

A Victorian artist as ceramic-collector

The letters of Henry Wallis, Part 1

Timothy Wilson

The painter Henry Wallis (1830–1916) became in later life an enthusiastic collector of Egyptian, Islamic and Hispano-Moresque pottery, and of early Italian maiolica. He wrote several elegant books on pottery, illustrated with his own drawings. From the 1880s onwards, he encouraged, badgered and assisted the British and South Kensington (later Victoria and Albert) Museums in the acquisition of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century pottery and other artefacts. His letters reveal much about collecting in Egypt and Italy, and about the mechanisms of museum acquisition, successful and unsuccessful. The present article, the first of two, describes his dealings with the South Kensington Museum.

THE early death of Clive Wainwright is a grave loss to a subject he made his own: the history of collecting of sculpture and the applied arts, and particularly the growth of museum collections of them in Britain. Much weighty prose has been written about the ideas behind the growth of museums in the nineteenth century – the heroic period – but no other scholar has matched Clive's knowledge of the practical detail of how this was achieved. Much of the history of a great art or archaeology museum is a story of acquisitions opportunistically made and frustratingly missed, in which individuals – dealers and collectors, curators and scholars, artists and travellers, excavators authorized and unauthorized – are at the centre. The shape of the collections of a museum like the Victoria and Albert or the British Museum is determined almost as much by opportunities lost as by opportunities seized. In the history of this process, much of the primary material – the records and correspondence of dealers and collectors – has been lost, and the official archives of museums often give only a bloodless shadow of what was really happening. The present contribution is the first of two extracts from the revealing letters of a man who played a key role in the development of the ceramic collections of both museums in the decades before the First World War.

A pioneer in the taste for 'primitive' Italian maiolica

Henry Wallis trained as a painter in London and Paris.¹ In the 1850s he achieved some celebrity with

paintings in a somewhat Pre-Raphaelite style. *The Death of Chatterton*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1856 (Tate Britain), was widely praised and described by Ruskin as 'faultless and wonderful: a most noble example of the great school'. The sombre *Stonebreaker* (Birmingham City Art Gallery), exhibited in 1858, made scarcely less of a stir.²

Around 1857, Wallis and Mary Ellen Meredith, daughter of Thomas Love Peacock and wife of George Meredith, became lovers. She left her husband for Wallis, and their son, Harold (alias Felix), was born in 1858. Mary Ellen died in 1861 and the boy was brought up by Wallis. This episode may have rendered him to some degree an outsider from 'good society', and may explain why he was never elected either to the Royal Academy or to the Society of Antiquaries. After the death of his well-off stepfather, Wallis was financially comfortable for the rest of his life and gradually gave up professional oil painting, though he continued to make water-colours, especially on his travels in the Orient (Fig. 1).³ He also wrote trenchantly, often anonymously, on artistic, conservation and other matters, for the *Athenaeum*,⁴ the *Art Journal*⁵ and other journals.

Like many artists of the nineteenth century in France, England and elsewhere,⁶ Wallis responded sensuously and imaginatively to the Islamic world, an artistic response shot through with a sense that the grace and picturesque elegance of Islamic culture was being destroyed by shoddy westernization. In 1888



Fig. 1. 'A Doruck and Chool'leh Merchant, Cairo', watercolour by Henry Wallis, probably painted between 1880 and 1895. 40 × 55 cm. Private collection, London.

he wrote feelingly of old Cairo: 'At any point in those ancient streets in the old times, the painter could find materials for a picture, and materials intrinsically beautiful; masses of cool shade, brilliant passages of light, charming bits of decorative detail half hidden away, and often crowning the whole, and soaring in the sunshine, the shaft of some minaret, where elegant and fantastic forms meet in all sorts of unexpected combinations.'⁷ More unusually among artists, he developed a near-professional interest in archaeology, and became actively and practically involved in archaeological and conservation projects in Italy and Egypt, such as the campaign to prevent over-restoration of the façade of San Marco in Venice around 1880,⁸ and a society to prevent the destruction of monuments in Egypt eight years later.⁹

Ceramics – ancient Egyptian, Islamic, Hispano-Moresque and Italian – became a dominating interest of Wallis's life. By 1880 he had formed important collections of pottery from Mediterranean and Islamic cultures, and he continued to collect and study them into old age. In 1896 he wrote that 'the notion that what are termed the industrial arts being inferior to those of painting and sculpture is a purely modern heresy'.¹⁰ His first ceramic passion was for Islamic pottery, on which he wrote extensively.¹¹ Such was his international authority¹² that he was asked to

write the sumptuous catalogues of Persian pottery in the greatest of all private collections of Islamic and Hispano-Moresque ware, which had been formed by Frederick DuCane Godman.¹³

