

Colonial collectors: the Tata bequests of nineteenth-century European paintings in the Mumbai Museum

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WHEN THE MUMBAI-BASED Tata Group, India's largest industrial house, recently outbid its rivals and acquired Europe's second biggest steel producer, the Anglo-Dutch firm Corus, analysts remarked on the budding 'reverse-colonisation', especially because British Steel had become part of Corus. In fact the Tata's Anglo-Indian affair, economically, socially and culturally, is much older, due in large part to the activities of Sir Ratan Tata (1871–1918).

Ratan was the younger son of the Parsi founder of the Tata empire, Jamsetji Tata (b.1839).¹ He and his elder brother, Sir Dorab (1859–1932), took over the family's holdings after their father's death in 1904 (Fig.18). They continued to press forward India's industrial growth and Jamsetji's conviction, with supporting initiatives, that one route to reducing Indian poverty was to educate the best Indian minds in England (Jamsetji himself had travelled to London and was buried there). Ratan's interests and commitments encompassed art, architecture and archaeology, as well as education, health and global poverty. He was an early supporter of the non-cooperation movement in South Africa at a time when its leader, Mahatma Gandhi, was little known. 'In South Africa when I was struggling along with the Indians in the attempt to retain our self-respect and to vindicate our status', Gandhi later recalled, 'it was Sir Ratan Tata who first came forward with assistance'.²

Ratan's philanthropic projects were varied: in 1912 he began giving £1,400 annually to the London School of Economics for research on the causes and prevention of poverty; a Tata Visiting Fellowship is now awarded by The Sir Ratan Tata Foundation at the School, which also has a faculty exchange programme with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai; the Salvation Army's work in India received Ratan's assistance; and the first excavations at the ancient Mauryan capital of Pataliputra (modern day Patna), from where the Emperor Ashoka ruled, were begun in 1913 with his support.



18. The Tata family c.1900. Jamsetji is seated at centre, his wife, Hirabai, at his right, and Navajbai, wife of Sir Ratan, at his left. Standing left to right: Sir Dorab, his wife, Meherbai, and Sir Ratan. (Courtesy Tata Central Archives, Pune).

Ratan's interests in travel and the visual arts took him to East Asia, where he acquired Chinese and Japanese porcelains and other decorative objects as complements to his large collections of European paintings, jade and Indian paintings, manuscripts, textiles and arms. In 1906 he bought York House, Twickenham, for £16,000 from Louis-Philippe-Robert, duc d'Orléans, as his London residence (Tata Ltd. was established the following year), installing his vast collections in large sky-lit rooms (Figs.19 and 20).³ Ratan was York House's last private owner, adding onto the building and placing an elaborate, Italianate marble fountain with statues in its riverside gardens.⁴ He also had a house at Versailles and a few years before his death built a grand residence in Bombay known as

This article is a sequel to my publication of Antoine Dubost's *Sword of Damocles* in this Magazine (see note 10 below), which records the assistance I have received since 2000 as consultant to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai (formerly the Prince of Wales Museum), above all from Abraham Joel, Barbara Bertieri and Athena Tacha, who have surveyed its collection of European paintings with me. The former director of the Museum, Kalpana Desai, initiated the study and conservation of the collection, and her successor, Sabyasachi Mukherjee, has continued to support the project. I am particularly indebted to senior curator Dilip Ranade, who has assisted me in numerous ways. Rajendra Prasad Narla of the Tata Central Archive in Pune answered many queries with exemplary efficiency. My travel to Mumbai in 2004 was supported by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. Research in London for this article was completed with funds awarded to the Museum by the Sir Dorab Tata Trust.

¹ On Jamsetji, see F.R. Harris: *Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata. A chronicle of his life*, 2nd ed., Bombay 1958. A fine portrait of Jamsetji, signed and dated 1889 by Edwin Ward, was donated to the Prince of Wales Museum (inv. no.33.72) by his son, Dorab. Museum inventory numbers beginning 22. (1922) and 33. (1933) cited throughout this essay indicate donations by Ratan and Dorab, respectively.

² From a speech delivered at Jamshedpur on 8th August 1925, cited in 'Sir Ratan Tata and Mahatma Gandhi', an essay by H. Raghunath of the Tata Central Archives; posted at www.rediff.com/money/2004/aug/16tata.htm.

³ The paintings identifiable in Fig.19 are, on the end wall, the Maclise (Fig.21), discussed below; at the left on the long wall a large seventeenth-century Flemish landscape catalogued as Jacob Grimmer (inv. no.22.4553), which has a pendant (inv. no.22.4567); above the stove in the centre *David and Abigail* (inv. no.22.4561), convincingly attributed to Erasmus Quellinus by Walter Liedtke (conversation with the present writer); next to it the so-called Dosso Dossi (inv. no.22.4620; see note 10 below); and at the right Giuseppe Chiari's *Venus and Adonis* (inv. no.22.4554) from the Thomas Hope collection (there as by Carlo Maratta).

⁴ See 'The Ratan Tatas in Twickenham', in Twickenham's Local History Society's *Occasional Paper* 4 (May 1990), pp.48–52, and a lecture by J. Payan: 'The Statues in York House Gardens Twickenham', 1995; see www.twickenham-museum.org.uk/paper.asp?PaperID=1. I am indebted to Richard Cashmore and Jane Baxter for their assistance with my research on the Tatas at York House.



19. View of Sir Ratan's collections installed in York House, Twickenham. Before 1918. (Courtesy Tata Central Archives, Pune).



20. View of Sir Ratan's collections installed in York House, Twickenham. Before 1918. (Courtesy Tata Central Archives, Pune).

Tata House, designed in a quasi-French style by Frederick William Stevens of Bath, the high priest of Indian Gothic and the architect of Mumbai's famed Victoria Terminus.⁵

Ratan threw lavish garden parties at York House, one in July 1914 for 1,500 guests, although upon the outbreak of war he returned to India. Two years later he became seriously ill

and decided on treatment in England, but on the way back his ship was torpedoed and sank. After he was rescued from a lifeboat, his condition continued to decline and he died in London in 1918, aged forty-seven, having been knighted two years earlier.

Childless, Ratan bequeathed his fortune to a charitable trust and his collection of some 120 European paintings and Asian and Indian art to the new Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay (now the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai), which opened to the public in 1922. To this day it remains the Museum's principal donation. Among its paintings is a striking full-length portrait of Ratan's wife, Navajbai, in Indian dress by the Anglo-American painter Sir James Jebusa Shannon.⁶ It hung over the fireplace in the dining room at York House, where Lady Tata lived until 1922. In the spring of 1919, following Ratan's death, Christie's auctioned forty-five lots of furniture, tapestries and porcelain from York House.⁷ The major estate sale occurred in October of 1922 when its furnishings and a hundred minor paintings, about a thousand lots in all, were auctioned, realising close to £10,000.⁸ Two years later the house was purchased by the Twickenham Urban District Council, from whom it was inherited by its present owner, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.⁹

With few exceptions, Ratan's European paintings, and another fifty given to the Prince of Wales Museum a decade later by his brother, Dorab, remain unpublished.¹⁰ Probably most of Ratan's paintings were bought on the London market, where Ratan was an active bidder at Christie's (notably during 1908–09 and 1917) and an occasional consigner (chiefly of furniture) from 1906 until shortly before his death.¹¹ In 1917, along with other works in the Hope sale, he acquired his most important nineteenth-century picture, Antoine Dubost's *Sword of Damocles* (1804), which was auctioned as 'French school' and regarded as lost for nearly a century.¹² Ratan had left a commission bid of £50 for the painting, although the buyer on record (at £57.15s.) was one J. Malins, who apparently was an agent or business associate of Ratan's, given that his name appears with Tata's elsewhere in auction records.¹³

The purpose of this article is to call attention to the best of the other unpublished nineteenth-century pictures that Ratan and Dorab purchased, some of which are classic Victorian paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, others by Academicians and obscure artists who await serious study.¹⁴

⁵ For Jamsetji's views on architecture in 1902 ('the canons of architecture [. . .] are as yet very arbitrary: even in Europe ideas differ so widely that all the continent still laughs at the pretensions of English architects and vice versa'), who at the time was building the great Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay, see Harris, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 73–74.

