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An Art World Insider: Austen Henry Layard and the Nineteenth-Century European Art Trade

ABSTRACT

In the lively context of the European art market of mid-nineteenth century, Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894) played an active role both as a private collector and advisor, and equally as a trustee and unofficial travelling agent for London museums. Thanks to his extensive travels throughout Europe and the Middle East, he became acquainted with the most eminent figures of the art world and was able to pur-

chase a great assortment of art objects, ranging from Cypriot pottery to Renaissance paintings, from Spanish religious artefacts to Burgundian tapestry. In order to analyse the cultural and economical implications of these relocations, this paper examines the relations of this network within the European connoisseurship, the formation of Layard's personal collection and his contributions to private and public institutions.

The memory and reputation of Sir Austen Henry Layard (Paris, 1817 – London, 1894) is mainly connected to his archaeological enterprises at Nineveh and Nimrud, but in fact, as Frank Davis wrote, he “was a man of parts, with a finger in many pies”.¹

Compared to the abundance of studies on his archaeological achievements, Layard's political and diplomatic career has been less explored and accounts of his life lack a comprehensive record on his commitment to the art world.² Both his bequest to the National

1 Frank Davis, Pioneer of modern archaeology, in *The Illustrated London News* (Feb. 27, 1971), 23.

2 On Layard's diplomatic career see Sinan Kunalalp, ed., *The Queen's Ambassador to the Sultan. Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard's Constantinople Embassy 1877-1880* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2009), 21-5; Saho Matsumoto-Best, The Art of Diplomacy: British Diplomats and the Collection of Italian Renaissance Paintings 1851-1917, in Markus Mösslang, Torsten Rietze, eds., *The Diplomats' World. A cultural History of Diploma-*

Gallery and his relationship with Giovanni Morelli are the issues on which scholarship has chiefly focused in the past, but there are many aspects of his involvement in the art world that remain unexamined.³ This paper intends to present part of the new material on this topic that emerged from recent archival research, which combines his private correspondence with official documents and newspaper articles. Notably, it examines Layard's engagement with the museum world and his role in the international circulation of artworks, and sheds light on the complex interaction between the different variables, which concern the art trade, i.e. economic, political, legal, social, and cultural factors that shaped the art world in his time.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the market for Old Masters and antiquities was fairly active in Italy due to the conspicuous presence of agents of foreign institutions and collectors in search of a wide range of Italian art.⁴ Dealers could easily benefit from the political turmoil and lawlessness of the country, as well as a widespread impoverishment that favoured the sale of works of art and which furthermore represented an important economic opportunity for many aristocratic families, religious institutions and municipalities.⁵ Although Layard condemned that “flagrant abuse”⁶ of selling and dispersing artworks indiscriminately and welcomed Morelli's attempts to prevent it, yet he argued that “after all, [the Italians] owe the preservation of many of their most valuable

cy 1815-1914 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 83-101; Gordon Waterfield, Henry Layard: Nineteenth Century Aesthete, in *Apollo*, 83 (Mar., 1966), 166-73; John Fleming, Art Dealing in the Risorgimento I, in *The Burlington Magazine*, 115/838 (Jan. 1973), 4-17; Dorothy A. Simmons, ‘Austen Henry Layard and the Victorian Art World 1850-1870’, unpublished Doctoral thesis submitted to the Oxford Brookes University (2000).

- 3 See Jaynie Anderson and Madeline Lennon's essays in Mario F. Fales, Bernard H. Hickey, eds., *Austen Henry Layard. Tra l'Oriente e Venezia*, conference proceedings (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1987), at 109-37, 139-47; Madeline Lennon, Morelli and the Layard collection: influence as intellectual exchange, in Giacomo Agosti, ed., *Giovanni Morelli e la cultura dei conoscitori*, conference proceedings (Bergamo: Lubrina, 1993), 241-52; Nicholas Penny, *National Gallery School catalogues: The Sixteenth century Italian paintings, vol. I: Paintings from Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona* (London: National Gallery, 2004), 372-80.
- 4 See Guido Guerzoni, Cultural Heritage and Preservation Policies: Notes on the History of the Italian Case, in Michael Hutter, Ilde Rizzo, eds., *Economic perspective on cultural heritage* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), at 115-25. On this topic see also Dennys Sutton, Aspects of the British Collecting, in *Apollo*, CXXIII, 282 (Aug. 1985), 109-10; Jaynie Anderson, The Political Power of Connoisseurship in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Wilhelm von Bode versus Giovanni Morelli, in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 38 (1996), 107-19, at 114; Flaminia Gennari Santori, I musei e il mercato dell'arte, in Marcello Fantoni, ed., *Storia e Storiografia*, vol. 1 (*Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa*), (Treviso: Angelo Colla, 2005), 489-510; Donata Levi, Let Agents Be Sent to All the Cities of Italy: British Public Museums and the Italian Art Market in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, in John E. Law, Lene Østermark-Johnson, eds., *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 33-53; Enrico Stumpo, Per una storia del mercato dell'arte nell'Europa dell'Ottocento, in *Studi Storici Luigi Simeoni LV* (2005), 243-73.
- 5 Among the most significant dispersals of private collections there were the one of the Pisani family [Matsumoto-Best, *British Diplomats*, 88-90; Susanna Avery-Quash, Julie Sheldon, *Art for the Nation, The Eastlakes and the Victorian Art world* (London: National Gallery Company, 2011), 175], and of Girolamo Manfrin at Venice [Anderson, *The Political Power of Connoisseurship*, 113; more specific studies are forthcoming], Guglielmo Lochis at Bergamo [Giovanna Brambilla Ranise, *La Raccolta dimezzata: storia della dispersione della pinacoteca di Guglielmo Lochis, 1789-1859* (Bergamo: Lubrina, 2007)]; Giovanni Costabili at Ferrara [E. Mattaliano, *La collezione Costabili*, ed. by G. Agostini (Venice: Marsilio, 1998)].
- 6 Austen H. Layard, Introduction, in Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Paintings. Critical Studies of their works*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1892), 13.

monuments of art to the liberality of enlightened strangers”.⁷ Indeed, over thirty years, he took part in more than a hundred sales, assisting in various ways both private collectors

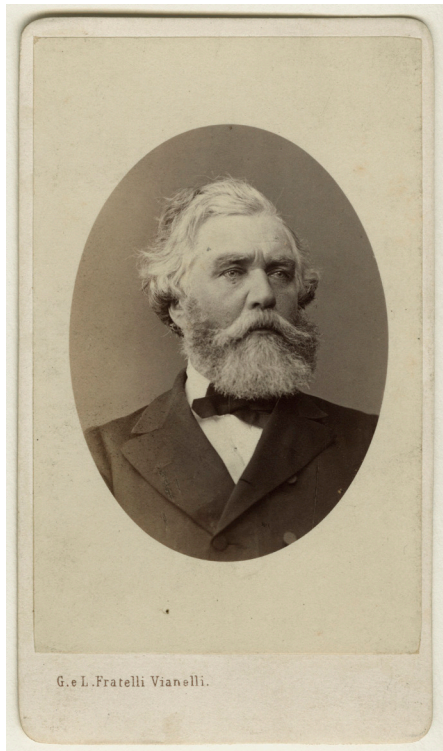


Fig. 1: Fratelli Giuseppe e Luigi Vianelli, Sir Austen Henry Layard, 1860s, albumen carte-de-visite, 63x46mm, London, National Portrait Gallery, PG-Ax17765. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

and public museums. With versatile interests and always on the move, Layard purchased a great variety of works of art ranging from Cypriot pottery to Renaissance paintings, from Spanish religious metalwork to Burgundian tapestry.

Born in 1817 in Paris, Layard started travelling extensively in his early years while receiving a wide education. At a time when social ascent was easier in the territories of the Empire, he trained to obtain a civil service position in Ceylon, but a fascination with the Middle East and the desire for an adventurous life prevailed.⁸ On his return from the excavation campaigns in Persia (1845-1851), he duly entered politics after serving as unpaid *attaché* at Constantinople.⁹ His political career, as a Liberal, provided him with a public stage where he could try to put into effect his view on cultural policy, gain a reputation and at the same time get acquainted with the leading figures of his age. The position of Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1852, 1861-66) would open to him “a brilliant career”¹⁰ and, furthermore, allowed him to travel extensively throughout Europe; in fact he used to “take [a] usual run into Italy”¹¹ almost every autumn. These incursions enabled him to monitor the political upheaval and get acquainted with the main political advocates of the Risorgimento, men

7 Austen H. Layard, *Domenico Ghirlandaio and his fresco of the death of S. Francis* (London: The Arundel Society, 1860), 32. On Morelli's activities to safeguard the artistic heritage, see *Atti del Parlamento Italiano, Discussioni della Camera dei Deputati, VIII Legislatura, Sessione 1861-62, Vol. VI* (Rome: Tipografia Eredi Botta, 1882), 3413-23; *Catalogo delle opere d'arte nelle Marche e nell'Umbria di G.B. Cavalcaselle e di G. Morelli (1861-62)*, in *Le Gallerie Nazionali Italiane. Notizie e documenti*, II (1896), 191-348. Compare with Donata Levi, *Il viaggio di Morelli e Cavalcaselle nelle Marche e nell'Umbria*, in Giacomo Agosti, *Giovanni Morelli e la cultura*, 133-48.

