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'Like a Tale from the Thousand and One Nights'

Reconstructing the taste and collections of William Williams Hope (1802-1855)¹

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Born into a prominent family of Dutch bankers and art collectors, William Williams Hope (1802-1855) was widely considered by his peers as a *connoisseur émérite* whose collection only contained 'first choice paintings and objets d'art'.² Helped by a vast fortune, he assembled over two decades a collection of Dutch and Flemish Old Masters and nineteenth-century paintings – many with illustrious provenances, as well as an eclectic array of objets d'art including European and Oriental porcelain, Japanese and Chinese lacquer, Renaissance bronzes, and Greek vases and antiquities.

Descending from the illustrious Scottish Hope clan, William Williams Hope was a scion of the successful Hope banking dynasty though his mother, the niece of one of its directors, Henry Hope (1735-1811). His British-born father, John Williams Hope (1757-1813), joined the Amsterdam bank as a simple employee but his financial acumen and judicious marriage promptly bolstered his position within its ranks. By Henry Hope's departure to England in 1794, he was running the bank.³ At his death

1 The author wishes to thank Dr Suzanne Higgott, Maksymilian Liszewski and Jolanta Niedziela-Thebault in the preparation of this article.

2 C. Blanc, *Catalogue de tableaux anciens des écoles flamande hollandaise et française provenant de la galerie de M.W. Hope dont la vente aux enchères publiques aura lieu le Mardi 11 Mai 1858* (Paris, 1858), 10 [hereafter *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1858].

3 P. Witt, *Ambassade De Pologne, Hôtel De Monaco* (Paris, 2005), 38; Musée Rodin, *Le Faubourg Saint-Germain: La Rue Saint-Dominique: Hôtels et amateurs* (Paris, 1984), 137; *Dictionary of National Biography*, 27 (London, 1900), 325.

in 1813, Williams Hope and his sister Henrietta Dorothea Maria (1790-1830) inherited a colossal fortune and property in England. Williams Hope probably arrived in France in the early 1820s.⁴ An established fixture of the Parisian *beau-monde*, he was a member of the prestigious anglophile private club *Le Cercle de l'Union* which counted old and new elites amongst its members, including the Duc de Richelieu (1804-1879), banker Francis Baring (1796-1866), officer Comte de Perregaux (1815-1889), and Russian art collector Anatoly Demidov (1813-1870). King Louis-Philippe (1773-1850) bestowed on him the French nationality in 1848.⁵

Largely overlooked by scholars in favour of his cousin Thomas Hope (1769-1831), William Hope's taste only partially echoed his cousin's resolute and flamboyant adoption of classical antiquity and prefigured the opulence of the *Goût Rothschild*. Navigating in the upper echelons of polite Parisian society, Hope acquired in 1837 the Hôtel de Monaco, a grand neoclassical townhouse built by the celebrated architect Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart (1739-1813) for Marie-Christine de Brignole, Princesse de Monaco (1737-1813) in 1774-1777. He then commissioned its complete refurbishment, of which the bedroom survives today reconstructed in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. An epicentre of fashionable society, his Parisian residence, today the site of the Polish Embassy, showcased his art collection and was dubbed 'a little Versailles'.⁶ His collections were dispersed through five auctions, one at his English country house Rushton Hall in 1849, three in situ at the Hôtel de Monaco shortly after his death in 1855, and the final one in Paris in 1858.⁷ Williams Hope's significance as a collector, and the quality of his collections are attested by the presence, today, of many of its treasures in museums throughout the world, including for

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4 Maréchal de Castellane, *Journal du Maréchal de Castellane 1823-1831*, 2 (Paris, 1895-1897), 160-1: 'Il a donné un grand bal dans sa trop petite maison de la rue Neuve des Mathurins, meublée avec une magnificence extraordinaire et un goût parfait [...] il y avait la meilleure compagnie de Paris'.

5 A. Martin-Fugier, *La vie élégante ou la formation du Tout-Paris, 1815-1848* (Paris, 1990), 114-5.

6 *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1858, 11.

7 Christie Manson & Woods, *Catalogue of the beautiful collection of pictures of the very highest class of William Williams Hope Esq. partly from Rushton Hall Northamptonshire; also his very choice and rare collection of Etruscan vases; antique bronzes; limosine enamels; exquisite enamels by Petitot; and miniatures by Augustin* (London, 1849) [hereafter *Rushton Hall*, 1849]; *Catalogue d'une belle réunion de tableaux et dessins anciens et modernes... après décès de M. W. W. Hope* (Paris, 1855) [hereafter *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1855]; *Catalogue de livres rares & précieux très richement reliés: manuscrits sur vélin grands ouvrages a figures collection d'estampes françaises et étrangères recueils de portraits albums dessins caricatures anglaises et françaises provenant du cabinet de feu M.W.W. Hope: dont la vente aura lieu en son Hôtel rue Saint-Dominique-Saint-Germain 131 le mardi 1er mai 1855 et les quatre jours suivants a une heure précise* (Paris, 1855); *Catalogue du riche mobilier objets d'art et de curiosité tableaux & dessins anciens & modernes gravures 385 kilogrammes d'argenterie et vermeil dépendant de la succession de M.W. Hope dont la vente aura lieu les 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 et 16 Juin 1855* (Paris, 1855) [hereafter *Catalogue du mobilier*, 1855]; *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1858. Williams Hope died childless and his friend V.H. Crosby, great-nephew of Lord Brass Crosby, former mayor of London, was appointed his universal legatee and inherited the collections. See J. Sabatier, 'Affaire Hope', *La Tribune judiciaire. Recueil des plaidoyers et des réquisitoires les plus remarquables des tribunaux français et étrangers* 2 (Paris, 1856), 131.

Fig. 1. The Holy Family with Saints Elizabeth and John the Baptist (oil on panel, Peter Paul Rubens, circa 1615; coll. Art Institute of Chicago)



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instance Clodion's *Offering to Priapus* of 1775 in the J.P. Getty Museum, two Limoges enamel plaques depicting the story of Aeneas in the Walters Art Museum, Murillo's *Holy Family with the Infant Baptist* in the Wallace Collection, or Rubens' *Holy Family with Elizabeth and John the Baptist*, now in the Art Institute of Chicago (fig. 1).⁸

Despite the breadth and significance of his art collection, Williams Hope has been so far almost entirely ignored by scholars and only mentioned briefly in relation to his bedroom at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.⁹ This lack of interest

⁸ Claude Michel known as Clodion, *Offering to Priapus*, c. 1775, terracotta, accession number: 85.SC.166, The J.P. Getty Museum; Master of the Aeneid Legend, *Aeneas Offers Sacrifice to the Gods of the Lower World*, *Aeneas Entreats Anchises to Flee from Troy*, c.1530-1540, painted enamel and gold on copper, accession numbers: 44.57, 44.58, acquired by Henry Walters, 1910, The Walters Art Museum; Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Holy Family with the Infant Baptist*, c.1670, oil on canvas, accession number: P58, The Wallace Collection, London; P.P. Rubens, *Holy Family with Elizabeth and John the Baptist*, c.1615, oil on panel, accession number: 1967.229.