⁶ Inv. no. 22.4637. In addition to Ward's painting of Jamsetji, there is a portrait in oil of Dorab's wife, Meherbai, signed by Sir John Lavery (inv. no. 33.73), as well as a water-colour of her seated (inv. no. 33.75), signed and dated 1918 by Gladstone Solomon, the compiler of the catalogue cited in note 10 below. There is no portrait of Dorab in the Museum; Ratan is represented seated in an anonymous bronze sculpture cast by H. Gonot in Paris. Other portraits of the family are at the Tata Central Archives, Pune.

⁷ 3rd April 1919. Twenty of the lots were 'Chinese Porcelain, Etc.', five of which were described as Nankin; the other lots were 'Decorative Furniture', an eclectic mix of styles (Chippendale, Queen Anne, Louis XV and XVI, etc.).

⁸ Sale, Chancellor's, Richmond, 23rd October 1922 and following days. A small group of furniture was consigned by Lady Tata to Christie's, London, 1st February 1923, lots 137–50, but except for lot 148, a show-cabinet by William Kent acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum for £189, everything was bought in; see

note 47 regarding a further auction of Ratan's art in 1924.

⁹ The sale price was £20,500; see 'The Ratan Tatas in Twickenham', *op. cit.* (note 4), p. 52.

¹⁰ An outdated catalogue of the collection, essentially a checklist, was compiled by W.E. Gladstone Solomon: *Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Pictures and Modern Indian Pictures. The Prince of Wales Museum of Western India*, 2nd ed., Bombay 1927. More recently, from the small group of noteworthy old-master paintings, a *Triumph of Bacchus* (inv. no. 22.4620), dubiously attributed to Dosso Dossi, and five Northern paintings have been published; see A. Ballarin, ed.: *Il Camerino delle Pitture di Alfonso I*, Padua 2002, I, pp. 5–47; and B. Vermet: exh. cat. *Dutch masters from the collections of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai*, New Delhi (National Museum), Bangalore (Karnataka Chitrakala Parashad) and Mumbai (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya) 2002–03, nos. 3, 7, 10, 18 and 27. It has not been noticed that the Dosso was sold at Christie's, 8th February 1917, lot 187 (from the stock of Dowdeswell & Dowdeswell, Ltd., to Howard for £86.2s.), as 'Dosso Dossi, School of'. Among the published nineteenth-century material is Dubost's *Sword of Damocles* (R.E. Spear: 'Antoine

21. *Bohemian gypsies*,
by Daniel Maclise.
1837. Canvas,
179 by 424 cm.
(Chhatrapati Shivaji
Maharaj Vastu
Sangrahalaya,
Mumbai).



The long axis of the painting gallery at York House (Fig. 19) culminated in Ratan's second most notable nineteenth-century acquisition, *Bohemian gypsies*, signed and dated 'D MACLISE 1837' (Fig. 21). Formerly in the Gillott (1872) and Lord Holden collections, its market value had declined dramatically from over £900 in 1872 to £200 in 1913, a sum equivalent to about £13,500 today according to the retail price index.¹⁵ Even so, it probably was Ratan's second most expensive nineteenth-century purchase, surpassed only by the 525 gns. he paid for a full-length portrait by Lawrence in the Hope sale.¹⁶

Daniel Maclise's immense canvas was aptly described by the *Athenaeum* when it was shown at the Royal Academy in 1837, the year Queen Victoria came to the throne (forty years later she became Empress of India):

The canvas is overspread with a swarm of black-eyed, quick-blooded vagabonds, resting, rioting, courting – here a dance, there an embrace – in one corner, a sinewy fellow straddling over the body of a deer, in another a knot of crones huddling around the tent-fire, the middle distance filled with a crowd of new-comers reaching far across the plain. There are figures enough in this busy picture to fit out a round dozen of smaller ones; we felt, while looking at it, as if jostled by a crowd, and deafened by the noise of many voices.¹⁷

Familiar only with this notice, Nancy Weston sensed that 'such a description, when placed in the context of Maclise's

body of work and origins, strongly suggests that the picture was full of Irish associations and images both for [the painter] and his viewers'.¹⁸

Maclise was born in Cork in 1806 and left for London in 1827, where he entered the Royal Academy Schools the following year and in 1831 won the gold medal for history painting. Undoubtedly he knew and admired Charles Robert Leslie's *Sir Roger de Coverley and the gypsies* (R.A. 1829; private collection), another painting steeped in Irish associations that was underway when Maclise was introduced to Leslie, a successful practitioner of historical genre painting who was instrumental in helping the young Irishman find his footing in London.¹⁹

While Leslie's gypsy mother nurturing two babies would be at home in *Bohemian gypsies*, it has nothing of the unbridled 'wild mirth' that the *Magazine of Fine Arts* perceived in Maclise's *Snap apple night* of 1833 (private collection), which belongs to the tradition of Jan Steen's and David Wilkie's domestic scenes of everyday life. By contrast, *Bohemian gypsies* is more sumptuous and refined, evocative less of Dutch genre art than a cast of thousands in a Cecile B. DeMille production. In its happy mood of pre-industrial fellowship it is similar to his *Merry Christmas in the Baron's Hall* of 1838 (National Gallery, Dublin), which caused Mrs Jameson to muse that year, 'What shall be said of M'Clise – a young painter who has not yet realized the hopes formed of him [. . .] at present his genius seems to be overborne by his exuberant animal spirit'.²⁰

Dubost's "Sword of Damocles" and Thomas Hope: an Anglo-French skirmish', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 148 (2006), pp. 520–27; one of the Constables (see below); a full-length portrait by Thomas Lawrence (inv. no. 22.4614) from the Thomas Hope collection (K. Garlick: *Sir Thomas Lawrence: a complete catalogue of the oil paintings*, Oxford 1989, no. 416, as a work left in the studio at Lawrence's death when it was described as 'abt 1/2 finished' and completed by a later hand, 'whereabouts unknown'); and a portrait of 1911 of a dancer with members of the Chelsea Arts Club (inv. no. 22.4652), including the artist and Glyn Philpot (see below for his painting in Mumbai), signed by George Lambert (A. Gray: *George Lambert 1873–1930: catalogue raisonné*, Perth 1996, no. P148). Except for one of the five Dutch paintings, all these pictures belonged to Ratan. Few scholars of European painting, other than Alessandro Ballarin, Philip Hendy and Andrew Wilton, have visited the Museum and left their opinions on file.

¹¹ I am indebted to Marijke Booth of Christie's archives, London, for her assistance with my research in Christie's excellent records.

¹² See Spear, *op. cit.* (note 10), pp. 520–27.

¹³ Christie's day book indicates that Ratan and Malins worked together on the sale of some furniture and paintings as early as 1908 (5th December, lots 102–03); it notes

that Ratan 'wants them Sold during Nov' he leaves for India Dec 5'. After Ratan's death Lady Tata continued to have business relationship with Malins, who bought two of four works consigned by her to Christie's, 19th January 1923, lots 140 and 142.

¹⁴ I leave aside works by European artists active in India, such as a group by Albert Goodwin. For assistance with my research on paintings exhibited at the R.A., I thank Andrew Potter.

¹⁵ Christie's, 18th July 1913, lot 67 in the Holden sale (£199.10s. to Knoedler, from whom Ratan presumably acquired it); it had brought £934.10s. at Christie's, 19th April 1872, lot 138.