8 See Jonathan Parry, Layard, Sir Austen Henry (1817-1894), in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16218>> [accessed September 2017].

9 Layard served as MP for Aylesbury (1852-57), Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1852, 1861-66), MP for Southwark (1860-69) and First Commissioner of Works (1868-69). He was then appointed Minister Plenipotentiary in Spain (1869-77) and Ambassador in Turkey (1877-80).

10 London, National Archives, FO 519/195, f. 3: Letter A.H. Layard to E.R.C. Wellesley, 12 Feb. 1852.

11 London, British Library (hereafter BL), Vol. LXIII, Add MS 38993, f. 198r: C. Somers Cocks to A.H. Layard, 3 Sep. 1866.

such as Camillo Benso count of Cavour, Carlo Alberto Ferdinando Maffei di Boglio, Bettino Ricasoli, Marco Minghetti. Simultaneously, he could cultivate his passion for Italian art and familiarise himself with most of the public and private galleries of the Peninsula.

At the same time, Layard began to make his name thanks to publications on his archaeological enterprises,¹² but also through his writing for the Arundel Society (1856-68), *The Quarterly Review*, by delivering lectures on art at the Royal Institution (1859) and by participating in the principal artistic clubs of London, like the Fine Arts and Cosmopolitan Club, the Athenaeum.¹³ Although his knowledge of art could not compare to that of his friends, Charles Lock Eastlake (1793-1865) and Giovanni Morelli (1816-1891), he was regarded as “a man of the world and of taste and an MP [Member of Parliament] who knows foreign Countries and Galleries and dealers and has a genuine feeling for art”.¹⁴ Hence, Layard was offered the post of Director of the National Gallery, subsequent to Eastlake’s death in 1865, although he preferred the role of Trustee, in order to maintain his employment at the Foreign Office.¹⁵ In this way, he could continue to provide an advisory role and assist in the Gallery’s administration. Furthermore, from his private correspondence it can also be gleaned that “both Panizzi and Cole should have proposed [Layard] as their successor in the offices they respectively held in the British Museum and at South Kensington”.¹⁶

12 On 3 March 1853, the Court of Common Council resolved to award the Honorary Freedom of the City to Layard, on account of “the discovery of the long lost remains of Eastern antiquity and for securing them”. See the Certificate of Freedom of the City of London, which is contained within a casket now at the British Museum, 1976,0903.1. On the promotional use of the press, see Shawn Malley, *From archaeology to spectacle in Victorian Britain: the case of Assyria, 1845-1854* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

13 The notes of the whole series of lectures are gathered in BL, Add MSS 39072-73. The lectures, entitled *The Seven periods of Art*, have been fully examined by Simmons, Layard and the Victorian Art World, 85-106. For the most recent contribution on Layard’s activity within the Arundel Society see Lucina Ward, *A translation of a translation: Dissemination of the Arundel Society’s chromolithographs*, unpublished Doctoral thesis submitted to the Australian National University (2016). For art clubs refer to Benedict Nicolson, Editorial: The Burlington Fine Arts Club, in *The Burlington Magazine*, 94/589 (1952) 97-9; Ann Eatwell, The Collector’s of Fine Arts Club 1857-1874. The First Society for Collectors of the Decorative Arts, in *The Decorative Arts Society Journal*, 18 (1994), 25-30; Christopher A. Kent, Cosmopolitan Club (1852-1902), in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/95111>> [accessed September 2017]. Layard was elected member of the Athenaeum in January 1848, see BL, Add MS 58164, f. 8: E. Magrath to A.H. Layard, 25 January 1848.

14 London, National Gallery Archive (hereafter NGA), NG5/166/2: Lord Clarendon to A.H. Layard, 25 Jan. 1866; NG5/166/1: J. Russell to A.H. Layard, 28 Dec. 1865. John Steegman, *Victorian taste: a study of the Arts and Architecture from 1830 to 1870* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1971), 240-2.

15 NGA, NG1/4: Minutes of the Board Meeting of the National Gallery, IV: 19 Feb. 1866, at 377.

16 BL, Vol. XX, Add MS 38950, f. 66: A.H. Layard to W.H. Gregory, 12 Jan. 1889.

“You know the pictures of Europe, and where and when good pictures are to be purchased”.¹⁷

By the time of his appointment, Layard had already built up the major part of his painting collection and established a solid and profitable network of acquaintances within the circles that controlled the arrangements of London’s main institutions, as well as with aristocrats, diplomats, publishers, art critics, dealers, and restorers throughout Europe. He was also aware of the tricks of picture dealers and forgers, a practice that Layard carefully described in these terms:

“Picture-dealers of Rome, Florence, and other cities frequented by wealthy travelers, who think that a tour in Italy cannot be conscientiously performed without the outlay of a certain sum of money in the purchase of pictures, send their agents through the length and breadth of the land to buy up every work of art whatever its merits, which may be procurable. There are few Italian cities [...] which have not had their own school of painting, distinguished frequently by very eminent men. But as the names of these painters are little known [...] their pictures, however intrinsically valuable and excellent, would meet with very little favour in the eyes of most amateurs. To render them saleable [...] it becomes necessary to convert them by retouching or repainting, or by imparting to them some well-known quality of colour or technical execution, into the production of a popular master.”¹⁸

Therefore, friends such as the Earl of Somers and his wife, Charles and Virginia Somers Cocks, did “not intend entering any negotiation without the advantage of [his] opinion and advice”.¹⁹ Their correspondence with Layard sheds light on the practises they adopted in order to finalise purchases for their collection at Eastnor Castle (Herefordshire). Notably, the Somers Cocks supplied Layard with detailed descriptions and accurate examinations of the state of preservation of the pictures seen. If possible, Layard was asked to have a look at the canvases, otherwise he suggested only “the outside price which [they] might safely offer”.²⁰

Layard proved to be skilled even when selling. Robert Browning, the famous poet (1812-1889), turned to him when engaged in selling a picture in Henry Cottrell’s possession for £150;²¹ Janet Ross, née Duff Gordon (1842-1927), when eager to part with a pretended

17 NGA, NG5/166/1: J. Russell to A.H. Layard, 28 Dec. 1864.

18 Austen H. Layard, Catalogue of the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom collected in Manchester in 1857, in *The Quarterly Review*, 102/203 (1857), 165-205, at 184.

19 BL, Vol. LXIII, Add MS 38993, f. 214: C. Somers-Cocks to A.H. Layard, 29 Oct. 1866.

20 Ibidem.

21 Armstrong Browning Library, Baylor University, 67132: R. Browning to I. Blagden, 31 Dec. 1867; ivi, 68037-20: R. Browning to A.H. Layard, 7 May 1868. According to the Bank of England Historic Inflation Calculator, £150 equates to £15,411 in 2016. <<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation>> [accessed December 2017].

original sketch of the *Deposition* by Andrea del Sarto for £200, also asked his advice.²² Mrs Ross in fact recurred often to Layard's help in order to sell the paintings or artworks she had purchased as economic investment.²³

Sir Ivor Bertie Guest, Lord Wimborne (1835-1914), more than others, also enjoyed the privilege of Layard's assistance in several purchases, especially for Italian masters.²⁴ From 1866 Layard had started selecting paintings for Lord Wimborne, plus superintending the refurbishment of Canford Manor, where he set up on display the Nineveh porch, wood carved pediments and panels designed by the Venetian woodcarver Giuseppe Biraghi, following examples in the Scala d'Oro of the Ducal Palace.²⁵ Layard also purchased a great number of statues, which came from the Orti Oricellari in Florence, for the Manor's garden. He had been informed of the sale by an old friend, John Temple Leader (1810-1903), who recommended the acquisition "for a winter garden or a large conservatory in England" as the price was moderate and the statues "decorative".²⁶ Eventually, therefore, on behalf of J. Temple Leader, "the statues and oggetti which adorned the Orti Oricellari" were purchased for 2,800 Lire (equivalent to £110ca), packed in twenty-two cases and shipped with insurance from Leghorn to Southampton Docks, via London, for a total amount of 5,000 Lire (£200ca).²⁷ Despite the "good bargain", Layard was hardly persuaded of the merits of "purchasing damaged marble statues".²⁸ In fact, they "met little appreciation, and not being judged worthy a place in the English garden, they were resold for what they had cost in Florence to an English dealer in antiquities and curiosities".²⁹

