 'Anno. 1631 JVR' (upper right). Christie's, *Ancient and Modern Pictures*, 15, lot 104.
 - 34 Christie's, 'The portrait of a lady', lot 22.
 - 35 Alfred's art agent, 'Holloway', purchased the picture by Vincenzo Foppa in the sale of the Prince Napoléon on 9 May 1872: 'Vincenzo Foppa/ 309 A man's portrait, in a red cap and brown robe, with fur collar—on panel—height 0.59, width 0.47', Christie's, *Works of Art from the Collections of his Imperial Highness the Prince Napoleon*, 27, lot 309. The picture is recorded in the Fonthill picture gallery in the heirlooms inventory: 'V. Foppa ... Portrait of a Senator, in brown dress and crimson skull cap', 4; the work appears again in the III National Loan Exhibition: *Pictures from the Basildon Park and Fonthill Collections* at the Grosvenor Gallery: 'Profile Portrait, looking to spectator's right. Panel. 23 in. × 18 in.', 64; the picture is described in the 1937 Catalogue: 'Portrait of a Senator. / Half-length, turned to the right, wearing a brown tunic and crimson skull cap./ On Panel', p. 27; finally, the work appears in Christie's, *Important Pictures by Old Masters* (1965), lot 62: 'Vincenzo Foppa./ Portrait of a Gentleman, half length, in profile, in brown robe and red skull cap, against a dark background—on panel—23 in. by 17½ in.', 45. The current location of this work is unknown.
 - 36 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 266.
 - 37 The picture was located in the Chippendale Room at Fonthill at the time of the heirlooms inventory, 2.
 - 38 See Town and David, 'George Gower', 752–3. The portrait was studied microscopically and analysed using X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy with the aid of the Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
 - 39 Other versions of this likeness include portraits of Elizabeth I known as the Hampden Portrait (Private Collection; Philip Mould & Co., London) and the Berger/Northwick Park portrait (The Berger Collection, Denver Art Museum).
 - 40 Strong; *Gloriana*, 59; Town and David, 'George Gower', 752.
 - 41 '[...].890| May 20th 189[...]| Alfred [...]| Head of a [...]| the time [...]' See Town and David, 'George Gower', 753, n.61. Other traces of labels are visible.
 - 42 *A Catalogue of the Pictures in the III National Loan Exhibition*, 63–4. Town and David note that the portrait was not identified in the Esterhazy catalogue of 1883: 'George Gower', 753, n.61.
 - 43 Royal Academy, *Exhibition of Works by the Old Masters*, 39, no. 208, as 'François Clouet, Portrait of Louise de Lorraine' (lent by Alfred Morrison). It was later exhibited in the Exhibition of French Art, 1200–1900, at Royal Academy, London, 4 January–12 March 1932, no. 100, and City Art Gallery, Manchester, 22 March–1 May 1932, no. 112, as 'Anonymous, XVIth Century, Portrait of Louise de Lorraine' (lent by John Morrison). Recorded in the

- picture gallery in the heirlooms inventory, 6: 'Louise de Lorraine, in jewelled pink dress, head dress, and ruff—7½ in. by 5½ in. in carved pear wood frame'.
- 44 Recorded in the boudoir in the heirlooms inventory, 8: 'A Reformer, in black dress and cap, green back ground—in oils, on panel, 6¾ in. by 6 in.'. Exhibited at Grosvenor Gallery, London: Grosvenor Gallery, *Pictures from the Basildon Park and Fonthill Collections*, no. 43; and Royal Academy and City Art Gallery, *Exhibition of French Art*, nos. 102 and 109 respectively, as 'Attributed to Corneille de Lyon, Portrait of Théodore Bèze' (lent by J. G. Morrison, Fonthill), p. 54. Also see Dubois de Groër, *Corneille De La Haye*, 173–4, no. 70.
 - 45 Both of these reattributions were made by Dr Alexandra Zvereva for Christie's.
 - 46 Christie's, 'Property of the Lord Margadale of Islay DL', lots 19 and 20.
 - 47 Heirlooms inventory, 3: 'Portrait of Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, in black cap and fur trimmed robe, holding a paper, a shield-of-arms in the corner'; 1937 Catalogue, 19: 'School of Holbein / Portrait of Thomas Cromwell. Nearly three-quarter-length, in black cloak edged with fur, and black cap, seated, holding a paper; a table in front of his on which are some books and writing material / On Panel. / From the Collection of Robert Vernon, Esq., 1879'; Christie's, *Old Master and British Pictures Day Sale*, lot 112.
 - 48 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 53–4.
 - 49 Tiffin was an antiquarian dealer and publisher, based at 434 West Strand.
 - 50 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 54.
 - 51 Royal Academy, *Old Masters and Deceased Masters of the British School*, 30, no. 157; New Gallery, *Exhibition of the Royal House of Stuart*, 30–1, no. 70. The work has been exhibited several times since: New Gallery, London, *Monarchs of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1901–2, no. 112; Royal Academy, London, *Kings and Queens*, 1953, no. 167; National Portrait Gallery, London, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *An Exhibition of Manuscripts, Portraits*, 1969, no. 57; Palexpo, Geneva, La Fondation pour l'Écrit, *Salon International du Livre et de la Presse*, *Le livre et la presse dans la peinture*, 27 April–5 May 1996.
 - 52 The painting was listed in the heirlooms inventory, 1900, 3, no. 31 as by Claude Lefebvre (1632–75): 'Le Fevre ... Henrietta Maria, in her old age, in black dress, lace collar and cuffs, holding a book inscribed "Death's Advantage"—half length'. Although the printed text locates it on display in the picture gallery at Fonthill, a handwritten note of '300' in the right margin of the Fonthill copy of the catalogue indicates that the work was then at 9 Hawkin Street. The work then appears in Christie's, *Important Pictures by Old Masters* (1971), lot 48, as by Philippe de Champagne (1602–74): 'P. de Champagne/ Portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria ... in mourning for her husband, King Charles I, holding a book inscribed *Deaths Advantage* 34½ × 29 in (87.6 × 73.6 cm.)', p. 41, and illustrated. See also Piper, *Catalogue of the Seventeenth-Century Portraits in the National Portrait Gallery*, 162, under no. 1247: 'Portraits of her in exile, widowhood, and in her old age are rare, though several popular engravings and etchings of her in widow's weeds exist; a well-known painting of her as a widow, once attributed to Le Fevre, is in the Morrison collection.'
 - 53 Cornelis Janssens van Ceulen (1593–1661), *Portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria in mourning*, half-length, bears initials and date 'JR: fecit 165*' (lower left), oil on canvas, 89.2 × 75.4 cm (35½ × 29⅙ in.). Sold for £9,375 at Bonhams, *RAU UNICEF Sale*, lot 71. <https://www.bonhams.com/auction/21413/lot/71/cornelis-janssens-van-ceulen-dutch-1593-1661-portrait-of-queen-henrietta-maria-in-mourning-half-length/> (accessed 31 March 2023). The painting is also published in Anker, Lang and Tournier, *Le livre et le journal chez les peintres*, 106.
 - 54 The artist's surname varies in surviving records, including Russel, Russell, Roussel and Rousseel.
 - 55 Theodore was the son of Nicholas/Nicasius Roussel (a goldsmith and jeweller from Bruges) and Clara Jansz. (the sister of Cornelius Johnson), and the father of the portrait painter Anthony Russel. Also see Thieme and Becker, *General Encyclopedia of Visual Artists*, 229–30, cited at <https://rkd.nl/en/explore/artists/Russel%2C%20Theodore> (accessed 31 March 2023).
 - 56 Conversely, the faint 'R' could also be read as a 'B'. One painter with the initials 'JB' who was active at least at the start of the 1650s and a pupil of Johnson and Van Dyck is Jan van Belcamp (c. 1610–53). However, Belcamp stayed in London during the interregnum as a trustee of the sale of the king's goods – he was therefore not an artist who would likely find favour with the late king's mourning wife.

- 57 Ferris, 'The return of Michael Wright', 150 and 153.
- 58 Duncan Thomson, 'Wright, John Michael (bap. 1617, d. 1694)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30040>. See Wright's signature on his portrait of Thomas Hobbes in the National Portrait Gallery collection, inv. NPG 225: 'Jos. Michi. Writus Londinensis'.
- 59 Elizabeth Clappole, 1658, oil on panel, National Portrait Gallery, NPG 952; and *Portrait of Mrs Salesbury with her Grandchildren Edward and Elizabeth Bagot*, 1675–6, Tate, T06750. For another example of a sitter in mourning dress, see *Lady Mary Bagot and Granddaughter Mary, Later Lady Parker*, Wolverhampton Art Gallery.
- 60 Christie's, *Ancient and Modern Pictures*, 16, no. 105. Morrison's portrait was of 27 in × 22½ in (68.6 × 57.2 cm); the National Portrait Gallery's is 26 in × 21½ in (66 × 54.6 cm).
- 61 Recorded in the picture gallery in the heirlooms inventory, 5: '53. Van der Helst ... Grotius, with white hair, moustache, and beard, in black dress and wide lace collar—bust'; and listed in the 1937 catalogue, p. 28: 'Van Der Helst/Portrait of Grotius ... Bust, slightly turned to the right, with white beard and moustache, in black dress and white lawn collar. On Panel'.
- 62 Examples of both the Grotius and Cats portrait types by Mierevelt are in the Rijksmuseum collection.
- 63 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 54.
- 64 'Profile of a Lady, by Bernardino dei Conti. Panel, 75 × 57.2 cm.', B. N., 'General', 228 and 229, fig. 89. The picture is recorded in the picture gallery in the heirlooms inventory, 4, as by 'Bernardino di Conti, or Beltraffio', and identified as 'Portrait of the wife of Ludovico Sforza, called "Il Moro," in black fringed dress'; the work later appears in the 1937 Catalogue, 7, as by 'Bernardino dei Conti': 'Portrait of a Lady. / Half-length, seated in profile to the left, she wears a richly embroidered and lace dress, her dark hair and veil are held in place by a circlet of beads; dark background'. The entry includes a note that the work had been exhibited at the New Gallery, 1893–4, no. 260, 'as Boltraffio', and at the Burlington Fine Arts Club (1898, no. 44), New Grosvenor Gallery (1913, no. 38) and The Exhibition of Italian Art, Burlington House (1930, no. 334), presumably all as Dei Conti. The work was sold at Christie's, *Important Pictures by Old Masters*, 2 July 1965, lot 57, p. 42 and illustrated: 'Bernardino dei Conti/ Portrait of a Lady, half length, in profile to left, in dark brown dress, embroidered with gold and silver tassels, with slashed shoulders, a black neckband and a grey and orange snood—on panel—29½ in. by 22½ in.'. The work subsequently sold on 14 December 1990 and again on 10 December 1993 as 'Portrait of a Lady, half length, in profile, in a black dress decorated with lace, with pendant tassels...', work on panel, 78 × 58.5 cm. (30.7 × 23 in.), see https://www.artnet.com/artists/bernardino-dei-conti/portrait-of-a-lady-half-length-in-profile-in-aa-7NkqtxCdWzZW_DgTD2EsjA2 (accessed 31 March 2023).
- 65 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 276.
- 66 Frederic Leighton, *Summer Moon*, c. 1872, oil on canvas, private collection, India; which Caddy incorrectly calls 'Summer Noon'. Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 280; Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 56. Also see Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 297, n. 55.
- 67 See Dakers, '1872: Alfred Morrison's purchases'.
- 68 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 60.
- 69 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 57.
- 70 A painting in the picture gallery 'ascribed to' Holbein depicts 'An elector of Saxony, with long hair, in black fur trimmed robe, and red sleeves, holding a book—gold ground, on panel, 12 in. by 8¼ in.', 3; further on in the picture gallery is another 'Holbein', of 'Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex in fur trimmed black robe and cap, seated at a table—on panel, 15½ by 12 in', 4; and a 'Holbein' of 'Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, wearing the golden fleece/arched top, 10¼ in by 7½ in' is also listed in the picture gallery, but the appendix states that it was among the 'List of objects not found at Fonthill or Bruton Street'. Also listed is a 'Portrait of Lady Hunsdon' attributed to 'Holbein School' which has been crossed out and inscribed 'Lucas di Heere', 6, and similarly, a portrait of Charles IX by 'Holbein (ascribed to)' is crossed out at reattributed to 'Janet, School', 7. Another portrait that has no printed attribution but has been given to 'Holbein School' in a handwritten note: 'Portrait of a German Prince, in slashed crimson and black robe and cap with jewel, holding a paper, with a portrait in outline, in his right hand—on panel, 22 in. by 16 in.', 4; and an inscribed 'Holbein, after' is given to an unattributed 'Edward VI. In cap, with feather and ermine trimmed dress—on panel, 11 in. by 9 in.', 7.

- 71 Morrison's print collection was also situated at the property: 'Mr. Fitzmaurice's collection of prints, however, which ranks only second to that in the British Museum, is lodged in the town house'. Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 275.
- 72 John Brett, 'Daylight in the dwelling house', 459. See also Dakers, [Chapter 2](#) of this volume.
- 73 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 268, 270, 272.
- 74 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 56.
- 75 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 273.
- 76 Caddy, 'The millionaire's town house', 282–3. In Caddy's text, 'Mount Rivers' appears to be a play on words, referring to Fonthill: mount being another word for hill, and font being a word for a river: 'I was told that all this is nothing to Mount Rivers and the collections there', 275; 'and even this is said to be nothing to what is collected at Mount Rivers, not to mention the villa at Richmond', 283.
- 77 This selection was taken from one of Mabel's sales, Christie's, *Ancient and Modern Pictures*, 15–17.
- 78 See Simon, 'Bronzino's portrait of Cosimo I in armour'; and 'Blessed by the hand of Bronzino'; Dredge et al., 'Bronzino's portrait of Cosimo I de' Medici in armour re-examined'.
- 79 See Simon, 'Bronzino's portrait of Cosimo I in armour', 528, n.6, and 539, Appendix II, no. 19; Dredge et al., 'Bronzino's portrait of Cosimo I de' Medici in armour re-examined', 4, ns 1, 4, 6 and 7. The painting's full provenance and recent publication history is summarised on the Art Gallery NSW collection page: <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/78.1996/> (accessed 31 March 2023).
- 80 See a letter from Paolo Giovio (1483–1552) to Pier Francesco Riccio (1501–64), 30 July 1546, cited in Simon, 'Blessed by the hand of Bronzino', 387–88 and Appendix, and translated in Paula Dredge et al., 'Bronzino's portrait of Cosimo I de' Medici in armour re-examined', 4, n.4: 'Signor mio honorando, il mirabile ritratto di Sua Eccellenza è piaciuto summamente alli galanhuomini di questa Corte, et giudicato finissimo da' pittori ... et benedatta sia la mano di Bronzino qual mi pare che avanzi quella del Pontorni [sic] suo maestro' ('the marvellous portrait of His Excellency [which] was so pleasing to the gentlemen of this [Papal] Court, and judged excellent by painters ... blessed be the hand of Bronzino, which I think surpasses that of his teacher Pontormo'), Archivio Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato, vol. 1170a, fol. 104r. The portrait is recorded in the catalogue of Paolo Giovio's collection in P. Giovio: *Elogia vivorum bellica virtute illustrium*, Basel 1551, Book 7, 338–9. At a later stage in the sixteenth century, the painting was transferred with the rest of the 'Museo' collection to Palazzo Giovio, Como.
- 81 Incidentally, from 1840–1 Prince Napoléon lived at 1 Carlton Gardens, very near Morrison's apartment at 34 St James's Square, and part of the development that included Carlton House Terrace where Morrison was to later live.
- 82 See Christie's, *Works of Art from the Collections of his Imperial Highness the Prince Napoleon*, 1872, 26, lot 302: 'A. Bronzino. / Portrait of Cosmo [sic] de Medici, first Grand Duke of Tuscany, half-length, in a cuirass, in his left hand he holds a helmet, on which the right rests—on panel—height 08.6, width 0.67'. A handwritten note on a copy of the sale catalogue in the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (1030527571) details that the work was purchased by 'Holloway'.
- 83 See Holloway papers, Fonthill Archives, F.2.1129, and [Chapters 2](#) and [12](#) of this volume.
- 84 See Christie's, *Important Pictures by Old Masters* (1971), 40, lot 47: 'Portrait of Cosimo I de' Medici, half length, in armour, resting his right hand on his helmet'.
- 85 The Van Dyck was attributed to Titian in the heirlooms inventory, 1900, 6: 'Titian. A gentleman in armour, in profile—half length'; the portrait was reattributed by the 1937 Catalogue, 27: 'Sir A. Vandyck / Portrait of a General. / Half-length, turned to the right, in damascened armour with small white linen collar'; Christie's, *Old Masters and 19th Century Art*, lot 24. The Wissing features in the heirlooms inventory, 1900, 5: 'Wissing. William III, in armour, holding a baton, his left hand resting on a helmet—3/4 length'; also the 1937 Catalogue, 2: 'William Wissing / Portrait of William of Orange. / Three-quarter length, in damascened armour, with white cravat, holding a baton in his right hand, and resting his left on his helmet'; Christie's, *Christie's Interiors*, lot 163. Other portraits in armour in Morrison's collection include Louis XIII by P. de Champagne (heirlooms inventory, 1900, 6), and a portrait of Marshal Turenne (heirlooms inventory, 1900, 7).

- 86 'No 251 Bronzino, Portrait of a Child in a red dress, seated on a cushion, playing with a dog; supposed to be one of the family of Cosmo di Medici; no. 134 Amberger, Portrait of a man in a black cap and dress; no 912 Bronzino Portrait of Bianca Capella'. John Rushout, 2nd Baron Northwick's sale: Phillips, *Catalogue of the Late Lord Northwick's Extensive and Magnificent Collection of Ancient and Modern Pictures*.
- 87 Heirlooms inventory, 1900, 6, no. 60: 'Bronzino, A boy, in crimson dress, seated on a cushion, with dog and birds, supposed to be one of the family of Cosmo [sic] de Medici', no. 38, p. 4; 'Bronzino (ascribed to) ... "Bianca Capella," in embroidered crimson and white dress'. The portrait of a boy was exhibited for the first time in the Grosvenor Gallery Winter Exhibition of 1914–15, listed in 'The Small Gallery', with an unreferenced note 'Waagen writes of this picture: "Angelo Bronzino's portrait 'A Little Boy with a Dog', one of the children of Cosmo I, Duke of Tuscany; treated with great care and animation"; 62. The pictures appear again in the 1937 Catalogue, 8. 'Portrait of Bianca Capella, Grand Duchess of Tuscany' is described as 'Three-quarter length, facing the spectator, in red dress richly embroidered, and with white pleated sleeves, white lace collar, holding a 'kerchief in her left hand.' It is noted as having been previously in the Bernal Collection before the Northwick; 'Portrait of a Son of Cosimo I, Duke of Tuscany', 1937 Catalogue, 27: 'Nearly life size, in red dress embroidered with gold braid, red hose and shoes, seated on a cushion, caressing a spaniel; a bird and carnation in front.' The portrait of Bianca Capello left the Morrison collection via a Christie's sale in 1965, and was sold again on June 13 1995. Christie's, *Important Pictures by Old Masters* (1965), lot 53, 40: 'Bronzino / Portrait of Bianca Capella, three-quarter length, in red dress embroidered with silver, white slashed sleeves embroidered with gold, white lace cuffs and ruff, with a pearl necklace, a jewelled belt, a gold bracelet, and a ring on her left hand in which she holds a lace handkerchief, against a green curtain background—on panel—34 in. by 27 in. / Collections: Bernal/ The 3rd Lord Northwick.' This picture has since been reattributed to Alessandro di Cristofano Allori (1535–1607), see 'Portrait de Bianca Capella', oil on panel, 85.5 × 68 cm (33.7 × 26.8 in), sold on 13 June 1995 (auction house unknown), recorded on Artnet: https://www.artnet.com/artists/alessandro-di-cristofano-allori/portrait-de-bianca-capella-V_UOP_skeK61vRpr5vOqQ2 (accessed 31 March 2023).
- 88 Morrison exhibited this picture in the Royal Academy, 1879, and it then appears in the 1900 heirlooms inventory, the 1937 Catalogue and Grosvenor Gallery, *Pictures from the Basilidon Park and Fonthill Collections*. It passed through Christie's on 2 July 1965, lot 63, and again on 26 November 1971, lot 46. It is now in a private collection.
- 89 'Cosmo [sic] de Medici, in armour, his right hand resting on a helmet—half length', heirlooms inventory, 2.
- 90 I am very grateful to Anne Gérard-Austin of the Art Gallery of NSW for her support of my research for this case study, and for generously sharing images of the reverse of the panel with me.
- 91 'A label on the back of the panel records the 'Portrait of Cosmo di Medici by Bronzino' being on the 'No.1 Drawing Room Landing' at Fonthill House on 28 December 1887, in Simon, 'Bronzino's portrait of Cosimo I in armour', 528, n.6.
- 92 Conducting his provenance due diligence, Simon reported that 'Lord Margadale has kindly confirmed the provenance, noting that the picture appeared in the house inventory as follows: "Portrait of Giovanni della Bande Neri [sic] father of Cosimo de' Medici, First Grand Duke of Tuscany. Three-quarter length, facing the spectator, in damascened armour, holding his helmet. On Panel. From the collection of Prince Napoléon, 1872. 33.'" This citation given to Simon was drawn from the 1937 Catalogue, but was not related as printed. The sitter identification as 'Giovanni della Bande Neri [sic] father of Cosimo de' Medici' was derived from an incorrect handwritten annotation on the inventory; the printed entry states the correct sitter: 'Portrait of Cosimo de' Medici, First Grand Duke of Tuscany', 6.
- 93 For detailed provenance see Hand, *The Collections of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue*, 148.
- 94 The National Gallery of Art also holds another painting that was once in Morrison's collection, *The Adoration of the Magi* by Simon Bening. This is a tempera painting heightened with gold on vellum mounted to wood. An old label from the Woodner Collection describes the existence of a wax seal on the back of the panel: 'on the verso of the panel is a red wax seal with a coat of arms: s shield flanked by rampant dogs, below a crown flanked by flags, surmounted by a winged horse; inscribed w/motto: in Bello Forti'. There is, however, no trace

of a label similar to that discussed in these case studies on the reverse of this panel. Many thanks to Stacey Sell from the National Gallery of Art for providing me with this information from the object file.

- 95 'C. Amberger ... A gentleman in black dress and cap, wearing two rings, landscape background', heirlooms inventory, 1900, 6; 'Christoph Amberger / Portrait of a Gentleman with beard and moustache. / Nearly three-quarter length, turned to the right, in black cloak with small embroidered collar and frills at the wrists, black cap; architectural and landscape background. / On Panel. With Coat of Arms on the reverse', 1937 Catalogue, 7; Löcher, 'Studien zur oberdeutschen Bildnismalerei', 75–6, fig. 52.
- 96 Löcher, 'Studien zur oberdeutschen Bildnismalerei', 75; Hand, *The Collections of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue*, 149.
- 97 Hand, *The Collections of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue*, 150, n.2. The other labels are as follows. In brown ink on paper: 'From J. C. Morrison Esqre/ Fonthill House/ Tisbury/ Wilts/ Bristol/ May 1927'. In light brown ink: 'CNY-167'. At bottom left, circular paper sticker: '[FONTHI] ILL/63/HEIRLOOMS'. At bottom left, paper sticker: 'Lot No.P18290. Piece No.56'. See Hand, *The Collections of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue*, 150, n.2.
- 98 Many thanks to Susanna Avery-Quash and Caroline Dakers for their help in deciphering this passage.
- 99 Exhibited in the Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1899, no. 76; listed in the heirlooms inventory, 4, in the picture gallery, as 'Marco d'Oggione ... The Virgin and Child, with crimson curtain behind, and landscape background'; it is the first picture listed in 'The Large Gallery' in Grosvenor Gallery, *Pictures from the Basildon Park and Fonthill Collections*, with the same entry as the 1900 inventory, and with the note 'From Fonthill', 21; it is listed in the 1937 Catalogue as by 'Marco D'Oggiano', 'The Madonna in crimson dress with blue cloak lined with yellow, seated, holding the Infant Saviour on her lap, red curtain, architectural and landscape background./ On Panel', 25; exhibited again at Birmingham City Gallery in 1955; it was sold at Christie's, *Important Pictures by Old Masters* (1965), lot 68, p. 47: 'Marco D'Oggiono/ The Madonna and Child: the Madonna, half length, in blue and yellow robe and red underdress nurses the Infant Christ who is seated on a ledge covered with her robe; in the background a red curtain and in the distance to left and right a wooded river landscape and mountains—on panel—25 in. by 20½ in.'; The Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand, acquired the picture through Roland, Browse & Delbanco in 1966.
- 100 I am grateful to Sophie Matthiesson from Auckland Art Gallery for supporting my enquiry and alerting me to the fact that the painting's frame matched at least one other in the Morrison collection.
- 101 Haws, *Beautiful Houses*, 60.
- 102 Thanks to Sophie Matthiesson from Auckland Art Gallery for this suggestion. Edward Foster operated from 54 Pall Mall, London.
- 103 The painting is located in the picture gallery in the printed inventory of 1900, 3. Annotation to a copy of the inventory of 12 August 1914 notes that the picture was at that time located at 9 Halkin Street. It values the painting at £3,000, much higher than the majority of the other paintings listed, and topped only by the Rembrandt and Memling, which were both valued at £5,000 and still located at Fonthill. Also listed in Christie's, *Catalogue of Pictures, Drawings, Engravings, etc.*, 3.
- 104 Grosvenor Gallery, *Pictures from the Basildon Park and Fonthill Collections*, 38, no. 17.
- 105 With thanks to José Delamano for sharing his findings and image of the label, and to Isabella Manning at Christie's for confirming the sale details.
- 106 The Right Hon. Lord Dalling and Bulwer; Christie's, 21 February 1873, lot 62 (68 guineas to Durlacher), 8. The next two lots were also by 'Goya'; companion pieces 'Youth' and 'Age' also 'From the Collection of King Louis Philippe'.
- 107 Inv. Real Museo, 1857. Núm. 2810.
- 108 <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/charles-iii-in-hunting-dresses/32f3cf01-f8d2-4be1-b12a-aa04668706d7> (accessed 11 October 2024).
- 109 See forthcoming essay by Delamano 'The portrait of Carlos III in hunting costume by Francisco de Goya'.
- 110 For Morrison's armour, see Christie's, *Fine Arms and Armour*, 12 July 1965.

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Reconstructing Alfred Morrison's sculpture collection

Alexander Kader

Introduction

The sculpture collected by Alfred Morrison (1821–97) has never been examined as a focused subject.¹ The fortune he inherited from his father in 1857 gave him the means to collect whatever he liked and on a scale that few contemporaries would have been able to rival.² Nevertheless, Alfred has been said to have realised that he could not compete for the most expensive paintings against collectors such as Sir Richard Wallace (1818–90).³ This may have restricted his buying of important old master paintings, but it is not known if this curtailed his sculptural interests in the same way. Certainly, in comparison to the sculpture acquired by Sir Richard and the 4th Marquess of Hertford (1800–70) that today forms the Wallace collection, Alfred's sculpture appears rather meagre and random. Alfred was prone to an obsessive manner of collecting. He would latch onto a painter or craftsman and virtually monopolise his production. Such is the case with John Brett (1831–1902), Plácido Zuloaga (1834–1910) and Charles Lepec (1830–90).⁴ Alfred's sculpture collecting was no exception, and the remarkable group of works that he amassed by the German animalier sculptor, Julius Heinrich Hähnel (1823–1909), is unique.

This chapter aims to reconstruct Alfred's sculpture collection. It draws primarily on contemporary documentary and photographic evidence, as well as posthumous auction catalogues. None of these sources gives a complete picture and they are sometimes contradictory. Alfred has left no mention of what he thought about sculpture and it is unlikely that he thought about it as a coherent genre at all, so for the purposes of this study the sculpture he owned has been grouped into

four categories: portrait busts – contemporary and historical; animal sculpture – in bronze and marble; contemporary marble statues – by British, European and American sculptors; and Salon sculpture – in ivory and bronze. This chapter will explore each of these categories in an attempt to reconstruct Alfred's sculpture collection. Sculptures that are seen in photographs of Fonthill House but which are not documented in any other sources will be identified. Sculptures that are listed in bills from Alfred's dealers will be matched with photographic evidence and later auctions, and given a context where there is no visual record by which to judge their size or quality.

The beginnings of a sensibility for sculpture

Dakers has explored the life of James Morrison (1789–1857) and his children to reveal a fascinating family that might today be considered in some ways 'progressive'. Alfred's early education was unconventional and sympathetic to his natural abilities.⁵ As a young man he went to work in the family business, most notably with his elder brother Charles as his father's representative in America. Between 1841 and 1845, Alfred travelled extensively in North America, from Canada to Cuba, and this experience may have stimulated some sculpture acquisitions in later life by both Alfred and his brother.⁶ Alfred remained close to his father as he grew up, so it is here that we might expect to find the beginnings of his appreciation of sculpture. His earliest recorded encounter with sculpture occurred in Rome. In early 1847, Alfred joined his family in the Eternal City where his father renewed his acquaintance with John Gibson (1790–1866) and, according to Richard Gatty, through him met other English sculptors established there, such as Richard James Wyatt (1795–1850), Benjamin Spence (1822–66) and William Theed (1804–91). From the latter James commissioned his portrait bust.⁷ James Morrison had a merchant's insight into the business of sculpture when he observed on a trip to Rome in 1826:

It was amusing last night at Torlone's to see the rivalry (as Lions) between Leopold & Thorwaldsen. But there is trade in Art here & Art in their trade. Canova's studio is literally [*sic*] a manufactory of Venus', and Thorwaldsen is little better – works are made in his studio & sold as his which he perhaps never saw.⁸

The importance of a visit to Rome for an aspiring nineteenth-century Grand Tourist is well researched.⁹ Visits to artists' studios were an

essential pastime, and the workshops of the sculptors were particularly interesting. Count Hawks Le Grice's *Walks through the Studii of the Sculptors at Rome* had been published in 1841, and this book may well have been used by the Morrisons during their visit. Through his father, Alfred surely met Gibson, Wyatt and Theed whose studios are described by Le Grice.¹⁰ Alfred returned to Rome alone a year later, and wrote back to his father on 21 January 1848 noting: 'Theed I saw today & have agreed that he shall take my bust.' On this trip Alfred also helped his father with his commissions for vases and other marble decoration from Giuseppe Leonardi.¹¹ Therefore, Alfred's first serious encounter with sculpture would have been with the carving of his own portrait bust by William Theed and learning something of the life of an aspiring sculptor in Rome. These experiences may well have been influential in Alfred's collecting contemporary marble sculptures in the years to come and in commissioning a marble portrait bust of his wife in 1873.

Portrait busts – contemporary and historical

There has been some confusion surrounding the busts of James Morrison by Sir Francis Chantrey (1781–1841) (Figure 11.1) and William Theed, which has in turn hindered the identification of Theed's bust of Alfred.¹² Chantrey was a close acquaintance of James Morrison, advised him in his parliamentary work on education and was a frequent guest in London. The commission from James for his marble portrait bust dates to 1837, but sittings did not begin for two years and the bust was finally dated 1841.¹³ In 2013, the bust appeared at auction at Christie's, tentatively but erroneously identified as Lord Melbourne (1779–1848).¹⁴

David Wilson rightly concluded the bust at Christie's depicted James Morrison and correctly noted that a bust reproduced in Dakers is not by Chantrey, but he wrongly assumed this was the Theed bust of James.¹⁵ In fact, the bust reproduced by Dakers is clearly a reduced copy of the Chantrey bust and is not by William Theed. It is rather a copy by Felix Martin Miller (b. 1819) made in 1861, as is clarified by an inscription on the back of the bust.¹⁶ The bust carved by Theed in Rome, today in a private collection, is not a slavish copy of the Chantrey model (Figure 11.2).

Morrison looks quite different. His hair is parted over his right eye and he has longer whiskers. Theed handles the drapery in a conventional *all'antica* manner with a tunic drawn across the body and over the left shoulder, secured with a fibula. Until now, William Theed's bust of



Figure 11.1 Francis Chantrey, *Bust of James Morrison*, 1841, marble, 80.3 cm (31½ in). Sold Christie's London, *The European Connoisseur*, 5 July 2013, lot 170.

Photograph © 2013, Christie's Images Limited



Figure 11.2 William Theed, *Bust of James Morrison*, 1847, marble, 76 cm (30 in). Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

Alfred Morrison has not been identified. It was not exhibited at the Royal Academy (RA), where Theed did show his bust of James.

The key to its identification is a photograph of the interior of Basildon which has been noted in the past for showing Chantrey's portrait on the half landing, but now with the true identification of Theed's portrait of James established, the bust on a column in the hall below can be proposed as the same sculptor's bust of Alfred Morrison, because of its close stylistic affinities with his bust of James (Figure 11.3). The arrangement of the drapery on Alfred's bust matches the bust of his father. While James looks to his right, Alfred looks to his left, making the busts into natural pendants. Finally, the unusual arrangement of the hair with double parting is consistent with Alfred's appearance. The present whereabouts of this bust of Alfred, however, is currently unknown.¹⁷

In later life, Alfred never commissioned his own portrait bust, but he did order a bust of his wife Mabel (1847–1933) from the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor Thomas Woolner (1825–92) (Figure 11.4).¹⁸ Alfred may have met Woolner when visiting George Eliot (1819–80), and as a founder member of the Savile Club in 1868, Alfred is very likely to have known the sculptor, who was also a member. Both men shared an admiration for the works of the German sculptor Julius Heinrich Hähnel.¹⁹ Otherwise



Figure 11.3 Photograph of Basildon showing William Theed's bust of Alfred Morrison below the stairs. The Chantrey bust of James Morrison is on the stairs. Private collection



Figure 11.4 Thomas Woolner, *Bust of Mabel Morrison*, 1873, marble, 65 cm. (25½ in). Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

there are no known links between Alfred and Woolner.²⁰ Mabel's bust is dated 1873 and was exhibited at the RA in the following year.²¹ The herm format of the bust is typical of Woolner's portraits from the 1860s. Woolner frequently inscribed the lower part of his herm-busts with the sitter's name, as is the case with his first portrait of Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–92) or his bust of Charles Darwin (1809–82).²² In a few rare instances Woolner used this lower section to add an iconographic device which reflected the interests, or character of the sitter. So, for example, on the bust of Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak (1803–68), Woolner carved a broken sword, referencing his subject's actions in quelling a rebellion in Malaysia in 1841, and in 1860, for the bust of Professor Adam Sedgwick (1785–1873), he carved a geological specimen of a fish.²³

On his bust of Mabel, Woolner has used two iconographic symbols that are more difficult to interpret. In the lower part of the bust there is a flowering branch with seven-leaved stems, which appears to be jasmine, and on the medallion worn by Mabel, Woolner has carved a horse's head. From what is known about the life of Mabel Morrison, the significance of these attributes is not immediately apparent, but it would be unusual for this sculptor to add random decorative elements. Throughout his long career, Woolner made only four portrait busts of women and that

of Mabel is the only one presently located; it is a very fine example of his work.²⁴

Alfred owned marble busts of eight historical subjects, on two occasions in multiple versions. Grand porphyry busts of the ancient Roman emperors Vitellius (Figure 11.5) and Pompey and portraits of Voltaire, Handel and Goethe were displayed in 16 Carlton House Terrace, while busts of Byron, Napoleon and the young Emperor Augustus were at Fonthill House.²⁵ The porphyry busts were among the first objects that greeted visitors to Alfred's London residence.

Two contemporary authors, Mary Haweis in *Beautiful Houses* (1882) and Florence Caddy in *Lares and Penates* (1881), mention them, the latter giving the most detail: 'two life-sized busts of Roman emperors placed at the hall. These are cut with the diamond in porphyry, the flesh polished, the hair left dim.'²⁶ They appear in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* (hereinafter referred to as the *Inventory*) in the section on the stairs to the music gallery at Fonthill House, to where they must have been moved after Caddy and Haweis saw them in Carlton House Terrace. These busts are exceptional in both their size and in the use of porphyry



Figure 11.5 Bust of Emperor Vitellius, probably Rome, eighteenth century, porphyry, 92 cm (36½ in), from the former collections of William Beckford, Thomas Hope, and Alfred Morrison, Galerie Kugel.

Courtesy of Galerie Kugel, Paris

for the heads and torsos, as well as the socles.²⁷ Caddy's observation on the 'hair left dim' is a particular feature of these impressive busts. A closely related porphyry bust, but which lacks the distinctive treatment of the hair, is in the collection at Hinton Ampner, Hampshire.²⁸

There is no purchase information for the remaining historical busts in Alfred's collection and no apparent theme connects them. They align with Alfred's passion for autograph letters and his collection of engraved portraits of famous historical figures, but without any historical or thematic connection his historic marble busts seem more like decorative library accessories than acquisitions for a coherent sculpture collection.

It has generally been assumed that Alfred owned only one bust of Voltaire by Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741–1828), but in fact Florence Caddy's description of Carlton House Terrace mentions Voltaire twice. In the inner hall at Carlton House Terrace she was struck by Voltaire's 'eager, speaking, sarcastic face', and further on in her account, she describes the library in which the 'principal ornaments are [an] abundance of Chinese porcelain, busts of Goethe and Voltaire, and one oil-painting, Leighton's *Summer Moon*.'²⁹ When George Eliot visited Carlton House Terrace with G. H. Lewes (1817–78) with the hope of getting support for the campaign to save Swiss Cottage Fields, the viewing of Houdon's bust of Voltaire was a convenient pretext for the visit, but it is not clarified whether it was the Voltaire in the inner hall or the library that they went to see.³⁰ Alfred's two busts of Voltaire can be identified today in museums in Washington and London.

Dated 1778, the bust now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington (Figure 11.6) shows Voltaire in contemporary dress.³¹ It is a very fine autograph example of one of the several different portraits that Houdon made of Voltaire in a variety of formats.³² The bust was sold at Christie's on 10 February 1900 as lot 108, where it was bought by Joseph Duveen (1869–1939) and sold a year later to the Pennsylvanian collector, Peter A. B. Widener (1834–1915). The second Voltaire was sold the year before the Washington bust at Christie's on 23 January 1899 as lot 140. The catalogue description singles out the unusual decoration on the socle, 'sculpted with a scroll, with emblems in relief. Inscribed "*Houdon F. 1781. au Marquis de Vilette*".'

Published by Alicia Robinson in 2012, this second Voltaire (Figure 11.7), despite strong endorsement at the time of its acquisition by the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in 1947, is now considered to be a nineteenth-century pastiche.³³ These two busts of Voltaire present the renowned French author in very different ways. In the frontally composed Washington bust, the contemporary attire and wig give the



Figure 11.6 Jean-Antoine Houdon, *Bust of Voltaire*, 1778, marble, 52.7 cm. (20¾ in). National Gallery of Art, Washington (inv. 1942.9.127). Widener Collection.

Image courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington, CCO



Figure 11.7 Jean-Antoine Houdon, *Bust of Voltaire*, nineteenth century, 51 cm (20 in). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. A.24.1948).

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

sitter a formality that contrasts with the V&A bust in which Voltaire wears a simple band in his hair, with the suggestion of drapery hanging over one shoulder, and looks inquisitively to the side. Comparing the two, it would seem that Caddy's description of an 'eager, speaking, sarcastic face' fits better with the V&A bust, so it is fair to assume that it was the one in the inner hall, and that the Washington bust was in the library. The bust of Goethe described by Caddy does not appear in any other accounts or later auction sales, so it is hazardous to speculate whether it would have been a portrait of Goethe in contemporary costume to match the Washington Voltaire or an *all'antica* representation, such as that by Christian Daniel Rauch (1777–1857).

There are no lifetime accounts of Alfred's bust of George Frideric Handel (Figure 11.8). The bust is unsigned and the Christie's catalogue of 10 February 1900, when it was sold as lot 107, makes no reference to the sculptor – Louis-François Roubiliac (1702–62). The identification of the sitter is aided by the inscription on the front of the bust: 'BY HEAVEN / INSPIRED'. Sold to S. T. Gooden (later part of the firm Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox) on commission for Charles Eley, the marble has been exhaustively published by David Wilson in 2009 and subsequently sold at Sotheby's



Figure 11.8 Louis-François Roubiliac and workshop, *Bust of George Frideric Handel*, eighteenth century, marble, 54 cm (21¼ in) (without grey marble base). European private collection.

Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's

London in 2015.³⁴ In the absence of any other contemporary source, the respective sale prices in 1900 of the Washington Voltaire and the Handel busts may give some sense of their considered relative importance at the time: Voltaire sold for £693; Handel sold for £50 0s 5d.

Seven photographs of the large rooms that Alfred added to Fonthill House in around 1890 are crucial in identifying the sculpture he owned (see [Figures 2.2, 3.19, 3.20, 3.21, 3.22](#) and [3.24](#)). In one view of the dining gallery, looking through into the picture gallery (see [Figure 3.22](#)), there are two marble busts which can be identified in the *Inventory*. The first, no. 56, is a marble bust of Napoleon listed correctly as the future French emperor when he was first consul and erroneously attributed to Houdon. The bust remained at Fonthill House until sold for 130 guineas in a Christie's auction in 1971, by which time the Houdon attribution had been omitted.

The identification of Houdon's bust of Napoleon as first consul is a confused attribution.³⁵ Now lost, the only record of Houdon's bust is in a painting by Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845) showing the sculptor working on his terracotta model. There are several models of this bust which bear Houdon's signature, but none are believed to be autograph.³⁶ Morrison's Napoleon bust was paired in the Dining Gallery with a marble bust of the Emperor Augustus as a boy, a seemingly unrelated pairing which suggests both busts were considered decoration rather than as important. The Augustus bust is one of innumerable copies after the antique.³⁷

It is no more clear why Alfred owned two busts of Lord Byron by Thorvaldsen than why he owned two portraits of Voltaire. The marbles were life size, distinguished from each other by one being described as 'draped'. In the 1900 *Inventory*, however, the draped version seems to have been regarded as rather less important, since it was valued at £60 rather than £100 for the other. The latter bust was sold in the 1971 Fonthill House auction and illustrated in the catalogue.³⁸ It depicts Byron in a herm format with a lyre carved on the front. Thorvaldsen produced several variations of his portrait of the famous Romantic poet, which he sold from his Roman studio to an enthusiastic international clientele. There are examples of Byron depicted in a herm format in the Royal Collections and at Chatsworth, but no other version with the carved lyre is currently known.³⁹ A marble of the Byron bust with draped shoulders is preserved at the Thorvaldsen Museum with its plaster version, and it is fair to assume Alfred's draped example would have likely been this model.⁴⁰

While the Thorvaldsen Museum, Royal Collection and Chatsworth herm busts are all identical in the arrangement of the hair and

physiognomy, the bust sold in 1971 is handled quite differently. In fact, the differences are so pronounced that they call into question the original attribution to Thorvaldsen. It is interesting to note that in the *Inventory* the name Thorvaldsen is added in pen after printing, whereas the 1971 sale catalogue indicates that the bust is signed. After the auction, the bust passed through various art dealers before being sold by Christopher Foley. Its present location is unknown.⁴¹ Since we know that James Morrison could have known Thorvaldsen personally when in Rome in the 1820s, it could be the case that one or both of these Byron busts were acquired by him and inherited by Alfred with Fonthill House.⁴² Alfred's passion for important historical figures which drove his renowned collections of engraved portraits and autograph letters did not really extend into sculpture, and Alfred seems to have been content to have a conventional scattering of portrait busts around his homes.

Animal sculpture – bronze and marble

Alfred's strong interest in animals is well documented.⁴³ The interspersing of notes in his Memorandum book on the price of feed or the inspection of livestock for his Fonthill estate with references to visits to art dealers and artists in London or Paris give an insight into his preoccupations and priorities; there are rather more entries relating to estate management than art collecting. Alfred's large collection of animal art combines two of his principal passions and is the subject of a dedicated chapter in this volume.⁴⁴ In one notable instance, Alfred can be shown to have given a large animal bronze a prominent position in his collections in London. Haweis was struck by 'a huge bronze bull' in the inner hall of Carlton House Terrace.⁴⁵ Modelled by the painter Henry William Banks Davis, this bronze was exhibited at the RA in 1872 with the title *Trotting Bull* (Figure 11.9). In the same exhibition was his monumental painting, *A Panic*, depicting a herd of bulls and cows running amok, which was also purchased by Alfred. In fact, the pose of Davis's *Trotting Bull* is nearly identical to the black bull behind the central white bucking cow in the painting.⁴⁶

The bronze is finely cast, with close attention given to the treatment of the bull's coat.⁴⁷ Davis initially trained as a sculptor and was clearly highly accomplished as a modeller, as is corroborated by a portrait medallion of George Charles Bell which he exhibited at the RA in 1892.⁴⁸ With the display of *Trotting Bull* in the entrance hall of his town house, visitors would have been in no doubt about Alfred's interests in livestock



Figure 11.9 Henry William Banks Davis, *Trotting Bull*, 1872, bronze, private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

and the countryside. Clearly, he felt no discordance in exhibiting the bronze alongside porphyry busts of Roman emperors and enormous vases by Zuloaga.

Alfred further expressed his interest in cattle with the acquisition of French *animalier* bronzes by the siblings Isidore-Jules (1827–1901) and Rosa Bonheur (1822–99). Bronzes of a *Bull and Bear Fighting* by the former (see [Figure 2.4](#)) and *A Bull* by the latter are listed in the *Inventory*. Both were bought at the 1862 International Exhibition and Alfred was assisted in these purchases by the dealer Robert Phillips (1810–81) who prepared a list of acquisitions that extends over six pages and comprises a variety of furniture, decoration and objects as diverse as the exhibition itself (see [Chapter 5](#)).⁴⁹ From these lists it emerges that Alfred also bought a bronze *Partridge* by Isidore-Jules Bonheur, of which no trace has been found in subsequent inventories or auction catalogues.⁵⁰

The 1862 list also includes a ‘Bronze Group, Fox Coursing’, which can be connected with a bronze, previously unidentified, visible on the fireplace in one of the photographs of the Music Gallery at Fonthill House (see [Figure 3.19](#)). This can be attributed to the Russian sculptor, Nikolai Lieberich (1828–83).⁵¹ It is interesting to note that on the same mantelpiece there is a bronze of a *Standing Bear* also by Lieberich, which Alfred bought in Paris in 1865.⁵² Also at the 1862 International

Exhibition, Alfred demonstrated his taste for the extraordinary in his acquisition of the unusual relief modelled in wax by the French *animalier* sculptor Auguste-Nicolas Cain, entitled *Linnets Defending their Nest against a Dormouse* (see [Figure 5.11](#)). Alfred was not alone in his admiration of Cain's wax tour de force and J. B. Waring featured it in his publication on the exhibition, *300 Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition of 1862*.⁵³

Alfred owned six bronzes by the greatest French *animalier* sculptor, Antoine-Louis Barye. Four are identified in the *Inventory*: '706. A lion, seated', '708. A lion and serpent', '712. A lion, walking' and '715. A lioness, walking'. The latter is likely to be Barye's *Walking Tiger*, which is often paired with the *Walking Lion*, no. 712 in the *Inventory*. Alfred probably bought these bronzes on one of his trips to Paris. From his notes and letters we know he was there in 1867, the year of the Exposition Universelle, where Barye was awarded the Gold Medal. To the four Barye bronzes in the *Inventory* can be added a fifth bronze, until now unnoticed, of an eagle visible on a sideboard in the Saloon at Fonthill House, flanked by a pair of Chinese vases (see [Figure 2.2](#)).⁵⁴ However, the most important Barye bronze acquired by Alfred is one that until now has also been unidentified. Among the most expensive items on the 1862 Phillips list at £240 is an entry that is difficult to read, but can be deciphered as the artist's name Barye (misspelt) in the left-hand margin and the subject described as '1 Grande Bronze Group, Theseus and the Carloons [sic] on a Bronze Rock Pedestal'. This must be Barye's famous model of *Theseus and the Centaur*, *Biénor*, which the sculptor showed at the 1862 exhibition in the original large size ([Figure 11.10](#)). The importance of the bronze is confirmed by a contemporary photograph of it displayed in the Foreign Picture Gallery. It was also illustrated in J. B. Waring's *300 Masterpieces of Industrial Art*.

This bronze subsequently appears in the *Inventory* as one of the sculptures located outdoors at Fonthill House, misidentified as 'Hercules and the Centaur' and with no mention of Barye. It was positioned on the lawn facing the south front, flanked by a pair of extraordinary *Winged Lions* made by the French foundry, Ferdinand Barbedienne (see [Figure 3.2](#)).⁵⁵ No further trace of it has been found. Until this identification of the Morrison Barye *Theseus and the Centaur*, only three lifetime casts of this large bronze have been known to exist.⁵⁶ Alfred's purchase of this iconic model, together with his five small bronzes, constitutes an important contemporary British collection of Barye's work which, while not as extensive as that collected by the American collector William T. Walters (1819–94), is nonetheless significant.



Figure 11.10 Antoine-Louis Barye, *Theseus and the Centaur*.
J. B. Waring, *300 Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture*, 1863, vol. 1, plate 28.

In the saloon at Fonthill House (see [Figure 2.2](#)) Barye's *Eagle* was displayed facing an extraordinary bronze ostrich. Made by the German sculptor, Julius Heinrich Hähnel, *Ostrich Frightened by a Lizard* (see [Figure 9.5](#)) was part of the largest single group of works by any one sculptor in Alfred's collection. Indeed, considering Hähnel's limited oeuvre, the group he collected should be considered as probably the largest that has ever been formed, and equivalent to his better-known collections of work by Zuloaga and Lepec. The *Ostrich Frightened by a Lizard* is in addition to the eight Hähnel bronzes listed in the *Inventory*. There is also a model of a hippopotamus seen on a table in the left foreground in a photograph of the Fonthill House music gallery looking north (see [Figure 3.20](#)). Furthermore, Alfred owned probably the largest animal bronze cast by Hähnel, his *Crouching Lioness* ([Figure 11.11](#)).⁵⁷ This adds up to an unprecedented group of 11 bronzes by the German sculptor.