⁹ O. Beaufils, *Louis-Philippe à Fontainebleau: le roi et l'histoire* (Paris, 2018), 156-7.

may be partly explained by the absence of inventories or visual records of his interiors, as well as the posthumous dispersal of his collection. However, examination of the sale catalogues, combined with a visual interrogation of the architectural interiors of the Hôtel de Monaco, offer us a crucial point of access into his taste and collecting practices. While these sources provided invaluable insight, they also have to be approached with critical caution: the interiors of the Hôtel de Monaco underwent significant changes since Williams Hope's time and cannot be taken at face value. In addition, some of the works of art listed in the sale catalogues are today untraced and their nineteenth-century attributions remain unconfirmed to this day.

This essay builds on the work of scholars like Krzysztof Pomian and Antoine Schnapper whose meticulous studies have identified the types of goods coveted by early modern collectors and the display strategies underpinning the presentation of collections.¹⁰ Such empirical studies proved useful in positioning Williams Hope's practices within established genealogies of collectors. More recently, Silvia Davoli's rigorous reconstruction of the collections of the famed antiquary Horace Walpole (1717-1797) has brought to the fore the ongoing importance of provenance research in art historical enquiry, highlighting the values attached to artistic transfers.¹¹ The transformative value of ownership and the effect of provenance on the market value and status of objects were also points aptly articulated by Gail Fegenbaum and Inge Reist and helped illuminate my analysis of Williams Hope's practices and his apparent quest for exalted provenances.¹²

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Collaborative networks of collecting and the complex weavings of a plurality of agents and social, economic, political and cultural factors in the formation of collections have also been the object of sustained scrutiny, notably by Caroline McCaffrey Howarth and Diana Davis.¹³ This increased positioning of collectors within broader historical contexts away from insular readings of their collections has been used to frame Williams Hope's aesthetic project. Consideration of collective collecting strategies, particularly family traditions of collecting such as those of the Rothschilds examined by Dora Thornton also proved a useful framework for the analysis of Williams Hope's taste in relation to that of his relatives who were eminent collectors in their own rights.¹⁴

10 K. Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise: XVIe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1987); A. Schnapper, *Curieux du Grand Siècle* (Paris, 2005)

11 S. Davoli, M. Snodin, *Lost treasures of Strawberry Hill. Masterpieces from Horace Walpole's collection* (London, 2018).

12 G. Feigenbaum and I. Reist (eds), *Provenance: An alternate history of art* (Los Angeles, 2013).

13 C. McCaffrey-Howarth, 'Sèvres-mania' and collaborative collecting networks: The 2nd Earl of Lonsdale, Henry Broadwood and Edward Holmes Baldock, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 35, 1 (2023), 61–76; D. Davis, *The tastemakers: British dealers and the Anglo-Gallic interior 1785-1865* (Los Angeles, 2020)

14 D. Thornton, *A Rothschild Renaissance: Treasures from the Waddesdon bequest* (London, 2015).

Francis Haskell's pioneering study on the effect of the French Revolution on pan-European artistic taste has recently been expanded by a number of scholars who considered the *longue durée* of the post-revolutionary circulation of works of art and their connections to the fortunes of taste and the vagaries of the art market.¹⁵ Set against the background of the dispersal of French aristocratic and clerical collections, this article will interrogate Williams Hope's adoption of and engagement with *ancien régime* patrician hierarchies of taste. Largely faithful to the arts of the past and with the advantage of substantial inherited wealth, he was able to embrace validated connoisseurial artistic traditions and cultivate the refined tastes of elite eighteenth-century collectors.

Much recent scholarship has highlighted the nineteenth-century emergence of new cultures of collecting fuelled by a rapidly expanding art market driven and dominated by a wealthy bourgeoisie eager to mobilise the remnants of the past for the construction of polite social identities, or as part of a wider cultural project aimed at preserving the national patrimony.¹⁶ In contrast to those figures who saw themselves as equal to the state in their attempts to conserve national heritage, Williams Hope's aesthetic project was largely an individual one intended for his own pleasure and confined to the walls of his home.

In a first instance, the present study will consider Williams Hope's Parisian townhouse and argue that, through the grandiose spectacularisation of his wealth, it participated in a carefully constructed scenography employed as a means of transcending his own bourgeois origins and forging social and aesthetic bonds with the domestic milieus of pre- and post-revolutionary aristocracies. The second part of this article analyses the contents of Williams Hope's collection, and examines to what extent its formation, through the selective adoption of the material attributes of *ancien régime* elites, was primarily motivated by social ambition and a function of social emulation envisaged as a tool to project a genteel identity at a time when the old aristocracy, recently restored at the apex of the social pyramid, had to increasingly share its political, economic and cultural monopoly with wealthy bankers and industrialists. Finally, this article analyses Williams Hope's marked predilection for Netherlandish paintings. It considers the weight of historical affect embodied by his collections and posits that, while his taste for seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish pictures echoed eighteenth-century French collecting traditions, it may have also been a reflection of his own Dutch origins, intersected with a nostalgia for a past that could not be reclaimed, and a patriotic agenda to preserve Netherlandish heritage after decades of continual loss to foreign collectors.

15 F. Haskell, *Rediscoveries in art. Some aspects of taste fashion and collecting in England and France* (Oxford, 1980); R. Panzanelli and M. Preti (eds), *The circulation of works of art in the revolutionary era 1789-1848* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004).

16 D. Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian middle class. Money and the making of cultural identity* (Cambridge, 1996); T. Stammers, *The purchase of the past. Collecting culture in post-revolutionary Paris, 1790-1890* (Cambridge, 2020).