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- 22 Florence, British Institute, Waterfield collection, Wat, I, E, 23, H-6-8: Letter J. Ross to A.H. Layard, 29 March 1886. On this account see Irene Campolmi, Janet Ross: collezionista d'arte o marchande amateur? Un insolito caso di collezionismo femminile nella Firenze di fine Ottocento, in Serena Cenni, Francesca Di Blasio, eds., *Una sconfinata infatuazione. Firenze e la Toscana nella metamorfosi della cultura anglo-americana: 1861-1915*, conference proceedings (Florence: Consiglio Regionale della Toscana, 2012), 96-7.
- 23 See Campolmi, Janet Ross, 89-137.
- 24 Layard secured a great number of pictures for I.B. Guest, who was his son-in-law. On this see Fleming, *Art Dealing*, 7, 8, 10.
- 25 BL, Vol. CIX, Add MS 39039, f. 30: A.H. Layard to I.B. Guest; Vol. CXVIII, Add MS 39048, f. 172: G. Biraghi to A.H. Layard, 16 Jun. 1891. See Anon., *A catalogue of the pictures at Canford Manor in the possession of Lord Wimborne* (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1888).
- 26 BL, Vol. CXVII, Add MS 39047, f. 153: J. Temple Leader to A.H. Layard, 24 Jan. 1891; f. 127: J. Temple Leader to A.H. Layard, 8 Jan. 1891. The catalogue offered "1. Apollo, marmo, statua, Lire It. 1000 [£39ca]; 2. Bacco, L. 500; 3. Eio, L. 400; 4. Idolo L. 200; 5. Venere, L. 250; 6. Primavera, pietra, L. 250; 7. Musicante-battipiatte, L. 170; 8-9. Due torsi, marmo, L. 325; 10. Piccolo Marte, deperito, marmo, L. 90; 20. Busti, soggetti diversi, marmo, L. 500; 21. 22. Figurine, soggetti incerti, marmo, L. 180; 23-24. Due statue sdraiate, terracotta, L. 200; 25-31. Otto guanciali, terracotta, L. 240; 31-32. Due vasi triangolari, gesso ornato, L. 80; 33. Flora, statua, gesso, L. 70; 33. 34. Due panieri con frutti e putti, terracotta, L. 80".
- 27 BL, Vol. CXVIII, Add MS 39048, f. 23: J. Temple Leader to A.H. Layard, 19 Feb. 1891.
- 28 Ibidem; see also at f. 5: J. Temple Leader to A.H. Layard, 10 Feb. 1891.
- 29 Lucy Baxter, *The Orti Oricellari* (Florence: G. Barbera, 1893), 81. See BL, Vol. CLXVIII, Add MS 39098, f. 78: J. Temple Leader to A.H. Layard, 18 September 1891. For further details; Leandro M. Bartoli, Gabriella Contorni, *Gli Orti Oricellari a Firenze. Un giardino una città* (Florence: Edifir, 1991); Francesca Baldry, *John Temple Leader e il castello di Vincigliata* (Florence: Leo Olschki editore, 1997), 138.

An active Trustee of the National Gallery

Collecting for private or public institutions also went hand in hand with Layard's views about the value of such institutions as places intended "to convey instruction to the art-student, and to afford enjoyment to the lover of art"³⁰ at the same time.

With regard to the National Gallery, Layard played an active role in sustaining and developing collections, pointing out his opinion in acquisition policies, campaigning for the need of display space, applying for endowments, sponsoring achievements in the press, and encouraging gifts and bequests.³¹ The correspondence between Layard and the Directors of the Gallery testifies to his commitment to maintaining the post of Trustee – even when far from London – and demonstrates his collaborative relationship with the institution.³² Although his advice was not always followed, his experience and expertise were held in high regard, as the National Gallery registers evidence.

On some occasions Layard seemed to have acted as a travelling agent, appearing in pro forma transactions³³ or supplying first-hand information about the art market, as occurred in 1866-1867, when the new Director of the National Gallery, William Boxall (1800-1879), was about to start his first European journeys in that post. Layard offered advice about places to visit or paintings to see³⁴ and, furthermore, provided him with letters of introduction, in particular to Morelli, to whom he had written: "Il n'est pas la première visite en Italie, mais il [Boxall] n'a pas encore l'expérience nécessaire pour sa mission un peu délicate. Ainsi votre expérience et vos connaissances entendue lui seront de la plus grand utilité".³⁵ In a period when purchasing at the source, directly from the seller, was still preferred,³⁶ this represented a significant aid. Indeed, Boxall was grateful of his active support, since he felt hindered by the difficulties arising from the Third War of Italian Unification. As he wrote, it was "a most unfortunate time for my first visit. The Government has put its seal upon every picture belonging not only to the Church but to the Confraternities – so that I can do nothing".³⁷ Boxall's reference was to the Royal decree of 7 July 1866, n. 3036, which intended to curb the continuous exportation of works

30 A.H. Layard, Annual Report of the Director of the National Gallery to the Treasury for the year 1885, in *The Quarterly Review*, 163/326 (Jul.-Oct. 1886), 407.

31 All these activities were well summed up in the article mentioned above: Layard, Annual Report, 395-433.

32 NGA, NGA1/1/33/13: A.H. Layard to W. Boxall, 20 Dec. 1869; NGA1/1/52/27: A.H. Layard to W. Boxall, 23 Feb. 1871; BL, Vol. LXIX, Add MS 38999, f. 122: W. Boxall to A.H. Layard, 14 Mar. 1871; NGA, NGA1/1/53/12: A.H. Layard to W. Boxall, 18 Mar. 1871.

33 Most of these transactions took part during Burton's directorship (1874-94).

34 NGA, NGA1/1/4/6: A.H. Layard to Bartsch, 26 Apr. 1866; NGA1/1/19/11: A.H. Layard to W. Boxall, 19 Oct. 1867.

35 BL, Vol. XXXVI, Add MS 38966, f. 50: A.H. Layard to G. Morelli, 26 Apr. 1866.

36 Guido Guerzoni, *The British Painting Market 1789-1914*, in Michael North, ed., *Economic History and the Arts* (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1996), 102-3; Levi, *Let agents*, 37.

37 NGA, NGA1/1/4/19: W. Boxall to A.H. Layard, Jun. 1866.

of art ensuing from the suppression of churches and confraternities. Notwithstanding, the newborn Italian State still needed effective measures, at a national level, against the spoliation of its widely scattered cultural heritage and primarily a better awareness of its significance.³⁸ Fragmentation, gaps and loopholes in the legislative framework for the protection of the artistic patrimony, as well as the regulation of private sales, represented a thorny problem for the Italian Government, but also an occasion to profit by shrewd dealers and merciless foreign museum agents.³⁹

Like many other masterpieces in that period, for example, the little Madonna by Raphael in the collection of Count Scipione Conestabile della Staffa (now in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg) represented a point of contention not only between its owner and the Italian Government, on account of its removal from Perugia, but was coveted by several foreign museums.⁴⁰

Indeed, both Boxall and William H. Gregory (1817-1892), another Trustee of the National Gallery, wished to negotiate its purchase and were quite confident “to have any “concurrency” on the part of Prussia or France”,⁴¹ whose governments were then engaged in war. The Director had been informed by Lady Marion Alford of the sale and, as Eastlake had previously done, promptly requested Layard’s help in order to obtain first-hand information from an old acquaintance of his, Count Giancarlo Conestabile (1824-1877),

38 This topic has been extensively explored by scholarship. For instance, see Francis Haskell, *La dispersione e la conservazione del patrimonio artistico*, in Federico Zeri, ed., *Storia dell’arte italiana*, III, 3, *Conservazione, falso, restauro* (Turin: Einaudi, 1981), 28-35; Matteo Musacchio, *L’Archivio della Direzione Generale delle Antichità e belle arti (1860-1890). Inventario* (Rome: Ministero per i Beni Culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1994); Antonella Gioli, *Monumenti e oggetti d’arte nel Regno d’Italia: il patrimonio artistico degli enti religiosi soppressi tra riuoso, tutela e dispersione; inventario dei beni delle corporazioni religiose, 1860-1890* (Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1997); Elisabetta Fusar Poli, *La causa della conservazione del bello: modelli teorici e statuti giuridici per il patrimonio storico-artistico italiano nel secondo Ottocento* (Milan: Giuffrè, 2006); Francesca De Tomasi, *Diplomazia e archeologia nella Roma di fine Ottocento*, in *Horti Hesperidum. Studi di storia del collezionismo e di storiografia artistica*, II (2013), 151-197.

39 On smuggling episodes see the most recent papers by Virginia Napoleone, *Mercato e collezionismo nella Roma dei Wurts*, in Emanuele Pellegrini, ed., *Voglia d’Italia. Il collezionismo internazionale nella Roma del Vittoriano* (Naples: arte’m, 2017), 289-99; Joanna Smalcerz, *A Lesson in Loopholes: Stefano Bardini, and the Export of the Botticelli Frescoes from Villa Lemmi*, in Lynn Catterson, ed., *Dealing Art on Both Sides of the Atlantic 1860-1940* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017), 291-309; and the conference organised by Andrea Bacchi and Giovanna Capitelli, *Mercanti, collezionisti e conoscitori nella Roma Sabauda (1870-1915)*, held at the Fondazione Federico Zeri Bologna (Bologna, 15 Nov. 2017).

40 See Franco I. Nucciarelli, Giovanna Severini, *San Pietroburgo, Ermitage. Raffaello: Madonna del Libro o Madonna Conestabile* (Perugia: La Malafrasca, 1999); Alessandra Pantò, *Un episodio perugino di dispersione del patrimonio artistico italiano: la vendita della Madonna del libro di Raffaello alla luce di documenti inediti*, in *Bollettino della Deputazione di Storia Patria per l’Umbria*, 96 (1999), 189-253; Ead., *La quadreria Conestabile della Staffa. Consistenza e dispersione di una collezione ritrovata*, in *Studi di Storia dell’arte*, 11 (2000), 241-58.