Julius Heinrich Hähnel is less well known than, and occasionally confused with, the similarly named contemporary sculptor Ernst Julius Hähnel (1811–91), but he was no relation.⁵⁸ Born in the Saxon town of



Figure 11.11 Julius Heinrich Hähnel, *Crouching Lioness*, bronze, 64 × 160 × 58 cm (25¼ × 63 × 22¾ in). Private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

Schmiedeberg, south of Dresden, Julius Hähnel studied music until he was 14 before starting work in a foundry, while also attending drawing classes. His teacher at the polytechnic, Professor Wenzel, supported his early interest in modelling animals. Hähnel moved to Berlin, where he worked with Christian Daniel Rauch, winning a silver medal in 1848. With the support of his patron Graf Detlev von Einsiedel (1773–1861), Hähnel left for London the following year.⁵⁹ He remained in England for six years. There are few certain details about his time in London, but the length of his stay demonstrates that the period he spent studying the animals in London Zoo and the response of English patrons to his works must have had a positive impact.

Before he departed for Australia in 1852, the sculptor Thomas Woolner was a prominent champion of Hähnel, and he continued to promote the German sculptor's work after his return to England, writing to Alfred, Lord Tennyson in 1863:

You will be pleased to hear that Haehnel, that fine German sculptor of animals you have heard me talk of, has received a good number of orders for bronzes and is now on the fair road to be appreciated, and will be able to devote all his time to the making of more of his extraordinary works.⁶⁰

Woolner's daughter, Amy, added that 'many are the houses possessing bronzes of his animals through Woolner's recommendation'.⁶¹ There is no evidence that Alfred acquired his unprecedented collection of Hähnel bronzes through Woolner, but, as discussed earlier, the two are very likely to have known each other as members of the Savile Club, and Woolner was himself commissioned by Alfred to carve Mabel's bust in 1873.

The manuscript of Hähnel's unpublished biography provides crucial evidence to prove that of all the German sculptor's British patrons, Alfred was singled out for having commissioned the large bronze of a *Crouching Lioness*, and later in 1866 he ordered a lion as a pendant. This was presumably also large, since Hähnel was unable to complete the casting owing to a lack of time. Had Alfred received the large lion referred to in the archive he would have owned 12 Hähnel bronzes. The loss of any correspondence between Alfred and Hähnel, comparable to that which exists with Zuloaga and Lepec, reduces our understanding of the relationship between patron and artist, but the body of works themselves implies that it was a strong relationship, characteristic of Alfred's admiration for the unusual and, above all, for superb craftsmanship. Taken as a whole Alfred's *animalier* bronzes stand out as a major collection of the period, including a good group of works by the greatest French sculptor of the genre, Antoine-Louis Barye, and a unique grouping of bronzes by Hähnel.

Perhaps Alfred's most extraordinary animal sculpture was not one of the 20 bronzes he owned, but the remarkable marble group of *Two Goats* by the Italian sculptor, Giovita Lombardi (1837–79) (see [Figure 9.4](#)).⁶² The younger brother of the more established sculptor, Giovanni Battista Lombardi (1822–80), Giovita worked in his sibling's studio, but made his own speciality of large, virtuoso marble carvings of animals. The life-size marble of goats is typical of the unusual work which often caught Alfred's eye and is a work of impressive size and impact – a sculptural equivalent of Davis's *Panic*. Alfred displayed the Lombardi as the focal point on the north wall of the music gallery at Fonthill House (see [Figures 2.2](#) and [3.23](#)). Centrally placed, beneath an elaborate pelmet, flanked by marble figures of a girl praying and an infant Bacchus, surrounded by Chinese porcelain, its positioning may seem bizarre today, but was in keeping with Alfred's aesthetic that would juxtapose Henry Davis's bronze bull with porphyry busts of Roman emperors in Carlton House Terrace.

Contemporary modern sculpture

Lombardi's marble of *Two Goats* was purchased in 1863 through the London dealer, Marseille Middleton Holloway (1809–97). The sculptor features on a list of artists' names and prices drawn up by Holloway that is of great interest, because they are all the names of sculptors – eleven Italians and one American (Figure 11.12).

Three of the sculptors on the list have identifiable works in Alfred's collection, but the others are not recorded anywhere else. The document – a form of double entry book-keeping – appears to suggest that Alfred funded Holloway's dealing activity, buying two major marble sculptures and backing Holloway, who probably traded the other ones. The list registers only the sculptors' surnames with what appears to be a purchase price against each one and, on a second page, some costs of transport and insurance. Dates in the left-hand margin range from 20 July 1863 to 1 December 1864. Since there are no identifications of subjects, the prices can be compared to judge the relative size or importance of each work in comparison with the sculptures that can be identified in the collection. The price of £282 17s against the name of Lombardi would seem to relate to the life-size marble of goats discussed earlier. There are two other sculptors on the list whose marbles are recorded in Fonthill House. On the wall of the saloon opposite the Lombardi *Goats*, Alfred displayed a life-size marble figure of *Fabiola* by Stefano Galletti (1832–1905) on a marble plinth, flanked by marble busts by the American sculptor, Hiram Powers (1805–73) (Figure 11.13).

All three sculptures were photographed in situ (see Figure 3.24) and all three were sold in the Morrison Christie's auction on 28 January 1899.⁶³ Like Lombardi, Galletti was a Roman sculptor. A *terminus ante quem* for Galletti's *Fabiola* is its publication on the cover of a Roman magazine, *L'Album*, on 21 March 1857. Holloway's final entry for Alfred's Galletti is dated 1 December 1864, which makes it the earliest known example of several replicas Galletti carved in life-size and reduced marble versions.⁶⁴

Of the remaining names on the Holloway list, there are some well-known sculptors and others more obscure or unidentifiable, but none of their names appear in later Morrison inventories or auction sales. There is Leopoldo Ansiglione (1832–94) whose work cost £79 1s, so it is likely to have been more than a bust.⁶⁵ The price is slightly more than the Galletti, listed at £74 8d 7s, so it may have been a figurative piece. Ansiglione worked for a time in London, but he did not exhibit at the RA. The name Bazzanti, which features next to a price



Figure 11.13 Stefano Galletti, *Fabiola*, 1864, marble, 170 cm (67 in).
Artimo Fine Art, Brussels.

Photograph © Artimo Fine Art

of £64 16s, could be either Niccolò, who died in 1869, or his brother Pietro (1825–95) whose decorative marble statues appear regularly in auctions.⁶⁶ Bienaimé, whose work cost £34, also refers to a well-known family of sculptors, originally from Carrara, but also active in Rome, producing standard neoclassical sculpture in the wake of Antonio Canova and Bertel Thorvaldsen.⁶⁷ This could relate either to Francesco (active 1844–71), Angelo (1829–70), Luigi (1795–1878) or Pietro Antonio Bienaimé (1784–1857), all active around this period. From the price it would seem to be a small sculpture.

Bogazzi is another dynasty of Carrerese sculptors, Matteo and his two sons Giovanni and Ercole worked in a traditional neoclassical style.⁶⁸ At £50, the work referred to on the 1863 list could have been a bust, perhaps even the marble of the young Augustus.⁶⁹ The second most expensive sculpture in the 1863 consignment is marked under the name of Boschetti. At £148 15s. it may be assumed that the Boschetti was a significant sculpture. Benedetto Boschetti (active 1820–70) was a sculptor of antique style ornaments in bronze and marble that were avidly collected by travellers to Rome. The bronze and marble tazza displayed on the centre of the fireplace mantelpiece in the music gallery at Fonthill

House (see [Figure 3.19](#)) is typical of Boschetti's output, as is the large tazza seen on the round table in the saloon (see [Figure 2.2](#)), and various other *all'antica* ornaments seen in the Fonthill House photographs.

Two other names, Fontana and Lazzarini, might identify well known Italian sculptors. Both exhibited at the RA: Giovanni Fontana (1821–93) from 1852 to 1886, showing portrait busts and ideal subjects, such as *The Prisoner of Love* (RA 1857, no. 1226), or *Cupid captured by Venus* (RA 1859, no. 1273),⁷⁰ and Pietro Lazzarini (1842–1918) in 1875, when he exhibited three sculptures. At £24 16s and £80 respectively, the latter would appear to be a significant sculpture.

The remaining three names on the 1863 Holloway list are obscure. Ducci does not appear in any of the standard dictionaries of Italian sculptors of the period, but a David Ducci is noted by Alison Yarrington as a pupil of Francesco Bienaimé and the sculptor of a marble copy of a *Bust of Christ* by Thorvaldsen at Chatsworth House, acquired by the 6th Duke of Devonshire in 1846.⁷¹ There is no sculptor named Morelli of the right date, and finally Rosetti, if it is misspelt, may indicate Antonio Rossetti (b. 1819), but it is far from certain. However, at £127 10s his work was the third most expensive of the group.⁷² In one of the photographs of the saloon (see [Figure 3.23](#)) there is one unidentified sculpture of a small marble figure on the west wall in between two massive Chinese vases, which appears to be a seated boy that is stylistically consistent with most of the sculptors named on the Holloway list. Otherwise, the absence of any record of any of these sculptors in Alfred's collection leads to the assumption that the Holloway bills indicate that the dealer and patron were settling a joint business venture.

In the Fonthill House photographs, a marble of the *Infant Bacchus* by Richard James Wyatt can be identified in the saloon to the left of Giovita Lombardi's *Goats* (see [Figures 2.2](#) and [3.23](#)). Alfred may well have met Wyatt himself when he visited Rome with his family in 1847. On that visit James Morrison purchased a nymph from the sculptor, and it is quite possible the family visited Wyatt's studio at the time.⁷³ Alfred would have had at least two occasions to have seen Wyatt's *Infant Bacchus*: first when it was exhibited at the RA in 1848 (no. 1323) and again, posthumously, at the Great Exhibition in 1851. It is likely that for this acquisition Alfred again relied on Marseille Holloway. On 20 April 1868, he paid Holloway £252 for a statue by Wyatt. Although the subject is not specified, the level of price makes it feasible that it could be the *Infant Bacchus*.⁷⁴

Holloway's 1868 bill also records the sale of a statue by Power[s] for £260. The Fonthill House photographs show that Alfred owned busts of the *Greek Slave* and *Proserpine* (see [Figure 3.24](#)) by the American



Figure 11.14 Hiram Powers, *Bust of the Greek Slave*, c. 1860, marble. Sotheby's, London, 2 July 2013, lot 126.

Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. ©

sculptor Hiram Powers that are consistent with the details of this entry (Figure 11.14).⁷⁵

In promoting his sculpture in London, Hiram Powers had direct contact with Holloway and another London-based dealer, W. H. Ryder.⁷⁶ Powers' name also appears on the earlier 1863 Holloway list, but while the dealer ordered busts of the *Greek Slave* and *Proserpine* from Powers in March 1862, he paid the sculptor £150, so his charge to Alfred on the 1863 bill of £41 4s is inconsistent with the acquisition of these two marble busts. Holloway continued to import versions of the busts in 1865 and no doubt subsequently, and two of these must have been intended for Alfred in 1868.⁷⁷ The *Proserpine* is Powers's third version of this model, with a simplified termination to the shoulders that matches the *Greek Slave*, making them into visual, if not iconographic, pendants. Displayed in the saloon, they flanked the *Fabiola* by Galletti and formed one of the more harmonious arrangements in an interior which resembled the jumble of the International Exhibitions that Alfred regularly attended. This contrasts with the bizarre line up on the opposite wall of the saloon with Wyatt's *Infant Bacchus* next to Lombardi's *Goats* and an Italian marble figure of a girl praying on the other side. Sculpted by the Florentine sculptor Emilio Santarelli (1801–89), the latter was dated to 1852 in the Christie's auction where it was sold in 1899.⁷⁸ Entitled *Prayer of*

Innocence, the marble does not appear in any of the surviving Holloway bills, although as a sculptor Santarelli is on a par with those artists mentioned on the 1863 list. It found its way to Basildon where it was photographed early in the twentieth century (see [Figure 19.9](#)).

Salon sculpture

The last category of sculpture in Alfred's collection is a miscellaneous group of sculptures in ivory and bronze which are domestic in scale and were displayed at Fonthill House and Carlton House Terrace on tables and mantelpieces. They range in date from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, but Alfred did not build a coherent collection around them. One of the sculptures in Carlton House Terrace that impressed both Haweis and Caddy was an extraordinary ivory group. Haweis gives the clearest description: 'A very curious old ivory statuette of the *Angel of Death*, riding forth, scattering the seeds of pestilence and famine as he goes, has all the naïve vigour of *Albert Dürer*; it is probably somewhat later in date.'⁷⁹ Unidentified until now, this showpiece next appears at auction in 1899 described as 'a finely carved old Flemish ivory group, on plinth carved as rocks – 17in. high, on an ebonised plinth,' and less imaginatively called 'an equestrian figure, with outspread arms and flying drapery'.⁸⁰ The Haweis and 1899 auction descriptions match a famous ivory group by the Master of the Furies in the Reiner Winkler collection, today housed in the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt am Main ([Figure 11.15](#)).⁸¹

This virtuosic carving is now considered to represent one of the mythological Furies that give the anonymous early seventeenth-century Austrian sculptor his name. It is difficult to think of another Baroque sculptor whose work better fits with the two nineteenth-century descriptions of this piece. Alfred bought the ivory on 28 July 1865 from the dealer Abraham Joseph of 92 New Bond Street for the considerable sum of £325.⁸² At the 1899 auction, the ivory was probably purchased by a dealer who could have quickly sold it on to the renowned collector Rodolphe Kann (1845–1905) in Paris.⁸³ Aided by the guidance of the legendary German museum director, Wilhelm von Bode (1845–1929), Kann rapidly built one of the most prestigious collections of Old Master paintings in *fin-de-siècle* Paris. The focus of the collection was paintings, but the 1907 posthumous catalogue of his 'objets d'art' is testimony to his range of interests. The ivory is illustrated in this luxurious tome.⁸⁴ Kann's entire collection was famously acquired by Joseph Duveen and



Figure 11.15 *Riding Fury*, Master of the Furies, Salzburg (?), c. 1610, ivory, wood, bone. H. 41 cm (16 in), W. 47 cm (18½ in), D. 26 cm (10¼ in). Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Collection Reiner Winkler, Frankfurt am Main. Inv.St.P.808.

© Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt am Main, Foto: Horst Ziegenfusz, Frankfurt

a consortium of dealers who exported it lock, stock and barrel to the United States for resale.

From various sources it has been possible to identify other ivory sculptures acquired by Alfred. He left one personal account referring to ivory in his Memorandum book, when on 4 August 1869 he was in Paris and records a visit to 'Moreau' at 57 Rue Tiquetonne and notes: 'Moreau ... carved the ivory bust of Henry IV original by Germain Pilon ami de Jean Goujon – the designer of the mausoleum of Francis 1st & Henri II a St. Denis.' There is no record of an ivory bust of Henry IV in Alfred's collection, but we can contextualise it from another magnificent ivory relief by the same sculptor. Sold from the Morrison collection on 25 January 1899 as lot 138, and described as a relief with 'Cupids, gryphons, arabesques and other ornament', this exuberant composition was designed by Charles Lepec and is inscribed: *CH. LEPEC. INV. DEL 70* and *MOREAU SCUT.*⁸⁵ This was clearly a very personal commission from Alfred. The cartouche at the top of the relief is inscribed with two *Ms* for Mabel Morrison and the 1899 catalogue describes the group at the centre of the relief as emblematic of the theme *Omnia vincit Amor* (Love

conquers All). No significance for the date of 1870 on the work has been discovered, and as Mabel put it up for sale at the earliest opportunity, we might assume it did not hold great sentimental value for her. The Moreau family was a dynasty of French sculptors, but Jean Augustin Moreau, known as Augustin Moreau-Vauthier (1831–93), is the member of the family who was most accomplished in carving ivory, and his connection with Alfred's 1869 visit can be confirmed from his address given in the *Salon Livret*.⁸⁶

Another nineteenth-century ivory in the *Inventory* can probably be identified as by Augustin Moreau-Vauthier. No. 626 is 'A girl, with Cupid, partly blindfolded, and holding a torch, a large old French carved ivory group' – presciently, the word 'old' is crossed out. It remained in the collection until offered as lot 59 in the 1971 Fonthill House sale, and although no artist's name is given, it sold for an impressive £577.50. The ivory can be seen in two photographs of the saloon (see [Figure 3.24](#)), and from this visual record it can be identified as the same model as a marble version in the V&A.⁸⁷ The latter's association with the French eighteenth-century sculptor, Edmé Bouchardon (1698–1762), has no foundation, but it is known in a number of variant nineteenth- and early twentieth century compositions in bronze, marble and terracotta. On occasion these are signed by Moreau, hence the attribution to Augustin Moreau-Vauthier.

The *Inventory* catalogues two bronzes of the *Labours of Hercules* cast from models by Giambologna: 'no. 201 *Hercules and Lycas*' and 'no. 752 *Hercules and the Lion*'. The latter is visible on the fireplace mantelpiece in the music gallery at Fonthill House (see [Figure 3.19](#)). Described as simply 'an old Italian bronze group', it is impossible to gauge how highly it was regarded at the time since the price in the *Inventory* is left blank. However, it is definitely a cast after the model of Giambologna's *Hercules and the Nemean Lion*.⁸⁸ No further reference to this bronze has been found.

The *Hercules and Lycas* is documented in the 1971 Fonthill House sale, lot 192c, '*Hercules and Antaeus* – after Gian de Bologna'.⁸⁹ It is described as being inscribed and 16 inches (40.5 cm) high. It had a reserve of £90, but there was no bid. A bronze in the Chicago Institute of Art is considered the only surviving cast of Giambologna's *Hercules and Lycas*, but without a contemporary visual record it is impossible to confirm if Alfred's bronze was this rarest of the Mannerist sculptor's *Labours of Hercules* (or the more prevalent *Hercules and Antaeus*).⁹⁰ To these two Italian bronzes can be added a third Baroque bronze once owned by Alfred of *Tiger Ecorché*, a model associated with the work



Figure 11.16 Gustave Doré, *La Pyramide Humaine*, after 1883, bronze, sold Christie's, 29 October 1998, lot 200.

Photograph © 1998, Christie's Images Limited

of Willem Danielsz van Tetrode (1530–87) today in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.⁹¹

The last sculpture to consider in Alfred's collection is likely to have been one of his final sculptural purchases and is an anomaly in a collection of anomalies: the extraordinary bronze of *La Pyramide Humaine* by Gustave Doré (1832–83) (Figure 11.16).⁹²

The only mention of the bronze is in the 1899 Christie's sale when it sold for £28, more than the Hiram Powers busts or the Wyatt marble of *Bacchus*. Doré exhibited his *Pyramide Humaine* in 1881, but it is not thought that the bronze was edited in reduced versions until after his death in 1883. The sale of his studio two years later included three bronze casts in three sizes – 129 cm (50¾ in), 90 cm (35½ in) and 58 cm (22¾ in). Alfred's cast is inscribed by a Parisian Oriental art dealer, Auguste Sichel, with his address at 11 rue Pigalle, Paris. It is believed that Sichel owned the casting rights to the model, which would have been acquired at the Doré sale where the 58 cm (22¾ in) model was sold to a Monsieur Schwarz. So, between 1885 and his death in 1897, Alfred must have visited Sichel in France where he acquired the Doré bronze, perhaps among the stock of a shop full of Oriental art that would have been more in line with his tastes. That Alfred certainly knew Sichel, and on occasion visited him in Paris, is confirmed by three entries in his Memorandum book dated 1882, 1883 and 1891. A *terminus post quem* for Alfred's purchase is given by his 1883 entry that records Sichel's address as 39 Rue de Clichy, which by 1891 had changed to Rue Pigalle.⁹³ The Doré piece is a most surprising late addition to a varied and not insubstantial collection of sculpture.

Conclusion

This chapter has been a first attempt to reconstruct Alfred Morrison's collection of sculpture.⁹⁴ It has shown his collection to have been varied in date from the Baroque to the late nineteenth century and to have been in a variety of materials including bronze, marble and ivory. As a whole, the collection of sculpture does not appear to have any coherent rationale or guiding collecting principle. Alfred seems to have responded to what happened to be available to him and bought principally to decorate his two homes. He had the money to buy whatever sculpture he saw and liked at the periodic International and RA exhibitions, on his travels or from influential art dealers, such as Holloway or Phillips. However, Alfred's choice of sculpture certainly reflects his eye for the extraordinary and virtuosic which is also apparent in his other collections, notably his paintings, and his devotion to the works of Zuloaga and Lepec. Alfred's collection of *animalier* bronzes by Julius Heinrich Hähnel is truly exceptional, even if its choice is as obscure today as it probably was at the time. Hähnel's bronzes are distinguished for their precise craftsmanship, which chimed with Alfred's innate interest

in technical excellence. His group of bronzes by Barye can be regarded as one of the most significant in England at the time, and is particularly notable for Alfred's acquisition of the important bronze of *Theseus and the Centaur Biénor* at the 1862 International Exhibition. This was the highlight of the animalier collection.

Alfred seems to have had no interest in collecting ancient Roman antiquities to rival the noble collections that he would surely have known, such as the Pembroke collection at Wilton House or the Bedford collection at Woburn Abbey. He did demonstrate an interest in contemporary marble sculpture, but his acquisitions do not have the consistency or quality of the collections built by the 6th Duke of Devonshire (1790–1858) at Chatsworth or that of Joseph Neeld (1789–1856) at Grittleton Hall. In some ways his collection of sculpture is more akin to that put together by Sir Merton Russell-Cotes (1835–1921) at East Cliff Hall in Bournemouth. Alfred's sculpture fits into a Victorian aesthetic of collecting characterised by a massing of many diverse objects crammed into interiors, creating odd juxtapositions of styles and cultures, but within this seeming jumble, sculptures such as Gustave Doré's *Pyramide Humaine* or the Master of the Furies ivory are truly exceptional works of art.

Notes

- 1 I am grateful to Caroline Dakers for all her support and the continual supply of information and to Lord Margadale for his hospitality. I am indebted to Claudia Kryza-Gersch for her swift and thorough response to my questions on Julius Heinrich Hähnel and to Malcolm Baker for his insightful comments on the text. My thanks also go to many scholars, curators and friends who have answered many questions, including Margrethe Floryan and Laila Anita Skjøthaug at the Thorvaldsen Museum, Lawrence Hendra at Philip Mould and Co., Robert Kashey, Christopher Foley, Joanna Barnes, Alexis and Laura Kugel, Holly Trusted, Regine Marth, Martin Levy, Alain Richarme, Anne-Lise Desmas, Stefano Grandesso, Andrew King, Simon Brown, Tom Eden, Anna Bertorelli and the Sculpture team at Sotheby's, Adele Bourbon, Thayer Tolls, Stefan Roller, Kira d'Albuquerque, Georges van Cauwenberg, Philip Ward-Jackson and Alison Wright.
- 2 Alfred's probate estate of £869,174 in 1898 gives some indication of the level of his wealth earlier in life when he would have been collecting.
- 3 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 226.
- 4 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 233–4.
- 5 This is particularly the case with Alfred's early education at Bruce Castle, near Tottenham. See Gatty, *Portrait of a Merchant Prince*, 171.
- 6 See section on Alfred's acquisitions of busts by Hiram Powers later. Charles Morrison acquired two important marble statues by William Wetmore Story at the 1862 International Exhibition representing *Cleopatra* and *A Libyan Sibyl*, see Martin Levy, [Chapter 5](#) of this volume. The sale of these two marbles kick-started Power's career as a sculptor in Rome, and it is reasonable to suppose that Charles would have been aware that Powers was American and that the former's period in America would have motivated his acquisition. Whether Alfred later acquired the Hiram Power's busts of *The Greek Slave* and *Proserpine* in response to Charles's purchase remains a matter of speculation.

- 7 See Gatty, *Portrait of a Merchant Prince*, 191 and see later for an examination of the Theed and Chantrey busts of James Morrison.
- 8 Letter from James Morrison to John Dillon at J. Morrison & Co., 30 November 1826, box 2.
- 9 For an extensive bibliography on the Grand Tour see Mazzocca, Grandesso and Leone, *Grand Tour*.
- 10 Works by all these sculptors were later to be acquired by the Morrisons.
- 11 Gatty, *Portrait of a Merchant Prince*, 191–2, refers to Leonardi supplying columns and vases in all kinds of marble, porphyry and alabaster.
- 12 See Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 188, fig. 25, and Wilson, ‘The “unjustly forgotten” Henry Weekes RA’.
- 13 Wilson, ‘The “unjustly forgotten” Henry Weekes RA’, 38; the bust was exhibited at the RA in 1842. See also Yarrington et al., ‘An edition of the ledger of Sir Francis Chantrey’, 317, which records a payment of 200 guineas in 1837. The bust was no. 1409 in the 1842 RA exhibition.
- 14 Sold Christie’s London, *The European Connoisseur*, 5 July 2013, lot 170, present location unknown.
- 15 See Wilson, ‘The “unjustly forgotten” Henry Weekes RA’, 37, 41 n.132, and Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, fig. 25.
- 16 The inscription reads ‘JAMES MORRISON, ESQ./COPIED FROM THE ORIGINAL BUST/EXECUTED IN MARBLE/BY SIR FRANCIS CHANTREY, IN 1841. BY F. M. MILLER, 1861./PRESENTED TO J. DILLON, ESQ.,/ BY M. A. MORRISON’. For Miller see Roscoe, Hardy and Sullivan, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain*, 828–32.
- 17 The bust was likely sold at Phillips in the auction of *The Remaining Contents of Heytesbury House, Warminster, Wilts.*, on 31 October 1994, lot 103. Caroline Dakers has also noted a valuation of Charles Morrison’s paintings and sculpture at Basildon compiled by Tom Cox on 14 June 1910, which notes a marble bust of a gentleman dated 1848 which is almost certainly the bust of Alfred. Fonthill Archive, B/1/0850.
- 18 Indeed there are very few images of Alfred, except notably a painting by Plácido Zuloaga, a drawing by John Brett and a photograph on the steps of Fonthill House. For Woolner see Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 245 and Woolner, *Thomas Woolner, R.A. and Read and Barnes, Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture*.
- 19 See section on animal sculpture in this chapter.
- 20 Although both Woolner and Alfred did share an admiration for famous people – in carving his bust of Sedgwick, Woolner boasted ‘another great man added to my gallery’.
- 21 The bust is inscribed on the proper left side ‘T. WOOLNER. SC./LONDON. 1873’ on the right side ‘MABEL MORRISON’. It is 65 cm high (25½ in).
- 22 For Tennyson: Read and Barnes, *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture*, 149 and <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/alfred-lord-tennyson-18091892-275978> (accessed 2 May 2024). For Darwin: Read and Barnes, *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture*, 160.
- 23 For Brooke: Read and Barnes, *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture*, 150 and <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitExtended/mw00806/Sir-James-Brooke> (accessed 2 May 2024). For Sedgwick: Read and Barnes, *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture*, 153 and https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/adam-sedgwick-17851873-frs-275973/search/actor:woolner-thomas-18251892/page/1/view_as/grid (accessed 2 May 2024).
- 24 Mabel was known for her unusual sense of dress, but Woolner represents her in a simple round-necked tunic with long folds shaping her body. She wears her hair up with a large finely carved bun; the horse pendant hangs from a broad ribbon tied in a bow on the back of her neck. Woolner’s other portraits of women are a marble bust of Mrs Miles Gaskell, exhibited at RA in 1872; a plaster bust of Miss Hankey in 1883; and a marble bust of Lady Currie in 1886.
- 25 The *Inventory* records three busts of Bryon: two marble and one plaster.
- 26 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 265.
- 27 I am grateful to Alexis Kugel for his comments on these busts and to Galerie Kugel for permission to reproduce them. The busts appeared at the Hôtel Drouot, Paris, on 7 March 1975, lot 25, but remained unsold, and are currently with Galerie Kugel, Paris (July 2024). The busts have the Fonthill *Inventory of Heirlooms* label on the backs.
- 28 See <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1530145> (accessed 12 July 2024).
- 29 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 269 and 280. The author’s description of this bust as one of a pair of ‘Sicilian marble busts’ is not clear. Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 54–6 makes no mention of Voltaire or Goethe in the inner hall or library.

- 30 Haight, *The George Eliot Letters*, 162.
- 31 <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.1266.html> (accessed 27 April 2024).
- 32 This model is known as *Voltaire à la française*. See Scherf, *Houdon 1741–1828*, 68–81.
- 33 Robinson, 'Houdon and Voltaire', and see <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O94229/voltaire-bust-houdon-jean-antoine/> (accessed 24 June 2024). Also see Scherf, *Houdon 1741–1828*, 201–2.
- 34 Wilson, "By heaven inspired". Wilson misread the buyer's name as Sooden. This was corrected in Sotheby's 2015 description. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/old-master-sculpture-works-art-115231/lot.179.html> (accessed 28 April 2024).
- 35 Poulet et al., *Jean-Antoine Houdon*.
- 36 The omission of the attribution in the 1971 catalogue could imply that Alfred's bust was unsigned and the authorship of the bust rightly questioned.
- 37 A version signed by the British sculptor John Warrington Wood appeared as lot 251 at Sotheby's London on 5 July 2022: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/old-master-sculpture-early-jewels/bust-of-augustus> (accessed 23 June 2024) and another anonymous Italian nineteenth-century version appeared as lot 144 at Sotheby's London, *Bernheimer Day Sale*, 25 November 2015.
- 38 Christie's, *The Remaining Contents of Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire*, 1–2 November 1971, lot 58.
- 39 Royal Collections Trust, RCN 35425 <https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/5/collection/35425/george-gordon-byron-1788-1824-when-6th-baron-byronnbnsp> (accessed 23 June 2024). For Chatsworth bust see <https://kataloget.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/AX66> (accessed 23 June 2024).
- 40 <https://kataloget.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/A256> (accessed 23 June 2024).
- 41 The bust was bought in 1971 by Cyril Humphris who sold it to Shepherd Gallery in New York, whence it passed in 1995 to Philip Mould (then trading as Historical Portraits) and hence to Christopher Foley. See later for a tentative suggestion that this bust could be attributed to David Ducci, who is known to have carved variants of Thorvaldsen's models.
- 42 There was no inventory done when James Morrison gave Fonthill House to Alfred in 1850, so inevitably a question remains of what sculpture had already been collected by James. James's taste in sculpture seems to have been more conservative than his son's, tending towards the prevailing neoclassical style. The historical busts are the most likely works to have been acquired by Alfred's father.
- 43 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 225.
- 44 See Alison Wright, [Chapter 9](#) of this volume.
- 45 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 54. In due course the bronze was moved to Fonthill House and listed in the *Inventory* as in the entrance porch or outside.
- 46 I am grateful to Alison Wright for bringing this link to my attention.
- 47 There is no foundry mark. The bronze is initialled and dated 'H.W.B.DAVIS./1871'.
- 48 This medallion is today at Worcester College, Oxford. https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/george-charles-bell-18321913-268397/search/actor:davis-henry-william-banks-18331914/page/1/view_as/grid (accessed 29 April 2024).
- 49 See Martin Levy, [Chapter 5](#) of this volume. I am very grateful to Martin for bringing a very rare example of a bronze bull by Rosa to my attention which is very likely to be the model owned by Alfred: https://www.tajan.com/auction-lot/rosa-bonheur-1822-1899_B184A34B27?catalogReferredQueryParam=%253Fkeywords%253Dbonheur (accessed 21 August 2024).
- 50 As far as the present author has been able to establish, Isidore-Jules Bonheur is not recorded as ever having made a model of a partridge.
- 51 The artist's name is probably written on the left side of the page in the list but is misspelt differently. A similar cast was sold at auction: <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5424654> (accessed 29 April 2024).
- 52 Robert Phillips is documented as having assisted Alfred with the shipment from Paris. A similar cast was sold at auction: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2012/russian-art-n08844/lot.63.html> (accessed 29 April 2024).
- 53 See Wright in [Chapter 11](#) and Levy in [Chapter 5](#) of this volume.
- 54 The full title for this model is *Aigle – Ails étendues, bec ouvert*. It is distinguished from the similar model of an eagle and heron. Barye's eagle does not appear in the *Inventory* or any

subsequent auctions, so it could be assumed it was gifted or left the collection in some other way.

- 55 See Neil Burton, [Chapter 3](#) of this volume, on Alfred Morrison as a patron of architecture, with a photograph of the south front of Fonthill House.
- 56 See Poletti and Richarme, *Barye Catalogue raisonné des Sculptures*, 109–11. The authors suggest that fewer than five casts were made in the original large size between 1857 and 1875. The three known casts are in the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.177342.html> (accessed 24 June 2024); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/186832> (accessed 24 June 2024); Musée Crozatier, Le Puy-en-Velay: <https://webmuseo.com/ws/musee-crozatier/app/collection/record/34852> (accessed 24 June 2024).
- 57 A photograph of the exterior of Fonthill House shows the Hähnel's *Crouching Lioness* on a plinth on the south side. It is no. 162 in the *Inventory*.
- 58 I am extremely grateful to Dr Claudia Kryza-Gersch for her essential assistance in researching Hähnel in the Dresden archives, where she found this manuscript with the life of Julius Hähnel. The manuscript is unsigned, but is thought to have been Hähnel's own account, perhaps dictated. Archiv der Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Künstlerakten' (Julius Heinrich Hähnel).
- 59 Von Einsiedel was the owner of the Lauchhammer foundry where many of Hähnel's bronzes were cast in Germany.
- 60 Woolner, *Thomas Woolner, R.A.*, 241–2.
- 61 Woolner, *Thomas Woolner, R.A.*, 241, n.2. It is likely that Francis Turner Palgrave came to own two bronzes by Hähnel through Woolner. These are now in the V&A. <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O169186/monkey-swatting-a-fly-paperweight-h%C3%A4hnel-heinrich-julius/> (accessed 29 April 2024) and <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O35006/ostrich-with-a-lizard-figure-group-h%C3%A4hnel-heinrich-julius/> (accessed 29 April 2024).
- 62 For the fullest account of his life see Vicario, *Gli Scultori Italiani*, 619. The marble is now part of the collections at Sefton Park, Liverpool.
- 63 The *Fabiola* was sold as lot 116. The Powers busts were misidentified as lot 111 *Chastity* and lot 112 *Modesty*. It is not clear which was the *Greek Slave* and which *Proserpine*.
- 64 A marble version, signed and dated 1864, which might very well be the one owned by Alfred, is with the Brussels based art dealer Artimo Fine Arts (2024). Another version of this statue appeared at Sotheby's: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2023/19th-20th-century-sculpture-2/fabiola> (accessed 29 April 2024).
- 65 See Vicario, *Gli Scultori Italiani*, 35–6, and Panzetta, *Nuovo Dizionario*, 32.
- 66 See Vicario, *Gli Scultori Italiani*, 100, and Panzetta, *Nuovo Dizionario*, 78.
- 67 See Vicario, *Gli Scultori Italiani*, 137–8, and Panzetta, *Nuovo Dizionario*, 91.
- 68 See Panzetta, *Nuovo Dizionario*, 97.
- 69 Boschetti also produced bronzes of the Young Augustus bust, but the price against his name seems too high for such a marble bust. See <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2007/european-sculpture-works-of-art-l07231/lot.151.html> (accessed 30 April 2024).
- 70 This most beautiful marble was sold at Sotheby's in 2022. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/monte-alverno-an-irish-private-collection/cupid-captured-by-venus> (accessed 30 April 2024). See Vicario, *Gli Scultori Italiani*, and Panzetta, *Nuovo Dizionario*. Fontana was established in London and elsewhere.
- 71 Yarrington, 'Canova and Thorvaldsen at Chatsworth', 77–87. Ducci's bust is an adaptation of Thorvaldsen's full-length figure of Christ in the Vor Frue Kirke in Copenhagen. This kind of free interpretation of a Thorvaldsen model echoes Alfred's supposed Thorvaldsen bust of Lord Byron. The attribution of the Byron with a lyre needs further research, but Ducci's potential authorship should not be dismissed without further examination.
- 72 See Vicario, *Gli Scultori Italiani*, 909–10, and Panzetta, *Nuovo Dizionario*, 785.
- 73 See Gatty, *Portrait of a Merchant Prince*, 191. Unfortunately there is no trace of this sculpture of a Nymph by Wyatt in any inventories or sale catalogues.
- 74 Sold Sotheby's, London *European Sculpture & Works of Art 900–1900*, 8 July 2003, lot 217. If this marble was the one owned by Alfred it had lost its provenance by 2003, which is given as probably John Howard Galton, Hadzor House, Droitwich, Worcestershire. This may be the same marble as sold in Sotheby's New York, 28 March 1979, lot 182.

- 75 A version of the bust of a Greek Slave appeared at Sotheby's London in 2013: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2013/european-sculpture-works-of-art-medieval-to-modern/lot.126.html> (accessed 25 June 2024) and a version of the bust of Proserpine sold in Christie's New York in 2005: <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4615209> (accessed 25 June 2024).
- 76 See Dakers, *Chapter 2* of this volume, and Wunder, *Hiram Powers* discusses the remarkable trade he had in copies of his most famous models and demonstrates that he had contact with many UK based clients.
- 77 Wunder, *Hiram Powers*, 173.
- 78 It is mis-catalogued as by G. Santarelli. Another version in the Lady Lever Art Gallery is dated 1863. <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/artifact/prayer-of-innocence> (accessed 1 May 2024).
- 79 Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, 59, and Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 274.
- 80 Christie's, London, 25 January 1899, lot 136.
- 81 I am very grateful to Dr Holly Trusted and Dr Regine Marth for their crucial advice in proposing this identification, to Caroline Dakers for bringing the Joseph bill to my attention and to Dr Stefan Roller for kindly providing images and confirming the *Inventory* number. The details of the group are: Master of the Furies, Salzburg (?), um 1610, Ivory, wood, bone, H. 41 cm (16 in), W. 47 cm (18 ½ in), D. 26 cm (10 ¼ in), Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung – Collection Reiner Winkler, Frankfurt am Main, inv. St.P. 808. See Herbert Beck et al., *Der Furienmeister*, 40–7.
- 82 Westgarth, 'A biographical dictionary of nineteenth century antique & curiosity dealers', 126–7. More research is needed for any earlier provenance. For a comparison of this value, in 1862 Alfred paid £240 for Barye's major bronze of *Theseus and the Centaur* and in 1863/4 he paid £282 for the Lombardi *Goat and Kid* and £74 for the Galletti *Fabiola*.
- 83 The annotated Christie's catalogue for the 1899 auction indicates two names against this lot: Speyer and Eyles (or possibly Sykes); one may be the buyer and the other the underbidder. Further research is needed to establish the identity of the buyer.
- 84 See Mannheim and Rahir, *Catalogue of the Rodolphe Kann Collection*, 13, fig. 20. Described as German, sixteenth century.
- 85 Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the patronage of Alfred Morrison', 209–11.
- 86 The *Salon Livret* of 1857 gives the address of Augustin Moreau as Rue Tiquetonne, 15. The inconsistency of the house number may be an error on Alfred's part or a misprint in the *Livret*.
- 87 See <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O164265/cupid-blindfolded-carrying-a-torch-statue-tte-bouchardon-edme/> (accessed 1 May 2024).
- 88 See Avery and Radcliffe, *Giambologna*, 123 and Strozzi and Zikos, *Giambologna gli dei*, 360.
- 89 See Avery and Radcliffe, *Giambologna*, 134, and <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/30358/hercules-and-lichas> (accessed 26 June 2024).
- 90 The confusion between the models stems from the fact that both subjects represent Hercules lifting a man off the ground. I am grateful to Dr Dimitrios Zikos for his comments on the *Hercules and Lycas*.
- 91 No mention of this bronze has been found in the Fonthill House archive or later sources. It was exhibited as no. 40 at the Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition in 1937/8; the Morrison provenance is given in the auction of the E. L. Paget collection, Sotheby's London, 12 October 1949, lot 208. See also <https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/14024> (accessed 26 June 2024). This *Tiger Ecorché* could have been considered under the category of Alfred's animal sculptures. The same applies to a pair of small marble reclining lions after Antonio Canova's models for the Tomb of Pope Clement XIII in St Peter's Basilica, Rome, recorded in the *Inventory* (no. 793 in Beckford's bedroom), which survive today in a private UK collection.
- 92 <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-1328241> (accessed 1 May 2024).
- 93 It is important to note that Sichel's stamp on this bronze gives the address 11 rue Pigalle, Paris.
- 94 It is certainly the case that there remain many unknowns and lacunae in the history of Alfred's sculpture collection, and it is hoped that this chapter will stimulate further and more in-depth study.

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12

Alfred Morrison's print collection

David Alexander

Alfred Morrison began to collect prints in a serious way in 1860, despite a myriad of other interests. Between 1860 and 1868, he acquired nearly 3,000 prints, mostly engraved or etched portraits. These were recorded in a catalogue, privately printed in an edition of 100 copies, *The Collection of Engravings, formed between the years 1860–68, by Alfred Morrison. Annotated Catalogue and Index to Portraits by M. Holloway*. This was only the start.¹ By the time of his death in 1897, he had many thousand prints, most, if not all, carrying his collector's mark (Figures 12.1 and 12.2), housed at Fonthill House and 16 Carlton House Terrace.² This particular etching was included in M. Holloway's catalogue, number 2184.³



Figure 12.1 Alfred Morrison's collector's mark, AM, on reverse of Rembrandt *Self-Portrait*.

© Paris, Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt



Figure 12.2 Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait Leaning on a Stone Sill*, state 1/11, inv. no. 3990.

© Paris, Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt

Collecting old prints in context

What sparked Morrison's decision to collect is not clear. Prints were, of course, part of everyday life, and technical advances in printmaking, for example the use of steel facing on copper plates, had made it easier for print sellers to produce larger editions, enabling more people to acquire prints, notably of contemporary pictures. But the collecting of old prints was somewhat out of fashion.

The wild enthusiasm for British portraits had developed in the late eighteenth century, linked to the extra-illustration of books such as Granger's *Biographical History of England*, 1769, and Lord Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion*. James Granger's work, which was in its fifth edition by 1824, led extra-illustration to be called 'grangerizing'.⁴

Morrison bought his own copy (nine volumes) of *Granger* in 1864.⁵ By the mid-nineteenth century, the fashion for collecting British portraits had largely played itself out.

It is true, however, that there were enthusiastic collectors competing with each other for the finest prints. By their nature, collectors on any scale were a small group, since collecting was time-consuming and expensive. Because London was in some ways the strongest European market, many important continental collections were sent to London to be auctioned. The auction rooms were the best place to see old prints, and that is where most collectors gained much of their knowledge.

There was only a limited amount of contemporary writing about print collecting to assist beginners, the most accessible being *The Print Collector: An Introduction to the Knowledge Necessary for forming a Collection of Ancient Prints*, published anonymously in 1843, but written by a keen collector, Joseph Mabery (1783–1860).⁶ While there is no record of Morrison owning this (his library was not catalogued), some of Mabery's collection of prints did find their way to Fonthill House, including two by Dürer, *The Death of the Virgin* by Israel van Mencken, and an early state of Rembrandt's portrait of Jan Lutma.⁷

There were also existing catalogues of prints, notably Adam von Bartsch's *Le Peintre-Graveur*, 21 volumes (Vienna, 1803–21), but this only dealt with prints by painters. A list drawn up by Holloway & Son headed 'Bartsch Works of Marc Antonio, Revenna and Veneziano' surviving in Morrison's papers suggests the work was being used for reference by both dealer and collector.⁸ A. P. F. Robert-Dumesnil issued *Le Peintre-Graveur Français*, which treated engravers chronologically, between 1835 and 1850. Robert-Dumesnil disposed of his own collection between 1826 and 1864, Morrison acquiring 13 of his prints.⁹ Other single-author catalogues included Gustav Parthey's catalogue, with 2,733 entries, of the prints of Wenceslaus Hollar, the Bohemian engraver who spent much of his career in Britain.¹⁰ Between 1854 and 1858, the first three volumes of Charles Le Blanc's *Manuel de l'Amateur d'estampes* were brought out in Paris, giving lists of prints by individual engravers, but the cataloguing was confined to the holdings of the Bibliothèque nationale, and the three volumes only took the lists up to Pencz, the final volume not appearing until the late 1880s.¹¹ It was not, however, through books that aspiring collectors learned the most, but through the advice of dealers.

For those people who had not ventured into the auction rooms or the premises of those who dealt in old prints, such as P. & D. Colnaghi, John Russell Smith, William Smith and Samuel Woodburn, the first opportunity to see a range of prints, both by Old Masters and

contemporary engravers, was at the Art Treasures Exhibition held in Manchester in 1857.¹² This contained 1,550 prints lent by leading British print collectors, such as Richard Fisher, the Rev. John Griffith (1806–85), Robert Holford (1808–92), Felix Slade and Dr the Rev. Henry Wellesley (1794–1866), as well as by a few engravers and dealers.¹³ In 1858, there was a further publication which helped to increase public awareness of old prints: *British Museum. A Guide to the Drawings and Prints exhibited to the public in the King's Library*, written by a learned bookseller, William Hookham Carpenter (1792–1866), who had been appointed Keeper of Prints in 1844.¹⁴

The role of Holloway & Son

Among those who had sent prints to Manchester was the 48-year-old Londoner Marseille Middleton Holloway (1809–97) (Figure 12.3).¹⁵



Figure 12.3 Marseille Middleton Holloway, or his son Marseille Holloway, lithograph by Richard James Lane, ARA (1809–72), undated, National Portrait Gallery, London, D22539.

© National Portrait Gallery, London

Holloway began his career as an engraver, but in the 1830s he set up as a print seller at 22 King William St, moving by 1839 to 14 Henrietta Street, and by 1844 to 25 Bedford Street. In about 1864, he was joined by his son Marseille (d. 1878), and the business became Holloway & Son.¹⁶ There is an undated lithographic portrait by R. J. Lane, which shows a rather serious young man who is probably the son rather than the father.

It is clear that Holloway and his son were felt to be honest and reliable, and between 1851 and 1872 they were regularly employed to buy prints on behalf of the British Museum. The firm's relationship with Morrison ranged from acquiring prints, Old Masters, contemporary painting and sculpture, as well as cataloguing. By August 1866, Marseille Holloway (the son) was close enough to Morrison to be sent venison from the Fonthill estate. In a letter dated 16 August, Holloway offers Morrison Japanese enamel vases 'identical with your circular plates', suggesting he was familiar with the collections at Fonthill.¹⁷

In Holloway & Son, Morrison met knowledgeable dealers without whose help he could never have assembled his impressive collection. Initially, Morrison may have bought prints which were already in M. M. Holloway's inventory, and it seems that it was not until the Julian Marshall sale in June 1864 that Holloway bought for Morrison on a large scale in auction. Acting for Morrison, Holloway bought nearly 400 prints by artists of all schools and periods, including Lucas van Leyden, Israel van Mecken (d. 1503), Rembrandt, Jacob Ruysdael (1635–81), and Hendrik Golzius (1588–1617), as well as English prints by William Faithorne, David Loggan (1634–92) and William Hogarth. The biggest single group was French portrait prints, including ten by Pierre Drevet and his son Pierre Imbart Drevet. Holloway did not outbid the French dealer Clément, who paid £35 for an exceptional impression of the latter's full-length of Bossuet from the Count G. Archinto Collection, being content with a second state costing £4 10s 0d. The prices of all but very special ones were low, and in this sale Holloway was able to buy nearly 150 prints by Robert Nanteuil (1630–78), considered the greatest of the seventeenth-century portrait engravers, not least because so many of his portraits were based on his own *ad vivum* drawings. Morrison subsequently bought further prints which had belonged to Marshall, such as Cornelius Dusart's mezzotint of *The Harlequin* (Figure 12.4). This was bought for the Fitzwilliam Museum by Louis Clarke after it surfaced at Sotheby's on 30 March 1954.

Another sale in 1864 which swelled Morrison's collection was that in Paris of prints from part of the Thiers collection. The historian and crafty politician Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877), who was advised by



Figure 12.4 Cornelis Dusart, *The Harlequin*, a mezzotint, Fitzwilliam Museum, P.33-1954.

© The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

Robert-Dumesnil, was briefly French prime minister in 1840 and president from 1871 to 1873, following the war of 1870. He had a massive collection, and the Fondation Dosne-Thiers in Paris today has some 1,000 drawings and 30,000 prints. By 1868, Morrison had nearly 60 prints which came from this source. As well as further portrait prints by Nanteuil, Jean Morin (1605/10–50) and Gérard Edelinck (1640–1707), he obtained some subject prints, including one by Ostade and three by Rembrandt.

In contrast, Morrison acquired only three prints from the Wellesley collection, part of which was sold in February 1865. A further 28 portraits by Nanteuil were acquired at the auction which Christie's held of the stock of Alcide Donnadieu in June 1866. Alcide Donnadieu (c. 1791–1861), son of one of Napoleon's generals, was active as a dealer in London from about 1829.¹⁸ A number of prints came from auctions on the Continent, including fourteen from the collection of Chevalier J. Camberlyn (1783–1861), of Brussels, sold in Paris in 1865 and 1867, and 11, mostly early Netherlandish, from the collection of Count d'Harrach (1756–1829).