The Hôtel de Monaco

Keen to establish himself in an abode befitting his fortune, Williams Hope purchased a grand townhouse, the Hôtel d'Eckmühl, from the Maréchale Davout in 1838.¹⁷ The residence was located on the Rue Saint Dominique in the elegant district of Saint Germain-des-Prés, a time-honoured bastion of the aristocracy. Also known as the Hôtel de Monaco, the residence boasted an illustrious noble lineage: it had been originally built in for the Princess of Monaco by architect Alexandre-Theodore Brongniart. Trained in Jacques-Francois Blondel's (1705-1774) *École des Arts*, Brongniart was at the forefront of the neoclassical movement and had quickly gained a solid reputation building fashionable *hôtels particuliers* for a wealthy and cultured Parisian elite. Surviving designs in the Carnavalet Museum as well as elevations published by Krafft and Ransonette reveal that he had devised for the princess an imposing and elegant detached residence unequivocally inspired by classical antiquity. There is little doubt that status and social climbing underpinned Williams Hope's choice of residence. At a time when a growing number of financiers were increasingly establishing themselves in the newly developed districts on the right bank of the capital, Williams Hope was thus deliberately anchoring himself and his collections within the polite and privileged geographies of pre-revolutionary aristocracies.¹⁸ Eager to distance himself from his banking bourgeois origins, he was following in the footsteps of the early nineteenth-century imperial political, banking and industrial elites that had eagerly appropriated the grand *hôtels* on the left bank of the French capital as part of the construction of their social identities.¹⁹

Williams Hope commissioned Achilles Jacques Fédel (1785-1860) to expand the dwelling and modernise its interiors. Fédel remains elusive to scholars to this day due to the paucity of archival records surrounding his work on the Hôtel de Monaco, and his practice in general. Trained in the atelier of Pierre-Narcisse Guérin (1774-1833) and at the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*, he appears to have spent the early years of his career in Russia.²⁰ Praised by the *Figaro* in 1828 as 'a young artist as talented as he is modest', he may have been chosen by Williams Hope because he trained with Brongniart, thereby preserving the integrity of the architectural lineage of the residence.²¹ The house, however, underwent profound changes. Williams Hope's vision was ambitious and Fédel quasi-obliterated the eighteenth-century dwelling: he

17 J. Sillery, *Monographie de l'Hôtel de Sagan* (Paris, 1909), 1.

18 For a topography of Parisian townhouses see A. Gady, *Les Hôtels Particuliers de Paris* (Paris, 2008), 23-39.

19 Gady, 38-9.

20 *Biographies et nécrologies des hommes marquants du XIXe siècle*, 3 (Paris, 1846), 106. *Le Figaro*, 13 April 1828, 4.

21 *Le Figaro* (13 April 1828), 4; E. Ducamp, *Hôtel de Monaco. La résidence de l'ambassadeur de Pologne à Paris* (Paris, 2012), 33-37. The *Journal de L'Empire* mentions Fédel being a pupil of Brongniart and winning the second Grand Prix of the Beaux-Arts. *Journal de l'Empire* (19 September 1813), 2.

altered the facades, added matching lateral wings, and entirely stripped the original eighteenth-century interior decors. Work on the Hôtel lasted for three years and, upon completion, contemporaries lauded 'the beauty of its interior distributions, the richness of its style, the splendour of its vast proportions, which could perhaps only be compared to the admirable constructions executed at Versailles on the orders of Louis XIV'.²² The French newspaper *Le Pays* corroborated that view and noted that the 'hôtel was undeniably the richest and best decorated of all the faubourg Saint Germain. It evoked the magnificence and grandeur of royal houses'.²³

The *hôtel* spectacularised Williams Hope's immense wealth and social ambitions, and its many rooms framed both his extensive art collections and provided the setting for lavish house parties.²⁴ Far from being faithful to the aesthetic principles of the *Grand Siècle*, the residence was, however, a model of historicism fully in line with the eclectic tastes of the July Monarchy. The ground floor housed a dining room and a billiard room as well as Williams Hope's private appartements. Echoing contemporary fashions, the ceiling and door panelling of the dining room were loosely inspired by Renaissance aesthetics. The room furnishings consisting of a mahogany suite of furniture had, however, little to do with sixteenth-century taste.²⁵ The bedroom, today preserved in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, is a monument to the luxurious re-interpretations of the Renaissance styles that were fashionable in the 1830s and 1840s. Centered around an alcove, the lavish polychrome bedroom is indeed underpinned by a remarkable array of classically-inspired Renaissance ornament, effectively acting as a three-dimensional incarnation of contemporary dictionaries of ornament such as those published by Claude-Aimé Chenavard (1797-1838).²⁶ It was, above all, a playful evocation of French courtly life. Philippe Comairas (1803-1875), winner of the second *Prix de Rome* in 1833, depicted in the upper part of the wall-panelling elegant and playful characters in Renaissance garb. A tour-de-force of decorative ingenuity, Williams Hope's bedroom makes direct visual references to French royal residences and should also be envisaged within the context of the recent works undertaken at the Château de Fontainebleau under the aegis of King Louis-Philippe. Keen to bring back the Renaissance palace to its former glory, the king had initiated an ambitious programme of restorations and historicist decoration that brought the

²² *Biographies et nécrologies des hommes marquants du XIXe siècle*, 107: 'la beauté de ses distributions intérieures, la richesse de son style, la splendeur de ses vastes proportions, et que l'on ne pourrait comparer peut-être qu'aux admirables constructions exécutées à Versailles par les ordres de Louis XIV'.

²³ *Le Pays: journal des volontés de la France* (1 July 1855), 2: 'l'hôtel était sans contredit le plus riche et le mieux orné du faubourg Saint Germain. On y retrouvait le faste et la grandeur des demeures souveraines'.

²⁴ *Le Figaro* (24 March 1863), 3.

²⁵ *Catalogue du mobilier*, 1855, 6-7.

²⁶ See for instance Claude-Aimé Chenavard, *L'Album de l'ornementiste. Recueil d'ornements dans tous les genres et dans tous les styles* (Paris, 1835).

palace to the renewed attention of contemporary artists and designers.²⁷ There is little doubt that Fédel would have been familiar with those works, and the bedroom's elaborate yet playful grotesques are notably reminiscent of Charles Moench's (1784-1867) painted decorations for the palace's *Salle des Gardes*. On each side of the bed and in the lower section of the panelling, framed by elaborate strapwork cartouches, are also depicted ethereal nude figures with elongated limbs echoing Primaticcio's (1504-1570) elegant compositions made for Fontainebleau in the early part of the sixteenth century. Eschewing the polychromy of the rest of the interiors, these panels are painted in grisaille, thus evoking the tonality and materiality of the Limoges enamels in Williams Hope's own collection (though it is unclear whether any were actually displayed in the room). The profile heads adorning the strapwork cartouches are also directly derived from the elaborate stucco work of Fontainebleau's *Galerie François 1er*.²⁸

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The first floor devoted to reception rooms departed from Renaissance aesthetics and made further architectural quotations to celebrated aristocratic and royal palaces. A masterpiece of sculpted decoration, the staircase gives a foretaste of the splendour to come and revealed Fédel's erudition and mastery of classical sources. Loosely inspired by Antoine Desgodetz's *Édifices Antiques de Rome* (originally published in 1682), the barrelled vaulted coffering of the ceiling and the Corinthian columns echo those of the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, albeit with a personalised touch as Fédel had thoughtfully, and perhaps also playfully, embedded Hope's initial within the acanthus of the capitals. The stone decoration devoid of decorative painting was however also reminiscent of the work of architect François Mansart (1598-1666) at the Château de Maisons, and that of Jean Boullier de Bourges at the Hôtel Salé. The *Salle des Festins* that opened the suite of first-floor reception rooms was unequivocally *Louis Quatorze* in style, with polychrome scagliola panelling inspired by the marble-clad Salons of Venus and Diana at the Château of Versailles. The opulent three-dimensional coffered ceiling combined stucco sculpture and *quadri riportati*, and integrated still-lives and landscapes by Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer (1634-1699) and Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686-1755).