41 NGA, NGA1/1/47/6: W.H. Gregory to W. Boxall, 6 Oct. 1870. On Gregory see Anon., *Sir William Gregory: Politician, Colonial Governor, Patron of the arts 1817-1892*, in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 37 (1979/80), 35-53.

who was the brother of the owner.⁴² This latter was said to ask 500,000 Francs (£19,904ca) for the painting and had previously discarded Russia's offer of 400,000 Francs, but was still engaged with other negotiators.⁴³ Nevertheless, as Count Giancarlo



Fig. 2: Raphael, Madonna and Child (The Conestabile Madonna), 1504ca, tempera on canvas (transferred from panel), 17.5x18cm, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, inv. GE-252. © The State Hermitage Museum. Photo by Vladimir Terebenin.

lamented: “La guerre a ensuite mis fin à quelque négociations qui ce soit”.⁴⁴ He feared that the high price requested by his brother would induce Layard, and consequently Boxall, to interrupt the negotiation. The Director, indeed, had pleaded that the British Government would not grant large sums for purchases abroad, and thus had attempted

42 Lady Alford had been offered two paintings of the Conestabile collection for 120,000 Lire (£4,715ca), see Pantò, *La quadreria Conestabile della Staffa*, 250. On Eastlake's episode see BL, Vol. LXI, Add MS 38991, f. 201r: C.L. Eastlake to A.H. Layard, 24 May 1865.

43 BL, Vol. LXVIII, Add MS 38998, f. 299r: G. Conestabile to A.H. Layard, 16 Oct. 1870. See also Pantò, *Un episodio perugino*, 205-6.

44 BL, Vol. LXVIII, Add MS 38998, f. 299r: G. Conestabile to A.H. Layard, 16 Oct. 1870.

to offer 400,000 Francs, as the Russian had already done.⁴⁵ Boxall was nonetheless confident that “the wretched state of Europe at this moment and the clouds that still gather over us will [...] bring down the extravagantly high prices to which pictures have risen” and begged Layard to “give [him] one line of advice”.⁴⁶ Layard too expected that Count Scipione “may ultimately be more reasonable in his demand”⁴⁷ and therefore suggested that Boxall “leave the Conestabile negotiation for a while”.⁴⁸ Layard knew that such an offer would not be accepted, but at the same time he could not put pressure on Count Giancarlo, who had just the attorney procurement to sell the whole family collection. The Count had proposed to Layard to include in the bargain at least “les trois pérugins, les dessins, et les deux petits tableaux de Raphael”,⁴⁹ to counterbalance the price. But Boxall was interested only in the little Madonna and did not intend to buy other sections of the collection.⁵⁰ Furthermore, when he communicated to the nobleman that Eastlake had previously priced it £2,500,⁵¹ Conestabile wrote irritably to Layard that “sur cette base il est impossible de continuer une discussion”.⁵² Eastlake’s price, it may be assumed, had been set in terms of current market value, especially if compared to growing appreciation for small works of the master as confirmed by the price paid for the *Vision of the Christian Knight* in 1847.⁵³ As a matter of fact, Conestabile’s inventories had never evaluated the picture “sopra scudi 4,000 (Fr. 22,000). Ma in cap[o]lavori di questa specie vi ha un prezzo morale, che, sebbene abbia i suoi limiti, si allarga nondimeno, in contratti di questo genere, in proporzioni grandissime”.⁵⁴ No hesitation indeed occurred on the side of the Russians, who eventually obtained the picture for 330,000 Francs (£13,137ca), “much beneath [Conestabile’s] pretensions”⁵⁵ as Layard snorted. He wished it had been secured for the National Gallery or rather remained in Italy, instead of being sent to Russia, “où il ne sera plus vu des vrais amateurs et connaisseurs”.⁵⁶ Such a bitter remark sounded as a crushing blow, especially since Boxall hesitated in acquir-

45 NGA, NGA1/1/50/10(ii): Letter W. Boxall to A.H. Layard, 18 Dec. 1870. Actually the National Gallery disposed of an annual purchase grant of £10,000. On this aspect, see Jonathan Conlin, *The Nation’s Mantel-piece. A history of the National Gallery* (London: Pallas Athene, 2006), 83, 358-60.

46 NGA, NGA1/1/50/10(ii): W. Boxall to A.H. Layard, 18 Dec. 1870.

47 NGA, NGA1/1/50/16: A. H. Layard to W. Boxall, 23 Dec. 1870.

48 NGA, NGA1/1/52/3: A.H. Layard to W. Boxall, 3 Jan. 1870.

49 BL, Vol. LXVIII, Add MS 38998, f. 413: G. Conestabile to A.H. Layard, 15 Dec. 1870.

50 On Boxall’s policy see Michael Levey, A little-known director. Sir William Boxall, in *Apollo*, 159 (1975), 354-9; Susanna Avery-Quash, Silvia Davoli, Boxall is interested only in the Great Masters... Well, we’ll see about that! William Boxall, Federico Sacchi and Cremonese art at the National Gallery, in *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28/2 (2016), 225-41.

51 NGA, NGA1/1/52/11: Minutes of the Board of the Trustees: The Director’s report, 10 Nov. 1856, 50-1.

52 BL, Vol. LXIX, Add MS 38999, f. 55: G. Conestabile to A.H. Layard, 7 Feb. 1871.

53 See Gerald R. Reitlinger, *The economics of taste: the rise and fall of prices 1760-1960* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1961), 113.

54 NGA, NGA1/1/52/12(i): G. Conestabile to W. Boxall, 3 Feb. 1871.

55 BL, Vol. XIX, Add MS 38949, f. 95: A.H. Layard to W.H. Gregory, 11 May 1871.

56 Montemelino, Archivio Cristiano Conestabile della Staffa: A.H. Layard to G. Conestabile, 24 Sep. 1871, in Nucciarelli, Severini, *Raffaello: Madonna del Libro*, 188.

ing another work by Raphael, the Colonna Altarpiece (now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York, 16.30ab).⁵⁷

The Spanish experience

Meanwhile, Layard had moved to Madrid as Minister Plenipotentiary (1869-77) and from there he immediately started to inspect what was available to purchase and report such opportunities to Boxall. The Director was “inclined only to look for quality and to eschew as much as possible common place representations even of great names and out of condition beyond any reasonable hope of recovery”.⁵⁸ Therefore, the Duke of Villahermosa’s Velázquez did not suit his expectations, though highly recommended by Pedro de Madrazo y Kuntz (1816-1898).⁵⁹ In case of works of art by Velázquez, they should be “full-length dark pictures, low and dull in colour [...] of first rate excellence”.⁶⁰

Layard was quite discouraged at being unable to find any good specimens for the National Gallery on the Spanish market, he even had an idea “to establish a Fine arts club [...] and have interested several leading gentlemen in the thing. It may lead to the discovery and preservation of many treasures now hidden in private houses”.⁶¹ Certainly he entertained the main artistic salon and societies of the capital and had a friendly relationship with the Minister of Works, to whom he had suggested

“to send to the Gallery the large and most interesting collection of early Spanish paintings which were taken from Convents and churches and which are now scattered about his Office. He will, I think, do so at once and if they are properly arranged they will give a very good view of the origin and rise of painting in Spain.”⁶²

57 See Linda Wolk Simon, *Raphael at the Metropolitan: the Colonna Altarpiece* (New Haven: The Yale University Press, 2006), 49-52. Layard’s aversion to Russia was mainly due to political matters. The Conestabile affair remained an open wound that he would recall years later in a letter to Lady Eastlake; see BL, Vol. XLII, Add MS 38972, f. 68: A.H. Layard to E. Rigby, 17 Dec. 1878; and National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS), MS 42170, E. Rigby to A. H. Layard, 29 Dec. 1878.

58 BL, Vol. LXV, Add MS 38995, f. 328: W. Boxall to A.H. Layard, 21 Sep. 1868. In a short while the controversy regarding the attribution of *Christ blessing the Children* (NG757) would bring into question Boxall’s acquisition policy.

59 NGA, NGA1/1/46/8: A.H. Layard to W. Boxall, 18 Aug. 1870. On Madrazo see Francisco Calvo Serraller, Pedro de Madrazo, historiador y crítico de arte, in *Los Madrazo, una familia de artistas* (Madrid: Concejalía de Cultura, 1985), 67-80.

60 BL, Vol. LXVIII, Add MS 38998, f. 274: W. Boxall to A.H. Layard, 4 Oct. 1870.

61 BL, Vol. XIX, Add MS 38949, f. 33: A.H. Layard to W.H. Gregory, 23 Apr. 1870. In those years, several works of art had been stolen or illicitly sold. In a letter to W.H. Gregory, dated 22 May 1870, Layard retraces the one of the Toledo Treasury.