¹⁶ See note 10.

¹⁷ A. Graves: *The Royal Academy of Arts, a complete dictionary of contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*, London 1905–06, V, p. 153, no. 479; and the *Athenaeum* (1837), part I, p. 346, as cited by N. Weston: *Daniel Maclise: Irish Artist in Victorian London*, Dublin 2001, p. 144.

¹⁸ On Maclise's Irish background, see Weston, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 144 *et passim*.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 71 and 148–49.



22. *Sterne and the French innkeeper's daughter*, by William Powell Frith. 1867. Canvas, 112 by 86 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

Maclise's spirit was tamed during the subsequent decades when he was commissioned to paint murals in the House of Lords and Westminster Palace. Meanwhile he had established close friendships with a number of prominent Londoners, notably Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Dickens, and with the immensely successful William Powell Frith, an admirer of Maclise's work who recalled that, 'as a man, Maclise, whom I knew well [. . .] was delightful in every way [. . .] and universally regretted when he died'. He confessed that 'my admiration for Maclise, owing much to youthful and, I fear, somewhat mistaken enthusiasm, scarcely stopped short of worship'. He felt it was mistaken only because a young painter should not imitate his favourite artist or copy his faults, regardless of Maclise's 'prodigality of invention [and] facility with which he grouped crowds of figures, and the splendour of imagination displayed in all he did'.²¹

Frith himself had a sharp eye for alluring subjects and physiognomic distinctions and developed a precise technique

for depicting costumes and furniture. He established a reputation for his brilliant 'finish' in illustrating contemporary literary and genre subjects, such as in his exceptionally popular and lucrative *Derby Day* (1858; Tate Britain, London). He also could catch the essence of Victorian sentiment, as in *Sterne and the French innkeeper's daughter*, which Ratan acquired and installed in a prominent position over the fireplace of the morning room in York House. Signed and dated 'W.P. Frith 1867', the canvas was exhibited the following year at the Royal Academy (Fig. 22).²²

The painting illustrates an episode near the end of *Tristram Shandy* (VII, ix) when Tristram, visiting Montreuil – which looked 'most pitifully' – patiently and longingly watched an attractive girl named Janatone knitting a white stocking:

There is one thing however in [Montreuil] at present very handsome; and that is the inn-keeper's daughter: She has been eighteen months at Amiens, and six at Paris, in going through her classes; so knits, and sews, and dances, and does the little coquetries very well. -- A slut! in running them over within these five minutes that I have stood looking at her, she has let fall at least a dozen loops in a white thread stocking -- Yes, yes -- I see, you cunning gipsy! -- 'tis long, and taper -- you need not pin it to your knee -- and that 'tis your own -- and fits you exactly.

The subsequent text hints that Tristram looked upon Janatone not only with restrained desire ('slut' was more playfully affectionate than pejorative), but with an artist's eye.

Sterne and the French innkeeper's daughter was painted at a time when Frith had returned to eighteenth-century literature for many of his subjects.²³ In 1868, together with this scene he exhibited at the Royal Academy *Before dinner, at Boswell's lodgings in Bond Street* (seven years later it was auctioned for 4,350 gns., a record price for a living painter), a *Scene from 'She stoops to conquer'* and *Sterne's Maria*, another portrayal of an alluring young woman in *Tristram Shandy* who, like Janatone, reappears in *A Sentimental Journey*. Famously fanatic about finding the right models for his work, Frith did not record who he chose for Janatone but she probably resembled 'the model for "Maria" [. . .] a pretty, gentle creature'.²⁴

Frith belonged to a small group of Victorian painters called The Clique that met from the late 1830s until 1843, when its founder, Richard Dadd, murdered his father and was incarcerated. Despite their opposition to high academic art, most of its members, including John Phillip (1817–67), became Royal Academicians (he in 1859). Famous for paintings of Spanish life, Phillip was visiting Frith in February of 1867 when he was struck with paralysis and died a few days later. The following June Christie's auctioned about eighty of

²¹ W.P. Frith: *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*, 3rd ed., London 1887, I, pp.90–92.

²² Graves, *op. cit.* (note 17), III, p.173, no.167. It has been incorrectly identified as *The Vicar of Wakefield* since entering the Museum (Frith did exhibit paintings at the Royal Academy based on Goldsmith's novel as early as 1842; see Graves, III, p.171, no.454 [1842]). Ratan bought his painting at Christie's, 12th June 1908, lot 150 (£110.5s., having left a commission bid for 150 gns.); I have benefited from discussion of *Tristram Shandy* with Carl Peterson.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp.173–74 (1868–69). For two recent publications on Frith, see C. Wood: *William Powell Frith: a painter and his world*, Stroud 2006; and M. Bills and V. Knight,

eds.: *William Powell Frith: painting the Victorian age*, New Haven and London 2006.

²⁴ Frith, *op. cit.* (note 21), II, p.3 (on p.1 he refers to the group of paintings he exhibited in 1868, with a long discussion of 'Maria'); see Jane Sellars's essay on Frith's women in Bills and Knight, *op. cit.* (note 23), pp.131–44; and Edwina Ehrman's essay on Frith and fashion in *ibid.*, pp.111–29.

²⁵ Inv. no.22.4565 (indistinctly dated), 20 by 16 ins.; see Phillip's obituary in *The Times* (28th February 1867), p.5, and the paper's detailed account of the auction on 3rd June 1867; *ibid.* Phillip, however, painted various versions of *A Highland lassie*; see Christie's, 1st June 1867, lot 300, without dimensions; Christie's, 23rd February 1907, lot 49, 13½ by 11½ ins., described as 'with a distaff', unlike in Ratan's picture;



23. *The crusaders*, by John Gilbert.
1875. Canvas, 72 by 122 cm.
(Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu
Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

his works, realising the huge sum of £14,750. Among them was *A Highland lassie*, possibly the signed painting in Ratan's collection that depicts 'Yon solitary highland lass' from Wordsworth's poem 'The Solitary Reaper'.²⁵

Ratan's brother, Dorab, owned another picture exhibited at the Royal Academy (1876), *The crusaders* (Fig.23) by Sir John Gilbert (1817–97), signed and dated 1875, a year before the painter, watercolourist and prolific illustrator (he amassed an estate worth more than £200,000 through thousands of illustrations for the *Illustrated London News*) became a full member of the Academy.²⁶ The original frame bears a worn label with text taken from John Hoole's translation (1783) of *Orlando Furioso*, Canto 12, verse 47:

They rein their steeds, they strike, they ward by turns,
Their fury kindles as the combat burns;
Where best their force can plate or joint invade,
They speed the thrust, or whirl the beamy blade.²⁷

Illustrating one of Ariosto's many tumultuous battles, it shows Rogero, the son of a Christian knight, vanquishing the 'fierce' Moorish knight Ferrau. Unmistakably rooted in Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari*, the unbridled fervour of Gilbert's design derives from Rubens's work as well, whether the Fleming's celebrated copy of *Anghiari* or his own dramatic battles such as the *Death of Decius Mus* (Museo del Prado, Madrid).

In its obituary of Gilbert, who had been knighted in 1872 for his service to the Royal Watercolour Society and been

made a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur, *The Times* wrote that his 'cavaliers, trumpeters, and standard-bearers have a grand air, their steeds are genuine war horses, and both men and horses, on the march and in the battles, group themselves heroically'.²⁸ Those are fitting words for *The crusaders*, which *The Times* referred to as among 'Sir J. Gilbert's best known works'.