The ensuing reception rooms happily mixed seventeenth and eighteenth-century styles. For instance, the Salon Bleu, the Hôtel's largest reception room, boasted a heavily gilded coffered ceiling, regence-style door panelling, and an elaborate parquet floor similar to those executed by Alexandre-Jean Oppenord (1639-1715) and André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732) for Louis XIV at Versailles. The *Salon de Flore* and the *Salon de Musique*, followed a similar decorative programme based on an opulent reinterpretation of *Tous les Louis* styles thus anticipating the architectural *faste* of the Second Empire.

²⁷ V. Droguet, *Fontainebleau: 'La vraie demeure des rois, la maison des siècles'* (Paris, 2015), 357-64.

²⁸ Beaufile, *Louis-Philippe à Fontainebleau*, 156-7.

The art collections

The magnificence of Williams Hope's 'enchanted palace' was matched by the richness of its furnishings and art collections, as evidenced by the catalogues of his sales.²⁹ Their contents reveal a rich and eclectic taste often in line with contemporary French and Dutch collecting practices. The magnitude of his collection of furnishings and *objets d'art* was testified by the duration of the sale which spanned thirteen days from 4 to 16 June 1855. Taking place in situ at the Hôtel de Monaco, visitors were awed by the sheer profusion of objects and the 'admirable exhibition of sumptuous furnishings and wonderful objets d'art'.³⁰ A commentator compared the residence with a 'museum profusely furnished with all sorts of works of art', and enthusiastically remarked that the house was 'uncommonly and infinitely elegant', while another compared the abode and its collection to a 'tale from the Thousand and One Nights'.³¹

Williams Hope was evidently fond of Sèvres porcelain: the 1855 sale catalogue listed no less than eighty lots of useful and decorative wares described as *vieux Sèvres* or *Sèvres pâte tendre* to differentiate them from nineteenth-century productions. Prized and admired for their elaborate and imaginative designs, the products of the royal manufacture had in the eighteenth century been avidly collected by French and foreign royalty, and, more generally, fashion-conscious European urban elites. The French revolutionary sales precipitated an unparalleled number of pieces on the European art market, thereby fuelling further demand. At once the tangible manifestation of the *ancien régime* and a prized commodity eagerly competed for in European salesrooms, Sèvres porcelain entered the collections of some the most significant nineteenth-century European collectors such as King George IV (1762-1830), the 4th Marquess of Hertford (1800-1870), or the Rothschild family.

If the brevity of the descriptions in Williams Hope's catalogue significantly hinders the identification of many of his Sèvres pieces, it is nevertheless possible to identify as Lot 252 the celebrated 'Hope Service' made in 1787-1788 that he had inherited from his father.³² The service had been ordered from the French royal manufacture by Henry Hope in 1787 through the art dealer Jean-Baptiste Lefebvre.³³ Known as Lefebvre d'Amsterdam, he traded from business premises established in the Rue Thévenot in Paris, though it is likely that, like his father who had become a citizen of the city of Amsterdam and traded in French luxury goods, he had also lived in the

29 P. Nibelle, 'L'hôtel de M. William Hope', *La Lumière: journal non politique: beaux-arts, héliographie, sciences* (12 May 1855), 75.

30 *Le Pays: journal des volontés de la France* (1 July 1855), 2: 'une admirable exposition de meubles somptueux et de merveilleux objets d'art'.

31 Nibelle, 'L'hôtel de M. William Hope', 75: 'un musée abondamment fourni d'objets d'art de tout genre', 'd'une élégance peu commune et d'une recherche infinie'; *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1858, ii.

32 D. Peters, *Sèvres plates and services of the eighteenth century* 4 (Little Berkhamsted, 2015), 853-855.

33 R. Baarsen, *Paris 1650-1900. Decorative arts in the Rijkmuseum* (Amsterdam, 2013), 349-52. T. Préaud, 'Competition from Sèvres porcelain', *Derby Porcelain International Society* 4 (2000), 42.



Fig. 2. Detail of a piece from a service decorated with garlands, baskets of flowers and grisaille cameos after the antique against a beau bleu background. It incorporates the coat of arms of the Scottish Hope clan, as well as their motto motto *At Spes Infracta* (private coll.)

Dutch city. Jean-Baptiste Lefebvre was a regular client of the Sèvres Manufacture and many of his acquisitions were sent to his father's business in Holland. As Baarsen noted, Lefebvre was known for acquiring rare and expensive pieces from Sèvres, prompting culture minister Charles-Claude Flahaut de la Billarderie, Comte d'Angivillers (1730-1809) to write that he hoped the dealer might be able to expand the market for Sèvres in the Netherlands. Lefebvre's intermediation with the manufacture allowed Hope to benefit from the 12% discount usually granted by the manufacture to *marchands* (although, of course, Lefebvre's commission would have also had to be taken into account). The service was delivered in 1788 for the total sum of nearly 13,000 livres, as recorded in the Sèvres-Cité de la Céramique archives: *Livré à M Lefebvre / Du 23 février 1788 / Service Beau bleu armoiries*. It contained a total of 108 pieces, of which one hundred survive today.³⁴ Decorated with garlands, baskets of flowers

³⁴ *Catalogue du mobilier*, 1855, 25, lot 252. One hundred pieces from the service were sold at auction



Fig. 3. Pair of lidded bowls (*vases casselottes à monter*), attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire, Sèvres Manufactory, France, about 1785 (coll. J. Paul Getty Museum)

and grisaille cameos after the antique against a *beau bleu* background, it also incorporated the coat of arms of the Scottish Hope clan, as well as their motto *At Spes Infracta* (private coll.), thus revealing the family's insistence on their distinguished noble genealogies (fig. 2).³⁵ The lot fetched 10,500 francs and was the most expensive service sold. By comparison, a Sèvres service described as 'pâte tendre, décor à bouquets et ruban bleu' made of 118 pieces only fetched 2600 francs.³⁶ It has been possible to identify two further pieces from Williams Hope's collection: two of the six vases in lots 256 and 257 described as 'a garniture of three vases, plain *gro bleu* background, fine gilt-bronze mounts, on griotte marble pedestals' are indeed likely the pair of *bleu nouveau* lidded pot-pourri bowls in the J. Paul Getty Museum with mounts attributed to royal and later imperial bronzier Pierre-Philippe Thomire (1751-1843) (fig. 3).³⁷

by Christies in Paris on 27 November 2018 for €343,500. Five pieces are today in public collections in France and the United States. Christies Paris, *The Exceptional Sale*, 27 November 2018, lot 510.