It is unlikely that Holloway & Son attended the latter sale as it coincided with that in London of the collection of W. H. Carpenter held by Sotheby's on 25 and 26 February 1867. Carpenter, during his

years as a bookseller, had a passion for Van Dyck. He had written *Pictorial Notices, consisting of a memoir of Sir Anthony Van Dyck, with a descriptive catalogue of the etchings executed by him*, a work which he undertook partly because Van Dyck's etchings had not been catalogued by Adam von Bartsch in his 21-volume *Le Peintre-Graveur*. This was published in 1844, the year in which Carpenter joined the British Museum. Surprisingly, in view of the very low prices at the Carpenter sale, Van Dyck etchings were the only prints which Morrison acquired on that occasion. By 1868, Morrison possessed over 20 prints by or after Van Dyck which had belonged to Carpenter. Marseille Holloway had also acquired a portfolio of Van Dyck's a year before Carpenter's sale. On 23 January 1866, he wrote to Morrison announcing 'the Van Dycks have arrived safely'. He and Morrison then split the contents:

I propose charging you for the entire volume £450 – and crediting your account with £150 – for returns this appears to me the simplest way of overcoming some difficulties which might otherwise arise – and, if agreeable to you, will leave you in possession of a most valuable portfolio and leave me a good profit to be obtained from the sale of stock I like holding.¹⁹

Morrison obtained 28 prints, mostly early Italian ones, at the sale of the Rev. Edward Henry Emilius William Goddard (1792–1878), held by Christie's, 4–7 March 1867.²⁰ Low prices also prevailed at the Edward Tunno sale in 1867. Edward Rose Tunno (1792–1863), landowner and proprietor of a coalmine in Wales, who had been MP for Bossiney 1826–32, died at his Hampshire seat, Warnford Park, leaving assets under £60,000.²¹ Holloway & Son bought a number of prints in the sale. Morrison had some 60 prints from the collection by the time his catalogue was printed in 1868. These included six by William Faithorne and eight by Hollar, of whose prints Morrison had nearly 400 by 1868. Some of the prints from the Tunno collection which Morrison bought had interesting provenances: there were, for example, two by Francis Delaram which had belonged to Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, Marchioness of Bath (1735–1825), the best-known female print collector of her day and daughter of a more famous collector, Margaret Harley (1715–85), the Duchess of Portland. The Duchess had bought the famous Barberini, renamed Portland, Vase, a very fine piece of Roman glassmaking, from Sir William Hamilton.²² The prints acquired by Morrison, *Arthur Severus O'Toole* (lot 210) and the *Countess of Hertford* (lot 238), were bought for him by Samuel Woodburn for £4 4s 0d and £3 5s 0d.

The year 1868 brought two further sales which expanded the Morrison collection. The first was Sotheby's sale on the four days, beginning on 31 March, of the collection of the sculptor Baron Marochetti.²³ Charles Marochetti (1805–67), born in Turin, and made a baron by the King of Savoy, worked principally in Paris, but after the 1848 Revolution he moved to London, where he was patronised by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. He had collected many early prints, and among the 29 prints which Morrison acquired were four by Lucas van Leyden, one of which had belonged to William Esdaile, seven by Israel van Mecken and two by Schongauer.²⁴ A month later, the collection of Madame Puibusque was sold by Sotheby's, adding a further 17 prints to Morrison's collection, including a number of early English prints of royalty, of which four were by Faithorne. Madame Puibusque, the wife of Adolphe de Puibusque (1801–63), a French man of letters, was English, born Elizabeth Taylor; she made a collection of portraits of English royalty, of which a catalogue was published in Paris in 1866, prefaced by an essay on the arts in England by her husband.²⁵

By the end of 1868, Morrison had printed 100 copies of the catalogue of his collection. This was compiled by 'M. Holloway', probably the younger Marseille, rather than his father, who would have described himself as 'M. M. Holloway.' It listed, alphabetically by engraver, nearly 3,000 prints, giving the provenance of many of them. Holloway papers at Fonthill note the cost, £300, for 'compiling and printing Catalogue of Engravings (25 sheets) on best imperial hand made paper, green and covered'. Holloway & Son also provided a number of gilt frames to contain portraits, 'Wellington pattern and best flatted glass with cut out mounts of five oval openings'.²⁶ Some can be seen on the walls of the saloon at Fonthill House (see [Figures 2.2, 3.23 and 3.24](#)).

The catalogue was in some ways a curious thing to publish at this point, since it did not signal the end of Morrison's collecting. He maintained his rather austere taste, ignoring the decorative and topographical prints which were becoming more popular. He bought very few contemporary prints, though he had a soft spot for the etcher Edwin Edwards (1823–79), whose early set of 50 plates was included in the 1868 catalogue (750), and who dedicated his set of *Old Inns*, published in 1873, to Morrison. Holloway provided an 'oak frame gilt to show the grain and best Patent Plate Glass' for Edwards's *London from Greenwich*.²⁷

The Guildhall Library exhibition

In 1872, as part of the celebrations marking the opening of the new Guildhall Library in the City of London, there were two displays of prints, of which catalogues were published in the accompanying publication.²⁸ One was 'A Selection from the Collections of Engravings belonging to, and exhibited by, Alfred Morrison', which contained a good number of prints which had not been in the 1868 catalogue. Several came from the sale of the prints of John Dillon, held by Sotheby's, 16–19 June 1869, including Hollar's 'Royal Exchange', one of the few topographical prints owned by Morrison at this time. It cost £14.²⁹ Dillon (c. 1792–1868), print and autograph collector, of Netley Lodge, 31 Phillimore Gardens, had been a partner of Morrison's father in Morrison, Dillon & Co., silk mercers, Fore Street. Morrison also acquired books, catalogues and many autograph manuscripts (Henry VIII, Charles I and Charles II, William Beckford, Voltaire) at the Dillon sale.³⁰

Other prints came from the sale of the collection of Johann Melchior Birkenstock (1738–1809), sold by his daughter Antonia Brentano in Frankfurt. This contained a number of ornament prints, none of which were shown at the Guildhall.³¹ Finally a few prints, including two by Faithorne, were from the collection of John Young. Holloway & Son's accounts list autograph manuscripts from Young (3 May 1869) including Michael Angelo, Rembrandt and Rubens, and portraits (5 May 1869) including British kings and queens, important writers (Voltaire, Dr Johnson) and architects (Christopher Wren). The purchases were made in advance of the sale of Young's main collection in 1875.

Even though the other exhibition at the opening of the Guildhall Library was specifically of portrait prints lent by James Anderson Rose, no fewer than 998 in number, most of the prints Morrison lent were also portraits. One of the few exceptions, and a print which was not in the 1868 catalogue, was 'A Caricature on Judaism', then attributed to Francesco Squarcione (no. 324), described as one of 'only four known to exist. The present came from the Library of S. Giustina, Padua.' The provenance of most of the newly acquired prints was not given, which is particularly disappointing in the case of one of the first plates engraved in mezzotint, Prince Rupert's plate of *The Executioner* (206), undoubtedly one of the greatest and rarest of all mezzotints.

Morrison went on to buy prints which were in the Frankfurt auction in November 1875 of Friedrich Kalle (1802–75).³² He already had many mezzotint portraits by 1868, and acquired more, but had little interest in subject ones. With the growing appreciation of mezzotints, reflected

by the publication between 1878 and 1884 of John Chaloner Smith's *British Mezzotinto Portraits*, more came onto the market as prices rose. Because the ones Morrison owned at first had not come from famous collections, their provenances were not given in the 1868 catalogue. No doubt he continued to be helped by Holloway & Son, and was probably one of their most valued clients. He must, for a start, have been easier to deal with than some others: in contrast, another of the Holloway customers, George Salting, was in the habit of making dealers accept in part exchange prints which no longer met his high standard, items which he called his 'marbles'.³³

Holloway & Son ceased to sell prints to the British Museum in 1872; father and son had left 25 Bedford Street by 1875, when the shop was taken over by Goupil & Son.³⁴ The younger Holloway died in 1878, by which time his father was living in Streatham, describing himself in the 1881 census as 'Retired Publisher'.³⁵ How long he had continued to advise Morrison is unclear. Lugt thought that Morrison stopped collecting prints in 1878, concentrating on adding to the collection of autographs and historical documents that he had started in 1865 (see [Chapter 13](#)).

Dispersal

Morrison had so many interests that it is unlikely that he built up any relationship with museum curators, and he does not appear to have made gifts of prints, certainly not to the British Museum. After his death in 1897, the collection was gradually dispersed. The first consignment of prints was sold by Sotheby's on 15 December 1897. Christie's sold groups of his prints in sales on 28 January and 17 June 1899, 10 June 1902 and 24 March 1906. A charming niello print of lovers by 'The Master of the Housebook' was acquired by the British Museum after the 1906 sale. It is listed in Holloway's accounts for 21 March 1868 as costing £10.³⁶

Morrison's widow returned to Sotheby's, who held a more important sale between 11 and 14 July 1906. This contained 658 lots of his prints, described by Lugt as on the whole of exceptional quality. They were principally old master prints, but also included later French portraits. The sale realised £5,904, with the most expensive lot being the nine plates of the *Passion* by Lucas van Leyden. The British Museum bought a few prints through Obach & Co., including, for example, ornament prints, mostly by the Nuremberg engraver Matthias Zündt (c. 1498–1572) (BM 1907,0515.1–24). It was not until November 1927 that further sections

of the collection were sold. In that month part of an auction held by C. G. Boerner in Leipzig was of portrait prints from the collection of 'Sir Alfred Morrison', 'sold by order of Lady Morrison'. On 27 November 1927, there was a Sotheby's sale specifically of Morrison's 'early British and foreign engraved portraits'. For reasons which are not clear, Mrs Morrison held back some 450 portrait prints; she presented 55 to the British Museum (BM 1927,1008.1–55), and Samuel Courtauld bought from her nearly 400 which he gave to the British Museum on condition that his name was withheld. These included a group of very fine portraits by Nanteuil, such as one of his few female portraits (Figure 12.5).

As time went by, further prints from the collection found their way to the British Museum, but it was the Fitzwilliam rather than the British Museum which subsequently acquired the greater number of prints. John Charrington gave a large number of Morrison's English and continental portraits as well as English mezzotints, some bought by him in person, for example Renold Elstrack's plate of Frederick V, and Elizabeth ('The Winter Queen'), 1613, from Madame Puibusque's collection (P 2207-R), and others obtained through P. & D. Colnaghi. Several had been in other collections after they left Mrs Morrison's custody. A fine plate of Queen Mary II by G. Valck, for example, had been in the outstanding



Figure 12.5 Robert Nanteuil, *Marie de Bragelogne*, an engraving after his own drawing, BM 1927,1008.100.

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collection of mezzotints formed by Fritz Reiss (1841–1926). Reiss was born in Frankfurt, a partner in Reiss Bros, a leading Manchester textile business.³⁷ Charrington's generosity was followed by that of Dr Louis Clarke, who helped the museum to add more, with the result that the museum has some 115 prints, mostly mezzotints, from Morrison's collection.

Conclusion

Morrison had certainly taken full advantage of the opportunities for print collectors between 1860 and 1875. His was a remarkable collection, distinguished by the fine quality of the impressions, even if he had not sought to secure the finest impressions of the rarest and most famous prints. Despite the bias of the collection towards engraved portraits, it nevertheless contained many interesting and rare early prints, and the fact that many have ended up in leading museums is a tribute to the joint efforts of the collector and the firm of Holloway & Son.³⁸

Notes

- 1 The subheading on p. 1 of the catalogue is 'Collection of Engravings at Fonthill House', which establishes where the prints were kept in 1868. The catalogue lists the previous owners of many of the prints. Details of purchases in sales are contained in annotated auction catalogues. I am grateful to Hugo Chapman, Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, for giving me access to these. Much information about other collectors and their sales is given in Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, Supplement 19 (revised online version: marquesdecollections.fr); references here to Lugt are to the entries on collectors and dealers in the 1921 volume. Much valuable background information is contained in Griffiths, *Landmarks in Print Collecting*. I am grateful to the late Nicholas Stogdon, whose *Descriptive Catalogue* has useful biographical entries on collectors who concentrated on Rembrandt. I am also most grateful to Caroline Dakers for providing appropriate references to documents in the Fonthill Archives.
- 2 Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 151, illustrated on 27. When he started to use the mark, which has a conjoined AM, has not been discovered. By 1881, Mrs Caddy reports that prints are also kept at 16 Carlton House Terrace; see [Chapter 3](#).
- 3 This etching passed out of Alfred Morrison's collection to the collection of A. Danlos of Paris, then from the successors of Danlos on 4 April 1928 to the collection of Frits Lugt.
- 4 See Peltz, *Facing the Text*, and other publications by Dr Peltz on the topic.
- 5 Holloway papers, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
- 6 The collection of Joseph Maberly (1783–1860) (Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 1845) was sold by Sotheby's in May 1851. Maberly's book, edited by the great American bibliophile Robert Hoe (1839–1909) (for whom see Irene D. Neu in *American National Biography*), was reissued in New York in 1880 and 1885.
- 7 Rembrandt's *John Lutma*, Holloway accounts for 21 May 1868 from the Palmer sale. Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
- 8 See Holloway papers, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
- 9 Alexander-Pierre-François Robert-Dumesnil (1778–1864) (Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 2199–200) began to dispose of his collection in 1826; the first four sales were in Paris, but the

- following three sales, in 1836, 1837 and 1838, were conducted in London by Phillips; there were 15 later sales in Paris, the last being in 1864. By 1868 Morrison had 13 prints which had originally been his, three which had come via Marshall's sale and two via Carpenter's.
- 10 Parthey, *Wenzel Hollar*.
 - 11 Charles Le Blanc (1817–65), of the Bibliothèque Royale (later Imperial, and finally nationale) was also the author of pioneering catalogues of the work of the line engravers J-G. Wille (1717–1807), and Sir Robert Strange (1721–92), published in Leipzig in 1847 and 1848.
 - 12 Turner, 'Samuel Woodburn', 131–44.
 - 13 Richard Fisher (1809–90) (Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 2004–5), a collector engaged by the British Museum to compile a catalogue of the early Italian prints, which proved unsatisfactory (see Griffiths, *Landmarks in Print Collecting*). Slade (1790–1868), who endowed the lectures which bear his name, left 7,806 prints to the British Museum. See the essay on him by Antony Griffiths in Griffiths, *Landmarks in Print Collecting*, 113–33.
 - 14 For Carpenter, see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Richard J. Smith).
 - 15 See BM Heal, 88.35.
 - 16 Family papers of Marseille Middleton Holloway at University of St Andrews. See <https://collections.st-andrews.ac.uk/group/marseille-holloway-genealogical-information/2078194> (accessed 22 March 2025).
 - 17 M. Holloway to Alfred Morrison, August 16 1866, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
 - 18 Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 97–8.
 - 19 M. Holloway to Alfred Morrison, 23 January 1866, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
 - 20 Most of the 29 prints which the British Museum acquired from the sale, via Colnaghi, were early Italian prints (BM 1867,0413.538–566).
 - 21 Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 902.
 - 22 The duchess's extra-illustrated Granger, with some 3,300 prints, was sold by Christie's, 15–18 March 1826.
 - 23 Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 392.
 - 24 *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, which had been in the Monro collection, made £72 in the Morrison sale held by Sotheby's in July 1906.
 - 25 The collection was sold by Sotheby's, 27–30 April 1868.
 - 26 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
 - 27 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
 - 28 Overall, *A Catalogue of the Engraved Portraits*, unpaginated.
 - 29 Sotheby's, *Catalogue of the Interesting and Invaluable Collection of Autograph Letters*.
 - 30 Holloway papers, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129.
 - 31 Many years after Morrison's death, the British Museum acquired most of a set of Dutch copies of *Portraiture de diverses vases inventé par Jean le Pautre* (see BM 1951,1222.16).
 - 32 Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 1021.
 - 33 George Salting (1835–1909) (Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 2260–1) was to be one of the British Museum's greatest benefactors. For a revealing account of one of his dealings with Holloway, see Coppel, 'George Salting', 194. Among the prints he bequeathed to the BM were two landscapes with cottages by Rembrandt (BM 1910,0212.369 and .399) which had belonged to Morrison.
 - 34 The Paris 'Fine Art Publishers' Goupil & Cie (Lugt, 1090) had taken over 25 Bedford Street by 2 August 1875 (BM 2010,7081.6685).
 - 35 Holloway had continued to publish prints, generally engraved portraits, from time to time, which were often 'private plates'; in 1870, he had published a set of etchings by Alphonse Legros (see BM 2010,7015.333). He died on 6 November 1897, leaving personal effects of just over £19,000.
 - 36 Holloway papers, Fonthill Archives, F/2/1129. *Lovers*, niello print by 'The Master of the Housebook', 1480–1500 (BM 1908,0616.60).
 - 37 Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections*, 2177–8; his prints were sold by Christie's, 18 December 1923.
 - 38 There are, for example, 15 Old Master prints which belonged to Morrison in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and there is a group of his Rembrandts, acquired by J. P. Morgan from George W. Vanderbilt in 1905, which are now in the Morgan Library, New York. Images of all of these prints can be found on the internet.

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Alfred Morrison's autograph manuscripts

Philip S. Palmer and Daria Rose Foner

Introduction

Among the many cultural objects that Alfred Morrison collected, he pursued none quite so avidly as the autograph manuscript. He accumulated vast holdings of handwritten material from 1865 until his death in 1897. Recognising the intellectual and historical value of these manuscripts, he made the collection accessible to scholars and published its contents in a series of privately printed catalogues. His manuscripts were auctioned off from December 1917 to May 1919 in a series of four sales, comprising around 7,000 individual items, predominantly letters of historical interest. Upon its dispersal, the Alfred Morrison collection began its slow movement through the book trade into various private and institutional collections, where many thousands of the letters he acquired can be traced today.

This study is the first attempt to account for the development, cataloguing, sale and dispersal of Morrison's collection, one of the most significant groups of manuscripts ever formed. Archives at Fonthill Estate help tell this story, as do the multitude of lists and catalogues employed to organise and document the collection. The chapter culminates with a case study of a particularly rich group of Morrison manuscripts, drawings, and prints now held at the Morgan Library & Museum in New York City.

Handwriting, celebrity and personality

The underlying impetus for Morrison's collecting of autograph manuscripts should be considered within the entangled histories of handwriting,

celebrity and personality. In Eileen Douglas's study of 'script ... as a potent and dynamic technology' in the age of print, she notes the craze over handwriting and autographs in the early nineteenth century, attributing this cultural obsession to 'the contemporary belief that while the content of a piece of writing might be considered a conscious choice, the manner of the writing was not under conscious control'. According to Douglas, books such as the manuscript and print dealer John Thane's *British Autography* (1788), which elucidates the lives of eminent political and historical figures by illustrating their engraved portraits and signatures, 'gave graphic expression to the perception that the distinctiveness of a person's handwriting was comparable to the distinctiveness of his face'.¹ Collectors of autograph manuscripts were animated by this very idea – that the inked trace of a pen captured something of an individual's aura and character. The market for this material exploded in the 1820s, when the first auction catalogue devoted entirely to autograph manuscripts appeared, advertising the sale of John Thane's collection.²

The collecting of autograph manuscripts has changed considerably since Morrison's time, and though a general belief in the idea that handwriting reflects personality holds true, a far greater emphasis over the past 75 years has been placed on acquiring coherent, organically formed groups of manuscripts – the papers of a writer or artist, for instance, or the records of an organisation. Writing from this vantage point in the 1960s, King's College Cambridge librarian Alan Noel Latimer Munby considers the legacy of 'the greatest of all English collectors of autographs, Alfred Morrison':

No one will ever collect letters again on that scale ... we can now safely say that no collector will attempt to form again one of those vast universal assemblages of celebrities' letters from A'Becket to Zwingli. Instead of single album-pieces the emphasis has shifted to blocks of manuscript research material, and public opinion has become rightly critical of the raiding of an archive for a few choice plums. We are, I am glad to say, more conscious than our predecessors that the papers of a statesman or a man of letters are an organism from which individual parts cannot be lopped without grave damage to what remains.³

The Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) expressed a similar sentiment in 1884, when it dedicated nearly 90 pages of an appendix of the Ninth Report to a partial catalogue of Alfred Morrison's collection.

The HMC's account begins with a caveat about the lack of historical integrity pertaining to such a disparately built collection:

A collection of writings, that owes its existence to the taste and discretion of a single connoisseur, is necessarily wanting in the characteristics of accumulations of manuscripts, that owe their existence to the process of slow and natural accretion, by which the muniments of a corporation or a family grow year by year through successive ages from a handful of legal instruments to a large body of multifarious evidences.⁴

Rather than being the slowly accumulated written product of social networks and kinship bonds, the HMC account opines, Morrison's collection took shape 'from the literary flotsam and jetsam of shipwrecked families, and the miscellaneous materials offered to him from time to time by auctioneers and other traffickers in the curiosities of literature'.⁵

This is not to say, however, that Morrison's collection lacked historical significance, as evinced by the HMC dedicating so many pages to its description. Morrison owned three undoubtedly important sets of historical papers, all given their own volumes in the monumental catalogue of his collection: the Hamilton and Nelson papers (letters and documents pertaining to Sir William Hamilton; Emma, Lady Hamilton; and Horatio Nelson, 1st Viscount Nelson), the Blessington Papers (letters sent to Marguerite Gardiner, Countess of Blessington) and the Bulstrode Papers (newsletter dispatches sent to Sir Richard Bulstrode, soldier and diplomat, in the age of Samuel Pepys). The very act of bringing together disparately formed bodies of correspondence also held historical value. As with so many large holdings of rare books and manuscripts, Morrison's could be described as a 'collection of collections'. The HMC notes that

... the Dillon MSS, the Donnadien collection, the Rupert and Fairfax Correspondence, the Nelson Correspondence, the collections of Mr. Robert Cole, F.S.A., Sir William Tite, Baron Heath, Mr. Joseph Ridgway, Mr. George Manners, and the 'Leeds Papers' are some of the upwards of sixty different collections, from which Mr. Morrison has ... drawn to his hands the larger part of his exemplary epistles.⁶

Despite any misgivings about the collection's genesis through 'the taste and discretion of a single connoisseur', the HMC admits that it 'may be described in the language of moderation as the most remarkable

gathering of historic autographs ever formed by a single private collector in Great Britain'.⁷

Building the collection

Compared with the papers left behind by his father, James Morrison, the archival traces of Alfred's collecting are less complete. Printed catalogues of his autograph collection were made, but his personal papers regarding the collection do not.⁸ Surviving letters, invoices and inventories from two dealers of autograph manuscripts in particular, however, provide some insight into the means through which Morrison's collection coalesced. The British art dealers Marseille Middleton Holloway (1809–97) and his son Marseille primarily sold Morrison paintings, drawings and prints, but several documents list dozens of autograph letters and manuscripts purchased from Holloway & Son in 1869, quite early in the period during which Morrison collected manuscripts. Some of these originated 'from catalogue', but most are labelled as explicitly originating from specific collections sold at auction, where it seems likely that Holloway acted as Morrison's agent.⁹ The first such sale is the Sotheby's auction of John Young's autograph collection (26 April 1869), some of the higher-value items of which included manuscripts by Michelangelo Buonarroti; Charles Edward Stuart (the 'Young Pretender'); John Dryden; James Scott, 1st Duke of Monmouth; Rembrandt van Rijn; Peter Paul Rubens; Joseph Addison; and Richard Baxter.¹⁰

In 1869, Sotheby's also sold the important autograph collection of John Dillon (1792–1868), a partner of Alfred's father James in the Fore Street warehouse and a sometime writer and librarian.¹¹ The catalogue's title page singles out manuscripts by Robert Burns, Lord Byron and Oliver Cromwell; 'Queen Elizabeth's Correspondence with Dr. Dale on the Anjou Marriage'; 'Evelyn's Life of Mrs. Godolphin, in the Original Manuscript'; and the working manuscript of Samuel Johnson's 'Life of Pope'.¹² Morrison purchased about two dozen printed books from the Dillon Library as well as 85 lots of autograph manuscripts. The most valuable acquisitions included two of the headlining collections on the catalogue's title page: the correspondence between Elizabeth I and Valentine Dale (by 1527–89), the queen's resident ambassador in France (realising £70); and the manuscript of John Evelyn's *The Life of Mrs. Godolphin* (realising £50).¹³ Other notable Morrison purchases at the Dillon sale included manuscripts by Sir Thomas Browne, Robert Burns, Charles I, Kitty Clive, Nell Gwyn, Henrietta Maria, Samuel Johnson,

Marguerite de Valois and Samuel Pepys, as well as a rare letter by one of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators, Robert Catesby, which by realising £30 was one of the more valuable acquisitions.¹⁴

Another key piece of evidence for tracing the sources of Morrison's collection is the privately printed catalogue he had produced beginning in 1883 and spent the rest of his life trying to complete. Though the catalogue will be treated more thoroughly in the next section of this chapter, it is important to note here that it identifies most of the principal collections out of which Morrison built his own. The catalogue's provenance notes are limited to the first three volumes but list over 50 individual sources for Morrison's autographs. These are primarily private collections, as in the 'Veydt Collection', 'Sensier Collection' and 'Fillon Collection', but also include sets of papers ('Leeds Papers', 'Rupert Papers' and 'Bank of St. George Papers') and other formulations such as the 'Fairfax Correspondence'. Many of these collections appear seldomly in the catalogue, but some appear quite frequently, with the Young, Dillon, Ridgway, Veydt, Sensier, Fillon, d'Estourmel, Anderdon, Chambry and Heath collections (as well as the 'Leeds Papers') being the most commonly cited.

Closer to the end of his life, Morrison worked with the French book and autograph dealer Étienne Charavay (1848–99). A trained 'archiviste-paléographe' and historian who wrote books on Lafayette and Baudelaire, Charavay came from bookselling roots, taking over in 1867 the family business started by his father, Jacques, and working alongside his uncle (Gabriel) and brother (Claudius).¹⁵ One of the source collections cited frequently in Morrison's catalogue is the '[Benjamin] Fillon Collection', the sale of which Charavay managed in 1877.¹⁶ Invoices and letters dated to 1890 detail how Charavay mainly sold Morrison autographs of French historical material, including documents related to Louis XVI and XVIII; Louis, Grand Condé; Leopold I; and documents related to the marriage between Armand Charles de La Porte de La Meilleraye (Duc du Mazarin) and Hortense Mancini.¹⁷ Charavay also managed sales at auction, about two of which he informed Morrison in letters preserved at Fonthill. On 10 June 1890, Charavay drew Morrison's attention to an upcoming 'vente révolutionnaire' containing two lots of Louis XVI manuscripts, 'qui sont d'un grand intérêt et bien dignes de votre collection'.¹⁸ That letter and another dated 16 June indicate that Charavay had been conducting research, specifically regarding portrait medallions in Morrison's collection, at the Bibliothèque nationale. Undoubtedly the most significant documented collection Morrison acquired from Charavay is a group of letters written

by Gabrielle Émilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil, marquise Du Châtelet (1706–49), the French natural philosopher, translator of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* and romantic and intellectual partner of Voltaire. A handwritten invoice accompanying the 1890 Charavay documents at Fonthill lists 'Du Chastellet [*sic*] (la marquise) et Saint-Lambert – 1 volume in fol. contenant 105 pièces ... £200.'¹⁹ The collection is notable for comprising the love letters exchanged between Du Châtelet and her lover Jean-François de Saint-Lambert (1716–1803).²⁰

Cataloguing the collection

Another French dealer, Alphonse Louis Ernest Wyatt Thibaudeau (1840–93), played an even greater role in the formation and subsequent immortalisation of Alfred Morrison's autograph collection. A dealer in drawings, prints, paintings and autograph manuscripts, Thibaudeau served as Morrison's principal agent and wrote a portion of the privately printed multivolume catalogue of his collection.²¹ As noted in the best (though brief) account of Thibaudeau's life, by Robert J. D. Harding, the dealer was Parisian by birth, son of the art collector Adolphe-Narcisse, Comte Thibaudeau (1795–1856) and before the age of 20 had already published articles on Giorgio Vasari and the marks and monograms of celebrated historical figures.²² Thibaudeau's career as an art dealer had taken off by the mid-1870s, and though he seemed to focus principally on the prints of James McNeill Whistler and Alphonse Legros (for whom he co-wrote a catalogue raisonné in 1877), the Frenchman also sold drawings and offered framing, mounting and bookbinding services.²³ As a purchasing agent, Thibaudeau counted among his clients the British Museum and Baron Edmond de Rothschild.²⁴ The visual imagery of Thibaudeau's business card and an advertisement for his business, both listing the address 18 Green Street, St Martin's Place, indicate his primary focus on drawings and prints.²⁵

Although his business succumbed to mounting debts by the end of the decade, Thibaudeau enjoyed a successful career as a dealer and collector in the 1880s, when he helped Alfred Morrison compile a catalogue of his autograph manuscripts collection.²⁶ The first volume of the *Catalogue of the Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents formed between 1865 and 1882 by Alfred Morrison* appeared in 1883, 'compiled and annotated under the direction of A.W. Thibaudeau'. Thibaudeau's work on the catalogue was similarly credited in the following two volumes, published privately in 1885 and 1888,

respectively, but his name would not appear on the title pages of any of the subsequent volumes, with the final appearing in 1892. The disappearance of his name from the title page seems to align chronologically with the collapse of his art dealing business in 1889.

Morrison's catalogue appeared in six large folio volumes and was issued in only 200 copies. The title page is decorated with Morrison's monogram and features an epigraph, 'Letters – the living thoughts of a race departed', quoted from the British writer William Howitt.²⁷ The six-volume catalogue covers manuscripts acquired between 1865 and 1882 and is organised alphabetically by author. To account for manuscript acquisitions made after 1882, a 'second series' of the catalogue began publication in 1893 but remained incomplete at the time of Morrison's death: manuscripts 'A–D' were described in three volumes, with the remaining four volumes dedicated to the Hamilton and Nelson (in two volumes), Blessington and Bulstrode Papers.

Spanning the first series and incomplete second series, the 13-volume catalogue of Morrison's autograph collection is exceptionally detailed, with most of the entries containing contents summaries, extensive and usually full transcriptions and often both. Each manuscript is described separately with a date, correspondent name, biographical remarks, place of writing, physical extent, format and additional notes about cyphers, seals, superscriptions and the like. As discussed in the previous section, many of the entries in the first series catalogue indicate provenance as well, and these notes are crucial for tracing the sources of Morrison's collection.²⁸ Learned and frequently prolix footnotes identify figures and contextualise historical events mentioned in the manuscripts, which represent nearly every subject of interest to a collector of autographs. French and British history are best represented, but Morrison was catholic in his tastes and also acquired letters and documents pertaining to literature, art, politics, travel and exploration, religion, Italian culture and the history of science. American and Spanish material appears in the catalogue as well, but in smaller quantities.

The deluxe first series catalogue, larger in size than the second series volumes, reproduces many of Morrison's manuscripts in facsimile, either as cropped inset reproductions within the text block or as separate illustrated figures, many of them printed on folding plates. Some of these facsimiles are complete reproductions of the source material, showing every page, and even address panels, of selected letters.²⁹ As opposed to the unillustrated second series catalogues, these books visually capture the range of time periods, subjects, personalities and handwriting styles reflected in Morrison's collection. Together with the

catalogue's limited-edition printing, the facsimiles and folding plates in the first series volumes perhaps foster a sense of privileged access to Morrison's private collection, reserved, of course, for readers wealthy enough to afford the expensive multivolume set.³⁰

And yet Alfred Morrison also seemed committed to accessibility. That he recognised the scholarly value of his collection is evident not only in the detail of his catalogue but also in his willingness to grant physical access to his manuscripts. A newspaper account of the collection after Morrison's death describes how 'writers upon almost every question of a biographical character sought his kindly permission – never refused – to study the letters in his possession'.³¹ The article goes on to celebrate Morrison's printed catalogue, which was published 'in order to make his possessions as widely known as possible' and, combined with a liberal access policy to his library, furthered scholarly research:

Among recent books which are cited as owing much to Mr. Morrison are Lord Wolseley's 'Life of the Duke of Marlborough', Capt. Mahan's 'Life of Nelson', and the editors of lives of Byron, Burns, Coleridge, Shelley, Scott, and many others; while Prof. Laughton had the entrée to his library for recent books of his.³²

A letter sent by the literary scholar George Atherton Aitken to Alfred Morrison in 1890 refers to the collector's previous generosity making letters of writer and *Spectator* co-founder Richard Steele available for research.³³ Hoping to consult material for his next book, Aitken asks Morrison if he has any letters that might illuminate this new project, 'a life of Dr. [John] Arbuthnot', as 'letters to or from him appear to be scarce'. The sole Arbuthnot letter listed in Morrison's catalogue, included in the first volume of the second series (1893), cites Aitken's recently published biography.³⁴

Another letter from 1890 documents other ways in which prospective researchers might approach Morrison and his collection. In July of that year, an Ellen Salmon wrote to the London art dealer Edmond Deprez on behalf of her friend, the author and translator Florence Louisa Layard. Salmon writes that Layard 'is trying to do something in literature' and 'has just brought out a translation of Madame du Noyer's letters'.³⁵ She proceeds to ask Deprez if Layard might be given access to Alfred Morrison's collection: 'I am sure she would prize very highly any facilities Mr. Morrison would give her in the way of copying some letters'.³⁶ It is interesting that Salmon wrote to Edmond Deprez, who had collaborated with Thibaudeau, loaned him money and, in 1889, as one of his

chief creditors, taken over his business. The letter not only hints at the changing fortunes of the dealers and agents moving within Morrison's orbit, but also registers the various social mechanisms through which prospective researchers could gain access to his autograph manuscripts collection.

Selling the collection

Even though Morrison died in 1897, the bulk of his autograph collection was not sold until 1917. 'Collectors have been disappointed to learn', according to the *New York Times* journalist who wrote about the Morrison collection in early 1898, 'that Mr. Morrison's death will not lead to a sale of any portion of his collection'.³⁷ Caroline Dakers has noted that because 'the Morrisons had no need to sell land to pay death duties ... the estate remained intact'. Although Alfred's widow Mabel would authorise sales of her husband's vast collection starting in 1898, the autographs collection remained undispersed for 20 years.³⁸

A year before the first sale, Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge issued a hand-list of the Morrison Collection. More than a mere preview of the auction, this 68-page pamphlet functions as a kind of final catalogue of the collection, and though its focus is limited to 'some of the more important' material, it includes manuscripts that remained undescribed in the first and second series of Morrison's printed catalogue. The Preface of the *Hand-List*, dated December 1916, offers a detailed account of the collection's contents:

it consists of three different series of letters and manuscripts, arranged roughly in alphabetical order, a few parcels of unclassified material, and 68 special collections ... The whole is contained in 204 portfolios, about 100 bound volumes, and about 16 parcels. Of these, 93 portfolios, comprising the whole of the first series of the general collection, and the second series down to the end of the letter D, with two of the special collections (the Blessington and Hamilton-Nelson papers...), and a portion of a third (the Bulstrode papers...), were catalogued for Mr. Morrison, the remainder of the collection is uncatalogued.³⁹

Though 'brief and imperfect', this publication 'covers both the catalogued and uncatalogued portions, and is therefore the only record of the collection as a whole'. Such brevity and imperfection can be attributed

to the abridged and cursory nature of the catalogue, as 'hardly any attempt has been made to bring out the importance of the individual manuscripts'. 'Nothing ... save a complete catalogue on the scale of that commenced for the late owner', the preface concludes, 'could fully reveal the riches of this incomparable collection.'⁴⁰

The series numbers mentioned in the hand-list match the series numbers of the printed catalogues. Surnames E–Z in the second series, combined with the third series, comprise the uncatalogued material, which includes treasures such as John Keats letters to Fanny Brawne, Charles Lamb letters to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a draft of Napoleon's 'famous address to his soldiers before his first Italian campaign', 41 letters from Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra, poetry manuscripts of Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley and a letter signed by George Washington written out by Benjamin Franklin. The group of 'Unclassified Letters' contains correspondence sent from John Evelyn to Samuel Pepys and 30 letters by the Duke of Wellington, among others. Two sections of 'Special Collections' (one in portfolios, the other in volumes) include John Flaxman correspondence, a group of printed broadsides and vellum documents, the manuscript of John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* and Thomas Gray's annotated copy of *The Naturalist's Journal*.⁴¹

The first sale of Morrison's autograph manuscripts took place in mid-December 1917. The *Catalogue of the Renowned Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Manuscripts, formed by the Late Alfred Morrison, Esq. of Fonthill, and Now the Property of Mrs. Alfred Morrison* advertised a number of highlights on its title page, including the Hamilton–Nelson correspondence, 'the letter in which Oliver Cromwell describes the Battle of Marston Moor', 'Superb letters of Queen Elizabeth, Henry VIII, Charles I, Burns, Byron, Defoe, Keats, etc.', and 'the letter written by Mary Queen of Scots on the night before her execution'. The contents of the catalogue's 'addenda', detailing high spots in the collection, went under the hammer at sale's end. Of these, lots 757–60 were dedicated to Robert Burns and closed with the manuscript of his satirical poem 'The Rights of Woman', now owned by The Rosenbach in Philadelphia.⁴² The next several lots (761–9) featured Lord Byron letters. Just as with the Burns material, the best was saved for last – in this case a letter written by Byron's confidential valet William Fletcher to Augusta Leigh, recounting the poet's death in Greece.⁴³ The final pair of lots were the true highlight of the sale: the famous Nelson–Hamilton correspondence and the letter Mary Queen of Scots wrote Henri III, King of France, on the night before her execution.⁴⁴ The latter was

singled out nearly 20 years earlier as the collection's 'greatest single treasure',⁴⁵ and is described in the catalogue as 'probably the most precious autograph letter in the world' (see [Figure 2.11](#)).⁴⁶ 'Held in the archives of the Scots College in Paris until the French Revolution', the letter was regarded as a Scottish national treasure and purchased for an undisclosed sum with the support of 26 subscribers, who donated the manuscript to the Advocates' Library in 1923 as a gift to Scotland.⁴⁷ In a copy of the sale catalogue held at the Morgan Library & Museum, the margin next to a photographic reproduction of the letter bears the pencil note 'Bought by subscription for Scotland'.⁴⁸ The note is in the hand of Belle da Costa Greene (1879–1950), the dynamic first director of the Pierpont Morgan Library and daughter of Richard T. Greener, Harvard College's first Black graduate. At the time she was working for J. P. 'Jack' Morgan Jr (1867–1943), the son and heir of J. Pierpont Morgan, the New York banker who built one of the world's great collections of books, manuscripts and art. We will return to Belle da Costa Greene's annotated copy of the Morrison catalogue shortly. Other high spots in the first sale included a group of Charlotte Brontë letters, a document signed by Cervantes, an autograph letter by King Charles I written shortly after the decisive Battle of Naseby, an Oliver Cromwell letter written after the Battle of Marston Moor, a letter from James I of England to his mother Mary the Queen of Scots and a John Knox letter to John Calvin.⁴⁹

Although the remaining three sales (mid-April 1918; mid-December 1918; early May 1919) were not as spectacular as the first, the incredible manuscripts sold therein truly demonstrate the strength and depth of Morrison's collection. An article in *The Connoisseur* mentions lots that sold for over £100 in the third sale, with the highest prices realised for a Napoleon letter to his wife Josephine for £260, a letter from Catherine of Aragon regarding her divorce from Henry VIII for £270 and a group of letters written by Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra for £260.⁵⁰ The fourth sale featured a Robert Burns manuscript poem, a set of Oliver Cromwell letters to his son's father-in-law, an extra-illustrated *Life* of Sir Walter Raleigh and Jonathan Swift letters to Esther Vanhomrigh.⁵¹ The title page for the sale's second portion advertises letters from John Keats to Fanny Brawne and Charles Lamb to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, while also drawing attention to manuscripts by famous 'French rulers, statesmen, artists and authors', 'British celebrities', 'men famous in American history' and 'Great Artists'. The highest prices at the second sale went to three Mary Queen of Scots letters, a Napoleon letter to Louis XVIII, a François Rabelais letter, a notebook kept by James Boswell containing

memoranda on the life of Samuel Johnson and autograph verses by Lord Byron.⁵² Another high spot from the second sale – perhaps the manuscript associated with the title page’s ‘men famous in American history’ – was lot 1,170, an exceptionally rare Amerigo Vespucci letter written in Latin to his father on 19 October 1476.⁵³ Once again, Belle da Costa Greene annotated her copy of the sale catalogue, but this time her note indicates an acquisition for the ‘J.P.M. Library 1919’. Greene’s note advances us to the next chapter of the story, namely the dispersal of Alfred’s Morrison autograph collection into the hands of dealers and collectors.

Tracing the collection

‘J.P.M. Library 1919’ documents the circuitous route taken by Morrison’s collection through the byways of agents, intermediaries and temporary owners before ultimately settling in permanent institutional homes. For the most part, the Morgan did not purchase any material directly from the Morrison sales, but rather purchased a few choice manuscripts from trusted dealers a year or two later. The Amerigo Vespucci letter, for instance, came to the Morgan through A. S. W. Rosenbach in 1919, but had sold to Quaritch at the 1918 sale. The same is true of the Jane Austen letters, which sold to Walter Spencer at the auction but came to the Morgan in 1920 through the dealer Ernest Dressel North. A similar trajectory could likely be traced for the majority of Morrison’s manuscripts, changing hands from dealer to dealer before an institutional purchase, though a complete account of the vagaries of the collection’s movement would be a work of many years and well beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, what follows is a case study of a single research library, the Morgan Library & Museum in New York, that happens to own a significant amount of material once held in the Morrison collection. The Morgan’s Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts is the primary home for this material, which is fitting because the collection began its life in the hands of another great admirer of autograph manuscripts, J. Pierpont Morgan.

Alfred Morrison manuscripts, drawings and prints have been entering the Morgan’s collection for over a century, from the late 1910s (directly following the sales) to major acquisitions in the 1950s, 1960s and 1980s, to sporadic acquisitions into the 2000s. The Morgan transformed over this span from a private collection to an elite research library (with small exhibitions) and finally to a public museum (with major exhibitions) attached to an increasingly inclusive research library.

Many directors, curators and board members have been involved with these acquisitions, achieved through both purchase and gift.

Aside from Belle da Costa Greene and Jack Morgan's notable early acquisitions of the Vespucci and Jane Austen letters, they purchased several more Alfred Morrison manuscripts in the decade following the end of the First World War. As mentioned earlier, the 1916 handlist includes as one of its 'special collections' the manuscript of John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*. This manuscript would come to the Morgan following the fourth sale in 1919 through Quaritch.⁵⁴ It has been somewhat uncommon for the Morgan to acquire manuscripts and letters by philosophers, though in the 1920s there were several interesting acquisitions in this area – most notably an autograph manuscript of John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.⁵⁵ Along with the Mill manuscript, the Morgan acquired a David Hume letter, formerly of the Morrison collection, from J. Tregaskis in 1926, as well as a set of letters from Voltaire to Frederick the Great from J. Pearson & Co. in 1923.⁵⁶

By far the bulk of the Morgan's manuscripts with Morrison provenance came into the collection in 1950, when the American bookseller A. S. W. Rosenbach (1876–1952) sold to the Morgan the Charles Fairfax Murray Collection of European Autographs. The artist, collector and dealer Charles Fairfax Murray (1849–1919) was no stranger to the institution, having sold Pierpont Morgan a collection of nearly 1,500 Old Master drawings in 1910 and, after Pierpont's death, worked with Jack Morgan to appraise his father's collection. The Fairfax Murray autographs comprise nearly 300 letters and documents written by Italian, French and English historical figures from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In a letter offering the collection, Edwin Wolf II of the Rosenbach Company writes that 'it is probably the most important collection of its kind in private hands and one that supplements ... the similar material already in the Morgan Library ... We feel that the collection would be an important acquisition for you in a field in which you are preeminent in this country.'⁵⁷ Those manuscripts with Morrison provenance are primarily of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English historical interest, with letters by Sir Thomas Bodley, William Camden, the Gunpowder Plot conspirator Robert Catesby, Sir Robert Dudley, Lady Arabella Stuart and Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, along with royal documents signed or written by Edward IV, Richard III and Henry VII.⁵⁸ The post-Morrison fortunes of these manuscripts must be a fairly typical story: a collection made of collections (Morrison) is dispersed and formed into new collections (Fairfax Murray), which in turn are broken apart or acquired intact for yet further collections (the Morgan).

Other Morrison manuscripts have entered as single gifts or purchases over the years, including the Du Châtelet letters to Saint-Lambert acquired in 1964, 30 letters by Madame de Pompadour acquired in 1968, a Napoleon letter to his wife given with the Dannie and Hettie Heineman Collection in 1977 and a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci, to be discussed later, donated in 1986.⁵⁹ The most recent acquisition was a letter by Samuel Richardson commenting on his novel *Clarissa*, purchased in 2008.⁶⁰ Rather than provide an exhaustive list of Morrison manuscripts at the Morgan to complement the items listed here, the following will take a closer look at four items of particular importance: the Vespucci letter, the Jane Austen letters and the Leonardo da Vinci drawing, as well as a group of Rembrandt prints.

Morrison at the Morgan: Vespucci, Austen, Leonardo and Rembrandt

As described earlier, the Amerigo Vespucci letter (Figure 13.1) was not only one of the few manuscripts to be illustrated in the sales catalogues



Figure 13.1 Amerigo Vespucci (1451–1512), Autograph letter signed ‘Emmericus Vespucius Filius vester’: Trebbio di Mugello, to his father in Florence, 19 October 1476, p. 1. The Morgan Library & Museum. MA 952. Purchased by J. P. Morgan, Jr, 1919.

Photograph © Graham S. Haber

but also one of the only manuscripts to be acquired by the Morgan around the time of the sales, when its acquisition was marked by Belle da Costa Greene in her copy of the second sale catalogue.⁶¹

The letter's provenance goes back to eighteenth-century Italy, when in the 1740s it was part of the Strozzi family library.⁶² In the 1850s, the letter was sold to the French collector Félix-Sébastien Feuillet de Conches, whose collection was, in turn, sold in 1864. The letter would soon turn up at another sale, of the collector Benjamin Fillon in 1878, before appearing in Morrison's collection in 1892. The letter is one of only a few Vespucci autographs known and was reproduced in facsimile in several scholarly works and sales catalogues.⁶³ When Belle Greene acquired the letter in 1919 for Jack Morgan's library, acquisitions had only recently resumed following the end of the First World War. With some notable exceptions, moreover, Morgan and Greene did not typically acquire manuscripts pertaining to American history, at least not with the same enthusiasm as had the elder Morgan during his collecting heyday. The rarity of the Vespucci letter probably appealed to Morgan and Greene, or perhaps the way it complemented the Giovanni Verrazzano letter to Francis I (regarding a voyage to North America) purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1911.⁶⁴ Rosenbach suggests that national pride might have played a role in Jack Morgan 'obtaining one of the finest autograph letters in existence, and to an American, probably the most precious and desirable of all manuscripts'.⁶⁵

By far the most famous Morrison manuscripts with literary connections to enter the Morgan are the 41 letters written by Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra (Figure 13.2).⁶⁶ The Morgan holds 51 Austen letters, comprising a third of her surviving correspondence (the bulk of which was burned by Cassandra). All but 10 of those letters sold at the third Morrison sale to the dealer Walter Spencer for £260, before their purchase by the Morgan from the dealer Ernest Dressel North in 1920. Spanning from 1796 until 1816 (a year before Jane Austen's death), the letters are richly evocative of her world, her movements, her social networks, her reading and, above all, her keen wit. The letters were among those bequeathed by Cassandra Austen in 1845 to her niece, Fanny Austen Knight Knatchbull (1793–1882).⁶⁷ Her eldest son, Edward Hugessen Knatchbull-Hugessen, the first Baron Brabourne (1829–93), inherited the letters after his mother's death and would publish the first edition of Jane Austen's correspondence in 1884.⁶⁸ Lord Brabourne's collection was dispersed over two sales in the following decade.⁶⁹ The 1891 sale by Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge featured 10 Jane Austen



Figure 13.2 Jane Austen (1775–1817), Autograph letter signed: Godmersham, to Cassandra Austen, 20 and 22 June 1808, pp. 1 and 4. The Morgan Library & Museum, MA 977.16.

Photograph © Graham S. Haber

letters, including four that would end up in the Morrison collection.⁷⁰ The larger 1893 sale of Lord Brabourne's collection would bring over 60 Austen letters to auction, and though the catalogue's scant descriptions makes it impossible to match surviving letters to lots, most Austen scholars assume the letters Morrison purchased ultimately came from the Brabourne sales.⁷¹

As mentioned earlier, Morrison's collection of Austen letters sold in the third sale (December 1918) to the dealer Walter Spencer. By late April 1919, Spencer had sold them to the New York dealer Ernest Dressel North, who in turn offered them to Jack Morgan. 'I am venturing to call to your attention the extraordinary [*sic*] interesting series of autograph letters of Jane Austen which I have just received', North wrote; 'these letters are most intimate and personal revealing the characters and inner life and thought of this most charming novelist'.⁷² North remarks that 'it would be safe to say that no such collection of her letters will ever come into the market again', and determines that the 'very low' asking price comes out to \$75 per letter.⁷³ For unclear reasons Morgan rejected the offer, though a year later North would write and offer the letters again. In this letter he refers to Morgan's prior rejection, in which the financier made a request for the ultimate Austen desiderata, namely the original manuscript of one of her major novels; as North writes, 'my

London agents write that they have made careful inquiry and find no such manuscript exists, either in a library, museum, or among members of the family'.⁷⁴ 'Fear[ing] ... no one will ever be able to secure an original manuscript', North offered the 41 letters yet again and this time Morgan accepted, acquiring the collection for \$3,000.