62 BL, Vol. XLII Add MS 38972, f. 7: A.H. Layard to E. Rigby, 23 Apr. 1870.

Furthermore, Layard had been appointed *académico honorario extranjero* at the Real Academia de San Fernando.⁶³ But concerning paintings, as he explained to Morelli, “il ne existe pas dans les maisons particulières et ceux qui existent on ne peut pas les voir”,⁶⁴ and in addition, there was “no intention on to part [with masterpieces] by those who have valuable pictures, like the Duke of Pastrana”.⁶⁵

Layard had searched through antique shops as well as restorers’ studios, where he had found “a fine Bosch one of those strange ‘Diableries’ [...] but the owner asked £2,000 for it – which is absurd”.⁶⁶ Despite his zeal, Spain proved to be an infertile soil for bargains. In 1864 a member of the British Legation already informed Layard that “Andalusia has been so often ransacked that few remain, but still there are a few, and they sometimes may be secured at reasonable rates [...] especially at a season of financial crisis”.⁶⁷ Layard was of the same opinion; nevertheless, he was not able to hunt down anything for the National Gallery.

“There is a Murillo on sale at Granada – one of the usual ‘Conceptions’ – undoubtedly original but over-cleaned and too much restored. The owners ask some fabulous price for it. It is scarcely worth our attention, therefore, I made enquiries at Seville for pictures but heard of nothing on sale. I wish we could get a fine Roelas – but his pictures seem to be exceedingly rare – and are unequal.”⁶⁸

In contrast to the enthusiasm of some of his contemporaries, such as Richard Ford, William Stirling Maxwell or John Savile Lumley, Layard was not a great admirer of Spanish art.⁶⁹ In a letter to his fellow trustee Gregory, he wrote that “Vel[á]zquez and Murillo stand very high in the second class for their technical skill, and with these exceptions there is scarcely more than three or four Spanish painters whom one would place in the third class [...] I cannot get any real enthusiasm for Murillo – although admitting his great ability as a colo[u]rist”.⁷⁰ He particularly appreciated Velázquez, on which he had

63 BL, Vol. XVI, Add MS 58164, f. 54: E. de la Cámara to A.H. Layard, 9 Feb. 1870.

64 BL, Vol. XXXVI, Add MS 38966, f. 144: A.H. Layard to G. Morelli, 4 Jan. 1871.

65 NGA, NGA1/1/69/13: A.H. Layard to W. Boxall, 9 May 1873. The collection of the Duke of Pastrana, with its “superb Rubens’ and a magnificent early Van Dy[c]k”, was one of the few private ones that Layard could easily visit. See BL, Vol. XLII Add MS 38972, f. 24: A.H. Layard to E. Rigby, 8 May 1872. The collection was bequeathed by the Duchess of Pastrana to the Museo del Prado in 1889. See Madrid, Museo del Prado, Caja 98, Legajo 16.0, 21/1-4; Caja 1365, Legajo 11.279.

66 BL, Vol. XIX, Add MS 38949, f. 82: A.H. Layard to W.H. Gregory, 30 Jan. 1871.

67 BL, Vol. CLXXXII, Add MS 39112, f. 306v: A. Graham-Dunlop to A.H. Layard, 12 Dec. 1864. References to this issue were introduced by Jonathan Brown in his Foreword to Inge Reist, José L. Colomer, eds., *Collecting Spanish Art: Spain’s Golden Age and America’s Gilded Age* (New York: The Frick Collection, 2012), 17-8.

68 BL, Vol. XIX, Add MS 38949, f. 95: A.H. Layard to W.H. Gregory, 11 May 1871.

69 His dismissal of Spanish art could be associated to Ruskin’s view as far as concerns the link between artists and the society. Effectively, in a letter to Gregory (BL, Vol. XIX, Add MS 38949, f. 119: 6 Feb. 1873), Layard stated that it was “religious fanaticism and intolerance to which Spain owes her misfortunes”.

70 BL, Vol. XIX, Add MS 38949, f. 108: A.H. Layard to W.H. Gregory, 13 Jun. 1872.

been “occupying a few leisure moments in scribbling some remarks”⁷¹ but he also valued the lesser-known Juan de Valdés Leal, Francisco de Zurbarán, Juan de Juanes and Goya. Layard considered this latter “a distinguished painter had he lived at a good time”,⁷² in particular he admired his frescos in San Antonio de la Florida (Madrid). With regard to Juan de Juanes, which he deemed as “a painter of considerable power – but far behind his great Italian contemporaries”,⁷³ he purchased two panels representing St. John the Baptist and St. Jerome.⁷⁴ Details of this transaction remain shadowy, as well as the ones concerning the sale of a *St. Peter* after El Greco⁷⁵ and a painting by Juan Carreño de Miranda portraying Maria Luisa of Orleans.⁷⁶

On the contrary, Layard had recently taken an interest in modern Spanish painters, which appeared to him “to give great promise. There are several young men who are following in the steps of Fortuny and have great ability. They excel especially in colo[u]rists”.⁷⁷ For this reason Vicente Palmaroli y Gonzales (1834-1896), who Layard had already noticed at the Paris International Exhibition (1867),⁷⁸ was commissioned for a portrait of Lady Enid Layard (1843-1912), a work that, during the sittings, was much praised by Layard who enthusiastically wrote both to Lady Eastlake and to Boxall that it “promises to be a success, and if so it should be sent to the next Royal Academy Exhibi-

71 Ibidem. See Austen H. Layard, Velázquez, in *The Quarterly Review*, 133 (Jul.-Oct. 1872), 451-83.

72 NLS, MS 42337, f. 11: A.H. Layard to E. Rigby, 23 Oct. 1870.

73 BL, Vol. XLII Add MS 38972, f. 22: A.H. Layard to E. Rigby, 7 Jan. 1872.

74 The paintings are recorded in Colección Lladró, Valencia until 2000. See Fernando B. Doménech, *Joan de Joanés. Una nueva visión del artista y su obra* (Valencia: Museo de Bellas Artes, 2000), 172-3.

75 After El Greco, *Saint Peter*, early 17th cent., oil on vellum (?), 20.3x15.9cm; London, National Gallery, NG3131. It is curious to note that in a letter to Gregory (BL, Vol. XIX, Add MS 38949, f. 44: 22 May 1870), Layard considered El Greco’s “drawing [...] abominable, his colour ashy grey, untransparent [sic] and disagreeable. He has occasionally a fine head, but that is rare”.

76 The only mentions about this painting are in Layard’s notebook (NGA7/292/13(ii), n. 87) and in the inventory of the collection at Ca’ Cappello (Venice) made by Lady Layard in 1896, see Venice, Archivio Polo Museale Veneziano (hereafter APMV): *Catalogue by Sir Henry Layard, Ca’ Capello Venice*, typed by Enid Layard (1896), 15.

77 BL, Vol. XIX, Add MS 38949, f. 94: A.H. Layard to W.H. Gregory, 11 May 1871. Jeremy Roe published a graph related to imports of Spanish paintings into Britain about 1870-82 which confirms this [See Id., Custom books and sales catalogues, in Nigel Glendinning, Hilary Macartney, eds., *Spanish Art in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1920* (Suffolk: Tamesis, 2010), 40].

78 For the occasion the painter had been awarded a medal for *El sermón de la capilla Sixtina* (now Caja Due-ro, Salamanca).

tion”.⁷⁹ Layard possessed other works by Palmaroli (presently untraced),⁸⁰ as well as by other contemporary painters, not only Spanish (i.e. Vicente Esquivel), but also British.⁸¹

“We entirely trust your judgement”⁸² – an unofficial advisor for the South Kensington Museum

If the Spanish picture market proved to be thin,⁸³ Layard could at least provide more successful acquisitions for the South Kensington Museum (later renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum) from whilst in post in Madrid. First, he introduced Henry Cole (1808-1882), the museum Director, to a helpful agent, Juan Facundo Riaño, “an excellent man for the work – with taste and judgement”.⁸⁴ However, in a period of fierce international competition for fine objects it was not enough to have good advisory reports, but also fair means for purchasing and safe transfer. This was the case of the Zaragoza jewels, on which Layard bestowed his attention and provided the means, both financial and of security.⁸⁵

79 NGA, NGA1/1/44/9: A.H. Layard to W. Boxall, 15 Jun. 1870. BL, Vol. XLII Add MS 38972, f. 8, Layard to E. Rigby, 23 Apr. 1870. Vicente Palmaroli y Gonzales, *Portrait of Lady Layard*, 1870, oil on panel, 101.5x78.5cm, London, British Museum, 1980,1216.1. None of the Royal Academy catalogues record the picture.

80 See NGA, NG7/292/13(ii), n. 66-69, 72. Palmaroli y Gonzales portrayed also Layard conferring on him “an impudent, insolent look”, as the sitter commented in a letter to Lady Eastlake (BL, Vol. XLII, Add MS 38972, f. 18, A.H. Layard to E. Rigby, 18 May 1871). The picture is presently untraced.