Although in 1908 Ratan paid nearly £100 for *Waes me for Prince Charlie* (Fig.24), signed and dated 1885 by the now forgotten Charles Edward Johnson (1832–1913), he decided to sell the painting six years later with a reserve of only fifty gns., but it was bought in when bidding stopped at thirty.²⁹ Johnson was born in Stockport and studied at the Royal Academy, where this painting was exhibited in 1885 and described as depicting 'the monument erected in Glen Finnon, where Prince Charles Edward raised his standard in the rebellion in 1745'.³⁰ The tower in the middle distance, designed by the Scottish architect James Gillespie Graham, was erected in 1815 to commemorate the spot where Bonnie Prince Charlie hoisted his banner in the Highlands, inviting support for the failed Jacobite uprising. Regardless of its stormy, Romantic grandeur, the painting actually is quite accurate topographically. 'Waes me' (woe is me) in the title is derived from a Scottish ballad dedicated to the would-be king that begins, 'A wee bird cam to our ha' door, / It warbled sweet and clearly; / And aye the o'ercome o' its sang, / Was "Waes me for Prince Charlie"!'.

and again Christie's, 27th May 1910, lot 99, with slightly larger dimensions. Ratan's name does not appear in the records of these sales and it is unclear which version was sold in 1867.

²⁶ Graves, *op. cit.* (note 17), III, p.235, no.139 (1876). An inscription on the stretcher reads 'John Gilbert NO 2'. The painting was sold from the collection of the late John Dickinson of Park House, Sunderland, at Christie's, 4th December 1909, lot 41, for the considerable sum of £115.10s. 'Tata' was the buyer of record but whether that was Dorab or Ratan buying on his behalf is unknown (see the discussion below).

²⁷ *Orlando Furioso*: Translated from the Italian of Ludovico Ariosto; with Notes by John

Hoole, 2nd ed., London 1785, II, p.92, lines 318–21; I am indebted to Dennis Looney for directing me to Hoole's translation as a likely source of the English text.

²⁸ Obituary, *The Times* (7th October 1897), p.4.

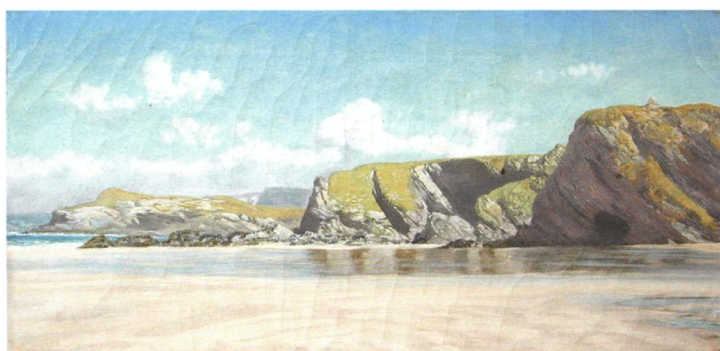
²⁹ Bought at Christie's, 12th June 1908, lot 153 (£99.15s.), in the same sale as the Frith, with which it hung in the morning room of York House (both works were consigned by a Miss A. Graham). It had appeared earlier at Christie's, 25th May 1895, lot 100 (sold to Lister for £50.8s.) and was consigned by Tata to Christie's, 19th June 1914, lot 70.

³⁰ Graves, *op. cit.* (note 17), IV, p.251, no.815 (a label on the painting erroneously states 'Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1886').



24. *Waes me for Prince Charlie*, by Charles Edward Johnson. 1885. Canvas, 115 by 183.5 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

Johnson's painting is one of many landscapes acquired by the Tata brothers. Each owned three small landscapes attributed to John Constable, only one of which, *Dedham Vale at sunset* (Fig. 27) from Ratan's collection, has been published. Dated c.1812 by Graham Reynolds, the poor black-and-white reproduction in his book imparts nothing of the



25. *Trevalgy Head*, by John Brett. 1881. Canvas, 18 by 36 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).



26. *Boats off the coast at Scheveningen*, by James Webb. 1876. Paper laid on canvas, 14 by 23 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

sketch's luminous, Claudian sun and vermillion-streaked sky, or of its bucolic mood of cattle grazing in the foreground.³¹ At least another of the six sketches in Mumbai has an excellent claim to authenticity, whether on the basis of its distinctive handling or its design (Fig. 28).³² It depicts an immense tree sheltering a tent below, a brilliant splash of pure red punctuating its broadly impastoed sky, clouds and landscape. As Charles Rhyne has noted, it is very similar to a *Landscape with cattle* that belonged to Constable's family, dated about 1811.³³ The other sketches in Mumbai are less certainly autograph and, like the Monticellis and Boudins discussed below, await first-hand study by specialists.³⁴

Ratan also purchased four paintings by James Webb (1825–95), the prolific marine and landscape artist whose work was occasionally mistaken for Constable's or Turner's. Two were signed and dated during the artist's maturity, 1876 (Webb began showing at the Royal Academy in 1853). In subject and style each is Dutch, one depicting boats at rest at Dordrecht, the other boats at sail off Scheveningen (Fig. 26).³⁵ Compositionally the former is similar to *Dordrecht* in the collection of Royal Holloway College, the latter to

³¹ Inv. no. 22.4586. G. Reynolds: *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London 1996, I, p. 175, no. 12.53. This probably is the picture bought by Tata (£27.6s.) at Christie's, 10th July 1908, lot 14 (*Woody landscape with cattle*, although its dimensions were given as 6½ by 8 ins.).

³² When Charles Rhyne visited the Museum many years ago, he saw only the sketch subsequently published by Graham Reynolds, whose autograph status he does not doubt. Professor Rhyne kindly shared with me his opinion, based on photographs, on the other sketches.

³³ Reynolds, *op. cit.* (note 31), I, p. 152, no. 10.50.

³⁴ Inv. no. 33.30 could be the painting Tata acquired at Christie's, 4th December 1909, lot 21, called *A forest scene with figures* (Charles Rhyne regards the attribution as 'speculative'), which was sold together with *A landscape with two figures* (Tata paid £14.14s. for both) and is perhaps inv. no. 33.56. They were sold simply as 'Constable', without dimensions cited. A sombre *Landscape with cottages* (inv. no. 22.4648)



27. *Dedham Vale at sunset*, by John Constable. c.1812. Canvas, 18 by 33 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).



28. *Landscape with tree*, here attributed to John Constable. c.1811. Oil on paper, 17 by 21 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

A swim-headed barge signed and dated 1861 in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.³⁶ As in Ratan's picture, some of Webb's best marines depict boats listing with wind-filled sails and convey through a freshness of touch the sea's damp atmosphere on a blustery day. His unstudied *œuvre* includes coastal scenes of England and France and views on the Rhine.

A jewel among the landscapes is a small canvas by John Brett (Fig.25), who scratched into its paint 'Trevalgy Head May 1881'.³⁷ Brett studied at the Royal Academy Schools in the 1850s, yet the art of the Pre-Raphaelites and John Ruskin's writings on nature were far more significant for his development, particularly the fourth volume of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* subtitled 'Of Mountain Beauty' (1856), which inspired Brett's trip to Switzerland. After further travel in the late 1850s and 1860s in Italy and the Alps, the artist divided his time between London and the English coast, producing large seascapes he sent to the Royal Academy's exhibitions and numerous small views of the seashore.

For three decades from 1870 until 1899 Brett spent many summers in Cornwall recording more than two hundred views of its coast, most of which are sketches painted in one sitting of two or three hours, in two standard sizes, 10 by 19 inches or, like Ratan's, 7 by 14 inches.³⁸ 1881 was a particularly productive summer for him: he completed about forty sketches measuring 7 by 14 inches, six measuring 10 by 19,

and six larger canvases, with a 'total value about 1200 which is a better season's work than usual', he remarked.³⁹

As this fresh view of a Cornwall promontory indicates, Brett was a brilliant observer of rock formations and the luminous effects of light on water. His interest in nature led him to acquire a large telescope – two major comets were visible that summer of 1881 – and even to publish some of his observations. *Trevalgy Head* might look like the work of a meticulous topographer-geologist in its accuracy, but its uncanny clarity and silence – not a ship, sheep or bird animates the scene – and its closely keyed colours create a surprisingly poetic mood. As remarked concerning a larger painting the artist sent to the Academy in 1881: 'Those who in anyway equal Mr Brett in his love for the Cornish coast will find it hard to tear themselves away from this picture'.⁴⁰ It is fitting that Brett was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy – an exceptional achievement for any painter connected with the Pre-Raphaelites – the year he painted this minor masterpiece.