Purchased for a song, these letters form 'the core of the Library's Austen collection' and would in time be complemented by additional acquisitions of Austen letters and manuscripts.⁷⁵ In 1925, Morgan added more letters, the satirical *Plan of a Novel*, a portion of the unfinished novel *The Watsons*, a manuscript poem and two autograph notes about the dates of composition of her novels and how much money she made from them.⁷⁶ Later acquisitions of the only surviving complete Jane Austen novel, *Lady Susan*, as well as significant material from the collection of Henry and Alberta Burke, round out the Morgan's Austen holdings.⁷⁷

In addition to literary and historical manuscripts, the Morgan's collection includes several important graphic works by Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt van Rijn once owned by Morrison.⁷⁸ The only sheet by Leonardo at the Morgan, *Two Designs for Machines* (Figure 13.3) combines word and image, thus reflecting Morrison's dual identities as inveterate autograph collector and avid art patron.⁷⁹

In this way, the drawing elides the nineteenth-century cult of the autograph with the eighteenth-century conviction that drawings permit direct access to the artist's style, hand and creative ingenuity. The sheet, one of approximately 400 military or industrial drawings by Leonardo that survives today, illustrates two designs for machines. Even if not practicable, they permit a view into the artist's perpetually curious mind.

In addition to these sketches, the paper contains notes by five distinct hands added from the fifteenth through to the twentieth centuries, a kind of visualisation of the sheet's multilayered history. Before Leonardo repurposed the sheet, it had been used as a ledger to record debits and credits of the Fabbrica, or administration, of Milan Cathedral.⁸⁰ Leonardo's comments, written in his unique right-to-left mirrored script, gloss the inner workings of his invented mechanisms. Subsequently, the nineteenth-century Parisian book-dealer Lefebvre added annotations elucidating the drawing's provenance. According to his note, the drawing had been owned by 'Mr [Jacques] Garnier [1755–1818] President of the court of la Rochelle' and would soon be bought by 'Monsieur Picchioni' (likely a reference to Luigi Picchioni) for 100 francs.⁸¹ Lefebvre further wrote that in May 1849, the sheet had been 'seized by order of the Judge, A. M. Hatton, based on a suspicion that it had been among the tranche

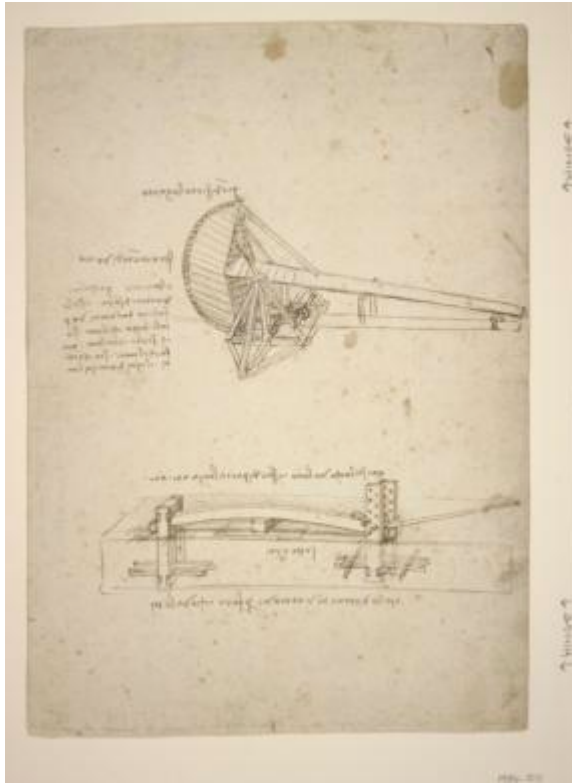


Figure 13.3 Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), ‘Two Designs for Machines: A Maritime Assault Mechanism and a Device for Bending Beams’, c. 1487–90. The Morgan Library & Museum, Gift of Otto Manley, 1986.50. Photograph © Graham S. Haber

of material stolen from the Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France by Count Guglielmo Libri (1803–69).⁸² The sheet was ultimately returned to Lefebvre and only afterward may have been owned by Libri, in whose June 1864 sale a similarly described work may be the present sheet.⁸³ An unidentified twentieth-century hand added a graphite inscription in French: ‘Writing of Leonardo da Vinci – the facsimile of this fragment was published in London.’⁸⁴ And, finally, the Swiss collector and writer Stefan Zweig (1881–1942), as if inserting himself into the object’s life for posterity, added the German word ‘gut’ on the verso.

The sheet was in Morrison’s possession by 1883, when Jean Paul Richter included it in *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*.⁸⁵ The drawing appears in the sixth (and final) volume of the first series of catalogues of Morrison’s collection of autograph letters and historical

documents compiled by Thibaudeau, who himself owned a Leonardo drawing of equine studies now in the Musée du Louvre.⁸⁶ The sheet was offered on the eighth day of the April 1917 sale of the Morrison collection.⁸⁷ The published price list states the work, lot 1174, sold to 'Peterson' for £110, likely a way of intimating that it did not sell.⁸⁸ By 1923, the work had entered the Swiss collection of Henri (or Enrico) Fatio (1863–1930), who also owned three sheets of Leonardo's *Codex on the Flight of Birds*.⁸⁹ When Otto Manley, a long-time Morgan trustee, donated the sheet to the institution in 1986, the work became only the twelfth drawing by Leonardo in the United States and Morrison's name had become synonymous with rarity and judicious taste.

In addition to Leonardo's drawing, the Morgan's collection includes 10 Rembrandt prints once owned by Morrison.⁹⁰ As Arthur Hind noted in the 1930s, the Morgan has 'by far the finest collection [of Rembrandt prints] in America ... [as] the general quality of the impressions is exceedingly high'.⁹¹ Indeed, the 10 Morrison prints, which taken together provide a comprehensive representation of Rembrandt's graphic oeuvre, all retain their plate marks, indicative of their calibre. Underscoring the breadth of Morrison's acquisitive interests, as well as his discrimination, many of the Rembrandts are especially rich impressions that retain velvety passages of drypoint.

When Marseille Holloway published his 1868 catalogue of Morrison's print collection (then comprising almost 3,000 engravings), it included 47 works by Rembrandt, with five of the ten works now at the Morgan among them, including his portrait of *Jan Six* (Figure 13.4).⁹²

Already in the eighteenth century, Rembrandt's portrait of Jan Six, his friend and patron, had attained 'almost mythical status'.⁹³ Holloway noted the work's importance in the 1868 catalogue by marking 'this most rare print' with three triangulated dots.⁹⁴ Six, a member of one of Amsterdam's leading families who became the town's burgomaster in 1691, is depicted full length and situated within a domestic interior replete with the trappings of a refined gentleman of arts and letters, not unlike Morrison himself.

Pierpont Morgan acquired Rembrandt's *Jan Six* in 1900 from Theodore Irwin (1827–1902), a financier and manufacturer of agricultural machinery from Oswego, New York. Brokered by Junius Spencer Morgan (1867–1932), Morgan's erudite nephew and an ardent bibliophile, the purchase included 272 Rembrandt prints and 3,270 volumes that laid the foundation for many areas of Morgan's collections.⁹⁵ As Sylvester Rosa Hoekhler (1837–1900), the art historian and curator credited with catalysing the revival of etching in the United



Figure 13.4 Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–69), *Jan Six, Rector*, 1647. The Morgan Library & Museum, RvR 401.

Photograph © Carmen González Fraile

States, wrote in 1885, Irwin's collection was 'distinguished by the almost uniform excellence of its impressions', an assessment that could just as aptly refer to Morrison's.⁹⁶

Morgan acquired another eight Rembrandt prints once owned by Morrison as part of an en-bloc purchase from George W. Vanderbilt (1862–1914). Between November 1905 and February 1906, Junius Spencer Morgan again brokered a deal on his uncle's behalf.⁹⁷ During the four months of negotiations, Vanderbilt emphasised that he had been dogged in his pursuit of many 'unique examples' and considered the collection of Baron Edmond James de Rothschild (1845–1934) to be 'the only private collection which can rank with mine as a whole for quality of impressions'.⁹⁸ Several of the Vanderbilt-Morgan prints had already passed through important collections before entering Morrison's, underscoring his judicious attention to provenance. Rembrandt's *Artist's Mother in a Cloth Headdress*, for instance, had been owned by the prominent collector Heneage Finch, fifth Earl of Aylesford (1786–1859), many of

whose Rembrandt prints are now in the British Museum, and then by Sir Thomas William Holburne, fifth Baronet of Menstrie (1793–1874), much of whose collection today forms the nucleus of Bath's Holburne Museum.⁹⁹ Similarly, John Barnard (1685–1764), who assembled a collection of Rembrandt etchings 'of the rarest beauty' (possibly once owned by Jan Six), had owned Rembrandt's *Bust of an Old Woman in a Furred Cloak*.¹⁰⁰ And *Christ Before Pilate* – formerly in the collections of De Boissieux, Michel de Marseille, François Debois, Delessert, and Hippolyte Dreux – had been purchased by Holloway on Morrison's behalf at the June 1864 sale of Julian Marshall's print collection, when it sold for £71, the highest price achieved for any of the 23 Rembrandts.¹⁰¹

And as with the literary autographs once owned by Morrison, Rembrandt prints with Morrison provenance continued to enter the collection following the establishment of the Pierpont Morgan Library in 1924. The Morgan acquired *Self Portrait with Saskia*, for instance, at Parke-Bernet in November 1949 at the posthumous sale of Albert E. McVitty (1876–1948), a celebrated Rembrandt collector.¹⁰²

Each of these 10 Rembrandt prints is annotated 'am' (i.e., Alfred Morrison) in reddish-black ink on the verso, indicating its former presence in Morrison's collection. However, notes in the Morgan's curatorial files suggest that this collector's mark, though 'found on many fine prints', eluded identification for quite some time.¹⁰³ Felice Stampfle (1912–2000), who served as the library's first curator of Drawings and Prints from 1945 through 1983, wrote in one curatorial file that reading the inscription as 'am' might 'be an error'.¹⁰⁴ In another file, she suggested that the letters might instead be 'amc', the initials of British lawyer Arthur Melville Champernowne (1871–1946).¹⁰⁵ Indeed, only in the curatorial file of *Jan Six* is the 'am' annotation connected ('Possibly') with Alfred Morrison, indicating that Morrison's ownership of the 10 prints was temporarily lost to the passage of time.¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

Beyond provenance notes in online catalogue records, Alfred Morrison's name is seldom encountered today at the Morgan Library & Museum. And yet the quality of his former collection is worthy of the great collecting traditions epitomised by the institution and the people behind it. Morrison's achievement, particularly the masterful six-volume catalogue, should be better known and recognised. This chapter has highlighted Morrison not only to learn more about the great manuscripts

and artworks he owned, but also to understand how his collection was made (and unmade) over time and how its contents have changed hands and found, in select cases, permanent homes. With the market's forward churn and the ongoing dispersal of old libraries, it remains inevitable that works from Morrison's collection continue to be circulated and gathered again by new hands.

Notes

- 1 Douglas, *Work in Hand*, 2, 29, 38.
- 2 Munby, *The Cult of the Autograph Letter*, 81. Munby dates the earliest bookseller's catalogue of autograph manuscripts to 1833.
- 3 Munby, *The Cult of the Autograph Letter*, 76, 79–80.
- 4 'The Manuscripts of Alfred Morrison', 406.
- 5 'The Manuscripts of Alfred Morrison', 406.
- 6 'The Manuscripts of Alfred Morrison', 407. For identifications of each of these collections (and their sales), see Munby, *The Cult of the Autograph Letter*, 78.
- 7 'The Manuscripts of Alfred Morrison', 407.
- 8 'History', *Fonthill Estate*. This source attributes the loss of Morrison's personal papers to the fact that his widow, Mabel, 'outlived him by nearly 40 years and lived in their matrimonial home at Fonthill for 20 years after his death'.
- 9 Fonthill 1129, 28 April 1869. Holloway & Son issued several catalogues devoted to autograph manuscripts in the 1860s, including *Autographs and Manuscripts* and *Catalogue of a Selection of Historical, Literary and other Autographs*, the latter of which may be the catalogue referenced in the Fonthill records. From Holloway, Morrison purchased autographs by Phillip Melanchthon, Louis XIV, Charles I, Frederick the Great, Martin Luther and Mary Queen of Scots.
- 10 Fonthill 1129, 3 May 1869. For other works purchased previously in the collection of John Young, see [Chapter 12](#) of this volume.
- 11 Smith, 'John Dillon, autograph collector'. Dillon was a business partner and close friend of Alfred's father James, and collected watercolours in addition to autographs. The artist Frank Dillon, John's son, was a contemporary of Alfred's. His painting, *The Colossal Pair, Thebes* (now in the Saint Louis Art Museum, 67:1989), was once owned by Alfred's mother Mary Ann, who sent it to the 1862 International Exhibition. For more on Dillon see Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 21–3 as well as [Chapter 12](#) of this volume.
- 12 *Catalogue of the Interesting and Invaluable Collection*. The manuscript of Johnson's 'Life of Pope' is now held at the Morgan Library & Museum (MA 205), purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1896.
- 13 Fonthill 1129, 10 June 1869. The Elizabethan correspondence collection was lot 341 in the Dillon sale and is listed in the Holloway invoice as 'Elizabeth-Dale letters'. The correspondence would later be described in the HMC account of Morrison's collection, where it would be listed second in the section on 'Letters and Documents in Volumes'. See 'The Manuscripts of Alfred Morrison', 407. The Evelyn manuscript was lot 366 in the Dillon sale and is now preserved at Harvard's Houghton Library (MS Eng 992).
- 14 Fonthill 1129, 10 June 1869. The only Catesby manuscript appearing in Morrison's various catalogues, however, lists the provenance as 'Donnadieu' rather than Dillon. This letter is now Morgan Library & Museum (MA 9322).
- 15 Tourneux, *Étienne Charavay*.
- 16 Charavay, *Inventaire des autographes*.
- 17 Fonthill 1133, undated.
- 18 'Which are of great interest and well worthy of your collection'. Fonthill 1133, 10 June 1890.
- 19 Fonthill 1133, undated.
- 20 The collection is now preserved at the Morgan Library & Museum (MA 2287).

- 21 Munby, *The Cult of the Autograph Letter*, 77; Harding, 'The Colvin print theft'.
- 22 Harding, 'The Colvin print theft', 163.
- 23 Harding, 'The Colvin print theft', 163–4.
- 24 Harding, 'The Colvin print theft', 164.
- 25 Thibaudeau, Business card for A. W. Thibaudeau. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, 115108. The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/51c1ae90-1f93-0134-8a39-00505686a51c> (accessed 8 May 2023). The advertisement is reproduced in Harding, 'The Colvin print theft', 165.
- 26 Thibaudeau died in 1893 in London. In 1889, his business assets were sold at auction to relieve his considerable debts. See Harding, 'The Colvin print theft', 172–3. On 28 June 1890, Thibaudeau's wife Wilhelmina wrote Alfred to ask for financial help, 'having regard to Mr. Thibaudeau's former services' (Fonthill 02, 1135). There was also a much smaller catalogue of Morrison's collection printed privately in 1879, *The Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents, formed by Alfred Morrison*, but it comprises merely an alphabetical list of autograph manuscript creators with the number of letters or documents by that person held in the collection. The catalogue is quite rare, and though a copy at the Grolier Club (\08.27\M878\1879 07/25/02 N) is interleaved, no annotations are present.
- 27 Howitt, *The Hall and the Hamlet*, II: 294. The passage from which the epigraph is sourced deserves to be quoted more fully: 'These were their letters. They were the living thoughts of a race departed – to me utterly unknown: and when I made myself acquainted with their many natural notions ... and called to mind that all these personages who thus lived, and loved, and poured their thoughts around them, were again as though they had never been ... the sense of the mystery of life came strongly upon me, and I could not help exclaiming – "What are we?" But if my heart was ever knit into sympathy with humanity, it was then.'
- 28 These provenance notes only appear, however, in the first three volumes, those edited by Thibaudeau. One might assume that the disappearance of these notes can be attributed to the fact that Thibaudeau was no longer working with Morrison on the catalogue when the fourth and subsequent volumes began appearing in 1890.
- 29 The plates bear the imprint of 'Héliog & Imp. Lemerrier & Cie'.
- 30 J. Pierpont Morgan owned a copy, number 144 of 200, now preserved in the Reference Collection of the Morgan Library & Museum (f 079 M87).
- 31 'Alfred Morrison's autographs'.
- 32 'Alfred Morrison's autographs'. The studies in question are Wolseley, *The Life of John Churchill*; Mahan, *The Life of Nelson*; and Laughton, *Nelson* as well as *Nelson and his Companions in Arms*.
- 33 Fonthill 1134, George Atherton Aitken to Alfred Morrison, 22 March 1890.
- 34 Aitken, *The Life and Works of John Arbuthnot*.
- 35 Fonthill 1134, Ellen Salmon to Edmond Deprez, 15 July 1890. See also Layard, *The Correspondence of Madame Du Noyer*.
- 36 Fonthill 1134, Ellen Salmon to Edmond Deprez, 15 July 1890.
- 37 'Alfred Morrison's autographs'.
- 38 Dakers, 'Fonthill in the twentieth century', 166.
- 39 Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, *Hand-List*, [i].
- 40 Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, *Hand-List*, [i].
- 41 At least one of these 'special collections', the Du Châtelet letters to Saint-Lambert, had actually been catalogued (second series, vol. 3).
- 42 'The Rights of woman: an occasional address. Spoken by Miss Fontenelle on her benefit night, November 26, 1792.' The Rosenbach, EL2 .B967 MS1. The manuscript sold to Maggs for £125, according to a copy of the Morrison sales catalogues at the Grolier Club (CSRLIN NYGG04-P2275) containing addenda of buyers and hammer prices. All further references to Morrison sale prices are sourced from the Grolier's copy of the catalogue.
- 43 Lot 769 to Philpot for £107.
- 44 The Hamilton–Nelson correspondence sold as lot 771 to Peterson for £2,500.
- 45 'Alfred Morrison's autographs'.
- 46 Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, *Catalogue of the Renowned Collection*, lot 770.
- 47 The Faculty of Advocates donated the letter in 1925 to the newly formed National Library of Scotland (Adv.MS.54.1.1). Information on the letter's provenance derives from the NLS online

catalogue record: <https://manuscripts.nls.uk/repositories/2/resources/16277> (accessed 8 May 2023).

- 48 Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, *Catalogue of the Renowned Collection*, Morgan Library & Museum, Reference Collection (079 M87 C).
- 49 Lot 127 to Sawyer for £108. Lot 187 to Agnew for £270. Lot 197 to Quaritch for £160. Lot 269 to Agnew for £300. Lot 535 to James for £210. Lot 582 to Maggs for £220.
- 50 'In the sale room', 168.
- 51 Lot 2760 to Maggs for £300. Lot 2805 to Maggs for £470. Lot 3059 to G.D. Smith for £800. Lot 3101 to Quaritch for £300.
- 52 Lot 777 to Agnew for £345. Lot 779 to Maggs for £360. Lot 1769 to Maggs for £340. Lot 854 to F. Sabin for £435. Lot 974 to Agnew & Sons for £270. Lot 1297 to F. Sabin for £220. Lot 1337 to Maggs for £320.
- 53 Lot 1170 to Quaritch for £390.
- 54 Lot 2998 to Quaritch for £162. Quaritch sold the manuscript to Jack Morgan on 20 August 1919 for £225. See ARC 1310, 'Quaritch'. Though Quaritch often acted as an agent at sales for Morgan and Greene, in this case the firm simply purchased the manuscript at auction and then offered it to the Morgan. The manuscript is now MA 968–970.
- 55 MA 998, purchased from Rosenbach in 1924 (not from the Morrison collection).
- 56 The Hume is MA 1040.4. Its lot number in the Morrison sale has not been determined. The Voltaire is MA 986 (lot 1768 to James for £200). Pearson offered Morgan the Voltaire letters, along with correspondence by Catherine de' Medici and Sir Thomas Gresham (both apparently not from the Morrison collection) for £1,000. See ARC 3291, Box 20, Folder 15.
- 57 Edwin Wolf II to Fred Adams, 11 September 1950. ARC 3291, Box 62, Folder 11. The Morgan purchased the collection for \$6,750.
- 58 MA 9025. MA 1346.54. MA 9322. MA 23379.1-6. MA 1346.215. MA 22865. MA 1346.93. MA 1346.233. MA 1346.125.
- 59 MA 2287.1-108. MA 2628. MA 6940. 1986.50.
- 60 MA 7251.
- 61 MA 952.
- 62 Unless otherwise indicated, all information on the provenance of the Vespucci letter is sourced from de Ricci, *Census*, 1633. A typed note accompanying MA 952 indicates that 'the Strozzi Library was transferred about 1785 to the Laurentian Library, after the extinction of the Strozzi family'. For a similar account of the letter's provenance, see A. S. W. Rosenbach to Jack Morgan, 22 July 1919 (ARC 3291, Box 23, Folder 3).
- 63 Harris, *Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima*, xxii. Cited in Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History*, II: 130–1.
- 64 MA 776. Both the Verrazzano and Vespucci letters were displayed for the Pierpont Morgan Library's 1976 United States bicentennial exhibition, *America: From Amerigo Vespucci to the Louisiana Purchase*. The exhibition catalogue notes that it is the only Vespucci letter in an American collection. See Pierpont Morgan Library, *America*, 2.
- 65 A. S. W. Rosenbach to Jack Morgan, 22 July 1919 (ARC 3291, Box 23, Folder 3). The Morgan paid \$9,500 for the manuscript.
- 66 MA 977.
- 67 For the provenance of these 41 Jane Austen letters, see Modert, *Jane Austen's Letters in Facsimile*, 13; Le Faye, *Jane Austen's Letters*; Wenner, 'Following the trail'; and Nelson, 'Jane Austen in the Morgan Library'.
- 68 Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Letters of Jane Austen*.
- 69 Wenner, 'Following the Trail', 138.
- 70 Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, *Catalogue of a portion of the topographical and general library*. The letters that would later enter the Morrison collection are dated 6 June 1811, 2 June 1799, 9 March 1814 and 30 June 1808 (now Morgan Library & Museum MA 977.30, 977.4, 977.37 and 977.18, respectively).
- 71 Puttick and Simpson, *Catalogue*; Wenner, 'Following the trail', 138. See also Modert, *Jane Austen's Letters in Facsimile* and Le Faye, *Jane Austen's Letters*.
- 72 Ernest Dressel North to J. P. Morgan, 26 April 1919. ARC 1310.
- 73 Ernest Dressel North to J. P. Morgan, 26 April 1919. ARC 1310. See also Nelson, 'Jane Austen in the Morgan Library', 4–5.

- 74 Ernest Dressel North to J. P. Morgan, 17 April 1920. ARC 1310. Nelson, 'Jane Austen in the Morgan Library', 4–5. In a letter to Belle Greene dated 15 August 1919 (also ARC 1310), the London book dealer Frank Wheeler (of the firm J. Pearson & Co.) promises that he will look out for the manuscript of *Pride and Prejudice*; the letter establishes that Greene and Morgan had been interested in acquiring an Austen literary manuscript since at least that summer.
- 75 Nelson, 'Jane Austen in the Morgan Library'.
- 76 MA 1034.1–12.
- 77 *Lady Susan* was acquired in 1947 from the New York dealer James F. Drake for \$6,750. The Burkes made their gift in 1975.
- 78 For a discussion of the ex-Morrison leaf from the Hohenlandenberg Missal, MS M.955, see [Chapter 19](#), Figure 19.24.
- 79 1986.50.
- 80 See the verso. Bambach, *Leonardo da Vinci, Master Draftsman*, 405–6.
- 81 On Garnier's identification, see Eschasseriaux, *Etudes documents et extraits*, 78.
- 82 Lamporecchi, *Mémoire*, 14n1.
- 83 London, Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, *Catalogue of the Magnificent Collection*, lot 142, no. 4.
- 84 'Ecriture de Leonard de Vinci – Le fac-simile de cet fragment a été publié à Londres'. Presumably a reference to Thibaudeau's publication.
- 85 Richter, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, I:7, no. 50.
- 86 Thibaudeau, *Autograph Letters and Historical Documents*, VI:325, reproduced plate 161. For Thibaudeau's drawing, see inv. no. 781 DR.
- 87 Describing the drawing using Thibaudeau's language.
- 88 Herrmann, *Sotheby's*, 173.
- 89 The Morrison–Morgan drawing appears as lot 291 in his 26–28 May 1923 sale at Noel Charavay, Paris. In 1926, Fatio gave all three (sheets 1, 2 and 10) to King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy, who reunited them with the rest of the manuscript, today in Turin's Biblioteca Reale. M.P., 'Rassegna Bibliografica, Italia', 118–19.
- 90 Morgan Library & Museum (RvR 120; RvR 164; RvR 190; RvR 315; RvR 387; RvR 401; RvR 453; RvR 467; RvR 472; 1949.5). Morrison also owned two letters Rembrandt wrote to his early patron Constantine Huygens. Sold on 16 April 1918, lots 983–4, both are today in the Fondation Custodia, Paris (inv. nos. A 179, A 180).
- 91 Hind, *Rembrandt*, 150.
- 92 RvR 401. Holloway, *The Collection of Engravings*, 256–60. Nos 2182–229; nos. 2183, 2194, 2199, 2222 and 2227 are in the Morgan.
- 93 Hinterding, *Rembrandt the Printmaker*, 69.
- 94 Holloway, *The Collection of Engravings*, 260, no. 2227.
- 95 Bailey and Foner, 'J. Pierpont Morgan', 42–4. The prints were purchased between April and May 1900 for \$80,000.
- 96 Koehler, *Etching*, 186. See also Larsen, 'S.R. Koehler and the etching revival', 6–18.
- 97 Bailey and Foner, 'J. Pierpont Morgan', 162n229. The 112 Rembrandt etchings and 106 Dürer engravings were purchased for \$140,000.
- 98 George W. Vanderbilt to Junius Spencer Morgan, 25 November 1905, cited in Lauder, *Collecting Rembrandt*, unpaginated.
- 99 Acquired for £3,000 in September 1848. Fagan, *Collectors' Marks*, 1.
- 100 Lugt, *Les Marques*, 256.
- 101 Holloway, *The Collection of Engravings*, 258, no. 2194. For other prints in Morrison's collection acquired at the Marshall sale, see [Chapter 12](#).
- 102 Already in Morrison's collection by 1868. See Holloway, *The Collection of Engravings*, 257, no. 2183. Other Rembrandt prints remained in the Morrison family's collection for several generations. See [Chapter 19](#) for a discussion of *Christ Presented to the People*, which was sold only in 1971.
- 103 Curatorial file, RvR 453. Lugt, *Les Marques*, 27, includes a different collector's mark.
- 104 Curatorial file, RvR 315. We are grateful to Jennifer Tonkovich for identifying the handwriting.
- 105 Curatorial file, RvR 472.
- 106 Curatorial file, RvR 401.

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'Lost if you leave me': Alfred Morrison, Plácido Zuloaga, collecting and not-knowing

Dror Elkivity

No. 428. A panel (five feet by two feet three inches) formerly the front of a *cassone* or coffer, intended to contain the garments and jewels of a bride. *Subject*: 'The Triumph of Love'. 'Umbrian School of the Fifteenth Century.' In the right-hand corner is a half-effaced inscription: *Desider ... de Civitate Lac ... me ... ecit*. This valuable painting is unfortunately much damaged by damp and mineral corrosives, owing probably to its having contained at one time buried treasure. Bequeathed in 1878 by the widow of the Rev. Lawson Stone, late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. (Catalogue of the Smith Museum, Leeds)¹

Introduction

In 1904, Vernon Lee (the pseudonym of the British writer Violet Paget) published a short story titled 'A Wedding Chest'. In this gothic tale, the body of a young bride was returned to her father and groom by a kidnapper, in a beautifully executed, specially commissioned cassone. The story begins with a fictionalised, museum card-style caption, ascribed to the 'Smith Museum, Leeds', parodying museum language and describing the cassone in the neutral way in which objects can often be described in museums and galleries. Carefully adhering only to the facts available while avoiding speculation, the revealed context in the tale which follows puts the museum label into stark contrast, alluding to the notion that a caption can obscure much more than it can reveal. Lee was no fan of objects in museums and galleries. In *Belcaro: Being Essays on Sundry Aesthetical Questions*, she calls galleries a 'place where

art is arranged and ticketed and made dingy and lifeless even as are the plants in a botanic collection'.² Her frustration seems to hinge on the objects losing their context, their story, one could argue. She sets out to give us that context, in all its gory detail. Does Lee make a valid point? Perhaps. Does she prove in her own tale how not knowing the story, and therefore being able to imagine it, has value in itself? Certainly.

Consider the wedding chest made by Plácido Zuloaga of Eibar for Alfred Morrison in 1888, currently in the Khalili Collections, where I have been working serving as curator for several years. We received it with an equally spartan description similar to Lee's fictional example: 'Highly important, large Spanish parcel-gilt and bronzed metal coffer, by Plácido Zuluaga. 121cm wide, 86cm deep' (Figure 14.1). While factual and informative to a point, a label such as this inevitably invites one to wonder. After all, the very first museum label, thought to be a cylinder excavated by Sir Leonard Woolley in 1927 in Ur and dating from 675–655 BCE, allegedly reads 'for observation' or, according to Woolley himself, 'for the marvel of beholders'.³ A label invites us to look; the object invites us to imagine.

Alfred Morrison's cassone

We were aware that the cassone had belonged to Alfred Morrison, as according to the dealer, it had been 'sitting at Fonthill House for



Figure 14.1 Iron cassone, forged iron and chiselled and engraved iron repoussé, silver with niello, gold and silver damascening by Plácido Zuloaga, Spain, Eibar, 1870–1, 121 × 201 × 86 cm, (47.6 × 79 × 33.8 in) ZUL102.

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several years'. There it waited; alone, mute, a relic from a period where it had been surrounded by thousands of other objects, a period when it was part of the life of a collector, a period when, perhaps, he had felt incredibly powerful. But we do not know, and in a way can never know what the emotional landscape looked like at the time it arrived in Morrison's collection, or many years after. We can only make assumptions. Morrison could have been insecure, vindictive, jealous, scared, in love or all the above. What we can safely determine, however, is that commissioning such a piece, in such a period of his life, was something quite remarkable. A statement.

Tracing history via ownership, through provenance alone – which sometimes is all the information available, with no maker and sometimes no date known – can be a hall of mirrors, assuming the right direction and then getting misdirected, lost and often being confronted with yourself, your ideas and your bias. Such is the way of art. Owners change through centuries; finer details and stories become lost. But what of pieces where the story is simpler? What of works made specifically for collectors, made entirely for the purpose of collecting? When a piece such as the cassone finds a home in a new collection, its history repeats and transforms.

Vernon Lee's story is, among other things, about possession. While true that in the tale the possession in question is a person, the tragedy is highlighted by the macabre delivery of this 'possession' in such an ornate and lovingly crafted object which is meant to stand for love and hope. Morrison commissioned his chest in 1870 at the age of 49, after having been married for four years. His wife Mabel may have felt stifled by the increasing size of his collection, by the waves of paintings, sculpture, furniture and *objets d'art* which filled her homes in London and Wiltshire. As Caroline Dakers highlights in *A Genius for Money*:

Few personal letters survive between Alfred, Mabel, their family and friends and as Mabel outlived her husband by thirty-six years the assumption is that she destroyed the correspondence. It is consequently difficult to judge what Mabel thought of the appearance of their London house or its contents. It is distinctly possible she thoroughly disliked both, because within months of Alfred's death she sold the house and a large quantity of paintings, sculpture, textiles, porcelain, autographs, lace, jewels, metalwork, glass and enamels, in the end almost everything not deemed an 'heirloom'.⁴

It is important to note that Mabel selling off Morrison's objects after his death seems particularly personal as she – by all accounts – did not need

the money. And so how did she feel when she saw this wedding chest? Did she feel that rather than a wedding chest it perhaps felt more like a coffin? Frederick Baekland, in *the Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting*, states that:

In addition to competing with other collectors, they [collectors] may in effect compete with their wives as interior decorators as their art objects gradually dominate the house, fill collecting cases, and spread from room to room, sometimes directly outshining and displacing the more mundane objects with which their wives have chosen to decorate their homes.⁵

What possessed Morrison to commission such a heavy piece (it weighs over a ton – something which is not often known but curators and collection administrators *have* to know), so lavish and completely impractical, at this point in his life, and to what end? *The Magazine of Art*, in 1879, describes it:

Conspicuously in Mr. Morrison's collection are a number of metal works by Zuloaga, of Madrid ... the largest of such works is a cassone, which occupies a central position in the opalescent drawing-room at Carlton House terrace ... on seeing the cassone, one is amazed at this marvel of modern workmanship, and the utilitarianism of the time urges one to puzzle oneself as to the use of such a work... Undoubtedly this important piece of fine art metal-work is primarily to be gazed at – to use it would entail much trouble on the user.⁶

One could potentially see it as a coded message to Mabel, a vindictive act, a cry for attention, or simply Morrison's vanity and wish for one-upmanship, to own the best and the most lavish and remarkable objects in the world, from an artist he had fostered and commissioned. In *On Collecting*, Susan Pierce claims:

The rationality of possession is central to the belief that our way of living is logical and sensible. But, in fact, our relationship with our possessions is far from reasonable, and, broadly speaking, the more we cherish them, the more unreasonable it becomes. We consistently buy things which we do not want, purchase things which we cannot afford, use things in ways for which they were not intended, and hang on to things which other people think would be better

thrown away. Sometimes, even frequently, the material which we chose to collect is worthless in the eyes of the world. It is, indeed, the disassociation between reason and acquisition which helps to account for the feelings of guilt and unhappiness which material goods often arouse in us, and in general for the emotions which flow between things and people, and which are not satisfactorily accounted for in terms of acceptable social practice.⁷

Morrison as a collector

Thus, a picture emerges. Morrison, as highlighted in this book and others, was a collector who collected feverishly, often buying in bulk, in an endless chase of ownership and status. Baekland compares this to something akin to compulsive eating, stating: ‘Several of those I interviewed reported having an urge to buy art objects when they feel frustrated or depressed because something has not worked out as they wished.’⁸ However, collecting is never just that. There are so many varied reasons for collecting and the complex psychological machinations which underly this practice that it is probably pointless to speculate. Yet speculate is what we all do, trying to piece together these stories until we find evidence.

As a collectors’ companion, tasked with the organisation and research of so many possessions, what strikes me most are the stories which are accrued along the way, and while reading of Morrison’s life and collection, I reflect on how I am an ‘insider’ witness to the process of collections forming. I oversee the ‘proof’ – what will the future make of the collector who collected other collectors’ pieces? What does this mean? In this very book, and in previous efforts like this, we all try to track the histories of objects. We desire to know, but not knowing may be part of the charm and power these objects possess. The power of these objects lies in the learning and the imagining they promote. Not-knowing, whether in psychology, zen, artistic practice or collecting itself, can be a magnetic source of creativity. Like the bland caption on Vernon Lee’s wedding chest, not knowing the back story is what makes the tale potent. When we face an object arriving at the Khalili Collections with even less information – or sometimes none – the attraction only magnifies.

In *The Inquiring Organization: Tacit Knowledge, Conversation, and Knowledge Creation: Skills for 21st-Century Organizations*, Catherine and John Kikoski note that ‘the not-knowing stance creates the relationship

that invites others into an exchange of ideas'.⁹ In *On Not Knowing: How artists think*, Emma Cocker offers valuable insight:

To place value on not knowing as generative or productive *in itself* is to work against the tide of certain teleological thought, which imagines progress as a one-way passage, the move from what is known towards the goal of knowing more and more. Working against the grain involves a degree of skilfulness and tenacity, a capacity to operate counter to expectation. To inhabit the experience of not knowing in affirmative terms requires some preparation.¹⁰

Indeed, our drive is always to know. Yet, as researchers, curators and academics, not knowing is precisely the framework which can lead us to down so many new avenues of thought.

Plácido Zuloaga

Morrison commissioned many pieces from Plácido Zuloaga; however, the passage of time meant that around 100 years later the master's name was once again all but unknown outside Spain. Plácido was born in Madrid in 1834 to a family steeped in art, with a rich heritage of metalworking. His father, Eusebio Zuloaga (1808–98), was his greatest influence. At 14, Eusebio, whose own father, Blas, was gunsmith at the Royal Armoury under both Ferdinand VII and Isabella II, eventually becoming chief armourer and owning a house within the palace grounds, was sent to study gun making for five years with an uncle who was armourer to the Royal Bodyguards. Eusebio was then apprenticed in Paris with a gunsmith to the French king, before studying in Liège. At the time, France and Belgium were enjoying a revival of interest in damascene, which was often used to decorate luxury firearms, and these formative experiences must have had a strong effect on Eusebio. On his return home, he set up a workshop in Madrid and was named honorary gunmaker to Queen Isabella II.

In 1847, shortly before his father's death, Eusebio became lieutenant armourer, overseeing the restoration of a priceless collection of Renaissance arms and armour in Madrid's Palace Armoury. Alongside the traditional techniques he had been brought up with, he mastered the art of damascening and developed new ways of working metal to a standard rarely seen in Europe at the time. Back in Eibar, he set up a

gun-making factory, which led the revival of damascene in Spain. He also earned an international reputation, winning medals at events such as the 1851 Great Exhibition in London. Plácido could hardly have asked for a better teacher than Eusebio. As a teenager, he was apprenticed at his father's arms factory, and before long the student surpassed the master. Plácido ended up winning numerous gold and silver medals at international expositions himself, and eventually gained honours. He was made Knight Commander of the Order of Isabel the Catholic, Knight of the Order of Charles III, Officer of the French Legion of Honour and Knight of the Portuguese Order of St James, all the while transforming Eibar into Europe's epicentre for damascene.

By the early 1850s, when he was still in his teens (he turned 16 in 1850), Plácido was already making outstanding pieces, including pistols, swords, daggers and shields. In 1859, aged 25, he took over the Eibar factory, and shifted its focus to creating damascened art objects rather than arms. He revealed a shrewd sense of foresight at a time when the world was shifting towards industrial manufacture of such equipment. Plácido's skills were so highly sought that he naturally attracted a high calibre of clients. He made a damascened writing stand for Queen Isabella II of Spain in 1859 and a table clock for Napoleon III of France in 1865. He also prepared a damascened inkstand that was given as a wedding gift to Evelina de Rothschild. These were outstanding commissions even for the most experienced of artists, let alone a young man from Eibar.

Unfortunately for him, in 1868, Queen Isabella was toppled by a military rebellion. Eusebio, Plácido's father, lost his position in the royal household and the Eibar factory was brought to its knees. They lost one of their most important customers in the middle of the political hurricane blowing around them. Desperate for work and having (likely) met Morrison via Owen Jones at the 1862 International Exhibition in London, Plácido appealed to Morrison, writing that he will 'do all that is possible for you, and truly I am lost if you leave me. The only hope that I have of working with beautiful things is from you and your wife.'¹¹ And indeed, Morrison became his biggest benefactor. Plácido worked almost exclusively for Morrison for the next 20 years, making over 30 pieces for him which included the cassone, a pair of Alhambra-style vases, a writing desk, a large safe and more, some of which are now in the Khalili Collections.

Morrison of course was thrilled, having 'snagged' such an accomplished artist and making it possible to have exclusive access to his work. The relationship was undoubtedly mutually beneficial. However, reading Zuloaga's 1868 letter to Morrison one must wonder at the

precariousness of the position and how difficult it might have been for Plácido, while surely being a major relief to have secured such a patron to keep him afloat. The complicated nature of artistic patronage has a long history and is well documented, and while thinking of Plácido in this context, I am reminded of the lines by Sheryl E. Reiss in *A Taxonomy of Art Patronage in Renaissance Italy*, who highlights perceptively how tangled this relationship can be:

Patrons in Renaissance Italy promoted personal, familial, and group renown by requesting works from – and fostering the careers of – famous or promising artists. Just as artists in this period often competed for the attention of patrons, patrons frequently competed for the services of successful artists. While artists of the calibre of Michelangelo, Raphael, or Titian often manipulated the patronage game to great advantage, most painters, sculptors, and architects in the period functioned within a deeply entrenched sociocultural system of mutual dependency. Even in the case of Michelangelo (who had, to paraphrase William Wallace, ‘reversed the rules of patronage’), in a painting for the Casa Buonarroti, his Seicento descendants had him depicted in the mode of a traditional presentation image, in which artist was subservient to patron.¹²

A particularly poignant portrait, made for Morrison by Plácido’s son, Ignacio, seems to capture this complexity rather well. Depicting an older Plácido gazing thoughtfully at the viewer (Figure 14.2), it shows the face of a prodigy who, through no fault of his own, saw his craft and livelihood nearly extinct. Saved at the eleventh hour by a wealthy patron who secured the future and artistic legacy of this talented family, the portrait is interpreted through the eyes of his equally gifted offspring. Morrison’s name appears directly on the painting above the signature, rather than the back of the piece or an accompanying note or plaque. A formal dedication, a stamp of ownership, a grateful present to a benevolent patron – all the above could be applied. And there Morrison sits, as it were, right between the father and the son. While much like other objects in this article and elsewhere it appears what we have before us are simple facts – a commissioner, an artist, a subject – a more delicate web can be potentially seen underneath.

At any rate, Zuloaga produced some of his best work under Morrison’s patronage. The Nasrid-style iron urns made for Morrison in 1877 (Figure 14.3) are one of the finest interpretations in metal of the so-called Alhambra vases made during the rule of the Nasrid dynasty

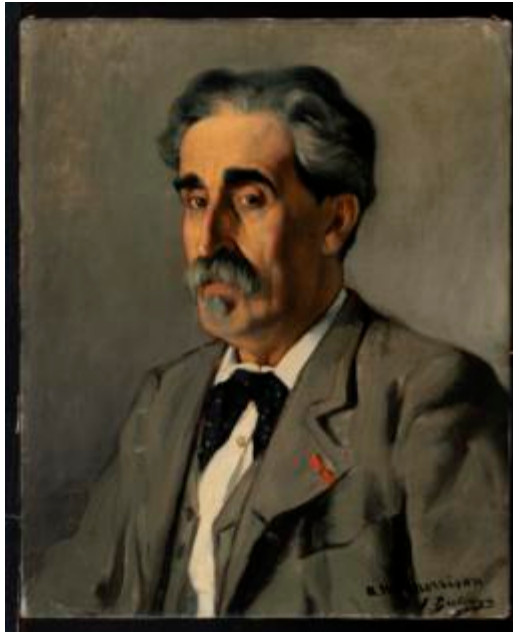


Figure 14.2 Ignacio Zuloaga, *Portrait of Plácido Zuloaga*, c. 1893–4, Oil on canvas, 61 × 50.5 cm. (24 × 19.8 in). Private collection.

© Private collection

(1230–1492), the last Muslim dynasty in the Iberian Peninsula. They were made during a period when Islamic art was certainly ‘trending’ among some Victorian artists (as Valerie Kennedy describes it: ‘Victorian Orientalism was all pervasive’).¹³ Creating these pieces after such iconic examples of Islamic pottery would have appealed to Alfred. As described in [Chapter 3](#), he was closely associated with Owen Jones, whose elaborate drawings of the Alhambra and its ornaments were widely admired.

Islamic art certainly made an impression on the artist Frederic Leighton, whose house and studio were filled to the brim with art he had acquired from Turkey, Egypt and Syria during the second half of the nineteenth century. Leighton’s passion (and collection) was such that he erected a special extension to his house which he named ‘the Arab hall’ in 1877, which served to display his extensive collection of tiles, a challenging and surely costly undertaking. Leighton was certainly within Alfred and Mabel’s circle. They owned his painting *Summer Moon*, which hung in Carlton House Terrace and then in the new picture gallery at Fonthill.



Figure 14.3 Pair of iron urns, forged iron, applied pierced iron handles, gold and silver damascene, by Plácido Zuloaga, Spain, Eibar, 1877, height 108 cm (42.5 in), ZUL 104.

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In our book, *The Art and Tradition of the Zuloagas: Spanish Damascene from the Khalili Collection*, James Lavin writes of Morisson's commission:

Plácido's urns, at slightly more than one metre in height, are approximately the same size as their Nasrid counterparts, and the distribution of their damascene ornament shows their author's familiarity with the southern originals ... in 1878 they were exhibited in Paris before being delivered to Morrison in London the following year.¹⁴

James Lavin is here referring to the Exposition Universelle of 1878. *The Magazine of Art* article of 1879 made a similar reference:

Those who visited the recent Paris Exhibition and paid attention to the exceptional instances of high-class workmanship there, will remember two important golden Moorish amphora-shaped vases,

some three feet in height, by Zuloaga. Those specimens of his latest feat in metal work are now in Mr. Morrison's dining room... It is easy to expatiate upon the marvellous skill involved in these modern Spanish metal works, but we fear that no description can convey an adequate idea of the skill of the handicraft displayed. Our remarks, however, may serve to awaken in people a desire to become acquainted with these masterpieces of modern fine art handicraft.¹⁵

These types of comments and glimpses into Orientalism are fascinating to us in the Khalili Collections especially as they capture some of the rousing inspiration – at even a hint of the original – which works such as these raised. As a set of collections which converge at many points with Morrison's Islamic interest, Zuloaga, and of course enamels (we also own many Lepec pieces such as those Morrison was so enamoured with), we can appreciate the wonder and fertility of these cross-cultural interests.

Zuloaga's writing desk

Zuloaga's writing desk is another remarkable piece which was made for Morrison, and was included, like many of Zuloaga's pieces, in Morrison's heirloom list. This list indicated which pieces from his collection could not be sold by Mabel after his death. Was this possession? Vindictiveness? Love? We can only guess.

Drop leaf writing desks of this type are often called *vargueño* in Spanish. They would be placed upon a table or a chest which allowed space for writing, often with many small drawers which would include writing instruments and other practical items. Morrison's piece was unusual for Zuloaga as it was made primarily from wood rather than metal and showcased his maturing creativity and versatility. The desk's drawers are also particularly shallow, which would indicate that Morrison had another use for them in mind, probably to keep his large collection of coins and medals, as Caroline Dakers suggests. According to Lavin: 'Plácido's writing-desk, by virtue of its materials, is a departure from his accustomed repertoire... its construction would have required the subcontracting of specialists for the woodwork and the veneer, and for the preparation and application of the tortoiseshell'.¹⁶ Zuloaga was more than willing to step out of his comfort zone for Morrison, and perhaps even excited to do so, having been given the opportunity of experimenting with techniques which were not his forte.



Figure 14.4 Writing desk, iron, gold damascene, tortoiseshell, wood, wood veneer by Plácido Zuloaga, Spain, Eibar, 1884–5, 75.5 × 123.5 × 42.5 cm (29.7 × 48.6 × 16.7 in), ZUL 105.

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It is curious to note that when looking at the photographs of the picture gallery at Fonthill House (see [Figures 3.21](#) and [3.22](#)), which shows the writing desk ([Figure 14.4](#)), bookended by the ‘Alhambra’ vases, the desk is sitting on a low table (or perhaps an ottoman?) very much too low for the drop-leaf to be used for any writing. In the room we can see at least two tables which can be used for this purpose, let alone probably the many other surfaces suitable to the task scattered around the house. While not as impractical as the cassone, with its nearly impossible-to-lift cover, here again is an object which is being subverted or rendered at least partly useless, if not by design, certainly by its placing, echoing Susan Pierce’s thoughts in *On Collecting*. It is another object which loses its intention and context in a sea of objects meant primarily to be looked at. It begs the question, what is lost in this situation? To me, it feels as if it loses part of its identity. And yet, while a drop-leaf is quite easy to ‘decipher’, time and time again in the collection we encounter pieces which look as if they are meant to be used somehow, and we do not know how or what for. This is an exciting point of not-knowing, from which learning, stories and ideas emerge and bring an object to life.

While the vases were purely decorative, the writing desk was (somewhat) practical, and it gives one pause to realise that the cassone

was ultimately viewed as neither practical nor particularly successful in its ornamentation. Lady Layard, in the 29 February 1872 entry of her journal written while in Madrid, was disparaging when she wrote:

Young [Plácido] Zuluaga [sic] came to see us and Henry gave him letters for people in England as he is going to take over the great iron chest which he and his father have made for Mr Alfred Morrison and which cost £5000 and is inlaid with gold ... We went to see it yesterday. It struck me as a fine piece of work but the design is wanting in force and the details are weak.¹⁷

The Magazine of Art meanwhile, while praising its workmanship claimed that 'The ornament is elegant and delicate, but has no symbolism ... The cassone asserts itself as a chest, and this being so, we are forced to consider whether it can be useful.'¹⁸

There seems to be a muted politeness around the cassone from the little information we have, but the general feeling seems to be that it was perhaps excessive, a kind of a piece which was, to quote the colloquialism, 'neither use nor ornament'. Yet to this day it is one of our most popular pieces. Perhaps, in its sheer size and extravagance, and in it being a wedding chest, it hints at something which exists only to please the eye and nothing more – exhibiting a sort of nihilism which is attractive in its totality. For somebody like Morrison, and perhaps to all collectors, this is the ultimate desirable object. *L'art pour l'art*. However, despite the negative connotation of such a thought, another emerges, of the total freedom of creativity when one is not bound by either use or indeed ornament; of being allowed to simply display and explore craftsmanship for its own sake – after all, the cassone took two years to make and had required quite a substantial team to accomplish. As Lavin puts it, 'the iron construction would have involved forgers, filers, and chisellers. The final finish would have been executed by damasceners and engravers, who would have completed the exterior and interior details.'¹⁹ We are left wondering what all these people, all these artists and makers, headed by Plácido, were feeling while working on such a piece; what stories they brought with them to create such extravagant work. We have several pieces such as this in our various collections, pieces which were painstakingly made over several years with sometimes dozens of artisans working on a single project. All their stories are unknown, and yet they are woven into the metaphorical, and sometimes literal, fabric of the work. We can only guess, but every morsel of information we find reveals a piece of a map we had not been aware exists before.