81 Layard was in fact a friend of William Brockedon, John E. Millais, George F. Watts, Frederick Leighton, Charles Vigor, John Warrington Wood, Edward Burne Jones, just to mention several of them. He was also in correspondence with Daniel Maclise – who had portrayed Layard’s uncle and aunt, Benjamin and Sara Austen (now in the British Museum, 1976.0925.14-15), Albert de Belleroyche (see Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Handschriftenabteilung, Slg. Darmstaedter: 1 1845: Layard, Austen Henry, ff. 1-3, 17-18). In addition, Layard possessed a good number of portraits made by British artists: Patrick Park, *Portrait bust of A.H. Layard*, 1855, marble, 77.5x31.6cm, London, British Museum, 1922,0708.1; William Brockedon, A.H. Layard, 1850(?), pencil and chalk, 37.5x27cm, London, National Portrait Gallery, NPG2515(103); Richard Cockle Lucas, *A set of nine Victorian wax profile relief busts of Notoriety*, 1851, wax, 25.5x9cm, sold at Christie’s in London on 14 Mar. 2001, lot. 128; George F. Watts, *Sir A.H. Layard*, c.1852, black chalk, 59.3x48.4cm, London, National Portrait Gallery, NPG1006; Id., *Sir A.H. Layard*, c.1852, chalk on paper, 58.4x48.3cm, London, National Portrait Gallery, NPG3787; William Menzies Tweedie, *Portrait of A.H. Layard* [untraced, exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1856, n. 306] Julia M. Cameron, *A.H. Layard*, 1869, albumen print, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, inv. 931-1913; William Blundell Spence, *Portrait of A.H. Layard*, 1880, untraced; John Warrington Wood, *Portrait of A.H. Layard*, 1881, Carrara marble, 64x37cm, London, National Gallery, NG5449; Charles Vigor, *Portrait of A.H. Layard*, 1885, oil on canvas, 120.5x80.5cm, London, British Museum, 1968,0518.1.

82 BL, Vol. LXVIII, Add MS 38998, f. 429r: H. Cole to A.H. Layard, 21 Dec. 1870.

83 See NGA, NGA1/1/69/13: A.H. Layard to W. Boxall, 9 May 1873.

84 BL, Vol. XIX, Add MS 38949, f. 44: A.H. Layard to W.H. Gregory, 22 May 1870. See Clive Wainwright, *The Making of the South Kensington Museum III. Collecting Abroad*, in *Journal of the History of Collections*, 14/1 (2002), 45-61, at 58.

85 BL, Vol. LXVIII, Add MS 38998, f. 64: H. Cole to A.H. Layard, 17 Jun. 1870. See also Wainwright, *The Making*, 58-9.

At his recommendation, the Foreign Office assisted the Science and Art Department in securing “a collection of pottery stuffs, objects in metal, arms, and various other articles illustrative of the customs and mode of life of the inhabitants of Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Kurdistan and Persia”.⁸⁶ The British Consulate further supported Layard’s private deals. Among those was the delivery of the small *Portrait of a man* that Layard had purchased from the Manfrin Collection and variously attributed to Carpaccio, Antonello da Messina or Alvise Vivarini.⁸⁷ Morelli, under whose surveillance the picture had been restored, had warned Layard, however, that “ai confini francesi le cornici nuove pagano un forte dazio; non sarebbe forse meglio ch’io consegnassi la cassetta al console britannico a Genova, perché gliela faccia avere direttamente già a Barcellona?”.⁸⁸ And that’s what happened.⁸⁹

To the South Kensington Museum Layard donated a group of Spanish white pottery jars and bottles, that Cole “arranged with [the] Ceramic collection to which it [would] add interest”.⁹⁰ Furthermore, he had been entrusted to provide Spanish cabinets, ancient tiles, woollen cloths and “a good collection of Toys”, for which he was allowed to spend up to £20 or even £50 in case he would find “objects of Pottery [...] suggestive to our manufactures”.⁹¹ It is significant that Layard’s purchases exercised an influence on his friends too. In particular, his Hispano-Moresque plates attracted the attention of Stephen Lushington (1782-1873) and William R. Drake (1817-1890), who asked him to provide them with some good specimens for their own collections.⁹² Such excitement over collecting Spanish *objets d’art* was also endorsed by a series of exhibitions organised by the

86 London, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive (hereafter VAMA), MA/1/L561: A.H. Layard to H. Cole, 20 Mar. 1868; Lord Stanley to Duke of Marlborough, 13 May 1868; H. Herbert to H. Cole, 16 Feb. 1869.

87 It is by Jacometto, *Portrait of a man*, 1475-98, tempera and oil on wood, 26x19cm, London, National Gallery, NG3121. In the sale catalogue of the Manfrin collection it was attributed to Carpaccio, see G. Nicoletti, ed., *Pinacoteca Manfrin a Venezia* (Venice: Visentini, 1872), 32, n. 159. It is curious to note how Layard and Morelli referred to it in their correspondence. BL, Vol. XXXVI, Add MS 38966, f. 162: A.H. Layard to G. Morelli, 20 Jun. 1872: “C’est un vrai bijoux, et je suis sur qu’un négociant de tableaux le pourrait baptiser “Antonello da Messina”, avec de très bonne chance de pouvoir le faire passer pour tel». Morelli, on his side, reasserted his opinion and added with malice that «pourrait être présenté à la masse des amateurs et soi-disant connaisseurs pour un œuvre d’Antonello da Messina» - BL, Vol. XXXIII, Add MS 38963, f. 137: G. Morelli to A.H. Layard, 28 Jun. 1872. However in a letter to Jean Paul Richter dated October 1885, Morelli already supposed an attribution to Jacometto (see Irma and Gisela Richter, eds., *Italienische Malerei der Renaissance im Briefwechsel von Giovanni Morelli und Jean Paul Richter* (Baden-Baden: Bruno Grimm, 1960), 441-2. Nonetheless, the attribution continued to be uncertain also during the legal proceedings between Layard’s heir, Major Arthur Layard, and the National Gallery of London.

88 BL, Vol. XXXIII, Add MS 38963, f. 128: G. Morelli to A.H. Layard, 5 Mar. 1872.

89 BL, Vol. XXXVI, Add MS 38966, f. 162: A.H. Layard to G. Morelli, 20 Jun. 1872.

90 BL, Vol. LXVIII, Add MS 38998, f. 206: H. Cole to A.H. Layard, 11 Aug. 1870. For the official acknowledgement see BL, Add MS 58164, f. 57: H. Cole to A.H. Layard, 12 Aug. 1870. See also Anthony Ray, *Spanish pottery 1248-1898: with a catalogue of the collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 2000), 280-4.

91 BL, Vol. LXVIII, Add MS 38998, f. 429r: H. Cole to A.H. Layard, 21 Dec. 1870.

92 Ivi, f. 364v: W.R. Drake to A.H. Layard, 28 Nov. 1870. For Drake, Layard purchased a silver-gilt cross. As regard Layard’s collection of Hispano-Moresque dishes, it was sold in London in 1918. See the sale catalogue, Christie, Manson & Woods (London, 11 Jun. 1918), lot. 41-52, untraced. It is worth mentioning that

South Kensington Museum (1871, 1872, 1881) and one at the New Gallery (1895-1896).⁹³ To all of them, Layard along with his wife participated as lenders and, in one case, they responded to that “growing tendency to present objects of importance and value once deposited in the [South Kensington] Museum”.⁹⁴



Fig. 3: La Rambla, Jars, 1865-70, tin-glazed earthenware, 19.4x13cm, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, inv. 760-1870. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London 2017. All Rights Reserved.

In this sense, Layard had offered to the Museum a silver-gilt monstrance, a chalice, the foot of a Crucifix, a crown for a life-sized statue of a Madonna, a salver and a combined chalice and monstrance by Noe Manuel, for which the South Kensington Museum paid him £1200.⁹⁵ In a letter to Gregory, Layard admitted to having bought some of them by the end of 1871, when “penury at South Kensington [...] led [him] to ruin [him]self in

W.R. Drake had a vested interest in potteries, demonstrated also by his book *Notes on Venetian ceramic* (London: Murray, 1868).

93 A taste for Spanish art and culture was progressively spreading also on the other side of the Atlantic. The Philadelphia’s International Exhibition (1876) and the Chicago’s World’s Columbian Exposition (1893) epitomise such an interest. On this topic, see Javier Barón, *The Spanish Presence at Philadelphia’s Centennial Exhibition and Chicago’s World’s Columbian Exposition*, in Reist, Colomer, *Collecting Spanish Art*, 65-93.

94 George Wallis, ed., *Seventh Report of the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education* (London: G.E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, 1870), 368.

95 BL, Vol. CV, Add MS 39035: ff. 201, 307; Vol. CVI, Add MS 39036: f. 67. See also María del Carmen Heredia Moreno, *Del arte y de devociones eucarísticas: las custodias portátiles*, in Jesús Rivas Carmona, ed., *Estudios de platería* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2002), 163-82.

buying a beautiful Spanish Gothic silver-gilt ‘custodia’ by D’Arfe”,⁹⁶ and which he “used to decorate his table”,⁹⁷ as Lady Gregory had observed. With regard to Spanish metalwork, Layard negotiated for the South Kensington Museum the purchase of another chalice and paten for £100.⁹⁸



Fig. 4: Burgos, Paten, 1549, silver gilt, diam. 16.7cm, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, inv. 133-1873. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London 2017. All Rights Reserved.