35 C. Dumortier and P. Habets, 'Les têtes à l'antique du service Lefebvre conservé au musée Nissim de Camondo', *Sèvres* 25 (2016), 84-96.

36 *Catalogue du mobilier*, 1855, 25, lot 251.

37 *Catalogue du mobilier*, 1855, 26, lots 256-7. Lot 256: 'une garniture de trois vases, fond gros bleu uni,

Williams Hope's erudite aesthetics found their precedents in early modern collecting practices and, unsurprisingly, Chinese and Japanese porcelain was present in his collections. Widely sought after by collectors since its arrival in fourteenth-century Europe via trade routes, oriental porcelain was extolled and valued for its rarity and exquisite translucency.³⁸ Although the creation of European porcelain factories impacted the demand for oriental wares, they were still highly prized by collectors and connoisseurs as immortalised by Henri-Pierre Danloux's (1753-1809) evocative portrayal of the Baron de Besenval (1722-1791) seated by a mantelpiece adorned with oriental celadon mounted porcelain.³⁹ Eighteenth-century sale catalogues abound with references to the presence of oriental porcelain in elite interiors. The Duc de Tallard's (1684-1755) collection contained for instance 'an exquisite choice of old porcelain from China or Japan, most of them richly adorned with gilt-bronze', and that of the Duc d'Aumont (1709-1782) included 'many esteemed pieces of porcelain known as old Japan or old China with celadon, celestial blue, violet colours'.⁴⁰ Here we see how Williams Hope continued the collecting journey of his pre-revolutionary predecessors. His taste for small bronzes also fully echoed that of *ancien régime* connoisseurs, as evidenced by the preface of the Duc de Tallard sale catalogue which exhorted collectors to mix such objects with porcelain.⁴¹ The high prices they fetched at his sale could be read as an indicator of their significance and desirability on the nineteenth-century art market. Of those bronzes, that of *Aristaeus and Proteus*, made by Antwerp-born sculptor Sébastien Slodtz (1655-1726) after a design by François Girardon (1628-1715), is today in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.⁴² A reduced version of the colossal marble group

fine monture en bronze doré, socles en marbre griotte'; lot 257: 'une garniture de trois vases, semblable à la précédente'. J. Paul Getty Museum, accession number: 73.Dl.77. A *bleu nouveau* vase 'à monter' with a similar pedestal and mounts also attributed to Thomire was sold at auction at Sotheby's in 2019 and may have been part of the garnitures. Sotheby's Paris, *La Collection Ribes*, 11 December 2019, lot 29.

38 S. Castelluccio, *Collecting Chinese and Japanese porcelain in pre-revolutionary Paris* (Los Angeles, 2013).

39 Henri-Pierre Danloux, *Portrait of the Baron de Besenval*, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London. Accession number: NG6598.

40 *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux, sculptures, tant de marbre que de bronze, desseins et estampes des plus grands maîtres, porcelaines anciennes, meubles précieux, bijoux, et autres effets qui composent le cabinet de feu monsieur le duc de Tallard* (Paris, 1756), ii: 'un choix exquis de porcelaines anciennes de la Chine, & du Japon, la plupart richement garnies de bronze doré d'or moulu'; *Catalogue des vases, colonnes, tables de marbres rares, figures de bronze, porcelaines de choix, laques, meubles précieux, pendules, lustres, bras & lanternes de bronze doré d'or mat: bijoux & autres effets importants qui composent le cabinet de feu M. le duc d'Aumont, 12 Decembere 1782* (Paris, 1782), unpagged: 'beaucoup de ces porcelaines si estimées sous les denominations d'ancien Japon, d'ancienne Chine sous les couleurs céladon, bleu-céleste, violet'.

41 *Catalogue Raisonné ... de Feu Monsieur de Duc de Tallard*, (Paris, 1756), 223: 'la couleur rembrunie des bronzes [...] donne au coup d'oeil, ce repos, si nécessaire, pour produire une sensation agréable, et particulièrement lorsque ces bronzes se trouvent mariés avec des porcelaines choisies'.

42 Sébastien Slodtz, *Aristaeus and Proteus*, bronze, c.1695, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Accession number: A.6-1963.

commissioned for the gardens of Versailles in the seventeenth century, the small bronze is believed to have been owned by Girardon and exhibited at the Salon of 1704.⁴³

That said, Williams Hope significantly expanded eighteenth-century categories of collecting by also acquiring Limoges enamels and Italian Maiolica. He also owned a number of pieces attributed to Bernard Palissy (1510-90), thereby positioning himself at the forefront of the revival of taste for the Renaissance ceramicist. Rediscovered in the 1820s by the director of the Sèvres Manufacture Alexandre Brongniart (1770-1847) who had acquired some of his pieces for the manufacture's museum, by the time of Williams Hope's death, Palissy wares were regular fixtures of collectors' cabinets, as shown in Arthur-Henri Roberts' depiction of Alexandre-Charles Sauvageot's (1781-1860) cabinet.⁴⁴ The similarities with Sauvageot's taste extended to the Gothic past and he also collected medieval ivories and woodcarvings. It however remains unclear whether Williams Hope ever shared Sauvageot's patriotic agenda and 'heritage crusade' in his attempts to salvage and preserve the medieval past.⁴⁵ Unlike Sauvageot, who entertained close links with Louvre curators and whose 1857 bequest to the museum formed the nucleus of the *Département des Objets d'Art*, there is no evidence that Williams Hope participated in scholarly networks of exchange or that he intended his collection to contribute to a broader public usefulness through, say, occasional loans.

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His acquisitions of Greco-Roman ceramics and glass, and Egyptian antiquities were at the nexus of an enlightenment tradition of collecting that stemmed from the rediscovery of the classical past and new collecting paradigms entwined with the patriotic project of collecting for the nation.⁴⁶ The second quarter of the nineteenth century was indeed a dynamic period for the collecting of classical antiquities in France. Underpinned and fuelled by an important number of fruitful archaeological excavations, it witnessed the formation of significant collections, such as those of Gustave-Adolphe Beugnot (1799-1861) and Antoine Vivenel (1799-1862), both of which were to be bequeathed to the nation.⁴⁷ Williams Hope's collecting, however, appears to have been divorced from any high-minded patriotic considerations. His objects did not contribute to scholarly understanding through their circulation in erudite circles, and none of them were left to public institutions. He may have been influenced by his cousin Thomas Hope whose unapologetic taste for the classical past

⁴³ J. Marsden in Bresc-Bautier, G. and Scherf, G. (eds), *Cast in bronze. French sculpture from Renaissance to Revolution* (Paris, 2009), 270-271, cat. 70.

⁴⁴ Beaufils, *Louis-Philippe à Fontainebleau*, 157-8; L. N. Amico, *Bernard Palissy in search of earthly paradise* (Paris, 1996), 191-2.

⁴⁵ Stammers, *Purchase of the past*, 159-202.