Sir David Khalili and Zuloaga

Sir David Khalili first became interested in objects by Zuloaga in the 1970s, as he was getting more and more involved with what he likes to call ‘forgotten’ areas of collecting, where whole swathes of makers and periods of art were being disregarded and deemed unfashionable. But this was not just about canny collecting. It was very much about revealing their hidden stories, trying to uncover what they might mean. This is the principle that has led his collecting and our collections for many years – curiosity. Collecting comes in all shapes and sizes and for many reasons, but rarely does it come about out of sheer curiosity for the forgotten – even if it does not directly relate to one’s own memories and life. As he told me himself, while we were working on his autobiography:

Why hunt, acquire, own, research, restore, display? Why collect? I don’t know if I can answer this. Of course there’s the memory of my father, all those visits we made together to galleries, museums and private houses in Tehran and beyond, the love for and curiosity about works of art and the stories that trailed behind them.

He came to Zuloaga through the art of damascene, via his knowledge and collecting of Islamic Art. In fact, it was Howard Ricketts, a renowned arms and armour dealer (the museum kind, mind you) who led Sir David to Morrison’s cassone. Whether it is Zuloaga, or the Swedish textile collection he was led to by initially thinking textiles he had found were Islamic, or enamelled boxes found in a small shop in New York which led to stories of makers who had put their hearts and their lives into pieces which were now standing idle in a vitrine, the route these objects take until they are ‘home’, accounted for, their history revealed and secrets unearthed as much as possible, is never a straight line. Ashes to ashes, collections form and break apart, objects drift and end up in other collections. In the Japanese collection, for example, we have several sets which have been separated by time. Most notable is a massive three-piece garniture made for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which was finally reunited by us in 2019, over 120 years after they were originally separated. A tale for another time, perhaps.

So, finally, what of the question of ownership? What conclusion can we draw about the meaning of these objects migrating between collections of those who share similar passions? Perhaps the conclusion lies in that the transference of stories, the knowing and the not-knowing, is the most powerful thing for perpetuity. Vernon Lee’s label tells us very

little, but it invites us to imagine. Something may have happened, or nothing, and yet there the object lies, as stated thousands of years ago, 'for the marvel of beholders'. Morrison's cassone was last displayed at the Auberge de Provence, now the National Museum of Archaeology, in Valletta, Malta, in 2012. I remember the curiosity of both installers, and later the public, in such a piece. It immediately raises questions. How heavy is it? How much did it cost? Why was it made? How do you keep it clean? What do these decorations mean? While I cannot answer all these questions (for a variety of reasons), one can imagine they were not dissimilar to some of the questions presented to Morrison. And there lies the secret of the object's power. It fills the mind with questions and wonder. This can be applied equally to practically any object in our collection which we have exhibited over the years. And it is there where the power of collecting lies. While, as we have seen, so much of Zuloaga and Morrison's biography can be traced, and so much information can be gleaned about the process of creating these objects, there are many more questions which are left to our imagination. Trying to answer these questions is what drives us forward in our attempts to discover more, and, for better or for worse, they are the reason we should forge ahead, if only to reveal yet another corner of that map we had not yet seen.

Conclusion

In this brief account of Plácido Zuloaga's work for Alfred Morrison, I have attempted to trace what it is we look for when we discuss the origin of an object beyond the facts we might have or have not have before us, and what we do when that research is limited in its scope, when there is only so much to know. While examining the relationship between collector, object and artist, through elements of their respective biographies, I have also attempted to look at what it means to collect, to acquire for the purpose of collecting, and what might this mean down the line, when objects are then collected by others. Ultimately, while revealing and enriching a part of the story, the facts we rely on when examining objects are not the full story – neither for the object nor for us. Using our imagination and the fascination with those who made the object, bought and/or paid for it to fill in the blanks, is an end goal which should be valued on its own. Research and collecting is about curiosity, and curiosity is what we should treasure above all else.

Collecting is also a blessing and a curse. While it allows for the preservation of objects – being in a collection ensures their safety better

than in any other context – it can create tension in the artist, the collector and their circles. While it creates a curated cache of objects that can tell myriad stories, it omits so many. A collection can reveal but it can hide; it can direct and misdirect. By examining collections, we must always examine their context, their history and possible meanings, beyond what is directly in front of us.

Notes

- 1 Lee, *Pope Jacynth*, 115–36.
- 2 Lee, *Being Essays*, 18.
- 3 'Inscription translation' under object 'Cylinder' at the British Museum website, museum number 119014, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1927-1003-9 (accessed 14 February 2023). Woolley, *Excavations at Ur*, 237.
- 4 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 241.
- 5 Baekeland, 'Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting', 207.
- 6 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art – II', 206.
- 7 Pearce, *On Collecting*, 163.
- 8 Baekeland, 'Psychological aspects of art collecting', 209.
- 9 Kikoski and Kikoski. *The Inquiring Organization*, 149.
- 10 Cocker, 'Tactics for not knowing', 126–7.
- 11 Letter from Plácido Zuloaga to Alfred Morrison, Eibar, Spain, 13 October, 1868, at the Khalili Collections.
- 12 Reiss, 'A taxonomy of art patronage', 23.
- 13 Kennedy, 'Orientalism in the Victorian era'.
- 14 Lavin, *The Art and Tradition of the Zuloagas*, 83.
- 15 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art – II', 207–8.
- 16 Lavin, *The Art and Tradition of the Zuloagas*, 108.
- 17 Journal entry by Lady Layard, Madrid, 29 February 1892. Baylor University website, [https://pops.baylor.edu/layard/xml.php?fn=18720229.xml&h=Morrison%](https://pops.baylor.edu/layard/xml.php?fn=18720229.xml&h=Morrison%20) (accessed 23 January 2023).
- 18 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art – II', 206.
- 19 Lavin, *The Art and Tradition of the Zuloagas*, 71.

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Richard Dadd and the Morrison family: a tale of two masterpieces

Nicholas Tromans

Introduction

Richard Dadd was a successful young painter of literary and historical subjects of the early 1840s who dropped off the professional map of London's art-world after falling into mental illness following a tour of the Eastern Mediterranean.¹ Detained as a 'criminal lunatic', first at London's ancient Bethlem Hospital and then at the new Broadmoor Hospital in Berkshire, Dadd continued to create finely crafted small paintings and watercolours for some 40 years. Given away to, or otherwise acquired by, those around him in these asylums, his exquisite creations were it seems scattered widely as soon as they were completed. The artist does not appear to have wanted to retain his own collection of his work, but neither did he think any longer of having an audience. In some notes written at Bethlem, Dadd suggested 'high art' could never be for the general public (despite the traditions of academic theory). Instead, 'one might fancy pictures are like monks secluded from and very little noticed by the world, so that after all what matters about its [art's] quality except to the few, the initiated? The great masses, if they do notice, will still wonder "What is the good of such things?"'²

Early collectors of Dadd

Who then were 'the initiated' who appreciated Dadd's art? They were indeed few in number, at least prior to the artist's full rediscovery in the 1970s. There was Richard Gibson Reeves, a merchant of Birmingham, who bought dozens of the artist's early works from his elder brother

Robert; and later Sir Robert Rawlinson, the well-known civil engineer, who owned several important works from across Dadd's life, which he lent to an exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1875.³ Beyond this pair – the origins of whose interest in Dadd have not yet been explained – there were only those asylum officers who had the opportunity to see a lot of Dadd himself and were able to develop some kind of a relationship with him. Alexander Morison was one of the Visiting Physicians at Bethlem in the 1840s and early 1850s and apparently acquired enough works by the artist such that, in retirement in Scotland, his home boasted 'a number of watercoloured paintings with which the dining room is hung round as close as they will go by a criminal lunatic in Bethlehem, Dadd'.⁴ The senior permanent officer at Bethlem in Morison's time, the Steward (non-medical general manager), Nathaniel Nicholls, was evidently also able to acquire a considerable number of modest works by the artist.⁵ In 1852, a clean sweep of the old management of Bethlem brought in a new regime under a Resident Physician-Superintendent, a specialist in lunacy prepared to devote themselves full time to the management of this large public institution with a dubious reputation. That the post went to Dr William Charles Hood, who was not yet 30, suggested how demanding and relatively poorly remunerated it was perceived to be. Hood was expected to modernise Bethlem, which meant doing all he could to encourage the patients with kindness on one hand and, on the other, to maintain a conscientiously statistical and classificatory overview of them.⁶

Hood's arrival evidently spurred Dadd's art along new paths. He had continued to create landscapes based on drawings and memories from his eastern tour, but now more genre and historical subjects appear among his watercolours. The young Superintendent was responsible for directly commissioning at least one major oil painting from his patient, *Contradiction. Oberon and Titania* (1854–8; [Figure 15.1](#)), clearly seeking to bring Dadd back to Shakespeare and in particular to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the sources of the subjects of the pictures which had first made him famous.

There is even a photograph of Dadd at work on Hood's painting, commissioned along with portraits of other patients from the fashionable Regent Street photographer Henry Hering ([Figure 15.2](#)). The last of the early collectors of Dadd's work was Hood's colleague George Henry Haydon, Nicholls's successor as Steward from 1853 to 1889. An artist himself, Haydon concerned himself with the display of artworks at the hospital: 'It was Haydon,' recalled an early historian of Bethlem, 'who presented to the hospital most of the plaster statues and statuettes, which



Figure 15.1 Richard Dadd, *Contradiction. Oberon and Titania*, oil on canvas, 1854–8, 61 × 75.5 cm (24 × 29¾ inches). Private collection.

© Private collection

help to soften the severe lines of our wards.’⁷ He also took a close interest in Dadd. Haydon preserved those intriguing notes on art by Dadd quoted from above, and commissioned from him *The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke*, now his most well-known picture, which is dated by the artist ‘quasi 1855–64’, being left not quite finished when Dadd was transferred from Bethlem to Broadmoor in the latter year (Figure 15.3). Haydon also came to own several other, lesser, works by Dadd, and gave away to friends and colleagues yet more examples.

Alfred Morrison’s collection of works by Dadd

Perhaps we cannot in all fairness add Alfred Morrison to this list of committed collectors and encouragers of Richard Dadd. To the best of our current knowledge, Morrison made purchases of works by the artist on only two occasions. Nevertheless, being the field marshal among collectors that he was, those two occasions – 20 years apart – resulted in his owning both *Contradiction* and *The Fairy Feller*, the two great



Figure 15.2 Henry Hering, *Richard Dadd at his Easel*, photograph, c. 1857.
© Bethlem Museum of the Mind

masterpieces of Dadd's asylum years (see the [Appendix](#) to this chapter for the full provenances of these two paintings). Morrison was therefore, in the 1890s, briefly the most significant owner of Dadd's work, if never a patron of his nor a steady collector in the way that he was of the works of the Pre-Raphaelite landscape painter John Brett. 'What mattered to Morrison,' summarises Caroline Dakers, 'was his relationships with artists and craftsmen and the opportunity to commission, and even direct the production of, works of art.'⁸ If this was not possible in the case of Dadd, then the minute delicacy and precision of his work still aligned it stylistically with that of Brett, and indeed allowed it to sit in sympathy with many of the three-dimensional treasures in the vast Morrison collections.

Dr Hood left Bethlem after 10 years in 1862 on being appointed one of the Lord Chancellor's Visitors in Lunacy, watching over those members of wealthy families whose illnesses had led to the state intervening in their affairs. He returned to Bethlem as its treasurer in 1868, but died of pleurisy aged only 45 in 1870. Hood's daughter sent

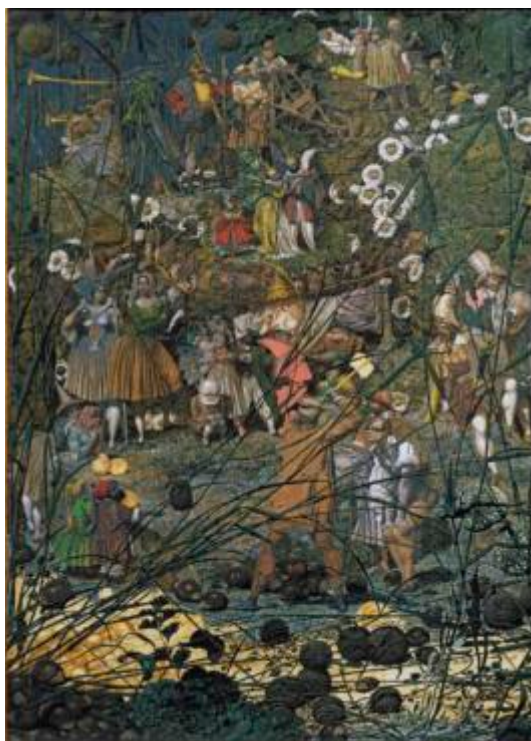


Figure 15.3 Richard Dadd, *The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke*, oil on canvas, 1855–64, 54 × 39.4 cm (21¼ × 15½ in).

© Tate, London

the prints, watercolours and paintings owned by her late father for sale at Christie's in March of that year. The catalogue reveals that Hood was no art collector. Beyond a selection of very conventional popular engravings, the only original works in the sale were by Dadd. By far the most eager bidder for these was the well-known print seller and art dealer Marseille Middleton Holloway, Morrison's trusted lieutenant in all that pertained to his collecting of prints, especially portrait engravings.⁹ It is not clear to what extent Holloway was buying on precise instructions from Morrison and how far on speculation on his own account; presumably his bidding was encouraged by both considerations.

The works by Dadd in the 1870 Hood sale were divided into three sections. First up were 14 watercolours (lots 302–15) representing a characteristic mix of Dadd's subjects from the 1840s and 1850s. Holloway came away with eight of these, three at least certainly thereafter entering the Morrison collection. These were an unidentified



Figure 15.4 Richard Dadd, *Reminiscence of Venice*, watercolour on paper, 1858, 17.6 × 25.7 cm (6¹⁵/₁₆ × 10¹/₈ in).

© Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK/Tyne & Wear Archives & Museum/Bridgeman Images

Seapiece; *Reminiscence of Venice* (1858; [Figure 15.4](#)); and *Reminiscence of the River Medway at Chatham* (1857; private collection). These reminiscences, while on one level conventional picturesque topographic studies, are also extraordinary feats of mnemonic visual reconstruction by an artist whose actual physical environment was narrowly and harshly defined by the blackened brick walls of Bethlem in Lambeth. Among the other watercolours from this part of the Hood sale which were acquired by Holloway but did not certainly go on to enter the Morrison collection (although it remains plausible that they did), *The Pilot Boat* stands out as one of Dadd's most evocative watercolours in his painstaking stippled miniature technique: it was later to be the first work by Dadd to be purchased by the Tate, in 1930.¹⁰

The second set of Dadd's works offered at the Hood sale (lots 316–30*) were 16 watercolours from his series of 'Illustrations to the Passions', the artist's extended meditation – echoing the kinds of textbooks on lunacy written by his doctors – upon the causes and symptoms of mental suffering.¹¹ These images, often harsh or satirical as they are, were evidently of less interest to Holloway, and so we infer also to his clients, including Morrison, and he purchased only three of the Passions – *Splendour and Wealth* (1853; Newport Museum and Art Gallery),

Want (1856; Victoria and Albert Museum) and *Idleness* (1853; Victoria and Albert Museum). Again, we cannot be sure whether or not these went to Morrison, but the fact that in 1879 it was claimed by a sober-minded writer that Morrison possessed ‘many’ works by Dadd (discussed below) strongly suggests that Morrison took more of these watercolours from Holloway than we can certainly document.

The presentation of Dadd’s work in the Hood sale culminated in three oil paintings (lots 331–332A), all of them bought by Holloway. *Mercy: David Spareth Saul’s Life* (1854), an austere Old Testament subject, rigidly executed, fetched only 19 guineas, less than several of the watercolours: it is today one of the treasures of the Getty Museum’s nineteenth-century collections. The following lot was also an Old Testament subject, *Jael and Sisera* (untraced), of the same size as *Mercy* but evidently more appealing despite its subject, the Israelite heroine killing the commander of the Canaanite army by driving a tent peg through his skull: it was knocked down to Holloway for 32 guineas. Finally came the star lot, *Contradiction. Oberon and Titania*, although that conceptual title (along the lines of *Mercy* and the Passions series) was inscribed by Dadd out of sight on the back of the picture, and so the painting was called simply *Scene from the Midsummer Night’s Dream*. As we have noted, Hood’s intention in commissioning the painting was surely to guide Dadd back into the ways of working and feeling that had generated his early successes with pictures such as *Titania Sleeping* (1841; Louvre) and *Puck* (1841; Harris Museum, Preston). As in those paintings, the fascination of *Contradiction* lies more with tiny figures strung into rings or spirals than with the main characters, here the static King and Queen of the Fairies who face off over custody of the ‘little changeling boy’ who brings up Titania’s skirts while Puck seems to want to lead his master away from the fight. Two of the play’s human lovers, divorced from the proceedings (perhaps because they are still waiting to come on stage), look on from the right. This is the confrontation, or ‘contradiction’, of the royal couple that opens Act II of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in which Titania describes the ‘distemperature’, the ghastly climate breakdown, that has overtaken the natural world as a result of their squabbling. The divisions of night and day, and of the seasons, have collapsed, and all nature is at war with itself.

Contradiction sold to Holloway for 136 guineas (£142 16s), a strong price for an artist who had been all but forgotten by the general public by 1870, but one comparable to auction results for other major oil paintings by Dadd during his lifetime.¹² There had been efforts by at least one eminent London dealer, William Cox, to build up Dadd’s prices in

the 1860s, although he claimed to have given up on the artist by the time of Hood's sale, concluding that Dadd's works were more intriguing than they were ever likely to be valuable.¹³ Nevertheless, Holloway must have faced an underbidder before succeeding in carrying off *Contradiction*, and another interested party had been the leading psychiatrist (and Bethlem trustee) Dr Daniel Hack Tuke, who left a written bid for the picture.¹⁴

The Hood sale, moreover, offered the art world its first opportunity to see a significant group of Dadd's asylum-period work together in one place. Among those who responded to the chance was the artist James Smetham, himself plagued by mental illness, who wrote of 'the fever of acute and consuming observation' to be found in Dadd's style of drawing.¹⁵ The retired banker James Hughes Anderdon, like Morrison a voracious collector of autographs (albeit working on a much smaller budget), was bowled over by the Hood collection. He enthused:

No such striking examples of graphic power have ever been exhibited ... Overspread with a flash of humour as many of them were, there were some which were in a degree empassioned and violent ... Never before had I seen a sample of this man's artistic faculty and it astonished me. There was some approach to the manner of Blake, but much more highly elaborated.¹⁶

From Bethlem itself came a rather more – on the face of it – cynical response. Back in 1856, Hood had written to Alexander Morison to say he would no longer allow any of Dadd's work to leave Bethlem. Yet in 1871 – with Hood no longer alive and evidently hoping to benefit from the interest generated by his sale the year before – G. H. Haydon sent a small group of Dadd watercolours to Christie's.¹⁷ Probably Hood's sale was also responsible for encouraging the national collections to begin acquiring works by Dadd in the 1870s, even as the artist remained at Her Majesty's pleasure at Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum.¹⁸

Two of the three oil paintings by Dadd acquired by Holloway at Hood's sale – *Contradiction* and *Jael and Sisera* – entered the Morrison collection, but *Mercy* remained with Holloway until his premises off the Strand, along with his other remaining stock, was taken over by Goupil & Co. in 1875.¹⁹ *Contradiction* was placed on display in Morrison's fabulously decorated house on Carlton House Terrace. Here it was seen and admired by the writer for *The Magazine of Art* who published a two-part article on the interiors in 1879.²⁰ The article was focused upon Morrison's astonishing decoration and *objets d'art*,

and *Contradiction* was the only example of Fine Art to be mentioned, almost, as it were, an honorary work of decorative art among the porcelain, metalwork and marquetry.²¹ Some of the vocabulary used of the latter might equally be applied to *Contradiction*, all sharing an ‘excruciation of workmanship’, while the exquisite little Japanese boxes at Carlton House Terrace were said to show ‘fairy-like freaks’ of detail.²² These *articles de luxe*, concludes the writer, disregarded any sense of utility and ‘must solely be regarded as precious and costly works of modern art’, thus further shrinking any distance between the work of Dadd on one hand and that of master-craftworkers such as Zuloaga or Tiffany on the other. Of *Contradiction* itself, the writer has much to say, yet without naming the work or referring to its subject or narrative, again emphasising its status as an amazing concoction of shapes and lines suited to its opulent environment:

Perhaps a work which will be least familiar to our readers is a circular oil painting by Dadd, a man who seemed to defy all principles of composition, proportion in drawing the figure, accuracy based upon a study of nature, perspective, and, in fact, well-known principles laid down by the great masters. Dadd, according to this example of his work – one of many in Mr. Morrison’s possession – has painted unhealthy nightmares of grey, ghostly hues, with a dexterity of finish which might have delighted a Van Eyck, and with a wildness of conception of which a Blake might have been envious. Elves, fairies, goblins, bits of architecture, clusters of jewels, pale grey and green fleshy foliage, drops of rain, an Oriental prince crowned with a Burmese crown, toads, frogs, sprays of unclassifiable flowers, a Bacchanalian procession, are in the work before us all grouped together more or less like the confused details of a ‘scrap’ screen, but as far removed from such work, in point of artistic interest and value, as a painting is from a lithograph. This eccentric painter ... has contrived ingeniously to blend his forms together so that there is a pleasing composition of lines; the ideas, however, with which the composition of lines is inevitably associated are unquestionably weird, if not hideous and inexplicable.²³

While *Contradiction* was being admired as a miraculous *objet d’art* in Morrison’s spectacular Carlton House Terrace rooms, *The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke* remained in the Steward’s house at Bethlem Hospital. Dadd himself, as a criminal lunatic in law, was transferred to the new

facility dedicated to the care of this category of patient – Broadmoor – as soon as this was opened in 1864. Deliberately perhaps, he left the *Fairy Feller*, on which he had been working since 1855, unfinished: a swathe of light tan underpainting has been left visible along the lower part of the picture, providing in effect a stable foreground platform for the fairy axeman (the ‘Feller’ of the punning title) to stand safely upon. His axe itself, however, has also been left unpainted. At Broadmoor, Dadd was immediately at work on a replica of the picture in watercolour, perhaps the most extraordinary of all his pictorial reconstructions from memory (*Songe de la fantasie*, 1864; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).²⁴ At the same time, Dadd wrote out – surely for Haydon, the *Fairy Feller*’s owner back at Bethlem – a kind of rhyming account of the picture and its characters, titled ‘Elimination of a Picture & its subject – called The Feller’s Master Stroke’ (1865; Bethlem Hospital, Museum of the Mind).²⁵ If the *Fairy Feller* is the most beguilingly mysterious of all Victorian paintings, it is also one of the most thoroughly elucidated.

‘Elimination’ (the title playing presumably upon ‘illumination’) recounts that ‘an official person’ (Haydon), pleased with the sight of Hood’s *Contradiction*, confessed that he desired ‘To have the like’.²⁶ Inspired partly by some poetry, and partly by spontaneous suggestions evoked by shapes appearing on the prepared canvas (‘vacant entities of chance, / Lent forms unto my careless glance’), Dadd developed a story about Shakespeare’s Queen Mab as described in *Romeo and Juliet*. ‘Fays, gnomes, and elves and suchlike’ have gathered to watch the Feller split a hazelnut in order to make a new coach for the queen, who waits with her retinue along the elongated brim of the hat of the ‘Patriarch’. As with *Contradiction*, the composition gets more interesting the harder we look into the detail, and as in that picture we find a tense stand-off: the Feller’s great act, to witness which all have assembled, is eternally postponed because his axe has never been brought into existence.

For all his untiring clubbability and art-world associations, Haydon does not appear to have cared to share his extraordinary painting. There is no known record of his having lent the *Fairy Feller* to any exhibition nor even of his having shown it to any of his many artist friends. He must surely have been wary of being seen to be profiting in any financial way from his position at Bethlem. The painting remained there, absolutely unknown, before eventually quietly passing into the Morrison collection to join *Contradiction*, its original inspiration. Precisely how and when this sale took place is unknown, but it was perhaps prompted by news of Haydon’s death in 1891 (just two years after his retirement

from Bethlem). The peculiar silence surrounding the *Fairy Feller* was still maintained, for nothing is heard of the picture until the 1930s, when the most unexpected of coincidences led to its emerging as one of the great art-historical revelations of the period.

After the death of Alfred Morrison

If the *Fairy Feller* came to Morrison in 1891, then Alfred was its owner for only a few years until his own death in 1897. It and *Contradiction* seem to have been hung together – Morrison's daughter Katharine described *Contradiction* as the 'companion' to the *Fairy Feller* – but whether in London or at Fonthill House we cannot say.²⁷ After 1897, Alfred's widow Mabel – to whom he left all his collections – soon began a campaign of downsizing, and got rid of the London house. In one of her many sales, in 1899, we come across Dadd's painting of *Jael and Sisera* and the three watercolours, also bought at Hood's sale by Holloway, which were noted earlier as being the only works on paper by Dadd certainly in the Morrison collection.²⁸ The two principal oil paintings by Dadd, however, were neither sold by Mabel nor retained as heirlooms. Rather, as curiosities of no great financial value, it seems they were simply taken by or given to whichever of the Morrisons' children had taken a fancy to them. So *Contradiction* was taken by the younger son, Major James Archibald ('Archie') Morrison, to Basildon Park in Berkshire, which he inherited from his uncle Charles in 1909. Unable to afford the upkeep of such a palatial property, however, Archie put the contents up for sale in 1920, among them an 'Intempera Drawing' by Richard Dodd (both *sic*), 'An allegorical subject, with numerous figures and fairies'. The *Fairy Feller* meanwhile passed to Katharine Morrison, who became Lady Gatty in 1905 on her marriage to Sir Stephen Gatty, a colonial judge. It was she who later recalled that *Contradiction* – the *Fairy Feller*'s 'companion' as she put it – had 'disappeared when her father died' in 1897.²⁹ That it had in fact gone no further than to the house of her brother Archie suggests how impossible it was to keep track of specific items within the vast Morrison collections.

The moment of the *Fairy Feller*'s tentative emergence from its long seclusion in absolute privacy finally came in 1933 when the Gattys' daughter Hester married the poet Siegfried Sassoon, celebrated as one of the essential voices of the First World War. Sassoon and his mother-in-law Lady Gatty evidently became very close, and her occasional gifts of books and artworks to him led him to exclaim: 'What a clever

present giver you are.’³⁰ Perhaps the first of these gifts, and certainly the cleverest, at about the time of the poet’s marriage, was the bizarre, compelling little painting from Bethlem. Lady Gatty must have realised the connection that made it such an appropriate gift: among Sassoon’s closest comrades during the war had been Richard Dadd’s great-nephews (the sons of the artist’s nephew), the brothers Edmund and Julian Dadd, all of them serving in France with the Welch Fusiliers. On 3 September 1916, during the Battle of the Somme, Edmund was killed and Julian shot through the throat, later suffering terrible mental trauma following his discharge. A third Dadd brother, the young sculptor Stephen Gabriel, had been killed the year before during the Dardanelles campaign, which had also claimed the life of Sassoon’s brother Hamo. A cousin of the Dadd brothers, Philip Dadd (another great-nephew of Richard Dadd and also an artist), was killed in France in August 1916.³¹

Julian Dadd and Sassoon depended on one another’s memories after the war, as the poet compiled his extended sequence of anonymised memoirs and Julian struggled with a misplaced but agonising survivor’s sense of guilt that he should have done more for his platoon. Sassoon was able to show the *Fairy Feller* to Julian when the latter visited his home, Heytesbury House near Warminster in Wiltshire. But in Julian’s last known letter to Sassoon before his suicide in 1937, he confessed the ‘sad truth’ that ‘the tragic and gruesome termination of his [Richard Dadd’s] career as a free member of society filled the family with such a superstitious horror that, so far as I can judge, they disowned, as far as possible, every connection with him.’³²

The *Fairy Feller* was placed on loan by Sassoon to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford between 1935 and 1937 as *A Phantasy*. This public appearance (the only loan of the picture made by Sassoon during his ownership of it) finally encouraged several experts to start asking how the picture related to the very few other rediscovered works by Dadd – to start the process of formal art-historical recovery. Ian Robertson, the young Assistant Keeper of the Ashmolean, was sparked to begin a proper study of Dadd. He corresponded with Lady Gatty about *Contradiction*, letting her know it had reappeared in the collection of Arthur Crossland, a textile manufacturer in Bradford, noted as a collector of modern British art.³³ Among the visitors to the Ashmolean in the 1930s to be struck by the *Fairy Feller* was the poet and scholar Laurence Binyon, who had recently retired from a distinguished career at the British Museum. In 1937 he published an article giving a brief overview of the works by Dadd known to him in the great London museums. In the same year, the aesthete Sacheverell Sitwell, although lamenting

how few works by Dadd had yet emerged, claimed him to be ‘one of the two or three most interesting of our painters during the nineteenth century’ – an ‘*âme damnée*’ ready to ‘be revived and allowed the light’. Both authors reproduced the *Fairy Feller* – effectively publishing it for the first time in art-historical literature – and both associated it with Surrealism.³⁴

If the intellectual groundwork for Dadd’s rehabilitation was now being done thanks to the public emergence of the *Fairy Feller*, what remained was the work of locating further major works in private collections and physically bringing them into the open. But the wilderness years of Victorian art’s critical standing had arrived, and little or nothing by Dadd passed through the major London auction houses between 1936 and 1960. When the Victorian revival of the 1960s came, one art-market figure stands out as ready to shape Dadd’s role in that story. John Rickett of the British pictures department of Sotheby’s stepped eagerly forward, determined to make something commercially of Dadd in a way that William Cox, a century earlier, had tried but failed to do. In 1963, the now elderly Sassoon entrusted the *Fairy Feller* to an antiques dealer from Portsmouth who had improbably managed to convince him he could sell it for some astronomical price to John Paul Getty.³⁵ To his horror, Sassoon discovered in May of that year that Rickett had included the picture in a planned Sotheby’s sale of *Fine Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Drawings & Paintings* on behalf of the dishonest dealer. Disgusted by the greed of the art market, Sassoon determined that ‘to remove the pollution from this work of genius, I will give it to the Tate’.³⁶ The painting was promptly recovered from Sotheby’s and presented to the Tate Gallery by Sassoon with the moving dedication: ‘in memory of his friend and fellow officer Julian Dadd, a great-nephew of the artist, and of his two brothers who gave their lives in the First World War’.

Nothing daunted by the debacle of the *Fairy Feller* at Sotheby’s in 1963, John Rickett went on in the following year to publish an important short article on Dadd’s life, and to bring to auction *Contradiction*, having located it – to his great surprise – in the luxurious Royal Hotel in Scarborough.³⁷ The hotel owner, Tom Laughton, later wrote of his regret at having been talked into selling after he had seen the picture go on to break the record for a Victorian painting at auction in 1983 – a record it would break again in 1992 when *Contradiction* was acquired by the composer and impresario Andrew Lloyd Webber.³⁸ The *Fairy Feller*, meanwhile, eluded the art market altogether: it has never appeared at auction and was sold privately, it seems, only once (to Morrison) and then for an unknown amount. In the 1960s, it became one of the great

Victorian favourites of the Tate collection, despite its contents remaining obscure until the rediscovery, in the early 1970s, of Dadd's 'Elimination' manuscript. This, it transpired, had remained at the Morrisons' estate at Fonthill, surely having come to Alfred Morrison with the *Fairy Feller* itself, but since separated from it. The notebook containing the poem was turned up only when the latest in a series of demolitions and rebuildings was taking place at Fonthill.³⁹ Extracts from 'Elimination' were published in David Greysmith's book on Dadd of 1973 and used by Freddie Mercury for the lyrics of the Queen song named after the painting which featured on their second album, released in March 1974 just a few weeks before the Tate opened its definitive Richard Dadd exhibition curated by Patricia Allderidge, the archivist of Bethlem Hospital. The *Fairy Feller* has since run deep into the fertile imaginations of writers of historical and fantasy literature, eager to complete the enigmatic picture's unfinished story.

Conclusion

The capacious Morrison collections had provided a refuge for Dadd's pair of Shakespearean Bethlem masterpieces when so many other important works of his were lost. The epic scope of the collection, with its aesthetic emphasis upon intricate workmanship, was able to welcome Dadd's paintings with an enthusiasm that public collections would not match for many decades. For a few years, it was possible for the pictures' relationship as companions to be respected. Subsequently, the *Fairy Feller* had an appropriately fairy-tale history, transmitted from owner to owner in a series of gifts. But the very scale of the Morrison art holdings also meant that *Contradiction* was, after Alfred's death, effectively mislaid within the family, and subsequently spent many years being passed from collection to collection, sadly separated from its companion. That occasional reunions, at loan exhibitions, are today possible is thanks in large part to the interest that Alfred Morrison showed in Dadd in the nineteenth century.

Appendix: Provenances of *Contradiction* and *The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke* (successive owners in bold)

Contradiction. Oberon and Titania

Oil on an oval canvas, 61 × 75.5 cm (24 × 29¾ in.). Inscribed on back on canvas (in lettering mimicking the stencilled name and address of the

maker, Charles Roberson): *Painted for W. C. Hood Esq^{re}. MD &c by R^d. Dadd. A.D. 1854–58*. On the back of the frame and stretcher, the artist has written in pencil many brief and incomprehensible phrases in mock Italian, along with a drawing of a hand holding a top hat.

Sir William Charles Hood, Physician-Superintendent of Bethlem Hospital; Hood's sale, Christie's, 26 and 28 March 1870, second day (332A), as *Scene from the Midsummer Night's Dream*, bought by Marseille Middleton Holloway, 136 guineas, for **Alfred Morrison** of Fonthill House and 16 Carlton House Terrace; on display at Carlton House Terrace in 1879; inherited by his widow, **Mabel Morrison**; to their younger son, **Major James Archibald Morrison** of Basildon Park, Berkshire; Basildon Park sale by Waring & Gillow, 26 October–3 November 1920, fifth day, 2 November (982) as *An Allegorical Subject*; the London dealer **F. R. Meatyard**; sent by Meatyard to an unidentified dealer in Bradford; **Arthur Crossland**, textile manufacturer, of Heaton Mount, Bradford by 1930 when lent to Bradford Corporation Art Gallery, Jubilee Exhibition (519) as *Midsummer Night's Dream*; by early 1950s to **Thomas Laughton** of the Royal Hotel, Scarborough, where it had been on public show 'for ten years or more' by 1964; Sotheby's, 18 March 1964 (42), bought by **Raymond F. Needler**, confectioner of Hull, £7,000; Sotheby's, 15 March 1983 (25), bought by Fine Art Society, £550,000, for **Myron Kunin**, owner of the Regis Collection, Minneapolis, MN; Christie's, 12 June 1992 (120), bought by David Mason, £1,650,000, for **Andrew Lloyd Webber**.

The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke

Oil on canvas, 54 × 39.4 cm (21¼ × 15½ in). Inscribed on back on canvas, in elaborate characters: *Painted for G. H. Haydon, Esq.^{re} by R Dadd, quasi-1855–64*.

George Henry Haydon, Steward of Bethlem Hospital (d. 1891); purchased at an unknown date for **Alfred Morrison**; inherited by his widow, **Mabel Morrison**; to her daughter, **Katharine, Lady Gatty**, at an uncertain date, perhaps around the time of her marriage in 1905; given by Lady Gatty to **Sir Siegfried Sassoon** about the time of his marriage to her daughter, Hester, in 1933; lent to Ashmolean Museum in Oxford 1935–7 as *A Phantasy*; entered to a Sotheby's sale in 1963 but withdrawn shortly before the auction and presented by Sassoon to the **Tate** in 1963, 'in memory of his friend and fellow officer Julian Dadd, a great-nephew of the artist, and of his two brothers who gave their lives in the First World War'.

Notes

- 1 For a survey of Dadd's life and work, see Tromans, *Richard Dadd*.
- 2 Tromans, "Pruning a Genius", 145.
- 3 Reeves's collection was sold at Foster's in London, 29 March–1 April 1865, 2nd day (139–51). Rawlinson's Dadds appeared in the sale of his widow at Christie's, 18 May 1903 (65–7, 120–1): on his collection, see also the *Athenaeum*, 10 April 1875, 495 and How, 'Illustrated interviews'.
- 4 Fragment of a letter, of which the details are lost, attached to Dadd's watercolour *The Rabbit Hutch* (1861; sold Christie's, 13 June 2001, lot 8).
- 5 Nicholls served for several decades until his retirement in 1853. A group of works by Dadd appeared in the sale of his widow's pictures at Christie's, 23 February 1878.
- 6 On Hood at Bethlem, see Andrews et al., *History of Bethlem*, chapter 26.
- 7 O'Donoghue, *The Story of Bethlehem Hospital*, 416.
- 8 Dakers, '1872: Alfred Morrison's purchases'.
- 9 So familiar a figure was Holloway at Christie's that the clerk annotating the company's archived copy of Hood's catalogue gave his name in abbreviated form as 'Holl', which has caused some confusion since.
- 10 The remaining four watercolours from this section of the Hood sale acquired by Holloway were: lot 311, *Mountain Scenery in Caria* (1857; Yale Center for British Art); lot 312, *Boudron [Bodrum], the Birthplace of Herodotus* (1858; Fogg Art Museum, Harvard); lot 314, *Charles II and Nell Gwyn* (untraced); and lot 315, *The Curiosity Shop* (1854; British Museum).
- 11 See Stock, 'Richard Dadd's Passions'. Dr Hood's understanding of lunacy was confidently moral or psychological in basis, as opposed to physiological or somatic.
- 12 Compare the 210gns paid for *Titania Sleeping* in 1854 and 150gns for *Haunt of the Fairies* (unlocated) in 1865.
- 13 Anon, 'The British Gallery of Art', 913; Alderidge, *The Late Richard Dadd*, 35.
- 14 On Dr Tuke and the visual arts, see Tromans, 'Artist and alienist'.
- 15 Smetham, *Letters*, 212.
- 16 Anderdon's grangerised and annotated volumes of exhibition catalogues: Royal Academy library, vol. 24, fo. 40.
- 17 Tromans, *Richard Dadd*, 113; Christie's, 14–15 July 1871, lots 75–81: most of these works were returned to Haydon unsold.
- 18 The British Museum purchased *Recklessness* (1855; from the 'Passions' series) in 1876: it had been lot 322 in Hood's sale. Also in 1876, within the huge library bequeathed to the Victoria and Albert Museum by John Forster, were two Dadd watercolours: *Patriotism* (1857; from the 'Passions' series, lot 316 in Hood's sale) and *Leonidas with the Woodcutters* (1873). Joining these works at the Victoria and Albert Museum there followed in 1877 *Entrance to an Egyptian Tomb* and *Tombs of the Khalifs* (both 1843) and in 1878 *View in the Island of Rhodes* (c. 1845, lot 310 in Hood's sale) and *Jesus Christ Walking on the Sea* (1852). Dadd first appeared at the Tate (the National Gallery of British Art, founded in 1897) in 1915 with the gift of *A Turk* (1863); as already mentioned, the Tate's first Dadd purchase was *The Pilot Boat* (1858–9) in 1930.
- 19 *Mercy* is listed among the 'Stock Holloway' in the Goupil stockbooks at the Getty Research Institute, Livre no. 7, 217.
- 20 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art', 1879. The author was likely the journal's editor, Arthur Trendell, a senior civil servant in the Department of Science and Art with expertise in the international exhibitions.
- 21 According to Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 275, at this period there were few important pictures on show in the Morrisons' London house, 'just a few favourites, and some specimens that are not easily classified'.
- 22 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art', 206, 210.
- 23 Anon, 'Treasure houses of art', 210. The passage on Dadd ends by lamenting that the artist had been omitted from recent reference works on the history of British art: he is indeed absent from Samuel Redgrave's *Dictionary of Artists of the English School* (1874, expanded edition 1878).
- 24 Tromans, 'Dadd's doubles', 158–62.
- 25 Tromans, *Richard Dadd*, 186–93. Haydon certainly at least had sight of 'Elimination', as he made a copy of it which survives in the possession of his descendants. As the original notebook containing the text was later discovered at Fonthill (see n.39), it seems reasonable to assume that it remained with the painting at least until the early twentieth century.

- 26 The *Fairy Feller* was begun in 1855 according to its inscription, at which date *Contradiction* – itself begun only the year before – cannot yet have existed beyond a drawing on a canvas.
- 27 Siegfried Sassoon, a subsequent owner, believed that the *Fairy Feller* had hung at Fonthill House, but was (understandably) confused over the history of the different Morrison properties; see Sassoon's letter to his friend and legal advisor Anthony Lousada, 28 May 1963: Tate Archives 4/2/244/2/26.
- 28 *Jael and Sisera* was sold at Christie's, 28 January 1899 (63) together with the previous lot, a painting by the Hudson River School artist J. F. Cropsey, for just 15s; the watercolours by Dadd were lots 17 and 18 in the same sale.
- 29 Sassoon related these words of Lady Gatty's in a letter to Mary Chamot of the Tate Gallery, 30 June 1963: Tate Archives, Artists' Files / Richard Dadd/2/T598.
- 30 Sassoon to Katharine Gatty, 10 September 1940: British Library, RP 5574/4.
- 31 All were grandsons of Richard Dadd's eldest brother Robert. Stephen Gabriel, Edmund and Julian were the children of Robert's son Stephen Thomas Dadd (a sporting and animal artist), and Philip the son of Edward Martin Dadd.
- 32 7 January 1936: Cambridge University Library, Sassoon correspondence, 9375/182.
- 33 5 March 1936: Cambridge University Library, Sassoon correspondence, 9375/1063.
- 34 Binyon, 'A note on Richard Dadd', 1937, 125; Sitwell, *Narrative Pictures*, 72–3. Sitwell, although producing by far the most enthusiastic and full coverage of Dadd to date, admits to being aware of only a very few works.
- 35 The dealer was Leonard Kitter, who was declared bankrupt in 1965.
- 36 Sassoon to Lousada, 19 May 1963: Tate Archives, 4/2/244/2/11.
- 37 Rickett, 'Rd. Dadd'. Rickett oversaw the sale of several further important works by Dadd at Sotheby's before his early death in 1970. His own collection of Dadds was even more impressive, including as it did some major paintings such as *Come Unto These Yellow Sands* (1842; private collection).
- 38 Laughton, *Pavilions by the Sea*, 164, 193; letter to *The Times*, 27 July 1983, 11.
- 39 The manuscript was apparently discovered in the drawer of a desk at Fonthill House as it was being cleared prior to demolition in 1972 (this Fonthill House was an old manor house rebuilt by Detmar Blow for Hugh Morrison, Alfred's elder son, early in the twentieth century). It was sold at Christie's, 20 December 1972 (183) to the collector Alistair McAlpine, and was later acquired by Bethlem Hospital for its Museum of the Mind.

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Mabel Morrison: patron and collector of lace and textiles

Molly-Claire Gillett

Introduction

Alfred Morrison's wife is remembered primarily for auctioning much of her husband's collection after his death, dispersing his prints, ephemera, paintings, ceramics and *objets de vertu* throughout private collections and museums. However, Mabel Morrison, née Chermside (1847–1933), was a patron and collector in her own right. Primarily interested in lace and textiles, she was an active member of the Council of the Royal School of Needlework, loaned objects from her collection to exhibitions throughout Britain and the United States, participated in an Irish lace design reform scheme and assembled a lace collection described in 1894 as 'the finest collection in England - perhaps the most varied in the world'.¹

Like that of her husband, Mabel's collection was dispersed, partly through auction, in the early years of the twentieth century. She left few letters behind, and seems to have destroyed much of her correspondence with Alfred.² Wiltshire writer Edith Olivier (1872–1948), who wrote a short and affectionate biographical sketch in *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire* and the preface for a posthumous collection of Mabel's religious and philosophical writings, *The Quest of Joy*, leaves one of the few records of her personality and habits.³ However, Mabel's collecting practice was, in many ways, a matter of public record. She made commissions and loaned items to exhibitions that published catalogues; she lent her name, organisational skills and considerable financial resources to philanthropic initiatives followed by the press and even detailed in government reports. Though neither her collection nor any personal records thereof have survived intact, newspaper gossip columns, advertising pamphlets, fashion periodicals and illustrated books hint at an extensive collection

of lace and textiles that is all but invisible in the Morrison family archive. This chapter follows accounts of Mabel's patronage and involvement in exhibitions throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to attempt a partial reconstruction of her vast lace and textiles collection and consider how her collecting practice intersected with contemporary design reform and philanthropy.

Mabel Morrison, née Chermside: 'a bird of paradise in the Wiltshire scene'

Born in Leeds in 1847, Mabel was the eldest child of Emily (née Dawson) and Richard Seymour Conway Chermside (1823–67), a rector in the Church of England.⁴ The family soon moved to south Wiltshire, where Chermside was appointed rector of Wilton. Mabel spent much of her childhood travelling, with winters on the French Riviera and several years living in Paris and Normandy with her grandfather, Sir Robert Alexander Chermside (d. 1860), an Irish military doctor. Edith Olivier's account of Mabel's childhood, though certainly composed from the stories that Mabel herself chose to tell in later years, is one of adventure and broad experience: making friends with cattle and farm workers alike in Normandy, climbing trees and fishing with her brothers, listening to tales of the Napoleonic wars at Newstead Abbey (erstwhile home of Lord Byron) and collecting costumes and jewellery while travelling abroad. Olivier describes her as 'a bird of paradise on the Wiltshire scene' who 'had always her own splendour'.⁵

A striking and unusual young woman, Mabel seems to have made a strong impression on Alfred, 26 years older and a neighbour of only a few miles away.⁶ They married at St James's Church, Piccadilly, in 1866. Alfred commissioned a Charles Lepec enamel miniature of his wife that year, which shows a confident, unlined face framed by reddish-brown hair (Figure 16.1).

Mabel, now Mabel Morrison, is wearing a shawl of blue silk edged with gold lace and secured with gold pins over her hair, her dress edged with what appears to be Italian *reticella* lace, likely dating to the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The Lepec miniature hints at the complexity surrounding Mabel's own status as a wife, connoisseur and collector of the decorative arts. It formed part of Alfred's collection and as a figurative, labelled and signed work of a known artist, it is remembered as such. With her likeness captured in enamel, gazing away from the viewer, pink-cheeked and adorned in bright colours, Mabel becomes part



Figure 16.1 Charles Lepec (1830–after 1888), *Mabel Morrison*. Frame by Plácido Zuloaga (1834–1910). French (Paris), 1866. Enamel on copper; Damascened iron frame inlaid with gold and silver; silk velvet. Framed: 14.9 × 12.7 × 1.3 cm (5.8 × 5 × 0.5 in). The enameller considered this a portrait true to life of the young Mrs. Morrison. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Olivier Hurstel and Martin Levy, 2018 (2018.74).

© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

of her husband's collection. This parallel was not lost on her contemporaries. Edith Olivier wrote that 'in [Alfred]'s eyes, she remained the most unique among all the treasures he had collected'.⁷

However, Mabel's 'exotic' costume, including costly gold lace, is consistent with the descriptions of her own early interest in collecting and adornment. Even before her marriage, Mabel collected textiles and items of costume from the countries that she visited – 'strange headdresses, shawls and jewels' – and incorporated them into 'her own peculiar style of dressing'.⁸ It may even have been this eclectic and acquisitive interest in the decorative arts – though confined to the more affordable and feminine spheres of jewellery and dress – that sparked Alfred's interest in Mabel when they met. Regardless, it is very likely that Mabel selected a costume from her own 'peculiar' wardrobe, or even had garments trimmed with lace from her collection to sit for the portrait. In the Lepec enamel – part of Alfred's collection – she displays specimens from her

own collection: her headscarf may be one of the embroidered Persian veils she would later display at the South Kensington Museum, and the gold lace might be that which had adorned a seventeenth-century cardinal's robe, praised by Britain's foremost textile expert, Alan Cole, a decade later. However, unlike the Lepec miniature, these and other scarves, shawls and laces from Mabel's collection – though intricately made, celebrated and costly – were the work of anonymous makers, often women, and were not signed or marked with provenance. They were much more likely to wear out with use, or fade and disintegrate from prolonged display. As such, Mabel's collection was more transient, and it remains harder to trace than that of her husband.

As a wife and mother, Mabel's collecting, patronage and philanthropy were also shaped by the demands of family life and a long period of convalescence. During the first eight years after her marriage, Mabel gave birth to five children, though the first, Rachel, died in infancy.⁹ Rachel was followed by Hugh (1868), Katherine (1869), Dorothy (1871) and James Archibald, or 'Archie' (1873). After Archie's birth in September 1873, Mabel suffered from a painful post-partum condition that necessitated long periods of bed rest.¹⁰ She was deeply concerned that her illness would adversely impact the lives of her children and husband. In the 1880s she wrote: 'I fretted dreadfully at first for fear my being ill should spoil my husband's or children's life, but I see it doesn't & that is everything.'¹¹ During this time, Mabel intermittently held court from her bed, reading extensively, summoning family members to her side for conversation and even keeping bees outside her bedroom window in London.¹² Whether by correspondence or during periods of increased mobility, she also became increasingly involved with the acquisition and display of lace and textiles.