Two of four small pictures in Mumbai attributed to Adolphe Monticelli are surely authentic. The first (Fig.29) is signed and has on its reverse a label, COTTIER & CO, NY & BOND ST. Daniel Cottier exhibited Monticelli's work during the later 1880s in New York and London (some of which had passed through the hands of Theo van Gogh), which fits with a date on stylistic grounds of around 1880 for

measuring 5½ by 10½ ins. would be very early if genuine and presumably is the painting bought by Tata for £25.4s. at Christie's, 16th July 1909, lot 112, as *East Bergholt* by J. Constable, R.A., 6½ by 12 ins. It and inv. no.33.56 are 'at the extremes of Constable's technique' (Rhyne) with no obvious parallels, although Rhyne would not dismiss them on those grounds. On the basis of what appears to be painted craquelure (none of the Constables has been examined in a laboratory), I suspect that the sixth sketch, *Landscape, river and lock* (inv. no.22.4634), may be a forgery.

³⁵ *Dordrecht* is inv. no.22.4562. The subjects are identified in Gladstone Solomon, *op. cit.* (note 10), p.11, nos.28 and 29. Tata bought the two other paintings by Webb, a signed *Gipsy in a landscape* (inv. no.22.4538) and *Coast scene, figures in the foreground* (inv. no.22.4589) at Christie's, 25th June 1906, lots 183 and 184, for £15.15s. and £13.13s., respectively.

³⁶ For the former, see J. Chapel: *Victorian Taste. The complete catalogue of paintings at the Royal Holloway College*, London 1982, p.140, no.77, with citation of other

paintings of *Dordrecht* by Webb.

³⁷ The site is usually spelled Trevelga Head. Tata bought the painting at Christie's, 7th July 1906, lot 143, for £23.2s.-8d. (from the collection of C.P. Matthews).

³⁸ In addition to the discussion of Brett's work in A. Staley: *The Pre-Raphaelite Landscape*, 2nd ed., New Haven and London 2001, pp.169–86, see, more recently, C. Brett *et al.*: exh. cat. *John Brett: a Pre-Raphaelite in Cornwall*, Penzance (Penlee House Gallery and Museum) 2006. For a technical note on his paintings, see Kate Lowry in A. Sumner *et al.*: exh. cat. *John Brett: a Pre-Raphaelite on the Shores of Wales*, Cardiff (National Museum and Gallery) 2001, pp.38–41. As recorded in the Museum's files, Andrew Wilton observed that Ratan's painting is apparently in Brett's original frame; for the gilded frames preferred by Brett, see *ibid.*, pp.116–17.

³⁹ Brett *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 38), p.51; see pp.108–19 for other examples of his work dated 1881.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.108.



29. *Fête champêtre*, by Adolphe Monticelli. c.1880. 48 by 34 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).



30. *Lady in a garden with a parasol*, by Philip Connard. Canvas, 61 by 51 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

this *fête champêtre*.⁴¹ The three women with a dog in a park are closely related to a group of figures in another of Monticelli's signed paintings in the Cailleux collection.⁴² Curiously, the label on the back of the painting is annotated 'Painter: Mathew Maris & Monticelli', albeit there is no known connection between the two artists nor any reason to see this as a collaborative effort.⁴³

The second undoubted Monticelli shows a woman tête-à-tête with a harlequin-like figure, whose composition resembles another signed work called *La Proposition* in the Cailleux collection.⁴⁴ This picture, too, bears Maris's name in the Museum's files, without mention that it is signed by Monticelli. Why his name was linked with that of the Dutch painter Matthijs Maris remains unknown.⁴⁵

Philip Connard's *Lady in a garden with a parasol* (Fig.30) is one of a few paintings acquired by Ratan that date from after the turn of the century. Elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1918 and full Academician in 1925, Connard started out as a house painter, trained in textile design, studied in the Académie Julian in Paris in 1898,

taught at the Lambeth School of Art and became known for his landscapes, portraits, watercolours and decorative murals, including those in the Doll's House room at Windsor Castle and a twenty-six-foot-long panel for the ocean liner *Queen Mary*.

Lady in a garden with a parasol is a remarkably bright example of Connard's work, in part because the canvas has escaped varnishing. Its palette and brushwork, derived from Manet and the Impressionists, beautifully capture the shifting sunlight in one of the various London gardens the artist frequented. *The Times*'s judgment in its notice of the eighty-three-year-old painter's death in 1958 that Connard displayed 'great technical accomplishment' is borne out in this lyrical work.⁴⁶

Another of Ratan's noteworthy 'modern' paintings, *The worshippers*, is signed and dated 1913 by William Strang (Fig.31).⁴⁷ Born in Scotland in 1859, Strang studied at the Slade School in London (1876–80) under Edward Poynter and more consequentially under Alphonse Legros. A prolific etcher of nearly 750 plates, he became a practicing advocate of realism in painting in the 1890s and was included

⁴¹ See A. Sheon: 'Theo van Gogh, publisher: the Monticelli album', *Van Gogh Museum Journal* (2000), pp.52–61, esp. p.58. I am indebted to Aaron Sheon for sharing with me his opinions on the basis of less-than-perfect digital photographs.

⁴² A.M. Alauzen and P. Ripert: *Monticelli. Sa vie et son œuvre*, Paris 1969, p.312, fig.539.

⁴³ Tata bought the painting for £52.10s. at Christie's, 10th July 1908, lot 167, where it was catalogued as 'M. Maris and A.T.J. Monticelli'.

⁴⁴ Inv. no.22.4605, presumably the painting sold at Christie's, 10th July 1908, lot 166 ('*The necklace*'), also as by Maris and Monticelli, bought by Tata for £57.15s. For the Cailleux picture, see Alauzen and Ripert, *op. cit.* (note 42), p.327, fig.575.

⁴⁵ A third Monticelli (inv. no.22.4632), a landscape that I have not had the opportunity to study (on the basis of a digital image, Aaron Scheon has expressed doubt that it is autograph), bears the artist's name and is also catalogued as 'M. Maris and Monticelli'; it was bought by Tata (as by Monticelli alone) in the same sale at Christie's, 10th July 1908, lot 169 (*Autumn woods*), for £68.5s. (he had left a high commission bid of 110 gns.). A fourth Monticelli in Mumbai (inv. no.33.27), identified as *The tutor* and inscribed with Monticelli's name, is painted on a metal (tin?) support and I suspect should retain its 'Anonymous' status.

⁴⁶ Obituary, *The Times* (9th December 1958), p.16.