⁴⁶ *Rushton Hall*, 1849; *Catalogue du mobilier*, 1855.

⁴⁷ C. Mazet, 'From Etruscan tombs to the Musée des Études. The history of the antiquities collection of Antoine Vivenel (1799-1862)', *Revue des Musées de France* (2016), 63-74.

positioned him as the most important collector of Greek vases of his day. It is well known that, having acquired the second Hamilton collection, Hope mobilised his vases for the improvement of contemporary public taste through his publications, most notably *Household furniture and Interior Decoration Executed from Designs by Thomas Hope*. In the absence of visual records of Williams Hope's interiors, the deployment of his antiquities and his historicist interiors remains an area of conjecture. Eschewing his cousin's didactic considerations or a coherent public agenda, once more, Williams Hope's classical interests appear to have largely been an individual pursuit confined to the walls of his luxurious abode, and his engagement with other collections limited to the quest for reputable provenances. He bought indeed from some of the most important French collectors of the day, including the aforementioned Beugnot and the Chevalier Edmé-Antoine Durand (1768-1835).⁴⁸ Former art dealer Durand had assembled in his lifetime a significant collection of over 7400 works of art and antiquities. Boasting impeccable pedigrees and lauded for its quality, part of it was sold *en bloc* for the modest sum of 480,000 francs in 1825 to form the core of the *Musée Charles X*.⁴⁹ The rest of his collection was dispersed in a posthumous sale in 1836, from which Williams Hope acquired the pieces in his collection, including an Athenian cup excavated in Vulci by Lucien Bonaparte (1775-1840), now in the Louvre.⁵⁰

Taste for Netherlandish paintings

If Williams Hope's taste in decorative arts was characterised by an eclectic lavishness spanning countries and centuries, his predilections in paintings were markedly centered on the Low Countries. His sale catalogues reveal a strong taste for Old Masters focused almost exclusively on Netherlandish art, with occasional forays into the French, Italian and Spanish schools. This enthusiasm for the art of the Low Countries was neither unique nor avant-garde. As extensively examined by Patrick Michel and, more recently, Darius Spieth, the collecting of Dutch and Flemish Golden Age pictures finds its antecedents in the eighteenth century when collectors viewed such works as 'aesthetic, intellectual and economic touchstones in the Parisian art world'.⁵¹ First seen on a grand scale at the close of the reign of Louis XIV in the collection of the Comtesse de Verrue (1670-1736), Netherlandish pictures became ubiquitous in the private galleries of wealthy eighteenth-century Parisian connoisseurs, of

⁴⁸ Louvre Museum, Accession number: NIII 2626. J. De Witte, *Description de la collection d'antiquités de M. le vicomte Beugnot* (Paris, 1840); fifteen pieces came from Durand's collection, *Rushton Hall*, 1849.

⁴⁹ L. Detrez, 'Edmé Antoine Durand (1768-1835): un bâtisseur de collections', *Cahiers de l'École du Louvre* 4 (2014). Positioned in a suite of nine rooms on the ground floor of the the Louvre, the *Musée Charles X* was devoted to classical antiquities.

⁵⁰ Accession number: NIII 2628

⁵¹ D.A. Spieth, *Revolutionary Paris and the market for Netherlandish art* (Boston, 2017), 1.

whom the collections of the Duc de Choiseul (1719-1785) and Augustin Blondel de Gagny (1695-1776) were among the most celebrated, the former famously immortalised in diminutive form through the so-called Choiseul box painted by Louis-Nicolas Van Blarenbergh (1716-1794).⁵² Underpinned by a buoyant market led by entrepreneurial dealers such as Edmé-François Gersaint (1694-1750) or Pierre-François Basan (1723-1797) and bolstered by a growing number of erudite publications including Jean-Baptiste Descamps' *Vie des Peintres Flamands et Hollandois* (1753-1763), or Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Lebrun's *Galerie des Peintures Flamands, Hollandais et Allemands* (1792-1796), Golden Age Dutch and Flemish paintings became essential fixtures of sophisticated urban picture cabinets. The political turmoil of the revolutionary period did not extinguish collectors' appetites, and subsequent decades saw such works eagerly competed for and firmly established as the 'gold standard' for connoisseurs and dealers. It is therefore within this collecting context that Williams Hope's taste needs to be understood.⁵³ Interestingly, the collection also departed from eighteenth-century models of collecting and the presence of three Northern Primitives in the collection reflected the more recent re-discovery of 'Gothic works' among Netherlandish collectors, of which King Willem II (1792-1849) was the most enthusiastic exponent. Driven by civic pride, this re-appraisal was also nurtured by discerning art dealers like Charles Nieuwenhuys (1799-1883) who took full advantage of the financial opportunities that this new market afforded.⁵⁴

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In the preface to the 1858 sale catalogue, art critic Charles Blanc (1813-1882) noted the importance that *Messieurs les millionnaires* attached to questions of provenance, and how contemporary collectors first wanted to know where a piece was from and 'in which famous gallery it had been exhibited'.⁵⁵ Williams Hope's interest for reputable provenances fully echoed Blanc's discourse, and he acquired pieces from some of the most prominent collections of his day. He bought a number of paintings from the 1832 sale of collector Sébastien Erard (1752-1832). Considered 'one of the most famous in Europe', the collection was sold at auction at his home, the former royal Château de la Muette in 1832.⁵⁶ A virtuoso maker of musical instruments specialised in pianos, harps and harpsichords, Erard was praised for his 'sure taste' and his 'discriminating spirit', and he had assembled in his lifetime a sizable collection of Old Masters of the three main schools.⁵⁷ A landscape by Claude Lorrain (now thought to

52 P. Michel, *Peinture et plaisir: les goûts picturaux des collectionneurs parisiens au XVIIIe siècle* (Rennes, 2010), 177-222; D. Bloomquist, 'The Choiseul box: A study of the duc de Choiseul's furniture', *Furniture History* 40 (2004), 53-72.

53 Spieth, *Market for Netherlandish art*, 26.

54 E. Hinterding and F. Horsch. "'A small but choice collection". The art gallery of King Willem II of the Netherlands (1792-1849).' *Simiolus. Netherlands quarterly for the history of art*, 19, 1/2 (1989), 5-122.

55 *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1858, 10-11.

56 *Catalogue des tableaux italiens, flamands, hollandais et français, des anciennes écoles qui composent la magnifique galerie de M. le Chevalier Erard* (Paris, 1832), 3.

57 *Catalogue Erard*, 3.