The Layard collection

Like many leading figures of his age (e.g. the Queen and the Prince Consort, the Khedive of Egypt, William E. Gladstone, Alexander Barker, Baron Marocchetti, George Salting), Layard made several temporary loans to the South Kensington Museum. The most important consisted of 54 paintings, 2 illuminations, 4 majolica and glass plates (1869-1871).⁹⁹ This enabled him to solve the problem of housing the whole collection

in his small London flat at 21 Grafton Street; besides the museum was a good window for showing it to a wider public. Such a strategy enabled him to make an exchange with Marchese Emanuele Taparelli D’Azeglio (1816-1890) of a gold engraving under glass with a painting representing a Venetian costume scene (presently untraced).¹⁰⁰ Instead of be-

96 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gregory Papers, Dep. d. 970, f. 39: A.H. Layard to W.H. Gregory, 7 Jan. 1872. To Gregory Layard sent also a photograph, see *ivi*, f. 40.

97 Augusta Gregory, *Seventy years: being the autobiography of Lady Gregory*, ed. by Colin Smythe (Gerrards Cross: Coole edition, 1973), 160.

98 See Charles Oman, *The Golden Age of Hispanic silver 1400-1665* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1968), 22, n. 54.

99 Compare with Wallis, Seventh Report, 368, 376-7. On this topic, see Ann Eatwell, *Borrowing from Collectors: The role of the Loan in the Formation of the Victoria and Albert Museum and its Collection (1852-1932)*, in *The Journal of the Decorative Art Society 1850 - the present*, 24 (2000), 20-9.

100 See Luca Giacomelli, *Un “collettore arrabbiato”: nuovi documenti sullo scambio di opere tra Sir Austen Henry Layard ed Emanuele d’Azeglio*, in *Studi e notizie. Palazzo Madama*, 2/1 (2011), 62-9.

ing sent around the country, as was the case with other circulating collections, Layard's was requested on loan by Henry E. Doyle (1827-1892), Director of the National Gallery of Ireland, since it "formed a very valuable and instructive adjunct to the permanent collection".¹⁰¹ Praise was bestowed upon the collection in Venice, where it was lodged after 1875.

Compared to great collectors of his time, i.e. the Rothschilds, Richard Wallace, Layard's spending power was limited, but this did not prevent him from acquiring good quality



Fig. 5: Caldara (after Paolo Veronese), Music, 1875-6, oil on canvas, Venice, Ca' Cappello. © Photo by the author.

paintings or from commissioning family portraits by the famous artists of his day.¹⁰² To overcome his limited resources, Layard had copies of great masters made to decorate his Venetian palace. For the music room, he commissioned a life-size copy of the painting *Music* by Paolo Veronese (1875-1876), from a certain Signor Caldara.¹⁰³ At Ca' Cappello, Layard had in fact orchestrated an impres-

sive display of archaeological materials, Old Master paintings, prints, furniture, armours, tapestry, glasses and curiosities. This collection had a variety of provenances, both

101 BL, Vol. LXXIII, Add MS 39003, f. 279: H. Doyle to A.H. Layard, 31 Jul. 1873. The collection was housed at the National Gallery of Ireland from 1871 to 1876. Although the Loan Book of the Gallery (1857-1922) does not record its presence, evidence can be gleaned from Layard's correspondence with Henry Doyle and from the documents held at Blythe House (VAMA). In addition, there is a letter of H. Cole, in which he prevents Layard from sending the frescos to Dublin because of their delicate support. See VAMA, MA/I/L561: H. Cole to A.H. Layard, 24 Jul. 1871.

102 Layard was celebrated in several portraits in his lifetime, ranging from watercolours to oil paintings, from photographs to marble busts. Besides the ones above mentioned these are: Amadeo Preziosi, *Portrait of A.H. Layard in Bakhtiari dress*, 1843, watercolour heightened with gold, 29.8x22.5cm, London, British Museum, 1976,0925.9; Alessandro Castellani, *Pendant portraying A.H. Layard*, 1865-70, micro mosaic, diam. 33mm, London, British Museum, 2006.0311.1; Joseph E. Böhm, *Marble portrait bust of Sir A.H. Layard CGB*, 1890, marble, 81.4x58.7cm, London, British Museum, 1891,0613.27; Anon., *Portrait of A.H. Layard*, 1890s, oil on canvas, 46x36cm, Ankara, British Embassy, GAC1974; Ludwig Passini, *Sir Austen Henry Layard*, 1891, watercolour, 61.7x46.7cm, London, National Portrait Gallery, NGP1797; Enid Layard, *Sir Austen Henry Layard*, 1889-1900, bronze, diam. 18.5cm, Ankara, British Embassy, GAC5077.

103 Rawdon L. Brown (1806-1883) was in charge to inspect the development of the work, of which he gave a thorough account in his correspondence with Layard. See BL, Vol. LXXVIII, Add MS 39008, f. 339v: 31 Oct. 1875; f. 372: 25 Nov. 1875; Vol. LXXIV, Add MS 39009, f. 40: 16 Dec. 1875; f. 131: 24 Jun. 1876; f. 386: 16 Dec. 1876; Vol. XC, Add MS 39020, f. 84: 12 May 1878.

geographic and temporally: from private collections and auction sales he had gathered paintings and illuminations, from excavations antiquities and from the suppression of churches and religious orders he had purchased ecclesiastical treasures and portions of frescoes.¹⁰⁴ The collection was mentioned in several artistic guidebooks and visited by the most significant personalities of the time, whose names were recorded in an album beginning in 1881.¹⁰⁵

“The Layard’s house filled with objects all of the greatest beauty and rarity. On cabinets of madre-perla (gift of Sultan to Lady L) tortoise shell, ivory. Quantities of Spanish plate, repoussé – dozens of Hispano-Morocco faience line the hall – gothic armour and weapons. The walls all hung with silk. The pictures all remarkable and many of rare painters (in the market).”¹⁰⁶

The gallery had been largely publicised also by photographing it in order to “faire connaître aux amateurs”¹⁰⁷ its content. Eventually, so as to celebrate the prestige and importance of the collection, while wishing to enrich the National Gallery of London, Layard decided to bequeath most of his paintings “for the use and enjoyment of the British public for ever as part of the National Collection”.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, he intended to fill some gaps in the museum’s collection, a plan later realised, by donating alleged works by Bramantino, Carpaccio and Jacopo de’ Barbari.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps in part to confirm the artistic prominence of his pictures, he had also assessed their market value, as one of his notebooks reveals. Indeed, Layard supplied an approximate evaluation of all his pictures, which amounted to £11,720, “very much beneath”¹¹⁰ the market parameters. In addition,

104 On this topic see Cecilia Riva, La collezione Layard nel catalogo dattiloscritto 1896, in *Predella*, 35 (2014), 53-78.

105 BL, Add MS 50149: Autograph Album of Mary Enid Evelyn Layard, 1881-1912. As to the most significant bibliographic references to the collection see: Bernard Berenson, *The Venetian painters of Renaissance* (New York: Putnam’s, 1894); Gustavo Frizzoni, La Galerie Layard, in *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 38 (1896), 455-476; Georges Lafenestre, Eugène Richtenberger, eds., *La peinture en Europe: Venise*, (Paris: Ancienne Maison Quantin, 1897); Cesare A. Levi, *Le collezioni veneziane d’arte e antichità dal secolo XIV ai giorni nostri* (Venice: F. Ongania, 1900), CCXLI-CCXLII.

106 These words by Daniel Curtis were quoted in Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, ed., *Gondola Days: Isabella Stuart Gardner e il suo mondo a Palazzo Barbaro-Curtis* (Mariano del Friuli: Edizioni della Laguna, 2004), 116.

107 BL, Vol. CXXXVI, Add MS 39036, f. 182: G. Frizzoni to A.H. Layard, 16 Jan. 1883. On this marketing strategy see Francesca Mambelli, Giovan Battista Brusa e i dipinti della collezione Layard, in Andrea Bacchi, Francesca Mambelli, Marcello Rossini, Elisabetta Sambo, eds., *I colori del bianco e nero. Fotografie storiche nella Fototeca Zeri 1870-1920* (Ferrara: SATE Srl, 2014) 64-70, at 70, n. 14. Several photographers, Alinari, Braun, the local Filippi, Perini etc., reproduced images of the collection. Any image of the interiors has come to light yet.

108 ACS, b. 745: Austen Henry Layard’s Will, 2 Aug. 1892.

109 Bartolomeo Suardi, known as Bramantino, *The Adoration of the Kings*, about 1500, oil on poplar, 56.8x55cm, London, National Gallery, NG3073; Vittore Carpaccio, *The Departure of Ceyx*, 1502-7, oil on spruce, 74.9x88.9cm, London, National Gallery, NG3085; Jacopo de’ Barbari, *The Sparrowhawk*, 1510s, oil on oak, 17.8x10.8cm, London, National Gallery, NG3088.