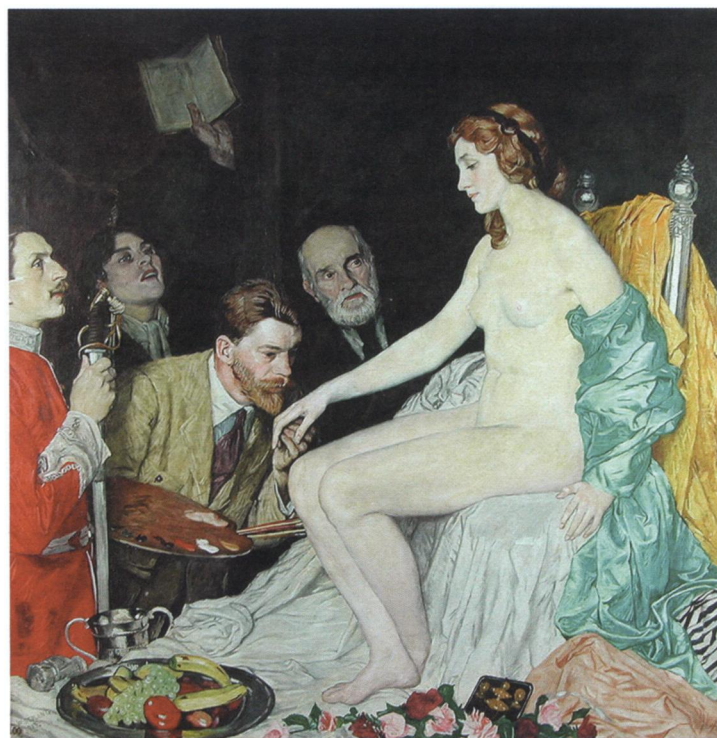
⁴⁷ See P. Athill and A. Goodchild, eds.: exh. cat. *William Strang RA, 1859–1921*:

in the first Secessionist exhibition in Vienna in 1897. As an engraver he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1906 and a full Academician in 1921, the year of his death.

Strang's best-known painting, *Bank Holiday* (1912; Tate Britain, London), like his *Bal Suzette* (1913; private collection), are from the same period as *The worshippers* (1913) and share with it the painter's characteristic linear clarity, saturated local colouring and meticulous technique. His strongest works are indebted to the art of Puvis de Chavannes, the French and Belgian Symbolists and his mentor Legros, and infuse a realist style with a disturbing psychological air. Here, in odd proximity, and with distant echoes of Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, four dressed men 'worship' an enthroned female nude, creating tension between the ostensibly clinical but inevitably sexual atmospheres, and an ambiguity of genres: is this allegory or portraiture? (Strang often put family and friends into his work.) In fact it is a reprisal of Strang's bizarre etching of 1890, also called *The worshippers*, which depicts a very similar nude adored by four men, one of whom is an artist and one a monk, above whom hangs a decapitated head. A year after completing the painting Strang returned to the same concept and design in his engraving *Ceres* (no.2).⁴⁸ As remarked by one critic on the occasion of the memorial exhibition of the artist's work in 1921, Strang is 'an artist who puzzles us'.⁴⁹

In size, breadth and quality, Ratan's collection was far more important than Dorab's, which shows one marked difference in taste: Dorab's attraction to nineteenth-century German and Austrian work. Dorab had been sent to England in 1875 for private tutoring and attended Cambridge, where he excelled in cricket and football (sport became a lifelong passion, culminating in his financing of India's participation in the Paris Olympics in 1924). In 1879 he returned to India, took a degree in Bombay and entered the cotton division of his father's firm, playing a more significant role in its development than did Ratan, notably by establishing Tata Steel. He was knighted in 1910 for his contribution to advancing industrial India.

Dorab died in 1932 and was buried alongside his wife outside London in Brookwood Cemetery. Like Ratan, he was childless and left his fortune to charitable trusts and his paintings to the Prince of Wales Museum. When and where he bought them is unrecorded but opportunities were numerous as he visited England, France, Germany, Washington and Spitzbergen, Norway, for the midnight sun.⁵⁰ A few of his old-master and nineteenth-century paintings were sold at Christie's during 1908–09, but since the auction records list only 'Tata', there is no way of knowing if he was the bidder, if Ratan was buying on his behalf or if



31. *The worshippers*, by William Strang, 1913. Canvas, 136 by 136 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

Dorab inherited those or other works from his brother. Undoubtedly his selection of *Bringing in the whales off Spitzbergen* by William Lionel Wyllie, R.A. (1851–1931), the London-born painter and illustrator of marine scenes, had personal significance for him. Ratan likewise bought a painting by Wyllie that more characteristically depicts river traffic on the Thames.⁵¹

Among the German paintings Dorab owned is *At the crossroad: the world or the cloister*, signed and dated 'E RAU München 1881' (Fig. 32). Emil Rau was born in Dresden in 1858 (his death date is unrecorded). He attended the Academy there and by 1879 entered the Academy in Munich, where he continued to work as a genre painter specialising in contemporary Bavarian subjects, such as his typically joyful and picturesque *Test of patience* (sale Weinmüller, Munich, 1973), also signed and dated 1888, the year before Rau reportedly was awarded a gold medal in London. In addition to its title – *Am Scheidewege (Welt oder Kloster)* – the story depicted in Dorab's painting is described in a published list of Rau's principal work: 'At the train station a peasant girl between two nuns at table with a young couple on their honeymoon trip'. That is, the scene shows a girl reliving the choice of Hercules by confronting the dilemma of deciding between a religious and secular life.⁵²

painter-etcher, Sheffield (City Art Galleries) 1980 (*The worshippers* is mentioned in passing on p.40). Along with fourteen other paintings, eleven prints and fifteen drawings 'In the Estate of the late Sir Ratan Tata', the Strang was put up at auction in 1924 (Robinson, Fisher & Harding, London, 16th October 1924, lot 40, as 'Exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery'). It and four other paintings now in Mumbai presumably were withdrawn or bought in and subsequently donated to the Museum. The others are by Glyn Philpot (lot 41; discussed below); after Raphael (lot 42; probably Gladstone Solomon, *op. cit.* (note 10), p.14, no.43); by George Lambert (lot 43; see note 10 above); and by Charles Ricketts (lot 45; discussed below).

⁴⁸ L. Binyon (essay): *William Strang. Catalogue of his etched work*, Glasgow 1906, p.66,

no.155; and *idem*: *William Strang. Supplement to the 'Catalogue of his etched work 1882–1912'*, Glasgow 1923, p.61, no.669.

⁴⁹ *The Times* (6th December 1921), p.8.

⁵⁰ Basic information on Dorab's life is found in Harris, *op. cit.* (note 1), and in the Tata Central Archives, Pune. Sadly, a great amount of his personal correspondence was purposefully destroyed, as revealed in a letter he wrote on 10th December 1931.

⁵¹ Inv. nos.33.67 and 22.4606.

⁵² H. Ludwig et al.: *Münchner Maler im 19. Jahrhundert (Bruckmanns Lexikon der Münchner Kunst)*, Munich 1982, III, p.359. I have not traced the source of the information repeated in dictionaries that Rau won a gold medal in London.



32. *At the crossroad: the world or the cloister*, by Emil Rau. 1881. Canvas, 151 by 204 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).



33. *A woman feeding a parrot*, by Eduard Merk. Canvas, 86 by 62 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

A charming painting of a fashionably dressed woman feeding a parrot (Fig. 33), unambiguously suggestive in technique and subject of Dutch genre art, bears a monogram EM. The painter must be Eduard Merk (1816–88) who, like Rau, attended the Munich Academy.⁵³ He was in Rome for a while in the 1830s and, like Rau, specialised in genre painting and scenes of country life, but his career awaits study.

The same pertains to the Austrian-American John Quincy Adams (1874–1933), the great-grandson of the sixth American president. Adams studied in Vienna, Munich and at the Académie Julian at Paris under J.-P. Laurens and Benjamin Constant. He became known for portraits and genre pictures but his brief biography in Thieme–Becker is simply based on oral communication with the artist himself, although presumably the judgment that he ‘figures among the best young artists in Vienna’ was not his own.

A painting in Mumbai from Dorab’s collection is cited in Thieme–Becker as among Adams’s ‘Hauptwerken’, a large *Prayer for the dead in the Volendam house of mourning* (Fig. 34), signed and dated ‘John Quincy Adams / Volendam 1903’. Probably on the basis of what Adams recounted, Thieme–Becker further records that this painting was sold from an exhibition of Austrian art in London in 1906, but the buyer is unnamed. Both the morbid subject and compositional severity recall some of Laurens’s most successful

paintings, especially his medal-winning *The Austrian military staff before the coffin of Marceau* of 1877 (National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo), while the colour and handling bring to mind the art of Adams’s compatriot Thomas Eakins.