Fig. 4. The herdsman (oil on canvas, 17th or 18th century, follower of Claude Lorraine; Samuel H. Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC)

be by a follower of the artist) was the most expensive work bought by Williams Hope at Erard sale, fetching 24,800 francs (fig. 4).⁵⁸ It was also the only painting not to be from the Northern school. He acquired indeed three further paintings: a self-portrait by Rembrandt, then thought to be the portrait of Martin Kappertz Tromp, an *Adoration of the Shepherds* by Adriaen van Ostade described in the catalogue as ‘un admirable tableau’, and a *Holy Family with St John and Elisabeth* by Rubens (fig. 1). The entry to the latter was extensive and detailed, and noted the painting’s exalted provenance to renowned eighteenth-century collector Antoine Poullain (d.1780): ‘this painting as precious as pleasant was part of the riches of the famous connoisseur Poullain’. The eminent art dealer Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Le Brun (1748-1813) had compiled Poullain’s sale catalogue in 1780 and his praises were duly included in Erard’s volume: ‘there is no gallery that this piece would not enhance. We note a fine design, heads full of grace and truth and a frank and transparent colour’.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Catalogue Erard*, 192, lot 183. The painting is now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, accession number 1946.7.12.

⁵⁹ *Catalogue Erard*, 136, lot 119, the self-portrait by Rembrandt was catalogued as the portrait de Martin-

Williams Hope did not bid himself at auction, and, like many of his peers, he appears to have relied on the agency and intermediacy of dealers for the assembly of his collection. In this instance, the *peintre marchand* Edmé Laurent Durand-Duclos (1771-1846) acted on his behalf. The brother of the aforementioned collector Chevalier Durand, Durand-Duclos specialised in Dutch and Flemish paintings, and operated in Paris from premises at 42 Rue des Petits Champs. His collection was sold at auction on 18 February 1847, and the preface to the catalogue describes him as a 'judicious guide' to the 'amateurs of pictures'.⁶⁰

A few years later, Williams Hope acquired a number of paintings from the sales of the Duc and Duchesse de Berry. Prior to his assassination by a Bonapartist supporter in 1820, Charles-Ferdinand Duc de Berry (1778-1820), heir to the French throne, had been an avid art collector, acquiring paintings at auction and from dealers like Colnaghi's. Arguably the most important collector of Dutch and Flemish pictures of the Restoration period, the Duc was helped for the formation of his collection by his private curator Chevalier Ferréol Bonnemaïson (1766-1827). All the *grands noms* of Netherlandish art were included in the Duc de Berry's collection: Gabriel Metsu, Paulus Potter, David Teniers, Gerard ter Borch and Philip Wouwerman to name but a few, and many of his first-rate pictures had also been part of some of the most illustrious pre-revolutionary Parisian cabinets such as those of the Duc de Choiseul or the Prince de Conti. Marie-Caroline de Bourbon-Sicile, Duchesse de Berry (1798-1870) was equally enthusiastic about art, although unlike her husband, she mostly collected to political ends in order to legitimise her son's right to the French throne. In addition to purchasing luxurious furnishings and decorative arts from renowned craftsmen and royal manufactures, she had assembled her own sizable collection of contemporary genre paintings and landscapes.⁶¹ Plagued by financial difficulties, the *duchesse* was however forced to part with both collections through a number of auction sales in the 1830s.

The sale of the paintings collection took place in Paris on 4 April 1837 under the aegis of art expert Charles Paillet. Introduced as a collection 'known throughout Europe for its high importance, the choice and the variety of the masters that

Kappertz-Tromp and was acquired by Durand Duclos for 17100 francs; Van Ostade's Nativity (lot 104) may have belonged to Empress Josephine at la Malmaison and was acquired for 11950 francs; the Rubens (lot 126) was acquired for 6020 francs: 'ce tableau aussi précieux qu'il est agréable a fait partie des richesses pittoresques du fameux amateur Poullain [...] il n'est point de galerie que ce morceau ne put embellir. On y remarque un dessein plein de finesse des têtes pleines de grace et de verité une couleur franche et transparente'.

⁶⁰ *Catalogue d'une belle collection de tableaux de choix anciens et modernes formant le cabinet de feu M. L. Durand-Duclos... 18 février 1847* (Paris, 1847), n.p. See also L. Détrez, 'La vente des vases antiques de la collection Durand en 1836: occasions manquées et choix opportuns pour les musées', *Revue des musées de France* 4 (2014), 44, note 20.

⁶¹ *Galerie de son altesse royale madame la duchesse de Berry. Tome 1 école française, peintres modernes. Ouvrage lithographié sous la direction de M. le chevalier Bonnemaïson* (Paris, 1822).



Fig. 5. *Pictura* or an allegory of painting (oil on copper, Frans van Mieris the Elder, 1661; coll. J. Paul Getty Museum)

it contains, of which the Dutch and Flemish school offers a most imposing reunion', it attracted the attention of some of the most voracious and competitive European collectors of the day, including Anatoly Demidov, and members of the Rothschild family.⁶² According to an annotated catalogue, Williams Hope appears to have only acquired five paintings from the Berry collection. His most expensive acquisitions, both in the Wallace Collection today, were David Teniers The Younger's *Smokers* (1644) which fetched 18,000 francs, and Paulus Potter's *Cattle in Stormy Weather* (1653) for which he paid 12,000 francs.⁶³ Examination of the prices attained shows that he did not (or could not) compete with Demidov's high bids. Although arguably

⁶² *Catalogue descriptif des tableaux provenant de l'ancienne galerie du palais de l'Elysée*, 4 avril 1837 (Paris, 1837), 7: 'connue de l'Europe entière, sous le rapport de sa haute importance, le choix et la variété des maitres qui la composent et dont l'école hollandaise et flamande offrira une réunion des plus imposantes'. The RKD catalogues are annotated with the name of the buyers and the prices fetched.

⁶³ The Wallace Collection; accession numbers P227, P252.

more economical, the remaining three paintings he acquired were nevertheless from renowned masters and included a *Dutch Town Square* by Jan van der Heyden (1637-1712), an interior scene attributed to Pieter Cornelisz van Slingelandt (1640-1691) 'cited in Descamps', and Frans van Mieris the Elder's *Allegory of Painting*, which was reassuringly described in the catalogue as having been 'cited by Gerard de Lairese in his *Traité de la Peinture* [...] and engraved in the Cabinet Poulain', and today in the collections of the J. Paul Getty Museum (fig. 5).⁶⁴ Four out of the five paintings were inscribed as being acquired by Durand-Duclos for 'Hoppe', testifying to their sustained professional relationship.⁶⁵

Williams Hope's presence at the sale of the Duc de Berry established him within an exclusive circle of privileged collectors and inscribed his collecting practices within a distinguished genealogy of eighteenth and nineteenth-century noble connoisseurs, of whom he may have perceived himself as the rightful heir. He was of course also continuing an eminent family tradition as his English cousins were famed for their remarkable treasure trove of Dutch and Flemish art. One may rightly wonder to what extent his national origins inflected his collecting of Dutch and Flemish art. His infatuation with Northern pictures may have indeed stemmed from a national pride for a homeland he had been exiled from for most of his life (albeit voluntarily). While it is difficult to establish to what extent he identified with his Dutch roots, his naturalisation as a French citizen in 1847 should not be seen as mutually exclusive from a sense of displacement and longing that he may have felt for his homeland. He certainly was not alone in sharing this sentiment, and the early decades of the nineteenth century witnessed an increased nostalgia for the Dutch Golden Age in Holland. Historical consciousness and a sense of national pride for a past that could not be reclaimed permeated for instance the collections of Amsterdam banker Adriaan van der Hoop (1778-1854), whose collecting pursuits intersected with the public-minded project of collecting for the nation and repatriating the Dutch heritage scattered abroad.⁶⁶