110 NGA, NG7/292/13(v): Value of pictures in Ca’ Capello, 29 Nov. 1881.

he recorded Morelli's assessments as well as attributions in a notebook, later typewritten by Lady Layard.¹¹¹ It may thus be inferred that Layard would have found satisfaction in publishing a proper catalogue of his collection with details on the pedigree of each painting, as alleged by bibliographical references and opinions of respected connoisseurs. This would explain the reason why Layard, in face of the hostility adopted of Morelli, would write to Wilhelm von Bode to verify the attributions of his pictures by Jacopo de' Barbari and Gerard David.¹¹²

When time came to fulfil Layard's dispositions and send the paintings to Trafalgar Square (1912), a bitter controversy ensued, notably in Venice, occupying daily the pages of the local newspapers, *L'Adriatico* and the *Gazzetta di Venezia*. The collection was considered one of the most beautiful in the whole Veneto, so that the Director of the Royal Academy of Venice, Gino Fogolari, made a plea for transforming Ca' Cappello Layard into a branch of the National Gallery and keeping the paintings within Italy.¹¹³ The affair had sparked off a fierce debate in Parliament, in national newspapers and cultural magazines, such as *Corriere della Sera*, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, *Nuova Antologia*, and *Il Marzocco*, as well as in Great Britain.¹¹⁴ Indeed, the fate of the Layard collection provoked an important debate in the national and international arena. Charles Holroyd, then Director of National Gallery, was "very anxious about" securing the Layard pictures for the Gallery and his "valuation was up to £100,000 taking year sales at Christie's into consideration".¹¹⁵ In addition, the matter offered a possibility to "define and protect the interest of the N[ational] G[allery] and distinguish [it] from the general British policy of meeting Italy more than halfway".¹¹⁶ Instead, on the Italian side, it epitomised the utmost necessity to enforce its new legislation aimed at safeguarding the cultural heritage (law n. 185/1902 and law n. 364/1909). But such a necessity collided with more urgent political and diplomatic priorities that the Government had to deal with by 1913-1914.¹¹⁷ On the eve of the British declaration of war, the Italian Council of Ministries felt compelled to authorise the exportation of the whole *Layard Gallery*, "as an act of grace towards the British Government".¹¹⁸

111 On this topic see Riva, *La collezione Layard*.

112 Wilhelm von Bode attributed the *Crucifixion* to Geertgen tot Sint Jans (now attributed to Gerard David, London, National Gallery, NG3067). See APMV: Catalogue, 45-6, 65; BL, Vol. CVII, Add MS 39037, f. 112: W. von Bode to A.H. Layard, 20 Apr. 1884.

113 NGA, NGA, NG14/3/1: G. Fogolari to C. Holroyd, 2 Nov. 1912.

114 See Alan Crookham, *Art or Document? Layard's Legacy and Bellini's Sultan*, in *Museum History Journal*, 8/1 (2015), 32.

115 BL, D'Abernon Papers, Vol. XIV, Add MS 48930, f. 8: Letter C. Holroyd to E. Vincent, 30 Dec. 1912.

116 BL, MSS EUR/F112/67: R.H. Benson to G. Curzon, 24 May 1913. A similar claim had been previously made by Alberto Musatti, *Ancora la Galleria Layard*, in *Il Marzocco*, XVII, 46 (1912), 5.

117 See Richard J. Bosworth, *Italy, the least of the great powers: Italian foreign policy before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 419-66.

118 BL, MSS EUR/F112/67: A. San Giuliano to J.R. Rodd, 21 Aug. 1914. On this topic see Cecilia Riva, *Un "velenoso pasticcio" made in Italy. Il caso della donazione Layard*, in Lorenzo Casini, Emanuele Pellegrini, ed., *Donare allo Stato* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2018), forthcoming.

Educating through donations

Beyond exporting several works of art from Italy, Layard donated to the Museum of Glass at Murano a considerable group of old glasses *à la façon de Venise* (1874-1876).¹¹⁹ The gift chiefly consisted of objects produced by the Muranese artisans who moved to Spain under the reign of Charles V. The donation was applauded by the community and recorded in the local newspaper, which praised Layard's intent to bring back such valuable documents that illustrated the history of the Venetian glass manufacture and helped in enriching the museum's collection, newly opened in 1861.¹²⁰ Similarly, Layard also donated several items produced by The Venice and Murano Glass and Mosaic Company (Limited), a manufacture he had funded with W.R. Drake and other British gentlemen at Murano (1868).¹²¹

In addition to the services previously offered to Cole and always aimed at educational purposes, Layard was asked by Thomas Armstrong, Director of the Science and Art department of the Department of Science and Art at the South Kensington Museum, to provide the museum with casts of important Italian monuments or woodcarvings reproducing Renaissance examples of columns, capitals and entablature to serve as models for the students of the Government School of Design.¹²²

By donating some Assyrian bricks to the School of Palaeography of Venice and to the city's museum, he combined again the twofold aim of educating while promoting his reputation. He also gifted several volumes relating to his archaeological enterprises at Nineveh to St. Mark's Library.¹²³

119 BL, Vol. LXXVIII, Add MS 39038, f. 178: V. Zanetti to A.H. Layard, 27 Jun. 1875. See also Venice, Archivio Museo del Vetro di Murano (hereafter AMVM), B. 41/352: inv. ms Urbani de Gheltof, *Classe Nona Vetri Spagnuoli*, c.1888. Further mentions are recorded in Vincenzo Zanetti, *Il Museo Civico-Vetrario di Murano* (Venice: G. Longo, 1881), 30.

120 See *La Voce di Murano*, 10, 40 (s.d. 1868); 14, 53 (30 Jul. 1874); 11, 49 (15 Jun. 1875); 12, 54 (30 Jun 1875); 11, 42 (s.d. 1876). I am grateful to Vladimiro Rusca for the help and information provided.

121 "Perfette e fedeli riproduzioni di vetri *fenici, etruschi, greco-romani (muhrini) cristiani e gallo-renani*. La Compagnia Venezia-Murano veggendo che tali vetri mancavano [...] con distinta generosità volle riempire un vuoto ch'era troppo manifesto donando ben quindici delle dette riproduzioni" in *La Voce di Murano*, 9 (1883). For further gifts from *The Venice and Murano Company* see AMVM, B. 11, fasc. 61, n. 3; B. 39, Atti Museo 1873: 5 Sep. 1873; B. 40, Atti Museo 1883: 1 Feb. 1883; B. 40, Atti Museo 1884: 28 Oct., 1 Nov. 1884; B. 41: inv. ms. Angelo Santi (1908); B. 41: inv. ms Urbani de Gheltof, Santi, Classe VIII: Vetri muranesi del secolo XVIII-XIX. See also Zanetti, *Il Museo Civico-Vetrario*, 45, 69-81. On the history of *The Venice and Murano Company* see Aldo Bova, Puccio Migliaccio, eds., *Vetri artistici: il recupero dell'antico nel secondo Ottocento* (Venice: Marsilio, 2013).

122 London, National Art Library, MSL/1976/5451/1-3. As to the objects: Entablature, 1884, carved walnut, 100x34.5cm, London, Victoria and Albert, n. 1115-1884; Capital, 1884, carved walnut, 38x45x24cm, London, Victoria and Albert, n. 1118-1884.

123 Venice, Archivio di Stato, Direzione dell'Archivio, 1882, fasc. 210. See Stefania Ermidoro, Cecilia Riva, Catalogue entry 7.8, in Pellegrini, *Voglia d'Italia*, 363. To the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Layard presented his *Discoveries in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (London: Murray, 1853) – ref. n. 34 A 168; and his *Nineveh and its remains* (London: Murray, 1854) – ref. A 37 A 60.

Conclusion

Looking beyond these cases, it seems clear that Layard pursued a need to enhance his personal status and prestige through his activities as a collector, while also pursuing the idea of art collecting as a public duty, in keeping with a typical British attitude of mid-nineteenth century.¹²⁴ Ultimately, Layard's manifold activities and his interest in purchasing works of art appear to be aimed at educating public taste and bringing the opportunity to experience, enjoy and understand artworks within the reach of as many people as possible, by helping to create and enhance both national collections and those of private individuals interested in art.

The aspects of *marchand amateur*, fine expert and collector combined with his role as Trustee and unofficial independent advisor, conferred upon him a pivotal role in the circulation of works of art. This paper has sought to highlight this important aspect of Layard's work and, in so doing, to define a number of issues. Among these, the provenance of the items gathered by Layard conveys the sense of his involvement in an extensive commercial and learned network, while his own combination of mercantile shrewdness and scholarly passion. Further points of interest that arise from this article are Layard's significant and direct relationship with museum directors and the varied purchasing practises adopted by national art galleries, relations that now need to be fully examined.

In addition, Layard's extensive relationships demonstrate a rich, suggestive exchange between components of the art trade, of which this study has provided an overview. The circulation and consequent relocation of artworks is a delicate framework where national, economic, geopolitical and social identities are involved and whose effects echo on a vast scale. The transactional dynamics in which Layard was involved equally underpin the intimate and profitable relationship between diplomacy and purchasing strategies, an issue that it would also be worthwhile to explore further.

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124 Guerzoni, *The British Painting*, 103-4.