Dorab collected other turn-of-the-century paintings by gifted yet wholly forgotten artists whose careers were centred in Munich and Vienna, such as Leon Fortuński.⁵⁴ Born in Poland, he studied in Vienna during the later 1870s and died in Munich in 1895, aged only thirty-six. In 1892 he exhibited a painting in Krakow called *At the house of the art patron*, which probably is the work now in Mumbai (Fig. 35) signed ‘LEO von FORTUŃSKI’. It depicts the courtyard of an ancient Roman villa where a youth is presenting a small statue to a reclining collector. The Pompeian setting, archaeological detail and meticulous technique all reflect the popular classicising trend of late Victorian painting, as does a pair of signed canvases Dorab owned by Vienna-born Emanuel Oberhauser (1854–1919) representing *The judgment of Paris* and *Phryne in Eleusis* (Fig. 36).⁵⁵

The wealthy courtesan Phryne is shown raising her arms and loosening her hair, preparing to step unclothed into the sea while at a festival of the mysteries in Eleusis. Accused of impiety, she was successfully defended by the Attic orator Hyperides who showed the judges the beauty of her breasts. Oberhauser’s Phryne evokes a kindred figure, itself an

⁵³ The form EM matches perfectly Merk’s monogram recorded in G.K. Nagler: *Die Monogrammisten*, Munich 1858–79, II, p. 632, no. 1687. Merk is briefly cited in Ludwig, *op. cit.* (note 52), III, p. 145 (‘Gemälde von ihm sind bis jetzt kaum bekannt’), and there is a list of eight of his paintings in F. von Boetticher: *Malenwerke des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig 1944–48, II, pt. 1, p. 25.

⁵⁴ The only notice I have found of his activity appears in a short entry in J. Maurin-Białostocka et al.: *Słownik Artystów Polskich*, Wrocław 1975, II, p. 236 (I thank Krystyna Wasserman for her translation).

⁵⁵ *The judgment of Paris* (inv. no. 33.61). Only a few lines on Oberhauser appear in H. Fuchs: *Die österreichischen Maler des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Vienna 1973, III, p. K68. Other examples of Dorab’s German paintings are *Two monks disputing* by the Berlin-born (1844) realist Otto Goldmann (inv. no. 33.69); a sunset view of boats with furled sails on a wide river, most likely the Rhine, signed by Helmuth Liesegang (b. 1858), who studied in the Düsseldorf Academy (inv. no. 33.22); a scene of eight girls at play around a table in a garden arbour, signed by Heinrich Schwiering (b. 1860), another student of the Düsseldorf Academy (inv. no. 33.35); and *Three Arabs playing chess*,



34. *Prayer for the dead in the Volendam house of mourning*, by John Quincy Adams. 1903. Canvas, 199 by 245 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

offspring of Ingres's and Gérôme's classical women, in an untraced painting of *Phryne at Eleusis* (R.A. 1882) by Lord Leighton that Oberhauser, although principally a portrait and genre painter, almost certainly would have admired.

Like Oberhauser, the few nineteenth-century Italian and American artists selected by Dorab merit critical re-evaluation. *The spoils of war* is by Giuseppe Barison (1853–1931), who studied in Vienna and exhibited widely in Munich yet worked mainly in his native Trieste, where he painted Dorab's colourful picture of troops returning with booty. Arnaldo de Lisio (1869–1949), a talented artist identified with the Neapolitan school who frequented the Impressionists' circles in Paris, signed a landscape of a *Peasant girl feeding poultry*. Another farm scene, a *Haycart and oxen*, is signed and dated 1892 by the animal specialist Henry Singlewood Bisbing (1849–1933), a Philadelphian who also attended the Academy in Munich.⁵⁶ Before settling in Paris, Bisbing studied in Brussels (1879) under the accomplished *animalier* J.H.L. de Haas (1832–1908), for whose *Cattle in a pasture*, signed and dated 1881, Ratan paid the considerable amount of £73.10s. in 1908.⁵⁷

French nineteenth-century paintings in the Tata collections are rare. Apparently Dorab owned none and Ratan only a few, primarily minor landscapes: a scene of a farm

maid with sheep, thought to be by Constant Troyon but more likely by Théodore Frédéric de Salmon (1811–76), and landscapes attributed to Jean Charles Cazin, Charles-François Daubigny and Henri-Joseph Harpignies.⁵⁸ He also bought two purported Boudins, each bearing the painter's signature, one a coastal scene with fishermen and pack animals, the other a view of ships grounded at low tide like those Boudin often observed at Portrieux. While the former is unusual in Boudin's *œuvre* and might be authentic, the latter has been doubted by Boudin experts.⁵⁹

Among the rest of Ratan's nineteenth-century British figural paintings are two with military themes: a small canvas showing an armoured warrior variously called *The ironside* or *The soldier's sermon*, monogrammed by Robert Alexander Hillingford (1825–1904), a specialist in military pictures who exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy from 1866 on; and a *Musketeer* signed by the Scottish artist John Pettie, R.A. (1839–93). Despite its subject, a *Man fixing a crossbow* by John Seymour Lucas, R.A. (1849–1923), the once-renowned London painter of modern life and highly successful set and costume designer, is not a military picture but a genre scene. As such it is exceptional in Ratan's collection, unless a dramatic view of horses wildly pulling a boat, signed and dated 1870 by the Scottish artist John Beavis (1824–96) and

signed by Ferdinand Schebek (1875–1949), who was born in Berlin and studied in the Vienna Academy (inv. no.33.81).

⁵⁶ Barison (inv. no.33.31; a label on the back of the painting gives the title *Bottino di Guerra* as well as Barison's name and address in Trieste, where he settled and opened a studio in 1887 after extensive travel); De Lisio (inv. no.33.19); Bisbing (inv. no.33.21). Dorab also owned a painting of a yacht (inv. no.33.2), signed by Arthur Burgess (1879–1957), an Australian who settled in London and became a successful marine painter, exhibiting regularly at the R.A.

⁵⁷ Inv. no.22.4584 (Christie's, 10th July 1908, lot 149).

⁵⁸ Cazin (inv. no.22.4629; signed with a monogram that appears to read MC; bought at Christie's, 10th July 1908, lot 9, for £52.10s.); Troyon (inv. no.22.4559; signed Th[?] Salmon); Daubigny (inv. no.22.4641); Harpignies (inv. no.22.4580; bearing the signature 'H Harpignies' and an illegible date, perhaps 1870, 1876 or 1896).

⁵⁹ Inv. nos.22.4537 and 22.4588; I am indebted to Manuel Schmit and Juliet Wilson-Bureau for their opinions, based on poor-quality digital images.



35. *At the house of the art patron*, by Leo von Fortuński. Canvas, 101 by 167 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

exhibited at the Royal Academy that year (*Hauling up a fishing boat – coast of Holland*), is classified as genre as well.⁶⁰

Ratan's numerous nineteenth-century British landscapes span the century and include two Turner-esque scenes, one of the Grand Canal, Venice, the other of a raft burning on the Rhine, by James Baker Pyne (1800–70). Both are signed and the latter, for which in 1908 Tata left a bid of 105 gns., is dated 1868.⁶¹ Ratan also bought a *Landscape with horseman and sheep* dated 1836 by Pyne's student and one of Bristol's leading painters, William James Müller (1812–45); a landscape signed by Benjamin Williams Leader, R.A. (1831–1923); another picture with sheep called *A bye-path, Dorset*, signed and dated 1896 by Edmund Monson Wimperis (1835–1900), who, said *The Times*, 'cared nothing for human incident – a hay-cart or a few rather Impressionist sheep procured him all the relief he needed'; a *Landscape with a lock on the Kennet and Avon Canal*, signed and dated 1880 by Alfred Parsons, R.A. (1847–1920); a scene catalogued as by the elder John Varley, William Blake's friend, but instead by his grandson, John Varley Jr (1850–1933), very possibly his *Nile boat aground* (R.A. 1890); and *Boy fishing* signed by Henry Herbert La Thangue, R.A.