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Dispersal of the collection

Williams Hope's death and the subsequent sales of his collections attracted much public attention and were to cement his reputation as a *connaissanceur émérité*.⁶⁷ The *Figaro* remarked that 'the most luxurious carriages keep blocking the Rue Saint Dominique-Saint Germain, the residence of the deceased M. W. Hope is the focus of the

⁶⁴ *Catalogue du palais de l'Elysée*, 1837, 76, lot 73; 68, lot 61, 73, Lot 68. The painting is now in the J.P. Getty Museum, accession number 82.PC.136 'cité par Gerard de Lairese dans son *Traité de la Peinture* [...] et gravé dans le Cabinet Poulain'.

⁶⁵ See the RKD copy of the catalogue.

⁶⁶ W. Krul, Collecting for posterity. Two Dutch art collectors in the nineteenth century and their bequests to the nation, *Journal of the history of collections*, 21, 2 (2009) 163-7.

⁶⁷ *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1858, 10.

attention of these crowds'.⁶⁸ Three of the sales coincided with the Paris *Exposition Universelle* of 1855 and *Le Pays* commented that they had been a 'real spectacle for foreigners and a brilliant accessory to the Universal Exhibition.'⁶⁹ Prefacing the 1858 sale catalogue, Charles Blanc (1813-1882) reiterated the *Figaro's* remarks and noted, that, at his death, his residence had attracted financiers and amateurs eager to admire the *merveilles de l'art* that it contained.⁷⁰ Emphasising the importance of known and esteemed provenances, Blanc was also quick to stress that an object that had been part of 'the incomparable gallery of M. W. Hope' would prove reassuring to prospective collectors.⁷¹ Examination of the annotated catalogues of his auctions reveals indeed that a plethora of European collectors of the highest calibre flocked to the sales and competed for its treasures.

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A number of items were acquired by Richard Seymour-Conway, 4th Marquess of Hertford (1800-1870), a collector whose voracious tastes were as eclectic as those of Williams Hope. Helped by his agent Samuel Mawson (1793-1862), Hertford acquired the aforementioned Teniers *Smokers* and Potter landscape that had previously belonged to the Duke de Berry, as well as two portraits by Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805), two religious scenes by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682), a landscape by Adam Pynacker (1620-73), *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* by Willem van Mieris (1662-1747), and two miniatures attributed to Jacques Charlier (1706-1790) after François Boucher (1703-1770).⁷² Other acquirers included French goldsmith M.A.L. Odot, Baron James de Rothschild (1792-1868), Anthony Nathan de Rothschild (1801-1876), or William Ward, 1st Earl of Dudley (1817-1885).⁷³ The sales did not just attract private collectors and the Louvre also acquired Paulus Potter's *Spotted Horse*.⁷⁴ Throughout the next decades, Williams Hope's pieces then filtered through some of the most important late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century collections such as those assembled by Alfred Beit (1853-1906), Peter A.B. Widener (1834-1915) at Lynnewood Hall, and Calouste Gulbenkian (1869-1955).

68 *Figaro: journal non politique*, 10 June 1855, 8: 'les équipages les plus réellement fastueux ne cessent d'encombrer la rue Saint Dominique-Saint Germain, l'hôtel de feu M. W. Hope est le point de mire de cette foule'.

69 *Le Pays: journal des volontés de la France*, 1 July 1855, 1-2: 'cette vente [...] a été encore un spectacle pour les étrangers et un brillant accessoire à l'exposition universelle.'

70 *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1858, 10-11.

71 *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1858, 10.

72 The Wallace Collection; accession numbers P227, P252, P403, P421, P58, P133, P115, P163, P467, P468.

73 Odiot acquired the aforementioned Clodion terracotta (see note 8); Baron James de Rothschild acquired Claude's landscape (see note 58); Anthony Nathan de Rothschild bought Rembrandt's portrait (see note 59), and the 1st Earl of Dudley owned Hobbema's *Travelers*, c.1662, now at the National Gallery of Art in Washington (accession number 1942.9.31). Adriaen van Ostade's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (see note 59) was part of Alfred Beit's collection, Rembrandt's portrait was acquired by Peter A.B. Widener and displayed at Lynnewood Hall, J.H. Fragonard's *Game of Horse and Rider* and *Game of Hot Cockles*, c.1775-1780, now at the National Gallery of Art in Washington (accession numbers 1946.7.5, 1946.7.6), belonged to Calouste Gulbenkian.

74 *Catalogue de tableaux*, 1858, lot 14. The painting is still today at the Louvre, accession number: MI 199.

A formidable collector with a far-reaching vision and quasi-encyclopaedic tastes, William Williams Hope assembled one of the most important art collections in Restoration Paris. Intended as a reconstruction of Williams Hope's taste and collecting strategies, the present study aimed to locate his collection within wider cultural networks and collecting genealogies. Erudite and aesthetically ambitious, Williams Hope inscribed his collecting practices within the lineage of eighteenth-century French noble collectors such as the Duc de Choiseul, most notably in his taste for Dutch and Flemish Golden Age paintings. The latter also aptly articulated his bi-national identity and Dutch heritage as well as his position within a dynastic nexus of collecting. In addition, this article sought to consider the role performed by the collection as a tool of social integration at a time when increased social mobility contributed to the growing replacement of old aristocratic elites by wealthy bankers and industrialists. Helped by a colossal banking fortune and favourable market conditions, Williams Hope indeed reconfigured his collection as a stage for the construction and performance of his social identity whilst simultaneously eschewing philanthropic participations in high-minded institutional artistic endeavours. Williams Hope thus cut a complex figure: positioned at the heart of the Parisian beau-monde, his collecting was nevertheless largely an individual project confined to the walls of his luxurious abode, in stark contrast with the aesthetic reform programme initiated by his cousin Thomas Hope. Displayed in opulent interiors anchored in the *ancien régime*, the collection's eclectic and lavish contents prefigured the *Goût Rothschild*. Dispersed after Williams Hope's death, many of its treasures are no longer hidden in the 'palace of Armida' and have found their way in some of today's most important public collections.⁷⁵

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75 Nibelle, 'L'hôtel de M. William Hope', 76.

Dossier Aristocratic collecting practices in Belgium and the Netherlands (ca. 1780-1950)

Aristocratic collecting practices in Belgium and the Netherlands (c. 1780-1950).

An introduction

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