The South Kensington Museum and the Royal School of Needlework

Mabel's loans to public exhibitions in the early 1870s indicate the extent and breadth of her collection of lace, textiles and jewellery in the early years of her marriage. Though much of her collecting must surely have been financed by her tremendously wealthy husband, Edith Olivier's account of Mabel's youthful delight in 'exotic' costumes and sumptuous textiles indicates that the interest pre-dated her marriage, and suggests that her collection originated in pieces gathered during her travels as a young woman, or perhaps gifted by her brother Herbert

Chermside (1850–1929), who served on military and intelligence missions in Turkey, Anatolia and Egypt in the 1870s and 1880s.¹³ Alfred and Mabel's collections seem to have lived side by side, but distinguished from each other, as evidenced by the catalogue for the London International Exhibition of 1872, which lists three enamelled objects by Charles Lepec (1830–90): a coffer lent by 'Mr. A. Morrison' and a jewel box and mirror lent by 'Mrs. A. Morrison'.¹⁴

In 1871, Mabel sat on a committee of women tasked with obtaining loans for a display of jewellery produced before 1800 at the South Kensington Museum to be held the following year.¹⁵ Born out of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and previously the Museum of Ornamental Art at Marlborough House, which both moved and changed name in 1857, the South Kensington Museum operated on the belief that exposure to quality design would both improve public taste and educate artisans. The committee was mandated to select objects that were 'remarkable either for the artistic design, or the fineness of the stones, or the skill displayed in their settings', and Mabel Morrison was among the most prolific lenders.¹⁶ She loaned 33 pieces, including an early eighteenth-century French locket containing a portrait of Oliver Cromwell and said to have been given by Richard Cromwell to 'an Italian lady', a large Chinese gold filigree box containing root of ruby taken from the Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan) in China, several 'Modern Indian' pieces and an eighteenth-century French cross pendant and matching bow that was illustrated in the exhibition catalogue.¹⁷ The loaned objects demonstrate an omnivorous interest in the decorative arts of various cultures and historical periods, and link Mabel to a global network of making, selling and even stealing: the Chinese filigree box was almost certainly taken during the looting and burning of Yuanmingyuan at the end of the Second Opium War, and likely sold in Paris or London in the 1860s, along with thousands of other stolen objects (see [Chapters 6 and 7](#)).¹⁸

The following year, Mabel was part of a committee assembled to promote an exhibition of decorative art needlework produced before 1800, also to be held at the South Kensington Museum.¹⁹ The committee met in the board room of the museum in March 1873, to set parameters for the exhibition, that no 'lace or woven tapestry' be included, and to select a group of gentlemen to form a committee of advice as well as, from their numbers, women to sit on an executive committee.²⁰ Mabel may not have been able to attend the exhibition itself; when it opened on 31 May, she would have been heavily pregnant with her fifth child, and perhaps already suffering a difficult pregnancy before what would prove

to be a complicated birth. Nonetheless, she loaned 14 items, including a large, likely eighteenth-century Circassian embroidery in coloured silks and gold, a seventeenth-century Spanish cover 'bearing the arms of Leon and Castile', two large, eighteenth-century Chinese satin bed quilts and three embroidered Persian veils.²¹

In organising the loan exhibition, she joined a group of women affiliated with the new School of Art Needlework, founded in the previous year by Victoria Welby and under the patronage of Princess Christian, who took increasing ownership of the school as it grew.²² Renamed the Royal School of Art Needlework in 1875, when it acquired the patronage of Queen Victoria, it is still active and now known as the Royal School of Needlework (RSN). The school's mandate was 'to supply suitable employment for gentlewomen' and to restore 'ornamental needlework to the high place it once held among the decorative arts', and it used designs from some of the most respected artists of the day, including Walter Crane and William Morris.²³ The catalogue for the 1873 exhibition does not mention the school by name, but outlines its motivation along similar lines, 'in the interests of Art Education and the employment of women', which strongly suggests, along with the makeup of the committee, that the two were linked.²⁴

Janice Helland and Bridget Elliot have argued that the RSN and similar organisations played a complex role in Victorian women's negotiation of gender and opportunity, at the same time reinforcing stereotypes of femininity and undermining dominant structures by giving women on the margins of society a livelihood.²⁵ A similar ambivalence applied to women with the privileges of rank and wealth. Participation in the governance and curatorship activities of the RSN and later involvement with Irish lace design reform would have provided a rare opportunity for Mabel to mobilise her extensive knowledge of the arts and natural aptitude for administration in the public sphere. However, such activities were permitted because they pertained to needlework, a woman's occupation, and took place within the context of genteel women's philanthropy. Exhibitions hosted by the RSN and similar organisations were also crucial sales venues, where wealthy women could demonstrate both benevolence and taste by purchasing handmade items to wear and display in their homes.

Sparse records and inconsistency in terminology make it difficult to determine the extent of Mabel's involvement with the RSN, but she appears to have taken an active role from the very early days. She attended council meetings in 1873 and 1874, and even proposed new sales strategies at a meeting in 1875, which complicates the notion

that she was confined to bed for the entire duration of her postpartum condition.²⁶ She appears in RSN advertising material listed as a member of the 'Council' or 'General Committee' in 1877, and then intermittently from 1888 until 1903. During this period, she occasionally assisted with RSN sales, and both she and Alfred donated around £205 to the building fund for the RSN's new school, which opened in 1903.²⁷ She seems to have been a consistent presence at RSN events. In 1896, *Hearth and Home* noted her attendance at an RSN tea: 'Mrs. Alfred Morrison – without whom no gathering at the Royal School of Art Needlework would be complete'.²⁸ The Morrises' country neighbour, Madeline Wyndham, of Clouds, Wiltshire, was also a fixture on the RSN council, even providing designs for embroidery.

In February 1874, Mabel joined a committee of women that organised a loan exhibition of lace for the London International Exhibition. She sent a large selection from her own collection, including a 'Border of Alençon; Alençon lappets; Set of Spanish Point Trimmings and Collar, 1st Empire &c.; Venice Point Gros; Venetian Church Cloths; Spanish Point Altar Cloth', and at least 10 other lace items or groups thereof.²⁹ The 1874 lace exhibition was of such importance that the renowned English lace expert Mrs Bury Palliser wrote an extended catalogue, and the following year, the South Kensington Museum's lace expert, Alan Cole, published *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace: with Notes on the History of Lace-Making and Descriptions of Thirty Examples*, which provided detailed information and photographs of some key specimens that had been displayed.³⁰ In the preface to the book, Cole notes that although the exhibition's lace display was impressive, it had been organised without any consideration of chronology or technique, which lessened its educational impact.³¹ In *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace*, Cole remedied this defect by writing about many of the specimens that had been displayed in 1874, describing them in detail alongside high-quality illustrations and placing them in chronological and geographical context.

Plate No. 8 in *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace* is 'Piece of Needlepoint Lace with Ground of Hexagonal Brides-a-Picots', Venetian, from about 1670–80, in the collection of Mrs. Alfred Morrison (Figure 16.2).

The sharp, highly detailed Woodburytype – an expensive photo-mechanical process that excelled in depicting texture – shows almost a full passage of the flounce's repeating design, of a pineapple, perched on a fanciful construction of blossoms and foliage, and flanked by Solomonic columns. Cole uses the specimen to illustrate the difficulties



Figure 16.2 *Piece of Needlepoint Lace with Ground of Hexagonal Brides-a-Picots (detail), Venetian, c. 1670–80, in the collection of Mrs Alfred Morrison. Alan Cole, *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace: With notes on the history of lace-making and descriptions of thirty examples* (London: Chiswick Press, 1875), plate 8.*

Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/AncientNeedlepoint>. (out of copyright/public domain) (accessed 7 April 2025)

of distinguishing between Argentan, Alençon and Venetian lace, pointing to a number of small details in the workmanship that proclaim its Venetian origin: the square-shaped mesh used in the spotted area above the Solomonic columns and the ‘minute but marked and regular open-worked fibres to the foliations above and below the pine-apple’, for example.³² Such a scholarly framing of antique lace was not only the province of a textile expert such as Alan Cole, but aligned with a broader interest in design reform, circulated in print and encouraged with exhibitions at the South Kensington Museum and its affiliated regional centres. Nineteenth-century lace books, such as Mrs Bury Palliser’s famous *The History of Lace* (first published in 1865 and reprinted several times), demonstrate a widespread interest in the history and mechanics of handmade lace specifically.³³ Literary theorist Elaine Freedgood has suggested that lace books celebrated the idiosyncrasies of handmade lace

precisely because the encroachment of machine-made lace signalled the imminent loss of such individuality.³⁴ Handmade lace therefore became a signifier of allegiance to quality and to a history of textile production, closely allied with the broader goals of design reform circulating in post-Great Exhibition Britain. As a collector and exhibitor, Mabel participated in South Kensington's mission to educate consumers and craftspeople through exposure to what contemporary experts considered to be the best historic examples of 'good design'.

Mabel loaned several articles of fine art needlework to an exhibition at the RSN's South Kensington headquarters in May 1878, including 'a wonderful piece of Spanish work, blue velvet surrounded by a beautiful device of flowers so shaded in silk and so bright still in colour (although the period is that of the seventeenth century) that with the sun upon it it glances and appears to stand out in relief like burnished metal'.³⁵ That spring, she also joined a committee of women – primarily affiliated with the RSN – requested to loan items and drum up publicity for a loan exhibition of lace and needlework at the new Nottingham Castle Museum. The Midland Counties Fine Art Museum, as it was then known, had recently relocated to the ruins of Nottingham Castle, repurposed as 'a spacious museum building, adapted for exhibition purposes'.³⁶ That one of the first exhibitions in this new space was of lace points to lace's importance in the local economy (Nottingham and its environs were a centre for machine-lace production) and the role of museum displays in shaping both public taste and design sensibilities. The loan exhibition was not simply an opportunity for wealthy British women to display their collections, but a teaching tool for local industry, parsed and displayed with all the rigour of its model, the South Kensington Museum, after which it even modelled its glass display cases.³⁷ Designers from the Nottingham School of Art would have attended the exhibition to learn from the antique lace specimens, meaning that, however indirectly, Mabel's collecting practice had the potential to impact the British machine-lace design. She displayed eight specimens of lace, including gold and silver thread bobbin lace from a seventeenth-century cardinal's robe which Alan Cole noted as a 'fine and remarkable specimen' in the catalogue introduction, as well as thirty-five examples of fine needlework.³⁸ These were primarily Indian, Chinese and Persian, reflecting an expansion of Mabel's collection of 'oriental' textiles displayed at South Kensington in 1873.

Florence Caddy's tour of the Morrisons' house, recounted in her 1881 book *Lares and Penates*, attests to Mabel's love of the sumptuous and exotic: 'rich draperies of all kinds lie scattered around it in profusion; from

shawls of fine Persian needlework [...] to weighty Spanish table-covers' and 'there are likewise many specimens of Cretan silk-work and cut-work from mosques and convents in Turkey'.³⁹ An 1882 account of the Morrisons' home at Carlton House Terrace describes the 'superb collection of antique embroideries, which gives a character to the whole house – embroideries from Spain, Italy, and the Orient; some of immense age, all beautiful, the meaner kind startling us on every table, stool, and couch, the finest framed and glazed on the walls'.⁴⁰ The tea-room held the lace collection,

hidden away in coffer of mother o' pearl, silver, and carved cedar, which stand under every cabinet and table; suffice it to say that the mantelpiece, curtains, and even the mirror are edged with exquisitely perfect rose point [...] such pieces that are judged worth framing and glazing are suspended on the walls. Some of these are entire altar-fronts of choice *Venetian* and *Spanish* point of marvellous delicacy, in which the sacred *Host* and quaint angels and beasts figure.⁴¹

Such an excess of display in the spaces of everyday life strongly suggests that, like her husband, Mabel took great personal pleasure in her collecting practice. She may also have chosen to surround herself with objects from her collection so that she could enjoy them and display them to visitors during her period of illness and limited mobility. However, she also took an active role in preserving and circulating lace and textiles for educational purposes, with specimens from her collection displayed in exhibitions and reproduced in texts to be consulted by other collectors, design reformers and industry experts. Florence Caddy's tour illustrates this aspect of Mabel's collecting practice in an anecdote about framed specimens of needlework in Alfred's study:

among them is a piece worked from a pattern designed and coloured by Mrs. Fitzmaurice [Morrison], who wished it to be reproduced in machine embroidery, that it might represent the finest specimen of machine power; but it was found impossible to execute this, and the embroidery had to be done by hand, of which work it is one of the finest modern specimens. The design was in some measure adapted from one in an Arabian pattern-book.⁴²

This education and industry-oriented engagement with lace collecting is particularly evident in Mabel's support of the Irish lace industry, which experienced a revival in the 1880s.

The 'Proposal for the Maintenance of the Domestic Industry of Lace-Making in Ireland' and Mabel Morrison's Irish lace commissions

During Ireland's Great Famine, *an Gorta Mór* in Irish, of 1845–52, philanthropically minded landowners, clergymen's wives and nuns introduced lacemaking as a form of famine relief, enabling women and girls to earn money and fend off starvation.⁴³ The industry flourished in the mid-century, but struggled in the decades following the famine. Patterns degraded with continuous reuse, and there was little innovation in design or opportunity for designers to learn how to create patterns for the unique needs of the Irish laces: crochet, embroidery and appliqué on net, and needle lace. Likely guided by the confluence of philanthropic impulse and Irish connections on her father's side, Mabel seems to have taken an interest in the Irish lace industry during this period of decline, before it came to the attention of her fellow British philanthropists.

Hayward's of Oxford Street held an exhibition of rare and antique laces in the spring and summer of 1881, which included several pieces from Mabel's collection. Mabel likely purchased much of her antique lace from dealers, and her involvement in this exhibition suggests a pre-existing relationship with Hayward's, a leading London lace merchant that would also become involved in the Irish lace revival. Lace in the exhibition from Mabel's collection included the bridal robe of Empress Marie-Louise, Napoleon I's second wife, and a flounce which had belonged to Empress Caroline of Austria.⁴⁴ Two of the specimens were displayed side by side: an apron in 'lacet point' – evidence that the 'art [has not] died out entirely in Ireland' – and a 'fine specimen of *point de Venise à brides picotées*'.⁴⁵ It is likely that the original Venetian specimen, after which the apron was designed, would have already been known to any serious lace connoisseurs in the audience, it having been displayed at the London International Exhibition of 1874 and included in Alan Cole's *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace* (Figure 16.2). The contemporary Irish apron was a copy of the 'antique' Venetian lace; the two specimens were displayed side by side so that exhibition attendees could compare the copy to the original.⁴⁶ The apron, or dress-front, now in the collection of the National Museum of Ireland, and the only extant lace specimen thus far that can be definitively traced to Mabel's collection, bears the flounce's distinctive pineapple and architectural motifs, with the crowning chrysanthemum elevated to fill the pentagonal top panel (Figure 16.3).⁴⁷

The apron was produced at the Presentation Convent in Youghal, a coastal town in County Cork, in 1880. The lace workshop specialised in



Figure 16.3 Apron in Youghal needlepoint lace, c. 1880, designed after a piece of Venetian needlepoint, c. 1670–80, in the collection of Mrs Alfred Morrison. Produced at the Presentation Convent, Youghal, c. 1880.

Image courtesy of National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts Division (718.1912)

needlepoint lace, an extremely skilled, time-consuming and expensive form of lace in which the pattern is built from a series of looped stitches with a needle and linen (later cotton) thread. The convent's Mother Mary Anne Smith became interested in the possibility of lacemaking as a source of employment for local young women during the famine, and used antique Italian models to learn and teach the technique. By 1852, the convent had a fully functioning lace school. The nuns and lacemakers at the Presentation Convent designed their own patterns, and even their own stitches; they also taught Youghal needlepoint techniques at other convents and schools in the south of Ireland.

Mabel commissioned two other pieces of needlepoint lace 'copying' her Venetian flounce from the Presentation Convent in the early 1880s: a flounce and handkerchief. Both of them were displayed at the 1883 Mansion House Exhibition of Irish Lace, organised by a committee of tradesmen to promote Irish lace and demonstrate its potential for development, with a positive economic and social impact.⁴⁸ *An Irish Times*

article remarked that ‘unlike the majority of trade exhibitions [it] has a direct practical object in view ... to resuscitate an industry which will relieve an unoccupied population from distress’.⁴⁹ Mabel’s three commissions alone, intricate and time-consuming as they were, certainly would have provided steady employment for the women in the convent workshop for months. A report of the earlier Hayward’s exhibition remarked that the Youghal apron ‘occupied 15 of the finest laceworkers two months of assiduous labour’ – a startling, but entirely possible claim given the delicacy of the work.⁵⁰ Though their wages were low, there is evidence that money from lacemaking had the potential to impact Irish women’s lives in very real ways; late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural reformers and inspectors of the industry expressed concern that women were using their lace money to emigrate, but also noted that areas with established lace industries seemed to retain more young women. Given her interest in both design and philanthropy, Mabel likely commissioned her Youghal lace ‘copies’ not only to expand her own collection, but also to provide the workshop with an ‘ancient’ model to copy that would teach them new stitches and design elements, as well as with lengthy commissions that would boost the workshop’s income and profile.

The commissions displayed at the Mansion House certainly drew attention to Youghal lace’s excellence of technique. The flounce, almost an exact copy of Mabel’s celebrated seventeenth-century Venetian specimen, was likely copied directly from it (Figure 16.4).

Harry Biddle and Ben Lindsey’s catalogue for the exhibition praised Mabel’s Youghal lace flounce as ‘magnificent’, and newspaper coverage echoed the sentiment.⁵¹ The handkerchief, like the apron, bears motifs drawn from the original flounce and rearranged to fit the thick, square border. The *Illustrated London News* published a full page of photographs of Youghal lace from the exhibition, which included the handkerchief and noted its ‘very fine’ pineapple motifs, which have lost their complex architectural borders and alternate with chrysanthemums at each of the four corners.⁵² It is unclear who provided the altered designs for the apron and handkerchief, though it may have been Mabel herself. Her home was adorned with needlework she had designed herself – including the aforementioned design after an Arabian pattern book – and there is evidence that she also made designs for lace.⁵³ However, even if only by providing an antique specimen to ‘copy’ or ‘interpret’, Mabel offered rich source material for design and technique, both to Youghal and other centres, such as the unspecified Irish crochet workshop that copied a seventeenth-century Point de Venise specimen in silk crochet.⁵⁴



Figure 16.4 Irish point lace flounce, Youghal, c. 1880s, originally in the collection of Mabel Morrison. C. Harry Biddle and Ben Lindsey, *Mansion House Exhibition, 1883. Irish Lace, a history of the industry with illustrations and a map showing the districts where the lace is produced* (London, 1883), 11.

Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/mansionhouseexh00housgoog/page/n38/mode/2up> (out of copyright/public domain) (accessed 7 April 2025)

In this, she anticipated the use of European lace specimens, circulated in exhibitions and photographs, to educate Irish designers studying in the new lace design programs that would emerge after 1883.⁵⁵

In 1884, Mabel Morrison became involved in an initiative that would impact her collecting practice and philanthropic activities for the next two decades. Prompted by the excellence in technique and dearth of good design shown at the Mansion House Exhibition, the South Kensington Museum's textile expert, Alan Cole, formed a committee with the intention of providing an incentive for Irish lace designers to produce more and better work. The committee issued a 'Proposal for the Maintenance of the Domestic Industry of Lace-Making in Ireland', which defined Irish lacemaking as a domestic industry, introduced by philanthropists to the country earlier in the nineteenth century and developed 'to rest upon excellent workmanship applied to a few forms of somewhat stereotyped and poor design'.⁵⁶ Cole pointed out that the

market depended on the sentiment rather than good taste of consumers; they purchased Irish lace because it was 'quaint' or because they wished to support 'National production', rather than because it was a superior product.⁵⁷ Arguing that better designs for lace would do much to solve this problem, the proposal outlined a plan to create a subscription to raise prize money for a series of lace design competitions. Mabel Morrison donated £25 to the subscription, topped only by £50 donations from the Draper's Company, which had an obvious commercial interest in the scheme, and MP J. T. Bruner on behalf of the Countess of Aberdeen, who was by that point already investing in Irish cottage industries.⁵⁸ The designers having been rewarded, winning designs would be sent to workshops throughout the country to be made up and photographed, so as to circulate the designs even more widely.

As such, the designs selected by judges and prototyped at established workshops had a tremendous impact on lace design throughout the country. Along with Lady Dorothy Neville, Mrs Alfred Petre and Thomas Armstrong, Director of the Department of Science and Art's Art Division at South Kensington, Mabel judged the second competition, with over 200 entries sent by 67 competitors.⁵⁹ She then commissioned several of the prize designs: an unspecified piece from the Convent of Poor Clares in Kenmare, a flounce designed by Agnes Farnham and made at Vere O'Brien's workshop in Limerick (Figure 16.5) and a striking parasol in cut linen embroidery designed by Michael Hayes and made at the Bath and Shirley Schools in County Monaghan (Figure 16.6).⁶⁰

Images of these completed specimens were circulated shortly afterwards in Cole's published report. In 1887, a third competition took place, with prizes amounting to £35 10s, and a further £108 from the committee to commission designs to be made up at the various lacemaking centres.⁶¹ By this point, the committee seems to have achieved their goal of demonstrating what was economically possible for the Irish lace industry if it could pair its already fine needlework with good design. Cole reported that: 'the use of better patterns is accepted by all the convents without exception as the first step by which the condition of the lace industry can be materially improved'.⁶²

In writing his reports on Irish lace for the Department of Science and Art, Alan Cole considered Mabel Morrison's patronage important enough to mention her by name on several occasions. Though he often references figures involved in the philanthropic (and political) side of the lace industry, such as Viscountess Theresa Londonderry, Cole's reports discuss few private purchasers. However, Mabel's commissions took up so much time and energy that they warranted special consideration:



Figure 16.5 Flounce made by workers at Limerick under the supervision of Mrs Vere O'Brien, from a design by Agnes Farnham, Leicester, 1886. Specimens purchased by the queen, the Countess of Aberdeen and Mrs. Alfred Morrison. Alan Cole, *Irish Lace: Report upon Visits to Convents, Classes, and Schools Where Lace-Making and Designing for Lace are Taught [...]* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887), n.p.

Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/IrishLace/page/n17/mode/2up>. Accessed 24 November 2021. Out of copyright/public domain

'Mrs. Alfred Morrison has been a most generous patron [...] giving orders for lace in the spirit which actuated those liberal amateurs of the arts, to whom the world is indebted for encouraging its artists to produce their best work.'⁶³ Cole's lantern slides for an 1893 lecture at the Society of Arts in London included five specimens from Mabel's collection: the parasol cover designed by Michael Hayes, a curtain of cut linen designed by Emily Anderson and made at the Convent of Mercy in Kinsale, a dress panel of raised lace made at New Ross, a needlepoint lace fan designed by a Miss Julyan and made at Youghal, and a needlepoint lace collar and plastron set designed and made at Kenmare.⁶⁴ During an October 1890 visit to the Kenmare Convent of Poor Clares, Cole conversed with the nuns about a 'mixed linen and lace work', commissioned by Mabel Morrison. Mabel had commissioned one of the 1886 prize designs from



Figure 16.6 Parasol cover in cut linen, made at the Bath and Shirley Schools, Carrickmacross, 1887, after a design by Michael Hayes. Purchased by Mrs Alfred Morrison. Alan Cole, *Irish Lace: Report upon Visits to Convents, Classes, and Schools Where Lace-Making and Designing for Lace are Taught [...]* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887), n.p.

Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/IrishLace/page/n17/mode/2up>. Accessed 24 November 2021. Out of copyright/public domain

the same convent.⁶⁵ He noted that ‘almost all the known varieties of flat and raised needlepoint lacework of cut and embroidered linen, are involved in the production of this commissioned and somewhat costly specimen’.⁶⁶ In October 1891, he returned, noting that the piece was done and that it had ‘gained [the] highest price offered’ in its category at the Royal Dublin Society.⁶⁷ Cole’s description of the piece as ‘somewhat costly’ was a vast understatement. At the August 1891 Royal Dublin Society competition, a ‘Fire screen in flat and raised needlepoint’ made at Kenmare won the first prize of £10, and was valued at £199 10s.⁶⁸ The next most expensive piece in the lace and needlework exhibition was a quilt decorated with silk embroidery, valued at £27.⁶⁹

Mabel maintained status as one of the primary patrons of the Irish lace industry – alongside Queen Victoria and Ishbel Aberdeen – throughout the 1880s and 1890s, while also maintaining an active role in

exhibitions of antique lace and contemporary Irish and British women's work more broadly. In 1886, Mabel sent a small display to the Edinburgh International Exhibition of Science, Industry, and Art. It consisted of 'Part of Wedding Dress in Brussels Lace, of the Empress Marie Louise (Napoleon I's second wife)' and 'A Table-cover, Old Italian'.⁷⁰ She joined the Ladies Executive Committee for the 1888 Irish Exhibition at Olympia, in South Kensington, and sat on a subcommittee of women tasked with securing loans for the display of British and Irish lace at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.⁷¹ In 1894, both Mabel and Alfred exhibited from their collections at the 1894 Exhibition of Fair Women, in London's Grafton Galleries. Several portraits of female figures are listed under Alfred's name, while Mabel lent an extensive collection of miniatures and specimens of lace including a piece of Alençon lace said to have belonged to Marie Antoinette and the Youghal lace apron discussed earlier.⁷² Her display garnered praise from the press: *The Standard* highlighted a case of Venetian lace, 'the best that is owned by a famous lace collector, Mrs. Alfred Morrison', and the *Cheltenham Looker-On* noted that 'the old lace shown is of enormous value, Mrs. Alfred Morrison, who has the most extensive and varied collection in England, being the greatest contributor'.⁷³ This is high praise, given the fact that several other high-profile lace collectors, both men and women, exhibited extensively in the late nineteenth century. Collectors such as Mrs. Bury Palliser, Sir William Drake, Arthur Blackborne, and M. Dupont-Auberville, for example, also featured in exhibition catalogues and press coverage. In August 1897, Mabel, along with Madeline Wyndham, sat on the Applied Arts Committee for the Women's Work Section of the Victorian Era Exhibition at Earl's Court, lending historical and contemporary English and Irish laces to the displays.⁷⁴

The turn of the century: dispersal

Alfred died in December 1897, leaving Mabel a widow at the age of 50. She began to dispose of their collections shortly after, beginning with three sales at Christie's in 1898 that raised £11,000.⁷⁵ The Morrisons' richly decorated house at Carlton House Terrace soon followed, though this sale had less of a clear financial motivation, as Mabel purchased the lease to another house with similar staffing costs shortly afterwards.⁷⁶ It is unclear why Mabel was so quick to sell so many of the couple's possessions, and her actions seem callous, 'as if nothing held any emotional or artistic value for her'.⁷⁷ However, the fact that during this period she also sold

objects from her own collection, lace that she exhibited, researched, commissioned and perhaps in some cases designed, complicates the notion that the sales reflect lack of care or interest.

In June 1902, Mabel sold 66 lots of lace and embroidery (some consisting of multiple items) at Christie's.⁷⁸ One of these was the Youghal lace apron, purchased by Hayward's, the lace dealers, for £11 and sold to the National Museum of Ireland for £18 in 1912.⁷⁹ An annotated sales catalogue notes that 'Blackborne' bought several lots; this is likely Arthur Blackborne, a London lace dealer who sold \$20,000 of lace to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1909, and whose remaining collection was donated to the Bowes Museum in Durham after his death.⁸⁰ As such, some of Mabel's lace is likely to be in the Metropolitan Museum's collection, though linked to the Blackborne sale rather than her own name.⁸¹

Hayward's lace dealers also made several purchases, though the catalogue descriptions are not detailed enough to determine where any of the other pieces of lace that had been photographed and described in print ended up. Mabel must have retained some of the lace from her collection past this date, as it was the focus of a feature in the American art periodical, the *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, in 1903. The article included detailed descriptions and photographs of several specimens from Mabel's collection, both antique and new work including Honiton lace by Mrs Charlotte Elizabeth Treadwin, a well-known lacemaker from Exeter, Irish crochet from the 1886 competition and the Youghal needlepoint copy of Mabel's seventeenth-century Venetian flounce.⁸² In 1904, she lent a 'copy of a Point D'Alençon flounce' completed by Mary McKenna to Vere O'Brien's Limerick Lace School display at the World's Fair in St Louis, Missouri.⁸³ This seems to be the last time Mabel exhibited lace from her collection publicly. Despite her involvement with exhibitions at the South Kensington Museum and apparent interest in design education, she gave only a very few items to the institution, renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899. In 1927, she donated a coffer and matchbox by the Spanish metalworker Plácido Zuloaga, and in 1929 a tortoiseshell mantilla comb.⁸⁴

Mabel gave Fonthill House and its contents, including objects from Alfred's collection deemed to be 'heirlooms' and bound to the estate in his will, to her son Hugh in 1909.⁸⁵ Some of her lace was left behind as well; Hugh's son John, given a peerage in 1964 and styled as Lord Margadale of Islay, sold another quantity of valuable antique lace from Fonthill House at Christie's in 1971.⁸⁶ In 1911, Mabel moved to Shawford House, near Winchester, where she lived until 1923. A two-part August 1920

Country Life special on the house details the furniture and pictures contained therein, but makes no mention of the laces and embroideries that had lined the walls and filled decorative caskets at 16 Carlton House Terrace almost 40 years earlier.⁸⁷

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr Susan Kay-Williams (Royal School of Needlework) and Alex Ward (National Museum of Ireland) for facilitating access to collections, and to Hilary Harris Hanslip and Louise Sibley in London. This research was supported by a Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art Research Support Grant.

Notes

- 1 Anon, 'From our lady correspondent', 5.
- 2 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 241. Mabel's collecting and patronage is not documented in the family archives. I am thankful to John D'Arcy and Caroline Dakers for giving me a sense of Mabel's presence (or lack thereof) in the Fonthill Archives.
- 3 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*; Morrison and Olivier, *The Quest of Joy*.
- 4 The Rev. Richard Chermiside also published two novels. *Artist and Craftsman* was serialised in the *Dublin University Magazine* and published in full in 1860; *Ned Locksley the Etonian: or, the Only Son* was serialised in the *Dublin University Magazine* in 1861 and published in full by Bentley in 1863. See Bassett, 'Richard Seymour Conway Chermiside'.
- 5 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 50, 52.
- 6 For a more detailed account of Mabel and Alfred's courtship, see Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 237–40.
- 7 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 60.
- 8 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 50.
- 9 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 53. Edith Olivier recounts that 'sixty years later [...] she spoke with loving pride of the unsullied spirit for which she had provided brief lodging' (53–4).
- 10 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 54. Caroline Dakers suggests that this 'illness' may have been a prolapsed uterus. Morrison was attended by Dr James Watt Black, 'a distinguished obstetrics physician and lecturer on midwifery at Charing Cross Hospital' and recovered under his care in the 1880s (Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 244).
- 11 Undated letter from Mabel Morrison (early 1880s), quoted in Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 244.
- 12 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 54.
- 13 Owen and Jones, 'Chermiside, Sir Herbert Charles'.
- 14 *London International Exhibition of 1872*, 86–7.
- 15 *Catalogue of the Loan Exhibition*, 2.
- 16 *Catalogue of the Loan Exhibition*, 3.
- 17 Mabel's loans are numbered in the catalogue: 172, 1 73, 314 (Cromwell locket), 343, 344, 542, 544, 545, 546, 549 (Summer Palace box), 552, 607, 610, 633, 634, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 943, 944, 1062 (Norman French cross pendant and bow, plate XII), 1202–9 (Modern Indian), 1293.
- 18 Items from Yuanmingyuan were sold in many Paris auctions (Howald and Saint-Raymond, 'Tracking dispersal') and Greg M. Thomas suggests they were also auctioned at Christie, Manson & Woods in the early 1860s (Thomas, 'The looting of Yuanming'). For more on the

- Yuanmingyuan loot in British collections, see Tythacott, *Collecting and Displaying China's 'Summer Palace' in the West*.
- 19 Twenty-first report of the Science and Art Department, 10–11; Cole, *Catalogue of the Special Loan Exhibit*, vii.
 - 20 Cole, *Catalogue of the Special Loan Exhibit*, viii.
 - 21 Mabel's loans are numbered in the catalogue: 341, 363, 493 (Circassian embroidery), 582, 604, 605–6 (Chinese quilts), 638, 639, 646, 647, 659–61 (Persian veils).
 - 22 Though many sources cite Princess Christian as the founder, her address at the opening of the school's new South Kensington premises in 1875 clearly establish Welby as the primary founder. The address was printed in the *Illustrated London News*: Anon, 'Royal School of Art Needlework', 603.
 - 23 Elliot and Helland, *Women Artists and the Decorative Arts*, 5; Royal School of Art Needlework, *Vice-President's Report*, 7.
 - 24 Cole, *Catalogue of the Special Loan Exhibit*, v.
 - 25 Elliot and Helland, *Women Artists and the Decorative Arts*, 5.
 - 26 Mabel attended council meetings on 4 July 1873; 24 February, 24 November and 22 December 1874; 26 January, 23 February, 23 March 1875. She likely attended in the years following, but this is the only council minute book that appears to have survived (Royal School of Needlework Archive 216: Council Minute Book 1873–5).
 - 27 Both Mabel and Alfred are listed in various pamphlets as having made donations in their own names, though the 1903 programme for the opening of the school appears to list a running total of funds from each donor, and lists Mrs Alfred Morrison at £205 5s (RSN Archives Box 19 Item 136, 1873–1905: Ephemera).
 - 28 Anon, *Hearth and Home* 11, no. 256 (9 April 1896): 840.
 - 29 Mabel exhibited the following at the 1874 International Exhibition: 'Border of Alençon; Alençon Lappets; Set of Spanish Point Trimmings and Collar, 1st Empire. &c.; Venice Point Gros; Venetian Church Cloths; Spanish Point Altar Cloth; Flat Venetian, Old Flemish, and Venetian Rose Point Lappets and Crown; Point d'Angleterre Flounce; Rose Point Venetian Collar; Spanish Point Apron Front; Flemish Guipure Flounce; Old Brussels Lace Quilt; Sets of Alençon; Louis XV. Gold Lace, and Flounce of Alençon, Italian, 16th century' (*London International Exhibition of 1874*, 126).
 - 30 Bury Palliser, *Guide to the Ancient and Modern Lace*; Cole, *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace*.
 - 31 Cole notes that the displays by Mrs Hailstone and Monsieur Dupont were organised in an educational fashion (Cole, *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace*, iii). *London International Exhibition of 1874* describes Dupont's display as 'Collection of Lace, chronologically arranged' and Mrs Hailstone's as simply 'Lace' (122–3).
 - 32 Cole, *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace*, n.p. (description of Plate 8).
 - 33 Bury Palliser, *A History of Lace*.
 - 34 Freedgood, "Fine Fingers", 631.
 - 35 'Fine art needlework', 314. Gale Primary Sources Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals.
 - 36 Cole and Nottingham Castle Museum, *Catalogue of the Special Loan Collection*, 4.
 - 37 Cole and Nottingham Castle Museum, *Catalogue of the Special Loan Collection*, 4.
 - 38 Cole and Nottingham Castle Museum, *Catalogue of the Special Loan Collection*, 6.
 - 39 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 276–7.
 - 40 Hawels, *Beautiful Houses*, 55–6.
 - 41 Hawels, *Beautiful Houses*, 57–8.
 - 42 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 268.
 - 43 For a history of Irish lacemaking, see Gillett, *Irish Lacemaking: Art, industry and cultural practice*; for a contemporary account of an Irish lace industry, see Meredith, *The Lacemakers*.
 - 44 Anon, 'Messrs Hayward's "loan exhibition" of antique lace', 48.
 - 45 Anon, 'Local exhibition of ancient lace', 4.
 - 46 Anon, 'Local exhibition of ancient lace', 4.
 - 47 Longfield, *Guide to the Collection of Lace*, plate XVII.
 - 48 Biddle and Lindsey, *Mansion House*, 1883.
 - 49 Anon, 'The Irish lace exhibition'.
 - 50 Anon, 'Messrs Hayward's "loan exhibition" of antique lace', 48.
 - 51 Biddle and Lindsey, *Mansion House Exhibition*, 9.

- 52 Anon, 'Specimens of Irish lace held at the exhibition held in the Egyptian Hall, Mansion House', 668.
- 53 Caddy, *Lares and Penates*, 268, 272, 275; Jourdain, 'Lace in the collection', 95.
- 54 Jourdain, 'Lace in the collection', 103.
- 55 For more on Irish lace design reform, see Gillett, *Irish Lacemaking: Art, industry and cultural practice*.
- 56 Cole, *Renascence*, 37.
- 57 Cole, *The Renascence of the Irish Art of Lace-Making*, 37.
- 58 Cole, *The Renascence of the Irish Art of Lace-Making*, 39.
- 59 Cole, *Irish Lace*, 3.
- 60 Thirty-fourth report of the Department of Science and Art, xli; Cole, *Irish Lace*, n.p.
- 61 Thirty-fifth report of the Department of Science and Art, xlv.
- 62 Thirty-fifth report of the Department of Science and Art, xlv.
- 63 Cole, 'The Irish lace industry', 319.
- 64 Cole, 'The Irish lace industry', 323–5. The cut linen curtain and fan are stated to have been purchased by Mrs Alfred Morrison and illustrated in Cole, 'Some recent Irish laces', 214, 215. The plastron and collar set designed and made at Kenmare may be the one illustrated in Cole, *Renascence*, Plate 1.
- 65 Thirty-fourth report of the Department of Science and Art, xli.
- 66 Thirty-eighth report of the Department of Science and Art, 38.
- 67 Thirty-ninth report of the Department of Science and Art, 27.
- 68 *Catalogue of the Exhibition*, 8.
- 69 *Catalogue of the Exhibition*, 12.
- 70 *International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art*.
- 71 Anon, 'Metropolitan gossip', 7. British Library Newspapers; *World's Columbian Exposition*, 97. For more on Olympia and the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, see Helland, 'Exhibiting Ireland'.
- 72 *Fair Women*, 88–9.
- 73 Anon, 'The Grafton Gallery', 3. Anon, 'Waiting the Winter Season', 910.
- 74 *Victorian Era Exhibition*, 69, 79–80.
- 75 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 246.
- 76 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 246.
- 77 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 246.
- 78 Christie, Manson and Woods, *Catalogue of Valuable Lace*.
- 79 Museum record DT:1912.718, courtesy of Alex Ward at National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks.
- 80 Valentiner, 'The Blackborne collection of lace', 82–4.
- 81 For example, Margaret Jourdain noted in 1904 that a piece of rose point in the Blackborne collection previously belonged to the Morrison collection (see 'The lace collection of Mr. Arthur Blackborne'). I am thankful to Elena Kanagy-Loux, collections specialist at the Ratti Textile Centre, for confirming that Mabel Morrison's name is not in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection database in relation to lace.
- 82 Jourdain, 'Lace in the collection', 95. For more on C. E. Treadwin, see McFadzean, *Mrs. Treadwin: Victorian Lace Maker, Designer & Historian*.
- 83 Great Britain's Royal Commission, *Royal Commission International Exhibition*, 27.
- 84 Nominal File of Mrs. Albert Morrison, MA/1/M2861, National Art Library, London. Both Mabel and Alfred corresponded with Zuloaga about the coffer and other pieces.
- 85 Dakers, *A Genius for Money*, 247.
- 86 Christie, Manson and Woods, *Dolls, Toys, Automata*, 23–6.
- 87 Kitchin, 'Shawford House –1' and 'Shawford House –2'.

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Part III

Dispersal

Alfred Morrison's numismatic collection: recollecting the mid-twentieth-century sales

Richard Falkiner with Caroline Dakers

Introduction

The collection of coins and medals formed by Alfred Morrison was remarkable in this country for its time, indeed at any time. The emphasis was on mainland European medals, with only a few British examples. This was unusual; most British collectors concentrated on examples relating to the United Kingdom and the Classical period and British auctions in the main offered medals of this type. As other chapters observe, Morrison had a very wide interest, and the quality of his collections was well above most collections of a similar nature.

Visitors to the Royal Academy winter exhibition of 1888 could admire 37 medals of gold, silver, bronze and lead lent by Morrison, most depicting important Renaissance statesmen and women. Morrison's loan was celebrated when he was included standing among the cultural elite of Britain in Henry Jamyn Brooks's painting *Private View of the Old Masters Exhibition, Royal Academy, 1888* (1889, now in the National Portrait Gallery). In 1890, Morrison's portrait was depicted on a medal by the distinguished French medallist Alphonse Eugène Lechevrel (Figure 17.1).

Lechevrel's medal was acquired by the Luxembourg Museum in Paris on 15 May 1901, soon after Morrison's death. In 1928, Morrison's widow Mabel sold several hundred coins and medals 'illustrating the portraits of rulers and celebrities'. A number of these are now in the British Museum, but the larger part of the collection was disposed of in 1965 and in 1967 through Christie's by John Granville Morrison, 1st Lord Margadale.¹ Richard Falkiner was closely involved in the sales and has shared his memories with Caroline Dakers for this short chapter.



Figure 17.1 Alphonse Eugène Lechevrel (1848–1924), *Alfred Morrison*, 1890 (MEDOR 833). Silver-plated copper, unifacial medal, electroplating, 2.7 cm (1.06 in) diameter.

Photograph © RMN-Grand Palais (Orsay Museum)/Adrien Didierjean

The sales

Richard Falkiner recalls vividly the occasion when Lord Margadale decided to dispose of much of the remaining collections formed by his grandfather, including coins and medals. 'I was in charge of the numismatic department at Christie's. What a privilege! The happy result for me and of course Christie's was two auctions which are still celebrated by numismatians. Getting catalogues to the printers about a month before the sale was quite an undertaking in those days.' Consequently the collections had to be offered in two auctions, on 23 July 1965 (98 lots) and 1 March 1966 (229 lots). Of course, many lots contained more than one item. The total obtained for the 327 lots was £49,968 (US\$139,911), a considerable amount at the time. Another sale followed on 4 April 1967.

Christie's relied heavily on the advice of A. H. Baldwin & Sons Ltd. This firm had been established in 1872 and remains one of the largest and longest established numismatic dealers and auction houses in the world. Falkiner recalled:

my role was consequently mostly editorial and administrating the auction and its aftermath. Much credit for the cataloguing was

due to the immense knowledge of Albert Baldwin who died 14 November 1967.² His nephew Peter Mitchell (d. 2024) prepared much of the manuscript. So much for the commercial and administrative side; however it should be noted that the prices realised are part of the history of the items concerned.

The collection was extraordinary, particularly at its time of formation and also at its dispersal. A very large part consisted of coins and medals of Germanic origin.³ This puzzled Falkiner. 'Why this is we are not now able to discern, but we may speculate that it was either Morrison's taste or his acquiring of another's collection.' Falkiner remembers the journey to Fonthill and his role as a junior member of Christie's:

I well remember being ordered to arrive at Christie's at an early hour to be driven to Fonthill by Christie's Chairman, I. O. 'Peter' Chance and Sir Alec Martin. Despite their insisting that we were a team, not a word was addressed to me during the journey. I was very much their junior. This caused me to be nervous on arrival; a nervousness that was all the more justified when the coins and medals were revealed. Most were quite unfamiliar to me. So, how to impress my bosses? I was lucky; the material was instructed to be sent immediately to Christie's in King Street; my problem was postponed.

Falkiner was also fortunate in attracting the favourable notice of Lord Margadale, Alfred Morrison's grandson:

I was also lucky that our generous host, Lord Margadale, was a humorous fellow, pleasantly well known for it indeed, and frequently he made remarks in my presence at Chance's expense, whom he obviously thought little of. It was more than my career's future to laugh, although on at least one occasion Lord Margadale and I were able to exchange a surreptitious wink.

For collectors at the time, the first sale in particular was a momentous event. It was confined to the gold pieces. There were 98 lots, and the total raised was £35,038. Many of the buyers were specialist dealers bidding on behalf of clients and using noms de plume. Mario Ratto of Milan chose the name 'James Bond', P. & P. Santamaria of Rome was 'Taylor' and Emile Bourgey of the Rue Drouot in Paris was 'Robert'. Falkiner remembers: 'I bid for the Polish-British nobleman, diplomat and



Figure 17.2 Carmagnola, *Ludovico II di Saluzzo (1475–1504) and Margarita de Foix, 1503, 10 scudi d'oro, 43.5 mm. (1.7 in). Obverse and verso.*

Photograph © Morton & Eden Ltd, London

art historian, Andrzej Ciechanowiecki, co-owner of the Heim Gallery in Jermyn Street.' The highest price, £4,800, was paid by 'Robert' for lot 49, a 100 ducat medal by Michael Apafi (1661–90), of Transylvania, 'mint state and of extreme rarity' and now in the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. The London dealer Spink paid £3,100 for lot 63, a gold piastre of 1610 from Florence, with Cosimo II, Duke of Tuscany, on one side, and the baptism of Christ on the reverse.

One of the most striking lots was the only one to remain unsold: lot 60 carried a reserve of £350 but was withdrawn when the bidding reached £280, 13.8 times the then value of the gold content. This was the 1503 10 scudi d'oro of Carmagnola, issued in the names of Ludovico II di Saluzzo (1475–1504) and Margarita de Foix (Figure 17.2). It was later auctioned at Christie's on 23 November 1971. Alan Thomas, the London bookseller and antiquarian, bought it for £70. After research by Tom Eden of Morton & Eden, the medal has been confirmed as being of the 'highest rarity', passing through the collections of the Teutonic Order, Vienna, Prince Montenuovo, Vienna, and the Cav. Giancarlo Rossi. Alfred Morrison probably acquired it after the Dura & Sambon auction in Rome, held on 6 December 1880, lot 771.⁴ Christie's had failed to uncover this extraordinary provenance. The coin sold in 2015 for £45,000.

A smaller number of medals were sold by Christie's on 1 March 1966, raising a total of £14,930. One of the bidders here was Herbert Cahn of Basle (1915–2002), both an academic and a dealer, and one of the most distinguished numismatists of the twentieth century.



Figure 17.3 Elia Tiseo, *Francesco I d'Este, Duke of Modena* (1610–58), Modena, Italy. Obverse and verso. Elia Tiseo was the Modenese court goldsmith.

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The Christie's sale of 4 April 1967 contained just 15 commemorative medals. Lot 44, an exquisite medal of the Duke of Modena (Figure 17.3), was given to the Fitzwilliam Museum by the Friends of the Museum on 27 April 1967. The catalogue described it as being 'extremely fine and rare'. The duke fitted well with Morrison's collections of autograph manuscripts, engraved portraits and paintings of distinguished men and women. He was not just a successful military commander but renowned for his upright character. He enriched Modena by building the Ducal Palace, the Teatro della Spelta and the Villa delle Pentetorri. The medal itself was an example of first-class work by the court goldsmith Elia Tiseo.

Morrison kept his coins and medals in specially designed cabinets, two of which were made by Plácido Zuloaga. No longer required by Lord Margadale, they were sold by Christie's on 19 May 1966. The chest veneered in tortoiseshell (lot 158) is now in the Khalili Collections (see Figure 14.4), but the inlaid and enamelled steel coin cabinet (lot 157; Figure 17.4) appears lost.⁵ By the 1890s, Morrison had placed the tortoiseshell chest in the Picture or Dining Gallery (see Figure 3.22) and the steel cabinet in his drawing room at Fonthill. In the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* (no. 463) the steel cabinet contained 205 medals and was described in detail, 'an upright cabinet of iron, damascened with gold, and chiselled with trophies and arabesques, mounted with pierced and chased silver plaques, on blue enamelled ground, and with rich chasings of figures, animals, birds and arabesques, in silver and gold, in relief'.⁶



Figure 17.4 Plácido Zuloaga, steel coin cabinet.

Photograph © 1966, Christie's Images Limited

The novelist Wilkie Collins, writing *The Woman in White* just a few years before Morrison began to collect coins and medals, describes the behaviour of Philip Fairlie, another, less pleasant but perhaps equally fastidious collector.

On approaching nearer to [Mr Fairlie] I discovered that he was not so entirely without occupation as I had at first supposed. Placed amid the other rare and beautiful objects on a large round table near him, was a dwarf cabinet in ebony and silver, containing coins of all shapes and sizes, set out in little drawers lined with dark purple velvet. One of these drawers lay on the small table attached to his chair; and near it were some tiny jeweller's brushes, a wash-leather 'stump', and a little bottle of liquid, all waiting to be used in various ways for the removal of any accidental impurities which might be discovered on the coins. His frail white fingers were listlessly toying with something which looked, to my uninstructed eyes, like a dirty pewter medal with ragged edges.⁷



Figure 17.5 Coronation medal of Edward VI, 1547, silver, 64 mm (2.5 in) diameter, 49.54 g weight. Obverse inscription: 'EDWARDVS VI D G ANG FR E HIB REX FIDEI DEFNS E IN TERRIS ANG E HIB ECCLE CAPVT SVPREMUM CORONATVS EST MD XLVI XX FEBRVA ETATIS DECIMO'. Reverse inscription: 'ΕΔΩΡΔΟΣ Ο ΕΚΤΟΣ Ο ΘΗ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΓΛΙΑΣ ΦΡΑΓΧΙΑΣ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΙΒΕΙΝΙΑΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ ΠΡΟΣΤΑΤΗΣ, ΚΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΝ ΓΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΙΒΕΡΝΙΚΗΣ Η ΠΡΩΤΗ ΚΕΦΑΛΗ ΣΤΕΦΑΝΩΘΕΙΣ ΕΤΕΙ. Χ'. Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, HCR95030.

© Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Morrison's medals and coins continued to be sent to Christie's. Nine gold medals and a further 36 lots, some of which contained more than one item in silver and bronze, came up for sale on 23 November 1971, including an Edward VI coronation medal (Figure 17.5).⁸

This is the very first coronation medal of any English royal. It was struck by the Tower Mint in 1547 to mark the coronation of Edward VI. At 6.5 cm (2.5 in) circumference, the medal demanded extraordinary skill. The original was engraved by Henry Basse (or Bayse), a goldsmith who was appointed chief engraver at the Tower Mint in 1545. To Falkiner's delight, 'the significance of the medal was not realised at the sale'. The medal was assumed to be a later seventeenth-century restorative medal, similar to the example now in the Cabinet des Médailles, at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. It consequently realised only £280 and 'I was fortunate to buy it.' After decades of research by Falkiner it was confirmed as an original sixteenth-century medal. The only other original example in silver is in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. 'My example is now at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.'