(1859–1929), a good example of the *plein-air* scenes tinged with a nostalgia for the vanishing rural life that brought the artist considerable recognition.⁶²

Three other works by better-known British artists date from after 1900. *Don Juan in hell* is signed by Charles Ricketts, R.A. (1866–1931), the celebrated set designer and illustrator who, with Charles Shannon, edited *The Dial*, started the Vale Press and after 1902 took up oil painting in a Romantic-Symbolist manner, as evidenced in this example indebted to Delacroix and Moreau. It is one of a number of Ricketts's paintings, including two close variants of this composition, that are based on the legendary figure in Mozart's opera, Byron's poem and Shaw's play. Ricketts's work was admired by Glyn Philpot, R.A. (1884–1937), who studied in Paris in 1905 with Laurens at the Académie Julian and became a very successful society portraitist before he scandalised London in 1933 with his artistic-sexual coming out. His best portraits, like *Mrs Carpenter* in Mumbai, have an engaging immediacy reminiscent of Sargent. It was probably painted sometime around 1912, when Alfred Munnings, the specialist of sporting scenes who also studied at the Académie Julian, signed and dated a small canvas in Mumbai of a woman on horseback.⁶³

⁶⁰ Hillingford (inv. no.22.4579; bought at Christie's, 10th July 1908, lot 151: 'The soldier's sermon', for £6.6s. Prints of it as *The ironside* are widely advertised on the internet but with no source given); Pettie (inv. no.22.4630); Lucas (inv. no.22.4622; I have not identified the artist of another genre painting in Ratan's collection, a *Girl sewing* (inv. no.22.4618), catalogued by Solomon, *op. cit.* (note 10), p.21, no.84, as by 'Beriet'); Beavis (inv. no.22.4627; Graves, *op. cit.* (note 17), I, p.154, no.177).

⁶¹ Pyne (inv. nos.22.4542 and 22.4628, as depicting Lake Geneva). The latter was sold at Christie's, 10th July 1908, lot 51, to Tata for £42 (he had left a commission bid of 105 gns.); a photograph of an unsigned watercolour variant of it is in the Witt Library, London, along with photographs of three variants of the Venetian scene, dated 1849, 1851 and 1867. The former is possibly a picture at Christie's, 5th May 1906, lot 53, as *The Doge's Palace*, 1862, whose dimensions are similar although Tata's

name does not appear in the auction records (bought by Simonson, £89.5s.), and no date has been found on the Mumbai painting.

⁶² Müller (inv. no.22.4601; bought at Christie's, 3rd July 1908, lot 38, for £33.12s.); Leader (inv. no.22.4602; dated 1878[?]); Wimperis (inv. no.22.4582; bought at Christie's, 12th June 1908, lot 96, 'exhibited at the New Gallery, 1896'. Tata had left a commission bid of 100 gns. but acquired it for £73.10s.; quotation from Wimperis's obituary in *The Times* (28th December 1900), p.7); Parsons (inv. no.22.4621); Varley (inv. no.22.4644; Graves, *op. cit.* (note 17), VIII, p.76, no.1241); La Thangue (inv. no.22.4539; presumably this is the painting from the collection of John Maddocks exhibited in 1890 at the New Gallery and sold at Christie's, 30th April 1910, lot 65, for £42, although Tata was not the buyer and had left no bid).

⁶³ Ricketts (inv. no.22.4654; signed 'CR' on the front, and 'C Ricketts' and 'Don



36. *Phryne in Eleusis*, by Emanuel Oberhauser. Canvas, 81 by 150 cm. (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai).

Other than Constable, Monticelli and Wyllie, the only nineteenth-century artist both Ratan and Dorab collected was Robert Weir Allan (1851–1942). Born and trained in Glasgow, Allan, too, studied at the Académie Julian (1875–80). He exhibited both at the Salon in Paris, winning medals there in 1899 and 1900, and throughout London. He travelled to India (1891–92), Japan (1907) and North Africa (1911–12). Two of his paintings in Mumbai are scenes of Egypt, the third of Udaipur, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1892 (*Oodeypore*).⁶⁴

As this survey indicates, the Tata brothers' taste for modern art was consistently conservative, despite Ratan's opportunities in London to see avant-garde painting, such as in Roger Fry's pioneering exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists* in 1910. Neither Ratan nor Dorab bought anything by Courbet, Manet, Cézanne, the Impressionists, the Post-Impressionists or the German Expressionists, or any progressive Victorian art, for instance by Whistler or Sickert, or examples of the British Aesthetic Movement.⁶⁵ Their liking is not surprising, however, for they were of a period when India's art establishment, including the

Bombay Art Society founded in 1888, followed the impetus of the British Raj by promoting the merits of Western academic naturalism.⁶⁶ Their choices of Lawrence, Constable, Frith, Brett and Boudin overlap with selections made by the academically biased British critic Marion Harry Spielmann, who concurrently was buying art for Sayaji Rao, Maharaja of Baroda.

In 1912 Rao hired Spielmann as his consultant to put together a collection of European paintings for a purpose-built picture gallery in the Baroda Museum, which Rao had founded in 1895.⁶⁷ The addition was inaugurated with nearly 200 paintings in 1921, a year before the Prince of Wales Museum opened its doors. Rao's and the Tatas' collections of European paintings are the largest and most important in India. They are similar in size, although the quality and range of Baroda's holdings are superior. Nonetheless, a small group of old masters, including works by Marco d'Oggiono, Jacob Backer, Erasmus Quellinus, Mattia Preti, Giuseppe Chiari and Gainsborough, all given to the Prince of Wales Museum by Ratan, complements these nineteenth-century paintings and awaits study, conservation and publication.

Juan in Hell' on the stretcher; photographs of the variants are in the Witt Library); Philpot (inv. no.22.4653); Munnings (inv. no.22.4595).

⁶⁴ Inv. no.33.23 (*Boats on the Nile*); inv. no.33.24 (*The Island of Philae*); and inv. no.33.68 (*Udaipur*, 87 by 122 cm., signed, indistinctly dated, inscribed 'Oodeypore'), for which see Graves, *op. cit.* (note 17), I, p.22, no.986 (a smaller watercolour replica measuring 53 by 76 cm., signed and dated 1891, was at Sotheby's, Belgravia, 19th May 1981, lot 101); Ratan also acquired a watercolour by Allan (inv. no.22.4541; Cairo).

⁶⁵ The closest to a truly Impressionist work is Ratan's painting of two nude women in a landscape signed by Philip Wilson Steer (1860–1942); inv. no.22.4593.

⁶⁶ For an overview of the early collecting of European art in India and the British Raj's leadership in India's turn towards academic painting and sculpture, see P. Mitter: *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850–1922*, Cambridge 1994.

⁶⁷ See J.F. Codell: 'The Artist's cause at heart: Marion Harry Spielmann and the late Victorian art world', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 71 (1989), pp.139–63; and *idem*: 'Ironies of mimicry. The Art collection of Sayaji Rao III Gaekwad, Maharaja of Baroda, and the cultural politics of early modern India', *Journal of the History of Collections* 15/1 (2003), pp.127–46. Like the Tatas, Rao was culturally Anglicised, sponsored public education and archaeological research, sided with Gandhi's anti-caste views and travelled widely in Europe and Asia. Codell's strained conclusion, that Rao's collecting and picture gallery reflect his attempt to 'appropriate, control and segregate British culture' and should be understood as 'an advocacy and a critique of British Victorian notions of progress and individualism' surely does not pertain to the Tatas.