No doubt Morrison would have appreciated one of his medals eventually being recognised for its true importance, and being given a final home in a distinguished public collection through the discernment of a fellow numismatist.

Notes

- 1 Glendining & Co. Ltd, 25 July 1928, *An important collection of coins and medals principally illustrating the portraits of rulers and celebrities. The property of Mrs Alfred Morrison. Christie, Manson & Woods, 23 July 1965, Catalogue of the Collection of Coins and Medals (Part I) formed by the Late Alfred Morrison Esq. Sold by Order of his Grandson The Right Honourable The Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D. removed from Fonthill House, Wiltshire. Christie, Manson & Woods, 4 April 1967, Coins and Medals The property of The Right Honourable the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*
- 2 See Carson, *Mints, Dies and Currency*.
- 3 There are 32 German medals in bronze listed in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, Fonthill Archives, F/5/1180.
- 4 Morton and Eden, 2 July 2015 sale, <https://www.numisbids.com/n.php?p=lot&sid=1161&lot=251> Italy, Carmagnola, Ludovico II di Saluzzo (1475–1504) and Margarita de Foix, 10 scudi d'oro, 1503, Ludovico marchionis et margaritae de foix m s, confronting busts of Ludovico, wearing a hat and the collar of the Order of St. Michael, and Margarita wearing a veil; below, 1503, rev., si deus pro nobis quis contra nos – followed by j and jc monogram, shield of Saluzzo and Foix superimposed on crowned eagle with spread wings, 43.5mm, 34.33g (CNI II, 135, this piece; Ravegnani Morosini 13, this piece; Bellesia 1, this piece noted; Forrer, BDM I, 442, this piece noted; Armand II, 122, 13; MIR 134; F. 157), some edge smoothing and with a few scratches, some double striking, very fine to extremely fine and of the highest rarity. Ex collection of the Teutonic Order, Vienna; ex Prince Montenuovo collection, Vienna; ex Cav. Giancarlo Rossi collection, Dura & Sambon auction, Rome, 6 December 1880, lot 771; ex Alfred Morrison collection, Christie's, 23 July 1965, lot 60; and ex Christie's, 23 November 1971, lot 90.
- 5 Christie, Manson & Woods, 19 May 1966, *Catalogue of Objects of Art Important French and Other Continental Furniture Tapestries, Rugs and Carpets The properties of The Rt.Hon.the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*
- 6 *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, 1900, Fonthill Archives, F/5/1180. The heirlooms list also specified 158 medals, value £7,259 in a separate list which has not been located).
- 7 Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White*, 66.
- 8 Christie, Manson & Woods, 23 November 1971, *Commemorative Medals, Orders and Decorations The properties of the Rt.Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

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Sale catalogues of the collections of Alfred Morrison are separately listed in the [appendix](#)

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Treasures from the Alfred Morrison collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide

Introduction

On view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art are a handful of French artworks consisting of a magnificent clock designed by Lucien Falize (1839–97) and several exquisite pieces by Charles Lepec (1830–after 1888) all specifically commissioned or purchased by Alfred Morrison. In addition, *The Libyan Sibyl* (see [Figure 5.8](#)) by the American sculptor William Wetmore Story (1819–95), acquired by Alfred's older brother Charles for Basildon Park, Berkshire, has pride of place in the museum's Charles Engelhard Court.¹ While *The Libyan Sibyl* was a 1979 gift, Alfred's objects entered the collections between 1991 and 2018; relatively recent acquisitions when one considers the long history of an institution founded in 1870.

Works on paper from Morrison's extensive art collections were acquired much earlier from 1917 onwards. Engravings and etchings by Albrecht Dürer, Lucas van Leyden, Martin Schongauer, Sebald Beham, Rembrandt and others enriched the museum's holdings and were augmented in 2015 by the latest example; a watercolour of 1865 by John Brett (1831–1902).² One of Morrison's closest artist friends, Brett created a number of paintings for him, including portraits of himself and his wife (see [Chapter 2](#)). Some of the engraved prints were in the possession of other notable collectors such as Sir John St Aubyn, Julian Marshall and the American banker Junius Spencer Morgan, nephew of J. Pierpont Morgan, before coming to the museum.

While not purchased specifically because of their association with Morrison, the objects at the Met now bask in the cachet that the provenance of his collection bestows. The fact that it took the museum

longer to acquire some of Morrison's nineteenth-century pieces than it did engravings by Old Masters testifies to the institution's changing attitude towards art from that period.

From the outset the museum brought together examples of decorative arts which were intended not only to inspire American artists but also to elevate contemporary design standards. Yet the museum's attitude towards artworks from the Second Empire and Victorian era has long been ambivalent. For instance, a Renaissance-style walnut folio holder by the Florentine virtuoso woodcarver Luigi Frullini (1839–97), who participated in international expositions to great acclaim, was bequeathed to the museum in 1888 but was deaccessioned in 1929.³ While the Met was not alone in revising its opinion about art from the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was perhaps slower to do so than some of its sister institutions. As Olivier Hurstel and Martin Levy have pointed out, renewed appreciation for this often-scorned eclectic period was first evidenced in the 1952 exhibition devoted to Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts organised by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.⁴

The inauguration of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris in 1978 for the display of artworks from nineteenth-century Europe signalled a shift in the history of taste, as did *The Second Empire, 1852–1870: Art in France under Napoleon III*, an exhibition held that same year at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Although many American art museums had already established departments for modern art, the Met created a department only in 1967. This was followed by the construction of a special wing, the Lila Acheson Wallace Wing, which opened in 1987.⁵ This not only stimulated the expansion of the Met's modern and contemporary holdings but also led to the creation of galleries nearby dedicated to nineteenth-century sculpture and decorative arts. The opening of the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Galleries in 1991, for the display of European objects spanning the period from Napoleon Bonaparte's 1815 defeat to the flowering of the Art Nouveau, brought about a concentrated effort to enlarge and upgrade the collections with an emphasis on pieces shown at the various world fairs.⁶ A flurry of acquisitions ensued; the works by Charles Lepec and the Falize clock formerly in Morrison's possession were among the notable additions.

Works by Charles Lepec

As various chapters in this book demonstrate, Morrison patronised contemporary manufacturers and artists, among them Charles Lepec.

The relationship between the French enameller, the British collector and the jeweller Robert Phillips – who acted as the artist’s London agent – has been examined in depth by Hurstel and Levy, who establish that Morrison became the Frenchman’s most significant patron.⁷ Of the three objects in the museum’s collection, the earliest is a miniature portrait in painted enamel of Mabel Morrison (née Chermside) (1847–1933), whom Alfred married on 12 April 1866 (see [Figure 16.1](#)). This was a very personal commission. It is inscribed on the back ‘N 306’ (the artist numbered all his enamels) and ‘M^e M. Morrison Par Charles Lepec Paris Dec. 1866’ ([Figure 18.1](#)).⁸ Lepec rendered Mabel in profile, reflecting the example of Renaissance art and medals.

Much like an Italian Madonna, the sitter’s wavy auburn hair is pulled back and covered with a blue veil or headscarf trimmed with bobbin lace worked in metal thread. The neckline of her dress is similarly decorated with bobbin lace, illustrating the sitter’s enthusiasm for this handmade material of which she became a serious collector (see [Chapter 16](#)). In fact, her holdings of antique lace served as design



Figure 18.1 Reverse of Charles Lepec, *Mabel Morrison* (see [Figure 16.1](#)), showing the inscription, signature and date of the enamelled portrait.

© Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

inspirations for centres of modern lacemaking.⁹ Lepec masterfully rendered the luscious skin of Morrison's young bride, and wrote with pride to his patron on 13 December 1866 that he had finished the portrait the previous day (see [Appendix](#)).¹⁰ Having met Mabel shortly after her marriage, the artist believed the result to be successful both in colouration and likeness.

Underscoring the difficulties of the enamelling technique, Lepec pointed out a small blemish on Mabel's nose as well as the fact that not enough gold had adhered to the brooch on her dress. Although the enameller planned to address both issues, neither of them were permanently resolved. He judged this portrait the better of the two that he had made of Mrs Morrison and charged her husband £100 for the work.¹¹ In the same letter, Lepec mentioned that he had commissioned a small frame. From subsequent correspondence, we learn that the Spanish metalworker Plácido Zuloaga (1834–1910), who was to execute other outstanding artworks for the British collector, was responsible for the damascened iron frame (see [Chapter 14](#)).¹² While the frame's inner border of stylised fleur-de-lis motifs is reminiscent of the lacework for which Mabel Morrison had such a passion, the inlaid heart motifs might well be a reference to the sitter's newly wedded status. Possibly the work was displayed among the miniatures on the glass shelves of Owen Jones's bookcases in the library at 16 Carlton House Terrace in London (see [Chapter 3](#)).

The portrait was shown at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 as part of more than 20 enamelled pieces contributed by Lepec, the majority of which belonged to Morrison.¹³ The artist received a gold medal for his work, which was praised in contemporary journals such as the *L'Exposition Universelle de 1867 Illustrée*, in which it was noted: 'C'est une collection d'émaux d'art, autant de chefs-d'oeuvre. On pourra discuter le plus ou moins de goût qui a présidé à la confection de ces émaux, mais la beauté du travail est incomparable. Jamais on n'a mieux fait dans le passé.'¹⁴ The London *Times* singled out the artist's command of colour, and mentioned that 'in the two miniatures of an English lady – we see that nothing can be more soft.' This must refer to Lepec's portraits of Mabel Morrison. The British newspaper also emphasised the difficulty in attaining such perfection, especially given that the enamelling technique does not permit the painter to see the colour until after it has been fired.¹⁵

A bottle and stand, now at the Metropolitan Museum, were also shown at the 1867 exposition and included in *The Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Universal Exhibition* ([Figure 18.2](#)). Morrison had



Figure 18.2 Charles Lepec (1830–after 1888), Bottle on stand, French (Paris), c. 1867. Enamel on silver, partly gilt, 31.9 × 25.4 × 20 cm (12⁹/₁₆ × 10 × 7⁷/₈ in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase, Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Gifts, 2004 (2004.452).

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paid £250 for the pair, which were described by Lepec as a ‘Bouteille venitienne et son plateau’.¹⁶

The form of the vessel was inspired by Italian Renaissance metalwork, most notably pilgrim bottles (Figure 18.3).

To obtain greater luminosity, Lepec enamelled on silver, rather than copper. Despite the Renaissance inspiration, the artist’s choice of palette and the densely patterned decoration typify nineteenth-century taste. The roundel on the front of Lepec’s bottle boasts a portrait bust in profile of Bernabò Visconti (1323–85). Condottieri and Lords of Milan, the Viscontis were known as much for their vicious rule as for the splendour of their court. Like a medal, the subject’s name is inscribed in the medallion’s border together with the date 1378. This was the year that Bernabò allied with the Republic of Venice in its War of Chioggia against Genoa caused by the two cities’ rivalry over Levantine trade. This was also the year of the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer’s second diplomatic mission to Italy. Chaucer was tasked at the time to negotiate on behalf of Richard II with Bernabò and his son-in-law John Hawkwood,



Figure 18.3 Pilgrim bottle with cover, Italian (Venice), late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Painted enamel on copper, partly gilt; gilt-brass; H. 40.6 cm (16 in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of George Blumenthal, 1941 (41.100.285ab).

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an English mercenary soldier.¹⁷ The stern Milanese tyrant is shown with a distinctive beard, wearing a cap and breastplate over a steel mesh covering with a ruff at the neck. This depiction is not unlike the way Bernabò is rendered in the equestrian statue by the sculptor Bonino da Campione of about 1363.¹⁸ It is possible that these pieces were among the vases by Lepec placed on the five Florentine pietre dure tables in the dining room at 16 Carlton House Terrace (see [Chapter 3](#)). When the bottle and stand were sold from Basildon Park in 1920, Lepec's name was no longer associated with the work, and it was not until 2004 that its provenance was reestablished.¹⁹

The Met also owns a panel of carved boxwood framing a tiny portrait of Mabel Morrison painted on ivory ([Figure 18.4](#)). It is a late work (1887) signed 'CHARLES LEPEC INV. SCVLP'. Lepec's skill as a woodcarver is revealed in the surround, which is embellished with a winged dragon holding an orb with a Cupid on top shooting an arrow. It bears the legend 'CESAR IMP'. A long inscription on the back of the miniature provides the sitter's name and date of the work:

Ce buis/ a été compose, dessiné/ et sculpté. Ainsi que le portrait/
en miniature sur ivoire de /Mme Mabel Morrison par/ Charles Le

Pecq de Tourville/ habituellement nommé/ Charles Lepec, dans sa maison/ de la Croix de Fer, à Reux/ arrt de Pont l'Éveque, Dept/ du Calvados et terminé/ dans la 1ère semaine de/ Février/ de l'an 1887.²⁰

Although sold from Basildon Park as a single object, several preparatory drawings show that this work was planned to be part of a larger oeuvre.²¹ As Hurstel and Levy have suggested, Mrs Morrison's likeness may have been intended to be the central panel of a 'family triptych' surrounded by miniatures of her four surviving children enclosed in a wooden shrine.²²

Though two decades had passed since Lepec first made an enamelled portrait of Mabel, she has barely aged, and her hair has retained its auburn colour. She is once again depicted in profile, and wears a velvet bonnet which may have been one of the 'strange headdresses' that she reportedly brought back from trips abroad.²³ Instead of lace, she is wearing earrings and necklaces set with gemstones which may have been created for her by Lepec.²⁴ Surviving drawings



Figure 18.4 Charles Lepec (1830–after 1888), Carved panel with miniature of Mabel Morrison, French (Reux), c. 1886/7. Boxwood, gilt-metal, painted ivory; 23.2 × 11.7 cm (9 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase, The James Parker Charitable Foundation Gift, 2010 (2010.33).

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indicate that Lepec designed (and possibly executed) other miniature portraits set in intricately carved frames, including another one of Mabel Morrison.²⁵

The clock by Lucien Falize

Alfred Morrison's sumptuous, complex and colourful clock is a major work by the Paris jewellery firm of Germain Bapst (1853–1921) and Lucien Falize, who were in partnership from 1879/80 until 1892 (Figure 18.5). The clock was executed in 1881 after designs by



Figure 18.5 Table clock with calendar, 1881. Silver, partly enamelled gold, hardstones, rock crystal, amethysts and diamonds. Case and enamel design by the firm of Lucien Falize (1839–97), in partnership with Germain Bapst (1853–1921). 47 × 17.8 × 17.8 cm (18½ × 7 × 7 in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase, Mrs Charles Wrightsman Gift, 1991 (1991.113a–f).

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Lucien Falize, who also signed and dated the work. The sculptor Léon Chédeville (1851–83) was responsible for modelling the five figures, cast in gold, which were chased by Claudius Marioton (1844–1919). The spring-driven movement signed ‘Le Roy et Fils, Horlogers fournisseurs brevetés de S.M. la Reine à Londres (Le Roy and Son, Clockmakers, licensed suppliers to H.M. the Queen in London)’ was supplied by Casimir Halley Desfontaines (1813–83) who in 1845 bought the firm from Charles-Louis Le Roy and retained its name.

As Katherine Purcell has pointed out, Falize drew inspiration from many different sources for his oeuvre.²⁶ The model of Morrison’s clock corresponds to early sixteenth-century architecture. Although not a direct copy of any extant Gothic tower, the overall structure bears similarities to the west front of the basilica *Nôtre Dame d’Alençon* (c. 1500). The design of the square silver base with its seated Cardinal Virtues can be compared with the Early Renaissance funerary monument to Louis XII (d. 1515) and Anne of Brittany (d. 1514) at the Abbey Church of Saint Denis. The case’s upper part functions like a medieval belfry; when the clock struck the hours and quarters, it evoked the sound of Gothic church bells. The gold roof is lavishly mounted with cabochon-cut amethysts while the thinly veiled figure of Truth, holding a torch in her lifted right hand and a palm branch in the other, towers above.

The clock is embellished with two types of enamelling: *cloisonné* and *basse taille*. The nineteenth-century revival of these techniques was credited to Falize.²⁷ The front of the tower is set with a large *cloisonné*-enamelled clock face fitted with a rock crystal lens carved with Roman numerals for the hours.²⁸ The minutes are indicated on the bezel of the lens. Set with tiny diamonds, the hands telling the time are made of gold. A cock with extended wings, symbolising day as well as vigilance, supports the dial.

On the reverse side, a large medallion, with an owl below representing both wisdom and night, has three *cloisonné*-enamelled dials set amid gold foliage (Figure 18.6). One of them has the names of the days of the week and in the centre the mark of the firm of Bapst and Falize BF, a ribbon, a diamond ring and a pendant pearl. The second dial bears the names of the months and floral emblems of the four seasons, while the third dial shows the days of the month with a winged hourglass in the middle. Falize’s watercolour designs for all four of the dials are preserved.²⁹ In addition to the hourglass, references to fleeting time and mortality are expressed in the Latin inscription engraved in medieval script on the bezel: ‘Vulnerant omnes, ultima necat’ (every [hour] wounds, the last kills) and in the words engraved on the *banderole*



Figure 18.6 Detail of Figure 18.5 showing the reverse side of the clock with the three enamelled dials.

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among the gold foliage: ‘HERI’ (yesterday) ‘HODIE’ (today) ‘CRAS’ (tomorrow). Amusingly, when the Morrison family sold the clock at auction in 1938, the movement was said to be by Heri Hodie, perhaps an indication of the less than stringent standards of classical scholarship at the time.³⁰

On the remaining two sides of the clock tower and on the base below are panels set in arched frames of brightly coloured basse-taille enamels.³¹ These panels symbolise the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity (above the arms of Pope Julius II of Italy) as well as the Philosophical Virtues of Science, Liberty and the Search for Knowledge (above the monogram of Henry VIII of England) (Figures 18.7 and 18.8).

When the clock was acquired by the Met in 1991, it was discovered that a number of decorative elements, including the enamelled plaques and the Cardinal Virtues, were arranged differently from Falize’s original design (Figure 18.9).³² Most significantly, Alfred Morrison’s initials AM were on the front of the clock, and the initials of Louis XII were on the reverse side. A finished (possibly presentation) drawing by Falize, now also in the museum’s collection, allowed the clock to be reassembled according to the jeweller’s original design. On the time-telling side of the clock, the initials of Louis XII were placed underneath the large clock



Figure 18.7 Detail of [Figure 18.5](#) showing the side of the clock with enameled panels symbolising the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity (above the arms of Pope Julius II of Italy), flanked by the seated figures representing Temperance and Prudence.

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Figure 18.8 Detail of [Figure 18.5](#) showing the side of the clock with enameled panels symbolising the Philosophical Virtues of Science, Liberty and the Search for Knowledge (above the monogram of Henry VIII of England), flanked by the seated figures representing Fortitude and Justice.

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Figure 18.9 Lucien Falize (1839–97), *Design for Enamelled Clock*, French (Paris), c. 1881. Pen, ink and watercolour, 58.4 × 34.9 cm (23 × 13¾ in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1991 (1991.1254).
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dial, with two enamelled panels representing the Church and Prayer, and flanked by the seated figures of Prudence and Fortitude.

The initials of the clock's patron, AM, were placed on the reverse side of the clock, below allegorical representations of Law and Labour. It now appears, however, that the clock may never have been finished to Falize's original design or was altered early on. In an illustration in the *Revue des Arts Décoratifs* of 1882–3, AM and Morrison's family motto 'Praetio Prudentia Praestat' (Prudence Supplies a Reward) are clearly depicted underneath the large dial.³³ When the clock was shown at the Exposition Universelle of 1889, Morrison's initials were still visible on the time-telling side. It seems likely that Morrison insisted to the artist that his identity be clearly shown on the front. This is where the owner's initials remained for over a century until rearranged by the Met after 1991 to correspond with Falize's drawing (Figure 18.10).³⁴

Its unique design, the precious metals, gems and hardstones used, as well as the exceptional workmanship combined rendered the clock a real showpiece. Not surprisingly therefore, the work attracted much



Figure 18.10 Detail of [Figure 18.5](#). The reverse side of the clock with the three dials shows the monogram of Alfred Morrison with the family motto, the Cardinal Virtues Justice and Temperance seated at the corners and two enamelled panels representing Labour and Law.

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attention and was featured in contemporary journals. Even before its completion, the French art critic and director of the École des Beaux Arts, Charles Blanc (1813–82), saw the timepiece, most likely in Falize's workshop. Blanc described it as 'une ravissante horloge d'or et d'argent' and referred to it as an 'admirable morceau de ciselure et d'émaillerie' which in his opinion could have been created by the goldsmith of Louis XII.³⁵ Unfortunately, nothing is known about the commission or how Falize first encountered his patron.³⁶

It has been suggested that Morrison may have seen work by the jeweller at the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle or that Charles Lepec may have introduced the two because the enamellers knew one another.³⁷ Falize created other important pieces for Morrison such as the so-called Vase Sassanide, for which Mrs Morrison apparently proposed the idea. Both the timepiece and the vase, which was inspired by Persian art, were included in the Paris international exhibition of 1889, earning Falize the decoration of Officier de la Légion d'Honneur.³⁸

Conclusion

The artworks from Alfred Morrison's collection now in New York have not only strengthened the Metropolitan Museum's holdings of nineteenth-century decorative arts but also beautifully illustrate how Lepec and Falize benefited from the trust, support and discerning taste of their British patron. The relationship of the collector with the two talented French artists led to the commission and creation of magnificent and unique works of art.

Appendix

Charles Lepec's letter to Alfred Morrison regarding Mabel's portrait of 1866

Paris 13 Decembre 1866

Cher Monsieur

J'ai terminé hier le portrait de Madame Morrison et je vous l'envoie aujourd'hui par l'intermédiaire de M^r Phillips, car on a refusé ici de vous l'expédier directement.

Je suis très inquiet de connaître votre appréciation et je vous rappelle votre promesse d'être bien sincère.

Voici mon opinion: comme objet d'art, c'est certainement très réussi, et comme vérité de coloration, c'est un excellent résultat: mais je voudrais avoir votre opinion bien franche et tout à fait en aussi quant à la ressemblance: ne craignez pas de ma dire la vérité: je n'ai pas cette mauvaise susceptibilité des artistes.

Je pense avoir, autant que je le pouvais, reproduit la figure de Madame Morrison, lorsque je la vis pour la première fois le 16 ou le 17 avril. Je serais bien heureux si j'avais à peu près réussi.

L'oeil est très réussi, et différentes personnes qui ont vu le portrait disent que j'ai du flatter la peinture: je ne le crois pas et je pense au contraire que Madame Morrison est mieux que la peinture que je vous envoie.

Maintenant parlons des défauts; il y a un petit bouillon sur la ligne du nez; je le ferai disparaître plus tard avec un peu de mastic; autre défaut, la broche n'a pas conservé la dorure et je l'ai remise au pinceau.

J'ai fait faire un petit cadre pour vous l'envoyer: nous fêrions ensuite ce que vous voudrez: seulement je désire que vous me chargiez

de le faire réencadrer si cela vous plait, parceque je crains une accident dans la main d'un autre.

Je vous prierai de me le confier au mois de mars pour l'exposition; car c'est un objet important comme émail.

La boîte contient un autre petit émail qui est destiné à M Chermshire: il m'a donné de grandes difficultés et n'est pas tout à fait semblable au grand: l'oeil est un peu trop grand et la bouche a quelque chose que je ne puis définir: cependant il a l'air plus jeune que le grand.

J'écris en même temps à M. Chermshire pour lui annoncer que vous allez recevoir les deux.

Veuillez, je vous prie, présenter à Madame Morrison mes hommages respectueux et croire aux meilleurs sentimens de votre tout dévoué

Charles Lepec

Paris 13 December 1866

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I finished the portrait of Mrs. Morrison, and I have sent it to you today through the intermediary of Mr. Phillips because we refused to send it to you directly.

I am very concerned about your assessment, and I remind you of your promise to be very sincere.

Here my opinion: as a work of art, it is certainly very successful, and as truth of colouring, it is an excellent result: but I would like to have your very frank opinion also as to the resemblance. Do not be afraid to tell me the truth. I do not have that poor susceptibility of artists.

As much as I could, I think I have reproduced the figure of Mrs. Morrison, when I saw her for the first time [on] April 16 or 17. I would be very happy if I had almost succeeded.

The eye is very successful and various people who have seen the portrait have said that I had to flatter the painting: I do not believe this, and I think quite the contrary that Mrs. Morrison is better than the painting that I am sending you.

Let us talk about the flaws now; there is a little blemish on the line of the nose. I will make it disappear later with a bit of mastic; another defect, the brooch has not kept the gilding, and I will touch it up with a paint brush.

I had a small frame made to send you. We would then do whatever you want. Only I want you to ask me to have it reframed if it pleases you, because I fear an accident in the hands of another.

I will ask you to entrust it to me for the exposition in the month of March, because it is an important enamelled object.

The box contains another small enamel which is intended for Mr. Chermshire: It has caused me great difficulties and it is not at all similar to the large [one]: the eye is a little too big and the mouth has something I cannot define, however, it looks younger than the big one.

I [will] write at the same time to Mr. Chermshire to tell him that you will receive both portraits.

Please pay Mrs. Morrison my respectful compliments and believe in the best sentiments of yours truly,

Charles Lepec

Notes

- 1 Anon, 'Our weekly gossip', 403. While Charles Morrison also acquired a *Cleopatra* from Story for Basildon Park, the Met's version of this sculpture does not have a Morrison provenance (88.5a–d).
- 2 *Bonchurch Downs* (2015.516). Alfred Morrison was an important patron of the painter John Brett. Dakers, 'Furniture and interior decoration', 203.
- 3 Bequest of Miss Ada Augusta Draper, 1888. (88.11.5) Deaccessioned in 1929 and sold again at Christie's, New York, 19th Century Furniture, Sculpture, Works of Art and Ceramics, 20 April 2006, lot 12. To make up for the lack of work by Frullini, the Museum bought *The Triumph of Bacchus* in 2019 (2019.205).
- 4 Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the Patronage of Alfred Morrison', 195–6.
- 5 Tinterow, 'The modern era', 128–9.
- 6 Raggio, 'Rethinking the collections', 9–11. More recently, a new wave of purchases, particularly works from the Victorian era, was spurred by the reinstallation of the Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries and Josephine Mercy Heathcote Gallery devoted to British decorative arts and sculpture created between 1500 and 1900, which opened in 2020.
- 7 Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the Patronage of Alfred Morrison', 195–223.
- 8 Hurstel and Levy, 'The Apotheosis of Charles Lepec', 35.
- 9 Jourdain, 'Lace in the Collection of Mrs. Alfred Morrison', 95. I'm grateful to Elena Kanagy-Loux for identifying the lace as bobbin lace.
- 10 Letter from Charles Lepec to Alfred Morrison, 13 December 1866. Morrison Archives at Fonthill Estate Archive, Wiltshire.
- 11 Charles Lepec to Alfred Morrison. The artist struggled with a second smaller enamelled portrait, intended for Mabel Morrison's father, the Rev. Robert Seymour Chermshire, rector of Wilton, Wiltshire, which has not yet been located. Lepec acknowledged receipt of the sum of £100 from Morrison for the portrait of his wife on 10 January 1867. Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 12 Undated bill from Charles Lepec to Alfred Morrison detailing pieces he had supplied to Mrs. Morrison, stating that he would send the two portraits of Mrs Morrison as soon as Zuloaga's damascening was finished. In a bill of 11 February 1868, Lepec charged £2 4s for the frames of both portraits of Mrs Morrison while ignoring the cost of the damascening. Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 13 Note by Charles Lepec of 10 January 1867, in which the artist states that he has received from Mr Morrison a group of objects including the portrait of Mme Morrison for display at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. Letter by Charles Lepec to Alfred Morrison, dated 24 November 1867, in which he thanks his patrons for having lent their enamels. Fonthill Estate Archive.

- 14 'It is a collection of artistic enamels, so many masterpieces. We can discuss the more or less [questionable] taste that presided over the making of these enamels, but the beauty of the work is incomparable. Never has anything better been done in the past.' Ducuing, 'La Rue de Paris', 86.
- 15 *The Times*, London, 23 August 1867, quoted by Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the Patronage of Alfred Morrison', 208.
- 16 Venetian bottle and its stand. *Illustrated Catalogue of the Universal Exhibition*, 304. Lepec acknowledged receipt of the sum of £250 from Morrison for the 'Bouteille venitien et son plateau' on 10 January 1867. Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 17 Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the patronage of Alfred Morrison', 207–8. See also Turner, 'The journey that changed Geoffrey Chaucer's life'.
- 18 This sculpture was initially created for the Church of San Giovanni in Conca but later reworked by the artist to be used as Bernabò's funerary monument in the same church. It is now at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan. Palmer, 'Bonino da Campione's equestrian monument', 57–67.
- 19 Waring & Gillow, Basildon Park, Pangbourne, Berks., English and Continental Furniture and Effects, 26 October 1920, lot 1037. It was described as a 'Very fine European enamel rose-watervase of flat bottle-shape with quadruple lip on oval base, the whole richly enamelled on silver, in claret, turquoise, white and gilt, etc., with a medallion portrait of a man.' Sold again at Doyle, New York, Belle Epoque; 19th and 20th Century Decorative Arts, 25–6 February 2004, lot 364, where it was described as Viennese. Blairman & Sons, *Furniture and Works of Art*, no. 11. Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the Patronage of Alfred Morrison', 207–8, 220, n.113.
- 20 This boxwood has been created, designed and carved, also the portrait in miniature on ivory of Mrs. Mabel Morrison by Charles Le Pecq of Tourville usually called Charles Lepec, at his house of the Iron Cross, at Reux, arrondissement of Pont l'Évêque, Department of Calvados and finished during the first week of February of the year 1887.
- 21 Sold by Waring & Gillow, Basildon Park, Pangbourne, Berks., 26 October 1920, lot 1306. Sold again by Shapes Auctioneers and Valuers, Edinburgh, 4 October 2008, lot 400; and at Christie's, London, 19th Century Furniture, Sculpture, Works of Art & Ceramics, 24 September 2009, lot 20.
- 22 Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the Patronage of Alfred Morrison', 212–15, figures 26–29b.
- 23 Olivier, *Four Victorian Ladies*, 50, 55. The miniature portrait is illustrated opposite page 53.
- 24 For instance, Lepec charged £132 for a 'collier indien et les boucles d'oreilles', which he had supplied to Mrs Morrison. Undated bill, Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 25 For the additional portrait of Mabel Morrison see Hurstel and Levy, 'Charles Lepec and the Patronage of Alfred Morrison', 215, fig. 30. For a portrait of an unidentified woman see Gabet, *L'Objet et son double*, 29, no. 36.
- 26 Purcell, *Falize*, 198–255.
- 27 Anon, 'Orfèvrerie-Beaux Arts', 201.
- 28 In this technique the enamel is poured into compartments formed by a network of metal bands on the surface of an object.
- 29 These designs are published by Purcell, *Falize*, 94, figure 136.
- 30 Christie, Manson & Woods, London, *Catalogue of Porcelain and Objects of Art*, 8 December 1938, lot 30, sold as the property of John Granville Morrison. The case erroneously said to be by 'Zuluaga' [Plácido Zuloaga].
- 31 A technique in which a metal surface, usually gold or silver, is engraved or carved in low relief and then covered with translucent vitreous enamel.
- 32 Sotheby's, New York, Important English and Continental Silver, 19 April 1991, lot 233.
- 33 Anon, 'Oeuvres Nouvelles', 29–30.
- 34 Falize, 'Exposition Universelle de 1889', 5.
- 35 'A delightful clock in gold and silver ... an admirable piece of chasing and enamelling ...'. Blanc, *Grammaire des arts décoratifs*, 308–9. See also Anon, 'Horloge en argent et or fin', 2227; Anon, 'Oeuvres Nouvelles', 29–30; Anon, 'Orfèvrerie-Beaux Arts', 201. More recently, a detailed description of the clock was given by Vincent and Leopold, *European Clocks and Watches*, 254–9, no. 54.
- 36 A letter written by Falize to the English collector illustrates that they enjoyed an amicable relationship. Letter of 1? July 1890, from Lucien Falize to Alfred Morrison. Fonthill Estate Archives, Morrison 1890 invoices and letters 1133, page 92.

- 37 Purcell, *Falize*, 307, n. 78. Alcouffe, 'Les émailleurs français', 105–6. Falize wrote about Lepec's enamel work see Falize, 'Claudius Popelin', 9: 512, and 10: 478.
- 38 Purcell, 'Catering for Every Taste', 98, and Purcell, *Falize*, 95.

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The dispersal of Alfred Morrison's collections, an overview

Caroline Dakers

Introduction

Alfred Morrison died on 22 December 1897. His estate was valued for probate on 5 April 1898 at £869,174 12s 6d and resworn in June 1900 at £916,107 18s 8d. Each of his four children received £75,000. His eldest son Hugh received all his landed estates apart from Fonthill House and the surrounding 300 acres (Fonthill Park). Mabel, his widow, was entitled to the use of Fonthill and its parkland, and 16 Carlton House Terrace, for her lifetime. She was also left all the contents of Alfred's country and town houses for her lifetime. There was, however, one particular stipulation. A list was to be drawn up of Alfred's 'heirlooms', which could be enjoyed by Mabel but must remain as part of the Fonthill estate.¹

Alfred's brothers Charles and Walter were his executors. They were responsible, in consultation with Mabel and the children, for deciding which of his vast collections were heirlooms and what to do with everything else. Death duties had to be paid, and it appears the decision was taken to sell objects rather than land. Alfred made his will the day he married Mabel; over the years, he occasionally made lists of objects in his collection, for example he commissioned catalogues of his engraved portraits and autograph letters, but he never revised his will and he never drew up a list of heirlooms.

It is clear from the subsequent sales that Alfred's heirs did not share his taste in interior design nor his collecting passions. This chapter follows the dispersal of his treasures since 1897, as his direct descendants reduced the contents of Fonthill House by auction sales. There were 22 sales between 1898 and 1906 before Mabel moved away

from Fonthill, leaving the house, the estate and the heirlooms to her eldest son Hugh.

There was a pause in sales from Fonthill, though Mabel continued to sell items through the First World War and into the 1920s, including Alfred's large collection of autograph manuscripts and many engraved portraits. Hugh, meanwhile, had built a new house on the estate, Little Ridge, and a new house in London, 9 Halkin Street, in Belgravia, both by the architect Detmar Blow.² He demolished Alfred's Fonthill House in 1921, selling anything that was surplus to requirement (including the ebony and ivory cabinets designed by Owen Jones), and renaming Little Ridge, confusingly, Fonthill House.

Hugh died in 1931 and was succeeded by his only son John Granville Morrison, who was made Baron Margadale of Islay in 1965. The late 1960s and early 1970s proved to be Lord Margadale's nadir, 'rampant inflation, falling production, collapsing land prices, rising unemployment; tax on investment income at 98 per cent; a sliding stock market; Capital Gains Tax, Capital Transfer Tax, Value Added Tax, and to crown everything the threat of a Wealth Tax'.³ He decided to demolish his father's Fonthill House in 1972 and to build a new smaller house on the site. The 32 sales he held between 1965 and 1985 disposed of the majority of Alfred's remaining treasures.

I give a general outline of the sales over the years, but also pick out a few objects, providing information about their present locations where known. I also refer to pieces identified in the earlier chapters. Many of Alfred's paintings, sculpture, Chinese ceramics, *objets de vertu*, autograph letters, coins and medals eventually entered public collections around the world, though not always identified as emanating from his collections. Now, in the twenty-first century, as provenances are being updated, his discernment and his position as an extraordinary collector, are being recognised.

The magnificent triptych now at the Toledo Museum of Art in the United States is named after Morrison, while the unknown Early Netherlandish painter is known as the 'Master of the Morrison Triptych' (Figure 19.1). Morrison's acquisition of the painting, however, remains something of a mystery. According to the catalogue of the National Loan Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery where it was exhibited in 1914, it had been walled up in a monastery during the Peninsular War, and was later brought to England by Plácido Zuloaga, presumably with Alfred already lined up as a buyer.⁴ Zuloaga was also named, at the same exhibition, as obtaining Alfred his portrait of Charles III of Spain by Goya. In Chapter 10, new evidence is presented that rejects the latter claim and



Figure 19.1 The Morrison triptych, *The Madonna and Child with Angels and Saints*, oil on wood panels, wings 110.8 × 37.2 cm (43.6 × 14.6 in); centre panel 97.5 × 60.4 cm (38.3 × 23.7 in). Toledo Museum of Art.

Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey.

© Toledo Museum of Art

inevitably raises questions over whether Zuloaga had anything to do with finding the triptych. Piecing together how Morrison built up his varied collections is as challenging as following their dispersal.

Early decisions, 16 Carlton House Terrace, the heirlooms

No. 16 Carlton House Terrace was disposed of quickly, just a few months after Alfred Morrison's death, presumably because Mabel had no wish to remain living there.⁵ The 63-year lease was valued by the firm of Gordon and Gunton on 18 February 1898 at £20,650 for probate and sold to Weetman Pearson, later the 1st Lord Cowdray.⁶ The Cowdrays remained at 16 Carlton House Terrace until 1933, then sold the house to Crockfords, a gaming club. The internal fittings and the ceilings designed by Owen Jones remained mostly intact. In the library, however, the club kept only the chimneypiece with fitted cabinets on either side of the fireplace (see [Figure 8.6a](#) and [8.6b](#)). The other cabinets were

dismantled and stored in the attic, then given, apparently, by the Crown Estate Commissioners (the ground landlords) to the Victoria and Albert Museum, which still has one cabinet. A separate panel appeared in the sale room in 2002 and is now in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris; another is in the Minneapolis Institute of Art. No sale particulars have come to light to indicate what happened in the early twentieth century to any of the unique furniture at Carlton House Terrace designed by Owen Jones for Jackson & Graham. Pieces continue to appear at sales in Britain, Europe and North America.

The piano, for example, was owned before 1976 by Mrs Elizabeth Tyser of Coach House Cottage, Gussage All Saints, Dorset (see [Figure 8.8](#)). There is no record of when or where she acquired it. She sold it at auction to Mr Crofton Millier, a Bournemouth-based piano dealer. The piano was then acquired from Millier by the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum in Bournemouth, joining their paintings by John Brett and H. W. B. Davis formerly in Alfred's collection (see [Figures 2.7](#) and [9.10](#)). The Russell-Cotes Museum sold the piano to Sewerby Hall in Yorkshire, where it remains on public view.

Smaller items of value in the London house appear to have been gathered together by Mabel in a specially constructed container. In a letter written in about 1911, Mabel explained how she commissioned a strong room for £645:

When I made it, it was a necessity. Carlton Terrace [*sic*] was sold & at that moment we had no London house & I had nowhere to store valuables & the many treasures. They [the manufacturers] are still very proud of the room all the parts floor roof sides etc are numbered & answer to the plan so it can be taken down.⁷

What exactly the strong room contained is a mystery.

As Alfred's executors, his brothers Charles and Walter Morrison 'experienced great difficulty in determining what articles were comprised in the bequest of heirlooms contained in the will', so they engaged Mr Tom Cox, an employee of Christie's since 1873, to make an inventory. He drew up his list 'having regard to their artistic and intrinsic value or merit and their suitability to their surroundings'. He included no pictures he thought of 'no art value'.⁸ Alfred had stipulated that the heirlooms list could be altered if the trustees were in agreement.

The *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* drawn up by Mr Cox in 1900 comprised Old Masters, eighteenth-century English paintings, portraits of the family, Chinese porcelain, coins and medals and some *objets de*

vertu, but very few nineteenth-century paintings and sculpture, few of Alfred's engraved portraits and no examples of autograph manuscripts.⁹ The omission of the nineteenth-century works of art in particular reflected both Mr Cox's standard of 'art value' and contemporary taste. The inventory indicated where in Fonthill House everything could be found. This was important as Christie's was obliged to check every few years that nothing had been disposed of without agreement of the executors. While Mabel continued to live at Fonthill, she was taken to the High Court, accused of moving pieces to her new London house.¹⁰

Each heirloom was given a numbered label (Figure 19.2). Now in the twenty-first century these heirloom labels have become a sign of additional value, particularly if attached to Chinese porcelain, and there is evidence of a market in forgeries.

Other items can easily be identified as coming from Fonthill or Carlton House Terrace by the monogram AM added by Alfred's craftsmen. For example, there is a vase made by Phillipe Joseph Brocard clearly bearing Alfred's initials (Figure 19.3). Autograph manuscripts and engraved portraits were marked AM; even the fire-backs, still in situ in Carlton House Terrace, were stamped AM.

The heirlooms in the inventory remained largely intact until just before the First World War, when the family agreed to their disposal, little



Figure 19.2 'Fonthill Heirlooms 442' label on base of Chinese enameled porcelain bowl, private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth



Figure 19.3 Phillipe Joseph Brocard, gilt, enamelled and applied glass vase, c. 1872, with monogram AM, private collection, London. Courtesy of Sinai and Sons, Ltd.

Photograph © Paul Minyo

by little, until the avalanche of sales in the 1970s. Everything else *could* be sold, with the agreement of Mabel, her children and the executors. Christie's was engaged to handle most of the sales through the twentieth century, though Sotheby's handled the sales of autograph manuscripts. It is clear that Alfred's children chose pieces from his collections to keep, as well as buying at the early auctions; some of these items appeared at sales later in the twentieth century. The [Appendix](#) contains a list of sales by Alfred's widow and heirs.

The early sales

The sales began in June 1898, with the disposal of much of Alfred's fine wine, followed by his intagli, camei, rings and Greek vases, and in December a selection of embroideries and Persian rugs.¹¹

Included in the sale of 29–30 June was an exquisite gem by Moschos of mottled agate depicting Herakles (Hercules) carrying the Cretan Bull over his shoulder (lot 70; [Figure 19.4](#)). It was bought by Francis E. Whelan (1848–1907), then acquired by the Greek collector



Figure 19.4 Moschos, *Gem of Herakles with the Cretan Bull*, 50–25 BC, mottled agate, 2.2 cm (0.8 in), The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Malibu, California. Gift of Jonathan and Ute Kagan.

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Alexander Constantine Ionides and his descendants, before being given by Jonathan and Ute Kagan in 2016 to the J. Paul Getty Museum.

Lot 56 was an Etruscan scarab also bought by Whelan (Figure 19.5). He was manager of the London branch of the Paris-based coin business Rollin and Feuardent, and ‘for something over thirty years up to his death a major player in the London coin trade’.¹² The scarab passed from Whelan to the collector Wyndham Francis Cook (1860–1905). When sold at Christie’s (New York) in 2019, it reached \$237,500.¹³ Only with the aid of a magnifying glass would it be possible to appreciate the extraordinary scene carved on the underside of the scarab beetle. Cassandra, nude apart from a mantle wrapped around her legs, crouches beside a statue of Athena while Ajax approaches, wearing a crested Attic helmet and carrying a shield with the head of Medusa on the blazon.

There were eight sales in 1899. The sale of 25 January included Japanese cloisonné enamels, bronzes, lacquer panels, bronzes and pieces by Charles Lepec, Plácido Zuloaga and Phillipe Joseph Brocard. The catalogue in Christie’s archive names a Morrison as one of the purchasers, most likely Alfred’s brother Charles of Basildon Park.

A fantastic decoration on a tazza made by Charles Lepec was described as ‘wild female Redskin riding a chimera’ when Alfred acquired



Figure 19.5 Unknown (Etruscan), *Engraved Scarab with Ajax and Cassandra*, 400–375 BC. Scarab: carnelian; modern ring: gold object: 1.5 × 1 × 0.7 cm (0.59 × 0.39 × 0.27 in). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Malibu, California, 2019.13.10.

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Figure 19.6 Charles Lepec, *La Fantaisie*, top of tazza, enamel on metal, 1864, 16.8 × 21.5 cm (6.6 × 8.46 in). Saint Louis Art Museum, Lopata Endowment Fund, 129-1994.

Photograph © H. Blairman & Sons Ltd

it in 1864 (Figure 19.6). At the sale in 1899 it had become lot 389, an 'African figure on a dragon'. Mabel disposed of other beautiful enamels by Lepec depicting naked or semi-nude women, all acquired by Alfred before their marriage (see Figure 2.3). The tall clock which stood on the first-floor landing at Carlton House Terrace (lot 151), was 2.66 m (8 ft 9 in) high of 'Moorish design'. *The Magazine of Art* had claimed it was by Charles Lepec, 'in upright ebony case, of Moorish design, inlaid and mounted with conventional flowers and foliage in gilt metal, steel and stained-red ivory'. The dealer Marcus snapped it up for 7 guineas, but it has not been seen since.

Two sales (28 January and 17 June 1899) disposed of many of Alfred's contemporary paintings and sculpture. A comparison between the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* and the photographs of the galleries taken in about 1891 reveals their demotion. The music gallery and the picture gallery had contained dense hangs of nineteenth-century paintings, but in Mr Cox's list, signed off in 1900, the music gallery only contained one picture worthy of being an heirloom, H. W. B. Davis's painting of stampeding cows (see Figure 3.19). The picture gallery was stripped of its nineteenth-century paintings and after the sale was rehung with Old Masters and eighteenth-century English paintings, including the Goya of Charles III and the triptych attributed to Memling.

The prices reached at the sales were not high. In the sale of 28 January, Anna Bilinska's self-portrait (lot 12) sold for just £16 (see Figure 2.12). John William Inchbold's *King Arthur's Island* was sold for £25 in 1899 (lot 72); on 27 September 2017 (lot 269) it was sold for \$40,000. Some of the sculptures included in the sales are visible in the photographs of the saloon at Fonthill (Figures 2.2, 3.23 and 3.24) and discussed here in Chapter 11: Emilio Santarelli's *Oratio Ejus Accepta*; Hiram Powers's *Proserpine* and *Greek Slave*, described by Christie's as *Chastity* and *Modesty*; Giovita Lombardi's *Two Goats*; Richard Wyatt's *Infant Bacchus*; Stefano Galletti's life-size figure of *Fabiola*. A version of the latter sculpture, sold at Sotheby's on 13 December 2023 (lot 41) for £150,000, may have been the one in Alfred's collection, but the provenance is not proven (see Figure 11.13).

Alfred had enough wall space at Fonthill (but not Carlton House Terrace) to hang very large paintings, particularly in his picture gallery and the music gallery. Several feature in these early sales, including Tidemand's *The Result of a Single Combat in a Norwegian Hut* at 170 × 236 cm (67 × 93 in); Nikolai Sverchkov's *Winter Scene* at 160 × 248.9 cm (63 × 98 in); H. W. B. Davis's *Spring Ploughing (Labourage au printemps)*, at 152 × 304.8 cm (60 × 120 in) (see Figure 9.9). At the



Figure 19.7 Seal of Napoleon III. Nineteenth-century gold mounted sapphire intaglio seal pendant for Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie, probably French, c. 1853. Private collection.

Photograph © S. J. Phillips Ltd

Christie's sale of 28 January 1899, 13 small paintings by John Brett were disposed of. *The River Dart* (lot 49) is now at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter. Six more by Brett were sold on 17 June, including his enormous *Seashore with Seagulls* (lot 105) at 152 × 304.8 cm (60 × 120 in), which is presumed lost. The Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum now owns Davis's *Approaching Thunderstorm* (lot 111), slightly smaller at 111.7 × 243.8 cm (44 × 96 in), and Brett's *Christmas Morning, 1866* (see [Figures 9.10](#) and [2.7](#)). The museum archives do not reveal whether Russell-Cotes himself bid for the paintings at auction, or whether they were acquired later from a dealer.

The sale of 12 June 1899 included more small precious items, camei and intagli and gold snuff boxes. Lot 84 was the sapphire and gold seal given by Napoleon III to his only son Louis-Napoleon, Prince Imperial, who always wore it round his neck ([Figure 19.7](#)). In 1879, it was stolen from his body after he was killed fighting with the British in the Anglo-Zulu War, to reappear in the saleroom.

The same sale included the *Rubens vase* (lot 81; [Figure 19.8](#)). This extraordinary vase, just over 18 cm (7 in) high, was carved from a single piece of agate, probably for a Byzantine emperor. It had passed through the hands of King Charles V of France, Peter Paul Rubens, the Emperor Jahangir of India, William Beckford, the Duke of Hamilton, the antiques dealer Samson Wertheimer and finally, in 1892, Alfred. The American



Figure 19.8 *Rubens vase*, c. AD 400, agate and gold, 18.6 × 18.5 × 12 cm (7.3 × 7.2 × 4.7 in). Museum purchase, formerly part of the Walters Collection, 1941, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland.

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Henry Walters eventually acquired it in 1925 and it is now in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. It is clear that Alfred's family did not share his love of illustrious provenance, let alone superb craftsmanship.

The dispersal of Alfred's collections to his brother Charles and his children Archie and Katharine

After Alfred's death, Mabel continued to live at Fonthill House with the heirlooms and the rest of her husband's diminishing collections until 1911, when she moved to Shawford near Winchester. Hugh, who had married Lady Mary Leveson-Gower in 1892, moved to Little Ridge, their new house on the Fonthill estate, in 1904. Archie married the Hon. Mary Hill-Trevor in 1901 and moved, first, to Berwick St Leonard, also on the estate. Katharine married Sir Stephen Gatty in 1905, acquiring an estate on the Isle of Mull and a house in Roehampton. Dorothy remained with her mother at Fonthill until 1910 when she bought her own estate, Walhampton in Hampshire, marrying Viscount Saint Cyres two years later.

All four children had received £75,000 from their father, but this was supplemented by gifts from their uncle Charles Morrison. In 1907, Hugh and Archie each received £125,222 in stocks while Katharine and Dorothy each received £62,888. Following the death of Charles and his sister Ellen in 1909, the Basildon estate near Reading passed to Archie with an additional bequest of money.¹⁴ Tom Cox, now retired from Christie's, carried out a valuation of the pictures and statuary which had belonged to Charles at Basildon, and which totalled almost £195,000.¹⁵ Rather than sell the collection on the open market, Walter Morrison agreed to buy it from the residuary legatees, who happened to be Alfred's four children. He then attempted to ensure that the 'Walter Morrison Settlement' would remain at Basildon by passing it to Archie and his heirs.¹⁶ The list drawn up by Cox makes for interesting reading as it reveals that Charles himself collected several pieces of mid-nineteenth-century sculpture, not just the copy of John Gibson's *Tinted Venus* and William Wetmore Story's *Cleopatra* and *The Libyan Sibyl* (see [Figures 5.7](#) and [5.8](#)), the latter pair acquired by him at the International Exhibition in 1862. They are now divided: *The Libyan Sibyl* is at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and *Cleopatra* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He was obviously drawn to sculptures of women and girls, so not surprisingly he had added Santarelli's sculpture *Oratio Ejus Accepta* [*Prayer of Innocence*] from Alfred's collection, visible in photographs of the saloon at Fonthill (see [Figures 2.2](#) and [3.23](#)) and which had been included in the sale of 28 January 1899 (lot 115).¹⁷

Photographs taken of the interior of Basildon House immediately after the death of Charles include one of the saloon, with Santarelli's *Prayer of Innocence* clearly displayed ([Figure 19.9](#)). Charles may have acquired other pieces from Alfred's collections, either buying at auction or simply removing unwanted pieces from Carlton House Terrace and Fonthill House. His faith in his nephew Archie maintaining Basildon and its contents was sadly misplaced.

Archie Morrison's personal and political lives were troubled and his stewardship of Basildon was short-lived. He was divorced by his first wife in 1910, and accused of bribing the voters of Nottingham where he was an MP. During the First World War, Basildon became a hospital for the Grenadier Guards. Archie married again in 1920, but the same year held a large sale of the contents of Basildon. Within 10 years, he had sold the house and estate and settled in an apartment in Kensington with his third wife. The 1920 sale followed an exchange of letters between the trustees and family lawyers regarding Archie's right to dispose of the contents of Basildon. The heirlooms as identified by Cox in 1910 could



Figure 19.9 Photograph of saloon at Basildon, c. 1910.

Private collection

not be touched, but Archie could sell any amount of china, furniture and *objets d'art*.¹⁸

The catalogue drawn up by Waring & Gillow Ltd clearly indicates that a number of lots were from Alfred's collections. We must assume these were either acquired by Alfred's brother Charles or by his son Archie; some certainly were given to Archie by Mabel when she left Fonthill. The catalogue included 'a very large and exceedingly choice and varied assortment of Old English, Oriental and Continental china, cloisonné and other enamels, carved ivories, jade, ormolu, silver, damascened and lacquer work, old and modern glass, Zuloaga work, and objet-d'art'.¹⁹ Archie was happy to sell a portrait of Mabel by Charles Lepec (see [Figures 16.1](#) and [18.1](#)), now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, Lepec's portrait of his own mother, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum and his *Bouteille venitienne*, also at the Metropolitan Museum (see [Figure 18. 2](#)). Leighton's *Summer Moon* (lot 555) had hung first in the library of Carlton House Terrace and then in the picture gallery at Fonthill (see [Figure 3.22](#), at far end of right-hand wall). It was sold to the famous cricketer Kumar Sri Sir Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji II, Maharaja of Nawanagar. It has never been exhibited since, nor left India, and is presumed to still be in the collection of Ranjitsinhji's descendants. Richard Dadd's painting *Contradiction* (lot 982) by 'Richard

Dodd' [sic] eventually found its way to the collection of Lord Lloyd Webber (see [Figure 15.1](#)). No one bought Charles's monumental marble sculptures of *Cleopatra* and the *Libyan Sibyl* by William Wetmore Story; they remained at Basildon until the house was given to the National Trust.

At his death, Archie had a number of items in store in the Royal County Depository in Reading.²⁰ These included Philip Burne-Jones's portrait of Alfred, which had been painted in front of Davis's painting of stampeding cattle in the music gallery at Fonthill. This portrait is now lost; however, the portrait of Archie's grandmother Mary Ann Morrison, painted in 1846 by Queen Victoria's favourite artist Alfred Edward Chalon RA, found its way from the store in Reading to Fonthill.

Alfred's daughter Katharine acquired various pieces from her father's collections. These passed to her children Richard, Oliver and Hester. There is some information about pieces that were in Heytesbury House in Wiltshire, the home of Hester and her husband the poet Siegfried Sassoon and their only child George. Siegfried Sassoon was given Richard Dadd's *The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke* by his mother-in-law, and he gave the painting to the Tate Gallery (see [Chapter 15](#), [Figure 15.3](#)). Hester sold some of Alfred's autograph letters including a set from the Rev. Alexander Scott, chaplain of HMS *Victory* to Lady Hamilton (Scott escorted Nelson's body back to London after the Battle of Trafalgar).²¹ George Sassoon disposed of further pieces from Alfred's collections. Phillips's auction of 'The remaining contents of Heytesbury House, Warminster, Wilts.', held on 31 October 1994, included two busts by William Theed, one of James Morrison (lot 84) and one, possibly, of Alfred Morrison (lot 83). It is likely the bust in the sale by Thomas Woolner was a plaster copy of the marble bust of Mabel which was kept by Hugh and his descendants (see [Figure 11.4](#)). A chair was later identified as being designed by Owen Jones and manufactured by Jackson & Graham (lot 212) and is now in a private collection in New York. The bust of James Morrison has returned to Fonthill (see [Figure 11.2](#)), but Alfred is still missing. Katharine also owned a small steel jewel casket damascened in gold and silver by Plácido Zuloaga which had been noticed in the drawing room of 16 Carlton House Terrace in *The Magazine of Art's* anonymous essay: 'sumptuous with its beaten steel ornamentation, in a Giulio-Romano style of scroll work, on a granulated dull gold ground'.²² It passed from Katharine down to her grandson George Sassoon, who died in 2006, and was sold at Christie's in 2023.

Mabel leaves Fonthill; her final sales

Mabel spent some years deciding how and when to leave Fonthill, taxing the patience of her son Hugh and his wife Lady Mary. She wrote a number of letters bemoaning her financial position. One letter, dated 6 June 1909, to Hugh, is worth quoting at length. She is critical of Hugh's decision to build his own house on the estate, but also suggests she has insufficient funds to run Fonthill House, which was not the case.

I write to warn you that my present intention is to give up Fonthill Jan 1st 1910. I should hand you over the house the heirlooms etc & then you will of course deal with them as you think fit ... I hope with all my heart you will pull the house I live in down – You have of course a perfect right to build yr house on any corner of the estate & I also never dispute yr right to prefer say the Jacobean style to the classical architecture – But I do grieve at two big houses within sight of each other. Then two gardens etc the spoiling of Fonthill which I love & the appalling waste of money. For years I have lived on the margins of debt & of debt incurred through [no] fault of my own but by my being placed in a position too large for my income – I tried to hide from Katharine & Dorothy how distasteful the life was to me but the bitterest thought was the uselessness of my sacrifice & the positively sinful waste of money! When I think of the thousands of pounds wasted, electric light, water supply galleries etc etc I wring my hands in sheer despair. You will I hope pull down the house & build a fine stone building across the Lake & make a drive under the wood in the deer park right up to Little Ridge.²³

In 1911 Mabel finally moved to Shawford House near Winchester, a little smaller than Fonthill, and dating from the seventeenth century. She passed the heirlooms and Fonthill Park to Hugh. Though physically weak for many years after the birth of her children, in her long widowhood she had a new lease of life. The grounds at Shawford extended to some 90 acres, including a home farm. She immediately engaged a young architect Harry Herbert Jewell to make alterations to the house, including adding a wing to contain a ballroom. During the First World War, she ran a hospital.

She took a number of paintings to Shawford that had not been included in the heirlooms, including Clouet's *'La Reine Blanche' Mary Queen of Scots* (Figure 19.10), and continued to sell parts of Alfred's



Figure 19.10 Clouet, *La Reine Blanche* (Mary Queen of Scots), now believed to be one of several copies, private collection.

Photograph © Adrian Wroth

collections, presumably with the permission of the executors. After her death, Clouet's portrait found its way back to Fonthill.²⁴

While still living at Fonthill, Mabel had sold some of Alfred's autograph letters through Sotheby's on 27 July 1900. The auction house then began a campaign to purchase the rest of the collection in its entirety, offering Mabel £200,000 in 1903 if she would sell through them to J. Pierpont Morgan. Mabel demanded £250,000, 'exclusive of Sotheby's commission as their approach had been totally unsolicited'.²⁵ Pierpont Morgan withdrew and the sale collapsed. Once established at Shawford, Mabel approached Sotheby's in 1917 to sell the whole of the collection. Four sales were arranged. The contents were astonishing as has been discussed in [Chapter 13](#). The last letter of Mary Queen of Scots at the sale of 10–14 December (lot 770) was bought by 26 subscribers and presented to the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh in 1923 (see [Figure 2.11](#)). The British Library acquired a number of pieces, including a letter from Oliver Cromwell to Colonel Watson describing the Battle of Marston Moor, the love letters from John Keats to Fanny Brawne and a letter from Giovanni Bernini to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, minister of Louis XIV, concerning his designs for the Louvre.

Mabel downsized from Shawford in 1923, moving to Littleden, Highcliffe, in Hampshire. There were further sales, including two of

engraved portraits, in November 1927, at Sotheby's and with C. G. Boerner in Leipzig. Campbell Dodgson, writing in the *British Museum Quarterly*, explained that Mabel had permitted the British Museum to select over 400 prints in advance of the sales. Mabel herself gave 54 Dutch and Flemish portraits, while 'the remainder was purchased on favourable terms for presentation to the Print Room by a donor who asks that his name shall not be disclosed'.²⁶ The donor was Samuel Courtauld.

Hugh Morrison at Little Ridge, Fonthill, and 9 Halkin Street, Belgravia; the demolition of Alfred Morrison's Fonthill House

Mabel's move away from Fonthill coincided with the completion of Hugh Morrison's new house in London. No. 9 Halkin Street, now the Caledonian Club, is a substantial four-storey five-bay house offering plenty of room for pieces from Alfred's collections. Hugh immediately took two porphyry busts of Roman Emperors (720 in the heirlooms list), to stand in the hall (see [Figure 11.5](#)). Alfred had displayed the busts in the hall of 16 Carlton House Terrace, but after the completion of the galleries they were brought to Fonthill to stand on the stairs leading to the music gallery. The updated *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*, dated around 1912, shows which objects Hugh took to London, including some paintings and furniture; the majority remained at Fonthill distributed between Little Ridge and Alfred's old house.²⁷

The decision to demolish the old Fonthill House was taken in 1921 after new wings were added to Little Ridge and it was (confusingly) renamed Fonthill House. Phillips, Son & Neale held a sale on 14 June 1921 of

... works of art, decorative property and silver plate ... including several examples of fine metal work, by Zuloaga, Chinese porcelain of the Kien Lung period, expensive console wall slabs and tables, in coloured Florentine marbles, jasper, Oriental onyx and labrador spar, a Japanese garden vase, in bronze, lacquer panels, and Italian design furniture. The property of Hugh Morrison, Esq., M.P., in consequence of removal from Old Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wilts., to New Fonthill House.²⁸

John Walton & Company of Mere held a sale in July of the remaining contents of the house. Engineers from Trollope & Colls Ltd (at work

at Little Ridge) supervised pulling down the house, H. Sabey & Co. completed the work, and material from the house was offered by Hugh for building cottages.²⁹

The sale catalogues provide a tantalising glimpse of the interior of the old house, 'oak and mahogany doors, some of them inlaid ... carved mantelshelves ... marble stairs, chandeliers', also Hugh's choice of objects to dispose of from his father's collections.³⁰ Tom Cox was once more engaged to advise on the value of the heirlooms and which could be sold. He explained his choice: 'the collection, as a whole, will gain, and not suffer by their elimination, as none of them are at all good or desirable, from a collector's point of view'.³¹ There were a number of pieces made by Plácido Zuloaga, including a steel and iron safe (presumably once holding Alfred's collection of intagli and camei), an oval dish 170 cm (67 in) long, a pair of torchères, a pair of bronze vases, and two tables, some of which had been in Carlton House Terrace. Miscellaneous items included a bust of Byron after Canova, a Chelsea figure of Milton and lot 136, 'an Italian cabinet of ebony of architectural design, elaborately carved in low relief with emblematic figures, arabesque ornament, foliage, etc., and surmounted by reclining figures and a vase, 99 in high 57 in wide' (Figure 19.11).³²

This was the cabinet by Fourdinois bought by Alfred at the 1862 International Exhibition (see Figure 5.13). The cabinet had been in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* (no. 223) and located in 1900 in the 'morning room', which may now be identified as the very large conservatory. Standing nearly 243 cm (8 ft) tall, the ebony cabinet is enriched with 'incrustations of lapis lazuli, bloodstone and jasper, the interior front fittings relieved with the finest inlay of engraved ivory and delicately hand-chased silver masks'. The central panel in the lower portion has a bas-relief of the rape of Proserpine, while the central panels of the upper portion have figures of Apollo and Diana. The cabinet is completed on top with free-standing recumbent figures of Peace & Plenty.³³

Cox declared the furniture designed by Owen Jones and made by Jackson & Graham for the 'new room', known, by 1900, as the dining room, as 'totally unsaleable'.³⁴ However, a local landowner, Robert W. Borley of Barton Hill House, Shaftesbury, bought all eight cabinets, of ebony inlaid with ivory, installing the semicircular cabinet in his billiard room.³⁵ Barton Hill House was acquired by Dorset County Council in the 1980s to become part of Shaftesbury Grammar School, so the council sold off Owen Jones's furniture through Sotheby's. Jones's mirror had been painted white by the Borleys to be used in a bathroom. Some of the tall cabinets are now in Toledo, Ohio, and in the Dunedin Art Gallery in



Figure 19.11 The Fourdinois cabinet, ebony, lapis lazuli, bloodstone and jasper, 1862, 237 × 147 × 54 cm (93.3 × 57.8 × 21.2 in).
 Photograph © Butchoff Antiques

New Zealand. At the same time, Hugh Morrison sold H. W. B. Davis's painting *A Panic* to John Edward Champney, possibly without going through the sale rooms; the painting was given by Champney to Beverley Art Gallery in 1921 (see [Figure 9.2](#)).

The demolition of Fonhill House also coincided with the emptying of Basildon House by Hugh's brother Archie. Their cousin Harold Moffatt was asked to select paintings from the Basildon list of heirlooms for Archie to seek permission to sell. Moffatt wrote: 'Hugh & Archie as far as I can see don't care a d—n for any of the pictures save about a dozen & are just [happy] for selling anything – certainly the more the better.'³⁶ It was Hugh's son John Granville Morrison, however, who was responsible for the final significant break up of Alfred's collections. He was driven by economics; he needed to increase his capital and reduce his expenditure. To avoid confusion over names, I shall refer to him by his title of Baron Margadale of Islay, which he was given in 1965.

John Granville Morrison, 1st Lord Margadale at Fonthill House: the first sales

Hugh Morrison died on 15 March 1931, Mabel on 1 March 1933 and Archie on 27 October 1934. There was a flurry of sales in the 1930s, preceding and following the family deaths, probably to raise money to pay death duties. Lord Margadale had never known his grandfather and according to his daughter, the Hon. Mary Morrison, he did not share Alfred's taste. *His* Fonthill House, designed by Detmar Blow and Fernand Billerey for Hugh and Lady Mary, broadly embodied Arts and Crafts ideals. He was a serious horseman, Master of the South & West Wilts Hunt, so it was hardly surprising he kept Alfred's paintings of horses, also the many paintings by James Ward of domestic and wild animals and bronzes by the animaliers Barye and Hahnel. Fonthill was after all at the centre of an agricultural estate. The inventory drawn up by Christie's in 1937 listing the contents of Fonthill House confirms he was also keeping family portraits, and Owen Jones's drawing of a dairy, designed for James Morrison, way back in 1845.

Some of Alfred's richly ornamented pieces of furniture were the first to be sold. Two examples were sold by Christie's in 1936.³⁷ The Louis XV bureau plat had been left at Fonthill by Alfred's father James (another, at Basildon, was sold by Archie). It was probably the table located in 1900 in Mabel's boudoir (no. 567 in the *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms*), though then dated from the reign of Louis XIV. The dealer Wildenstein bought it for 330 guineas.³⁸ A pair of vases by Plácido Zuloaga were also included in the sale, lot 142, and sold for 16 guineas. One of the pair was sold at Christie's, 8 July 2021, for £312,500.

Lord Margadale also disposed of a massive table by Zuloaga through Malletts ([Figure 19.12](#)). It was written up in the *Burlington Magazine*:

the gracious and flowing curves of a Spanish table of solid steel, probably the work of the metal-worker, Zuloaga ...in the style of the Renaissance, and is remarkable for the subtle manner in which, in spite of its gilded enrichments in high relief and its elaborate borders of gold and silver inlay, it manages to escape the reproach of the unduly ornate.³⁹

The table was bought by Queen Elizabeth (the Queen Mother) early in 1938 and is now on display at Buckingham Palace.



Figure 19.12 Plácido Zuloaga, Table in the Renaissance style; of metal damascened with gold and silver with rectangular breadsided top inset with variegated marble, supported on pierced scrolled end panels carved with foliage and female and satyr heads. Ends rest on three pads, the centre ones linked by a cross-stretcher supporting corinthian columns below a coffered cornice. Designed in the manner of a sixteenth-century Spanish vargueño (cabinet) stand, 1880, 78.7 × 116.7 × 88.9 cm (30.9 × 45.9 × 35 in).

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Lord Margadale's sales, 1965–1985

The sales in 1965, 1966 and 1967 preceded Lord Margadale's decision to demolish his house at Fonthill in 1972 and downsize to a smaller neo-Georgian property built on the same site. Alfred's large collection of coins and medals was disposed of in three sales, also the Zuloaga cabinets that had contained them (see [Figures 14.4](#) and [17.4](#)). Treasured by Alfred, the coins had become playthings for Lord Margadale's children.

Christie's held 13 sales in 1971. Decisions about what to sell were not only led by Christie's, but also by the preferences of Lord Margadale and the restrictions of the new, considerably smaller, Fonthill House being designed by Trenwith and Simonne Wills. Large pictures, tapestries and Chinese screens were obvious choices to be sold, but the Hon. Mary Morrison also recalls her father disliking 'gloomy paintings'.

The two works sold on 22 June 1971 reflect his views. The magnificent drypoint of *Ecce Homo (Christ Presented to the People)* by Rembrandt, dating from 1655, is one of Rembrandt's largest etchings, 387 × 455 mm (15.2 × 17.9 in), depicting the moment when Pontius Pilate asks the people of Jerusalem to choose whether Jesus or Barabbas should be spared execution. It was sold for £33,600.⁴⁰ Prince Rupert of the Rhine's powerful mezzotint *The Executioner* of 1658 was also included in the sale (lot 21), certainly a candidate for Lord Margadale's least favourite picture. It is based on a painting in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, of the *Great Executioner with the Head of Saint John the Baptist*. Other gloomy portraits followed, including a portrait by Rembrandt of a bearded man, sold on 25 June, and another listed in the Christie's catalogue for 19 November as by Rembrandt of *King Uzziah Stricken with Leprosy*. The portrait of *Queen Henrietta Maria in Mourning for her Husband, King Charles I, Holding a Book Inscribed Death's Advantage*, bought by Alfred from W. B. Tiffin in 1852, was sold on 26 November 1971 (see [Figure 10.5](#)).

The first large sale of Chinese porcelain was held on October 18 1971 with 145 lots raising £76,920.⁴¹ Size and quantity dictated Lord Margadale's selection here. Some were very large, including a pair of massive cloisonné-enamel cisterns or fish bowls, 71.1 cm (28 in) in diameter and 60.9 cm (24 in) high on elaborate giltwood stands (lot 100). These had been photographed for Alfred in the conservatory of Fonthill House (see [Figure 7.3](#)).

The largest sale of 'the remaining contents of Fonthill House' took place on 1 and 2 November 1971 at Fonthill.⁴² Geraldine Norman, writing in *The Times* compared the two-day sale to the 37-day sale of Fonthill Abbey. Though a 'pale imitation' of William Beckford's sale, she identified the attraction of the occasion lying 'in the echoes of the great although eccentric collector Alfred Morrison'. A marquee was erected in front of the house. There were 711 lots, including dolls' houses and bedsteads, Meccano and train sets, raising in total £89,122. The Hon. Mary Morrison recalls her sudden realisation of how much was being sold when the carpets (included in the sale) were taken up at the end of the last day. Once again, size determined the fate of pieces by Zuloaga, including vases (lot 8), and the huge cassone (lot 9), now in the Khalili Collections (see [Figure 14.1](#)). A 'table clock in metal gilt case on open flower stand enamelled in brilliant colours in Moorish design' was sold and is now lost. Ignacio Zuloaga's portrait of his father, given by the artist to Alfred, was also sold (lot 563) (see [Figure 14.2](#)) along with Alfred's pastel portrait by Otto Scholderer (lot 541).



Figure 19.13 Indian white marble 'throne' chair, one of four, lot 35.

Photograph © 1971, Christie's Images Limited

Alfred's four marble 'throne' chairs (heirloom 612; [Figure 19.13](#)) had stood in the saloon in the old Fonthill House, where they can be clearly seen in the photographs of about 1891 (see [Figures 2.2, 3.23 and 3.24](#)). Now they were deemed too large and too heavy, so had to be sold. Alfred had revealed an interest in Indian artefacts at the 1862 International Exhibition and may have bought these soon after. The Royal Collection has four similar chairs, given to Queen Victoria in 1851. Another in the Victoria and Albert Museum was made in Delhi and 'according to tradition ... was a gift from Bahadur Shah, the last Mughal Emperor. He presented it to General Sir George Brooke, KCB. By about 1810 to 1820, Indian princes routinely presented British officials with gifts of high-quality furniture.'⁴³

Lord Margadale sold a number of smaller fragile items including manuscripts and unframed watercolours. Alfred had owned paintings by Richard Dadd, also the autograph poem by Dadd written to explain *The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke*. The *Elimination of a Picture & Its Subject – Called the Feller's Master Stroke* was sold for £1,700 at a sale on 20 December 1972 (lot 183) and is now the property of the Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust, held at the Museum of the Mind, Bethlem Royal Hospital, Beckenham.



Figure 19.14 Leaf from the Hohenlandenberger Missal, with miniature by Springinklee der Ältere of the *Crucifixion of Christ, with Mary, John and the Donor*, Bishop Hugo von Hohenlandenberger (1460–1532), c. 1500, vellum, 407 × 289 mm (16 × 11.3 in). Morgan Library, New York. MS M.955. Purchased as the gift of the Fellows, with the special assistance of four members of the Board of Trustees, Mrs Gordon S. Rentschler, and Mrs G. P. Van de Bovenkamp (Sue Erpf Van de Bovenkamp) in memory of Armand G. Erpf, 1973.

© The Morgan Library & Museum, New York

An exquisite vellum leaf was originally part of volume one of a four-volume missal, dismembered when sold in Geneva in 1832 (Figure 19.14). When sold by Christie's in 1973 (20 March, lot 115), it reached £25,200. Fellows of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, together with four members of the Board of Trustees, bought it for the library.

For historians of Fonthill, it is unfortunate that a number of items associated with William Beckford were sold on 2 April 1975. These included the 'rental book of Manors and Estates' including the lists of holdings and tenants' names (lot 253) and the plan and survey of Beckford's estate at Fonthill Gifford (lot 254), with lists of accounts and rents, drawn up by Robert Wyatt, his surveyor, in 1800. Both are lost. The *Jamaica Letter Books* containing letters between Beckford's lawyer and London agent Thomas Wildman and his brother James Wildman, agent in Jamaica (Lot 255) were bought by Boyd Alexander and bequeathed to the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

While their new house was being built, Lord and Lady Margadale moved into the Old Rectory in Fonthill Bishop. Saved possessions, many still from the collections of Alfred Morrison, were put in store. Little more was sold until after the deaths of Lord Margadale in 1996 and his eldest son James, the 2nd Lord Margadale, in 2003.

The twenty-first-century sales

Sales of Alfred Morrison's Chinese porcelain became headline news in the early twenty-first century when a number of individual pieces were sold for several million pounds. As Stacey Pierson has observed (Chapter 6), Alfred's porcelain shifted from 'household contents, to objects in Morrison's "famous collection" to Fonthill masterpieces'. At the same time there has been growing sensitivity around the sources of the porcelain: how much was actually looted from the Summer Palace.

The first sale was held by Christie's on 9 November 2004. This was a specialist sale focusing on porcelains and enamels, positioning Alfred's collection as 'singularly notable'. The sale of *Imperial Treasures from the Fonthill Collection* held on 1 December 2010 included lot 2983, 'a highly important and exceedingly rare pair of Imperial Cloisonné enamel double crane censers from the Yongzheng period (1723–35)'. They were included by Ignacio Zuloaga in his portrait of Alfred (see front cover and Figure 2.14) and survived for decades precariously positioned on the stairs at the Margadales' Fonthill House (see frontispiece). They were sold to Joseph Lau for HK\$129.5 million, some £13 million, setting a new auction record for cloisonné enamel.⁴⁴

Porcelain sold by the 1st Lord Margadale in the 1970s has also been resold at extraordinary prices. Both Stacey Pierson and Katrina Hill track some of the key pieces in Chapters 6 and 7.

A beautiful 'butterfly' vase had been sold by Lord Margadale on 18 October 1971 (lot 65; Figure 19.15). When it reappeared at Christie's in Hong Kong on 3 December 2008 it was part of the collection of the Ping Y. Tai Foundation. It sold for HK\$53.3 million or about £5 million.⁴⁵ A large yellow-ground, *famille rose*, double gourd vase from the Qianlong period (lot 2126) was sold by Sotheby & Co. in Hong Kong on 7 October 2010 for HK\$252.6 million or about £25 million.⁴⁶ As Stacey Pierson points out, this was at the time not just the highest price at auction for a piece from Alfred's collection, but a record-breaking price for a Chinese ceramic. It had been included in the 1971 sale of the 'Remaining Contents of Fonthill House'.



Figure 19.15 Imperial pink-ground Famille Rose ‘Butterfly’ vase Qianlong iron-red six-character sealmark and of the period (1736–95). 45.7 cm (17.7 in) high.

Photograph © 2015, Christie’s Images Limited

Very different items from Alfred’s collection have also achieved high prices. Holloway & Son were not the only dealers finding rare objects for Alfred. Thomas Whitehead bought a number of paintings and drawings for Alfred, including, in 1865, two remarkable watercolours of birds, attributed to Dürer (£250), and a drawing of Nonsuch Palace by Joris Hoefnagel (£50; [Figure 19.16](#)).

Nonsuch Palace was built as a hunting lodge by Henry VIII. Only a handful of views survive and Alfred’s was one of the ‘earliest and perhaps the most significant of them all’.⁴⁷ It was offered for sale by Christie’s on 7 December 2010, bought in, lent to the Victoria and Albert Museum from 16 May 2013 to 11 November 2014, then subject to an export licence stop dated 1 March 2016. It was finally bought by the museum with the support of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation) and the Michael Marks Charitable Trust for the asking price of £1 million. In 2022 it was included in the exhibition ‘The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England’, curated by Elizabeth Cleland and Adam Eaker at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



Figure 19.16 Joris Hoefnagel, *Nonsuch Palace from the South*, 1568, black chalk, pen and ink, with watercolour, heightened with white and gold, 24.2 × 26.3 cm (9.5 × 10.3 in). Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Photograph © 2010, Christie's Images Limited

Paintings continue to be sold from the collections. The most important must be the early portrait of Queen Elizabeth I (see [Figure 10.3](#)), acquired by Alfred towards the end of his life. It was lent to the Yale Center for British Art in 2019, then exhibited at the British Library, 8 October 2021 to 20 February 2022, in 'Elizabeth and Mary: Royal Cousins, Rival Queens', by which time it was attributed to George Gower, the most successful artist working in oils at Elizabeth's court. It was sold by Christie's on 2 July 2024 for just over £900,000, three times the estimate.

Conclusion

Nineteenth-century photographs of Alfred Morrison's house at Fonthill include a number of statues clearly visible in front of the main entrance. Their fate reflects the treatment of Alfred's collections, lost, recovered, recognised and re-presented. The two winged lions by Ferdinand Barbedienne which had been sent from Paris in 1867, each weighing a ton, remained in situ for some half a century after the house was demolished.⁴⁸ One was stolen, but a local landowner made two copies before the remaining sculpture was sold to Crowthers ([Figure 19.17](#)).



Figure 19.17 Copy of Barbedienne winged lion, private collection.

Photograph © Caroline Dakers

The massive beasts (in concrete) now adorn a garden just a few miles away from Fonthill. The large bronze sculpture by Antoine-Louis Barye of *Theseus and the Centaur* which was bought by Alfred at the 1862 International Exhibition (see [Figure 11.10](#)), was also stolen.⁴⁹ The *Crouching Lioness* by Julius Heinrich Hähnel (see [Figure 11.11](#)) and a marble eagle with wings outspread remain at Fonthill.

Apart from the original driveways, all traces of the house have gone, though a few of the much larger trees can be identified in nineteenth-century photographs. No. 16 Carlton House Terrace, though stripped of its treasures by Alfred's widow and children, has been restored to a home, its extraordinary ceilings and many of the elaborate original fittings mostly intact.

Pieces from Alfred's collections continue to emerge in sales, some reaching increasingly high prices. They can be found in public collections in Great Britain, Germany, France, the United States of America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. The nineteenth-century paintings and sculpture which were the first to be sold en masse are once more being collected. Most recently, in late 2024, two of the chairs designed by Owen Jones for 16 Carlton House Terrace appeared on the market (see [Figure 19.8](#)).

While it is impossible to recreate the overall impact of Alfred's collections, the preceding chapters reveal consistencies across all areas.



Figure 19.18 A pair of marquetry chairs in various woods designed by Owen Jones and made by Jackson & Graham for Alfred Morrison's London home, 16 Carlton House Terrace, c. 1865–70.

Carlton Hobbs LLC

He was not interested in the outward appearance of his town and country homes, nor of architecture in general, but he did care about the internal display of his collections, and there is evidence he moved pieces around, undertaking a complete rehang in London as the new galleries in Fonthill were completed.

Above all, he loved colour, glitter, pattern and detail, from the ceilings of Carlton House Terrace to the surface treatment of his Chinese enamelled porcelain, his *objets de vertu* and collection of intagli and camei. Before he married, he liked to acquire images of beautiful women, from the exquisite enamel nudes by Charles Lepec to John Brett's striking *Lady with a Dove* (now at Tate Britain) and the life-size marble statue of *Fabiola* by Galletti. He was obsessed with famous men and women, not just royalty, aristocrats and military commanders, but artists, architects, novelists and philosophers; as a consequence he bought Old Master portraits, thousands of engraved portraits, coins and medals and autograph manuscripts. He sought the best he could afford and was willing to pay high prices to painters, sculptors and craftsmen. An obituary in the *Daily Chronicle* described him as 'one of the greatest collectors of pictures, engravings, and autographs of modern times ... furnished with money, good taste, and good advice'.⁵⁰ He had a possessive streak, buying

up all he could lay his hands on from the studios and workshops of his favourite craftsmen and artists, including John Brett, Plácido Zuloaga and Charles Lepec. He was generous in lending paintings, engraved prints, furniture, *objets de vertu*, coins and medals to exhibitions in Great Britain and Europe, and must have been proud to be included in Henry Jamyn Brooks's painting of the distinguished men and women who had loaned pieces to the Old Masters exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1888.

Philip Palmer and Daria Foner end [Chapter 13](#) with a summary of his approach to collecting autograph manuscripts. Their words can be applied to this entire project and the resulting book, planned with the intention of understanding 'how his collection was made (and unmade) over time and how its contents have changed hands and found, in select cases, permanent homes. With the market's forward churn ... it remains inevitable that works from Morrison's collection continue to be circulated and gathered again by new hands.' Dror Elkivity is poetical when he considers the stories of pieces by Plácido Zuloaga once owned by Alfred. 'Ashes to ashes, collections form and break apart, objects drift and end up in other collections.' Alfred Morrison's name, however, and the range of his collections, are now firmly in the public domain.

Notes

- 1 Alfred Morrison's will, Fonthill Archives, F/05/1119. *Inventory of Fonthill heirlooms* Fonthill Archives, F/5/1180.
- 2 9 Halkin Street was sold by his son in 1946 and is now the Caledonian Club.
- 3 27 November 1970, Fonthill Archives, S/11/2018.
- 4 Alfred lent it to the winter exhibition at Burlington House 1878, no. 223, and in 1892 to the Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition, no. 42.
- 5 She moved to 26 Bruton Street in 1898, then 35 Lennox Gardens in 1905.
- 6 Fonthill Archives, G/1/1195.
- 7 Fonthill Archives, M/2/1401.
- 8 Statements made at High Court of Justice in *Morrison v. Morrison*, and reported in Anon, 'Law Report', Fonthill Archives, M/2/1401.
- 9 Fonthill Archives, F/5/1180 and M/2/1401.
- 10 Statements made at High Court of Justice in *Morrison v. Morrison*, and reported in Anon, 'Law Report', Fonthill Archives, M/2/1401.
- 11 Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 29–30 June 1898.
- 12 For information about Whelan, see Pagan, 'Francis Edward Whelan'.
- 13 Christie, Manson & Wood, 29 April 2019, lot 17.
- 14 Their uncle Walter Morrison died in 1922, leaving Hugh, Dorothy and Katharine £200,000 each. He left £400,000 towards the maintenance of the Basildon estate, that is, Archie and his son Simon.
- 15 14 June 1910, Fonthill Archives, B/1/0850.
- 16 The remaining part of the Walter Morrison Settlement remains with Archie's heirs at Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire.
- 17 Another version is on display at the Lady Lever Gallery, Port Sunlight.
- 18 Ashurst Morris Crisp & Company to Robert Cooper, 21 September 1920, Fonthill Archives.
- 19 Waring & Gillow Ltd., 26 October 1920.

- 20 Fonthill Archives.
- 21 Sold at Sotheby's, 2 July 1962, lot 224. Now in British Library.
- 22 Anon, 'Treasure-houses of art', 207.
- 23 Mabel to Hugh Morrison, 6 June 1909, Fonthill Archives, G/01.
- 24 Mabel, however, chose not to be buried with Alfred at Fonthill. She was buried next to her daughter Katharine in Hampshire.
- 25 Herrmann, *Sotheby's*, 123.
- 26 Dodgson, 'Engraved portraits from the Alfred Morrison collection', 74–6.
- 27 Fonthill Archives, F/5/1180.
- 28 Fonthill Archives, M/2/1404.
- 29 Fonthill Archives, M/2/1418.
- 30 Article, 21 July 1921, in *Wiltshire Cuttings*, 16, 192, Wiltshire Museum, Devizes.
- 31 Tom Cox to Hugh Morrison, 13 April 1921, Fonthill Archives, M/2/1404.
- 32 Phillips, Son & Neale, 14 June 1921.
- 33 Butchoff Antiques, London.
- 34 List of heirlooms to be sold, 19 May 1921, Fonthill Archives, M/2/1418.
- 35 Information from Robert Copley, great grandson of Borley.
- 36 Fonthill Archives.
- 37 Christie's sale, 7 May 1936, lots 132 and 128.
- 38 Christie's sale, 15 December 2005, lot 225.
- 39 Anon, 'An exhibition of furniture, silver, etc', 45.
- 40 Christie, Manson & Woods, 22 June 1971, lot 19.
- 41 Christie, Manson & Woods, 18 October 1971.
- 42 Christie, Manson & Woods, 1 and 2 November 1971.
- 43 See Victoria and Albert Museum website, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O71106/throne-unknown/> (accessed 7 April 2025).
- 44 <https://www.christies.com/about-us/press-archive/details?PressReleaseID=4453> (accessed 7 April 2025).
- 45 Exquisitely enamelled around the sides with a multitude of brightly hued butterflies and moths of differing sizes and species in various attitudes of flight, playfully ascending, descending and frolicking amongst sprigs of morning glory, daisies, hibiscus, carnations, dianthus, gardenia, poppy, lily, peony, chrysanthemum and prunus, all scattered over an opaque pale pink ground delicately incised with feathery graviata scrolls, divided at the shoulder by a band of iron-red ruyi below fine floral scrolls picked out in blue enamel, the narrow foot encircled by a band of suspended bejewelled tassels on a yellow ground enclosed within upright petal-form panels outlined in blue, decorated with a further band of lappets on a yellow ground at the mouth, the swelling sides rising from the foot in an S-form curve to the broad angular shoulder, the tapers sharply before flaring out at the mouth and forming another sharp junction as the mouth rim inverts, the foot, shoulder, neck and mouth encircled with rich gold bands, the base covered in turquoise enamel continuing to the interior.
- 46 Sotheby & Co. (Hong Kong), 7 October 2010, Masterpieces of Qing Imperial Porcelain from J.T. Tai and Co. Lot 2126 Vase, Qianlong period.
- 47 See information on Victoria and Albert Museum website, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1365705/nonsuch-palace-from-the-south-watercolour-hoefnagel-joris/> (accessed 7 April 2025).
- 48 Fonthill Archives, F/2/1127.
- 49 This is the recollection of the Hon. Mary Morrison. She also thinks both of the winged lions were stolen.
- 50 Press cutting from scrapbook of Charles Morrison, labelled *Daily Chronicle*, 1897, Fonthill Archives.

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Auction catalogues separately listed in the [Appendix](#)

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- Anon. 'Law Report', *The Times*, 22 June 1900, 16.
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Appendix: sales of Alfred Morrison's collections by his widow and his descendants (possibly incomplete)

1898

Christie, Manson & Woods, 9, 10 June 1898, *Catalogue of the cellar of wines of Alfred Morrison, Esq.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 29, 30 June 1898, *Catalogue of the valuable and important collection of camei, intagli, gold rings, Egyptian vases in hardstone, Ancient Greek vases, glass, &c., including a few statuettes from Tanagra, and a remarkable glass bottle of Venetian work of the 16th century, richly decorated in gold.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 1 December 1898, *Indian, Persian, Turkish and other Oriental embroideries, brocades, prayer-carpets and rugs.*

1899

Christie, Manson & Woods, 19, 20 January 1899, *Old Chinese Porcelain, Chinese Carvings, Carvings in Rock Crystal, Chinese Carvings in Jade, Chinese Cloisonne Enamels, Nankin Porcelain.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 25 January 1899, *Indian Silver-gilt Filigree Work; Ancient Persian Brasswork, &c; Specimens of European Art Objects, Vases, Caskets, plaques, Dishes &c. of Silver and Gilt Metal, Beautifully Damascened and Enamelled by C. Lepec and P. Zuloaga; and a Large Collection of Japanese Cloisonne Enamels.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 28 January 1899, *Catalogue of ancient and modern pictures, water-colour drawings and sculpture; the property of Mrs Alfred Morrison.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 23 February 1899, *Indian, Persian, Turkish and other Oriental Embroideries, Brocades, Prayer-carpets and Rugs; a Large Collection of Cut and Polished Agates, Rare Stones, Crystals, etc., Ivory and Wax Reliefs, Sculpture and a few pieces of Decorative Furniture.*

12 June 1899, Christie, Manson & Woods, *A Few Fine Camei and Intagli, Including a rare Engraved Brilliant, with Portrait of Leopold II, Old French Snuff-Boxes, &c.*

17 June 1899, Christie, Manson & Woods, pictures ... sculpture from the collection of the late Alfred Morrison.

1900

Christie, Manson & Woods, 9 July 1900, *Old French objects of Art & Vertu*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 14 July 1900, *Catalogue of Good Modern Pictures and Water Colour Drawings.*

Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, July 1900, *Autographs 1865–1882.*

1901

Christie, Manson & Woods, 16 December 1901, *Engravings.*

1902

Christie, Manson & Woods, 10 June 1902, *Catalogue of Valuable Lace Old and Modern from the Collection of Mrs Alfred Morrison of Fonthill House.*

1903

Christie, Manson & Woods, 25 February 1903, *Engravings of Early English School.*

1904

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1914

Christie, Manson & Woods, 9 July 1914, *Decorative furniture and porcelain*.

1917

Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 10–14 December 1917, *Catalogue of the renowned collection of autograph letters and historical manuscripts formed by the late Alfred Morrison, Esq. of Fonthill, and now the property of Mrs Alfred Morrison*. First Portion

1918

Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 15–19 April 1918, *Catalogue of the renowned collection of autograph letters and historical manuscripts formed by the late Alfred Morrison, Esq. of Fonthill, and now the property of Mrs Alfred Morrison*. Second Portion

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1919

Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 5–7 May 1919, *Catalogue of the renowned collection of autograph letters and historical manuscripts formed by the late Alfred Morrison, Esq. of Fonthill, and now the property of Mrs Alfred Morrison*.

1920

Waring & Gillow, Ltd, 26–30 October, 1–3 November 1920, *A magnificent and Unique Collection of antique and modern English and continental furniture ... A very fine collection of oil paintings, water colors, etchings and engravings ... a very large and exceedingly choice and varied assortment of Old English, Oriental and Continental china, cloisonné and other enamels, carved ivories, jade, ormolu, silver, damascened and lacquer work, old and modern glass, Zuloaga work, and objet-d'art ... early Chinese and Italian stone carvings*.

Christie, Manson & Woods, 19 November 1920, *Old pictures*.

1921

Phillips, Son & Neale, 14 June 1921, *A catalogue of works of art, decorative property and silver plate ... including several examples of fine metal work, by Zuloaga, Chinese porcelain of the Kien Lung period, expensive console wall slabs and tables, in coloured Florentine marbles, jasper, Oriental onyx and Labrador spar, a Japanese garden vase, in bronze, lacquer panels, and Italian design furniture, The property of Hugh Morrison, Esq., M.P., in consequence of removal from Old Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wilts., to New Fonthill House.*

John Walton & Co., Ltd., Mere, 21 July 1921, *Sale of remaining contents of old Fonthill House prior to demolition.*

1923

Knight, Frank & Rutley, 9 October 1923, *Particulars with Plan, Views and Conditions of Sale of the freehold residential property known as Shawford House near Winchester.*

Knight, Frank & Rutley, 12 December 1923, *A catalogue of the remaining contents of the mansion Shawford House, near Winchester.*

1925

Sotheby & Co., 17–20 May 1925, *Valuable printed books, autograph letters and historical letters.*

1926

Sotheby & Co., 17–20 May 1926, *Autographs.*

Sotheby & Co., 31 May–1 June 1926, *Old Engravings.*

1927

Sotheby & Co., 21–3 November 1927, *Catalogue of an extensive collection of early British and foreign engraved portraits, sold by order of Mrs Alfred Morrison from the collection of the late Alfred Morrison.*

C.G. Boerner, Leipzig, 10–12 November 1927, *Kupferstiche alter Meister; Sammlung des Reichsgrafen Wenzel von Nostiz-Rieneck; Porträtsammlung Sir Alfred Morrison [sic]; Dubletten des National-Museums, Stockholm.*

1928

Sotheby & Co., 29 February–1 March 1928, *An extensive collection of engraved portraits; second portion.*

Glendining & Co. Ltd. 25 July 1928, *An important collection of coins and medals principally illustrating the portraits of rulers and celebrities. The property of Mrs Alfred Morrison.*

1929

Christie, Manson & Woods, 12 December 1929, *Old English and French Furniture Objects of Art Porcelain and Tapestry the properties of Major J.A. Morrison, D.S.O.*

1930

Christie, Manson & Woods, 1 May 1930, *Old English and French Furniture.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 6 May 1930, *Objects of Art and Vertu.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 26 June 1930 *Chinese porcelain.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 17 July 1930, *Old French Furniture etc ... Carvings in Hardstone.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 22 July 1930, *Chinese Porcelain ... Eastern rugs and carpets.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 28 July 1930, *Old English Silver Plate.*

1934

Messrs. Foster, 21 August 1934, *A catalogue of the valuable contents of the residence, 'Littleden', Highcliffe-on-Sea, Nr Christchurch Hants by direction of the Executors of the late Mrs Alfred Morrison.*

1936

Christie, Manson & Woods, 19 March 1936, *Fine Chinese Enamelled Porcelain The property of J.G. Morrison, Esq of Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wilts ... a part of the famous collection formed by the late Alfred Morrison, Esq., during the nineteenth century.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 7 May 1936, *Fine French & English Furniture Chinese Porcelain and Hardstones Old English Glass, Antiquities Objects of Art and Tapestry The properties of ... J.G. Morrison, Esq.*

1938

Christie, Manson & Woods, 8 December 1938, *Catalogue of Porcelain and Objects of Art.*

1962

Sotheby's, 2 July 1962 *Manuscripts* [Hester Sassoon, grand-daughter of Alfred Morrison, sells letters to Lady Hamilton, now British Library Egerton MS 3782].

1965

Christie, Manson & Woods, 31 May 1965, *Catalogue of Important Chinese Porcelain & Cloisonné Enamels the Property of The Rt. Hon. The Lord Margadale of Islay, a Collection of Fine Chinese Jades and Hardstones the Property of Miss A. L. Soffer and Fine Chinese Ceramics and Jades the Properties of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Harewood and from Various Sources.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 31 May 1965, *Catalogue of Important Chinese Porcelain & Cloisonne Enamels.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 2 July 1965, *Catalogue of Important Pictures by Old Masters The Properties of ... The Rt. Hon. Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D., removed from Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 12 July 1965, *Catalogue of Fine Arms and Armour The properties of the Right Honourable the Lord Margadale of Islay.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 23 July 1965, *Catalogue of the Collection of Coins and Medals (Part I) formed by the Late Alfred Morrison Esq. Sold by Order of his Grandson The Right Honourable The Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D. removed from Fonthill House, Wiltshire.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 19 October 1965, *Ethnographica, Antiquities and Islamic Pottery.*

1966

Christie, Manson & Woods, 1 March 1966, *The collection of coins and medals formed by Alfred Morrison; Part II.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 19 May 1966, *Catalogue of Objects of Art Important French and Other Continental Furniture Tapestries, Rugs and Carpets The properties of ... The Rt. Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

1967

Christie, Manson & Woods, 4 April 1967, *Coins and Medals The property of ... The Right Honourable the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

1971

Christie, Manson & Woods, 22 June 1971, *Important Old Master Engravings, Etchings and Lithographs The properties of ... The Rt. Hon. Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 25 June 1971, *Highly Important Pictures by Old Masters The properties of ... the Rt. Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 18 October 1971, *The Collection of Chinese Enamelled Porcelain, Cloisonné and Canton Enamels and a Jade Brush Pot formed by the Late Alfred Morrison, Esq. now sold by order of the Rt. Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D. removed from Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 1, 2 November 1971, *The Remaining Contents of Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire The property of the Rt. Hon. The Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D. comprising: English and Continental Furniture, Works of Art, Tapestries, Textiles and Carpets, Porcelain, Glass, Silver, Objects of Vertu, Pictures, Drawings and Engravings, Books and Household Furnishings.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 10 November 1971, *Dolls, Toys, Automata, Costume, Lace and Textiles The properties of ... The Rt. Hon. Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D. removed from Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 16 November 1971, *Japanese Swords, Sword Fittings, Prints and other Works of Art The properties of the Rt. Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 19 November 1971, *Fine Pictures by Old Masters The properties of ... the Rt. Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 23 November 1971, *Commemorative Medals, Orders and Decorations The properties of the Rt. Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 26 November 1971, *Important Pictures by Old Masters the properties of ... The Rt. Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 30 November 1971, *Fine Gold Boxes and Works of Art. The properties of ... The Rt. Hon. The Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 7 December 1971, *African, Oceanic and American Indian Art, Classical, Egyptian and Western Asiatic Antiquities*

and Ancient Jewellery The properties of ... The Rt. Hon. The Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.

Christie, Manson & Woods, 10 December 1971, *Fine English Pictures c.1700–c.1850 The properties of ... The Rt. Hon. Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 15 December 1971, *Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures The property of the Rt. Hon. the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

1972

Christie, Manson & Woods, 5 June 1972, *Important Chinese Ceramics and Hardstones The properties of ... The Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

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1973

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1975

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Christie, Manson & Woods, 6 August 1975, *Printed Books The properties of ... The Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

1980

Christie, Manson & Woods, 16 April 1980, *Fine Chinese Ceramics, Paintings and Works of Art The properties of ... the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 18 April 1980, *Important Old Master Pictures the properties of ... the Lord Margadale of Islay T.D.*

Christie, Manson & Woods, 9 July 1980, *Chinese Snuff Bottles, Jades and Hardstone Carvings The properties of the Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

1982

Christie, Manson & Woods, 6–9 July 1982, *Important Old Master Drawings The properties of ... the Lord Margadale of Islay T.D.*

1985

Christie, Manson & Woods, 18 April 1985, *Important Old Master Pictures (Part 1) The properties of ... The Lord Margadale of Islay, T.D.*

1994

Phillips, Bath, 31 October 1994, *The remaining contents of Heytesbury House, Warminster, Wilts. By direction of George Sassoon Esq.* [Sassoon = great-grandson of Alfred Morrison].

1998

Christie, Manson & Woods, 2 November 1998, *British and Continental Ceramics and Glass including Paperweights*. [lots 37 and 37 Islamic style flasks, two by Brocard, sold by executors of late Michael Cory-Wright, husband of Elizabeth Cory-Wright, daughter of Archie Morrison].

2004

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2006

Christie, Manson & Woods, 16 November 2006, *British Art on Paper*.

2010

Christie, Manson & Woods (Hong Kong), 1 December 2010, *Imperial Treasures from the Fonthill Collection*.

2016

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2024

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Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury, 12 November 2024, *Fine Asian Art*.

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Image credit:
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Cover design:
www.hayesdesign.co.uk

ISBN: 978-1-80008-900-6



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