By the 1890s his enthusiasm was increasingly for fourteenth- and fifteenth-century, so-called 'primitive', Italian pottery. The search for information from excavations and local sources, and for objects he could buy or draw, became one of the motives of his regular winter journeys to the Mediterranean. The result was a series of eight of the most charming books in the history of ceramic studies, published in small editions with loving attention to quality of reproduction and choice of paper, mostly by the London bookseller Quaritch, and illustrated in colour and monochrome with Wallis's drawings. These books on Italian pottery were: *Italian ceramic art. Examples of maiolica and mezza-maiolica fabricated before 1500* (privately printed, 60 copies, 1897), dedicated to C. D. E. Fortnum;¹⁴ *The Oriental Influence on the Ceramic Art of the Italian Renaissance* (225 copies, London, 1900), dedicated to Wilhelm von Bode;¹⁵ *The Art of the Precursors. A study in the history of early Italian maiolica* (225 copies, London, 1901); *Italian Ceramic Art. The maiolica pavement tiles of the fifteenth century* (250 copies, London, 1902), dedicated to the memory of Luigi Frati;¹⁶

Oak-leaf Jars. A fifteenth century Italian ware showing Moresco influence (250 copies, London, 1903) (Fig. 2); *Italian Ceramic Art. The albarello. A study in early Renaissance maiolica* (250 copies, London, 1905); *Italian Ceramic Art. Figure design and other forms of ornamentation in XVth century Italian maiolica* (200 copies, London, 1905); *XVII plates by Nicola Fontana da Urbino at the Correr Museum, Venice. A study in early XVIth century maiolica* (London, 1905).¹⁷

Wallis also published books on ancient Egyptian¹⁸ and Greek¹⁹ pottery, and a pioneering study of Byzantine pottery in 1907.²⁰ His work is, with hindsight, of varying scholarly value, and not all his strongly held attributions have stood the test of time. The reader may sometimes be reminded that the writer is an artist rather than a professional 'scientific' archaeologist or art historian. Yet he anticipated many of the lines of modern maiolica studies. He was one of the first students of Italian maiolica to realize the importance of excavated

fragments, and particularly of wasters,²¹ and to collect them for study and for museums. In 1899 he wrote of 'a department of research too long neglected by the Italians, namely excavations on the sites of maiolica potteries . . .', with the result that the study of the subject lacks 'the solid concrete of fact';²² and he constantly stressed the importance of systematic excavation in his writings. He was one of the first writers to use representations of pottery in paintings as a dating criterion.²³ He was aware of the potential of scientific analysis of pottery, writing in 1901 that 'it is desirable that the historian of Maiolica should seek the co-operation of the chemist'.²⁴ It was also he who made one of the fundamental discoveries in the study of *istoriato* maiolica (not even his prime interest): that the scenes on the maiolica plates by Nicola da Urbino in the Museo Correr in Venice are derived from woodcuts in the *Ovidio Metamorphoseos vulgare* and the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published in Venice in 1497 and 1499, respectively.

In more modest moments, he used to say that his books had at least the merit of providing students with a large body of visual material to study.²⁵ Their particular qualities were eloquently summed up by his younger friend Albert Van de Put in the obituary he wrote for *Faenza*, the journal of the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche, founded not long before by another friend, Gaetano Ballardini:

A wonderful talent for seizing in paint, in black-and-white, or with the pencil, ceramic form and ornament, are resources of which few other investigators have disposed in anything like the same degree. To artistic and intellectual insight, moreover, Mr Wallis added the knowledge acquired during many years – a lifetime even – of travel, collecting and study in the museums of Great Britain and the Continent . . . The ceramic shelves of our libraries are full, if not overstocked; yet the decisive work upon several branches, notably of earthenware or faïence, has still to appear; but it is certain that none more enlightening or beguilingly suggestive are likely to be written than the series of volumes, mostly in themselves artistic productions, which are Mr Wallis's tribute to the potter's art. The text, written with the easy familiarity born of the handling and comparison of many specimens – perfect as well as fragmentary; choice and rare, as well as commonplace – is informed by the good humour of the artist-archaeologist . . . Everywhere peeps out the wisdom begotten of pilgrimages to little-known museums, in quiet old cities; of the quest ceramic pursued between Berlin and Bitonto, and from Sèvres to Fostât, sketchbook in hand,²⁶ of discussions with *conservatori*; and of arguments with all and sundry: *canonici, sacristani, ciceroni, Fellâhin*. Mr Wallis's real knowledge

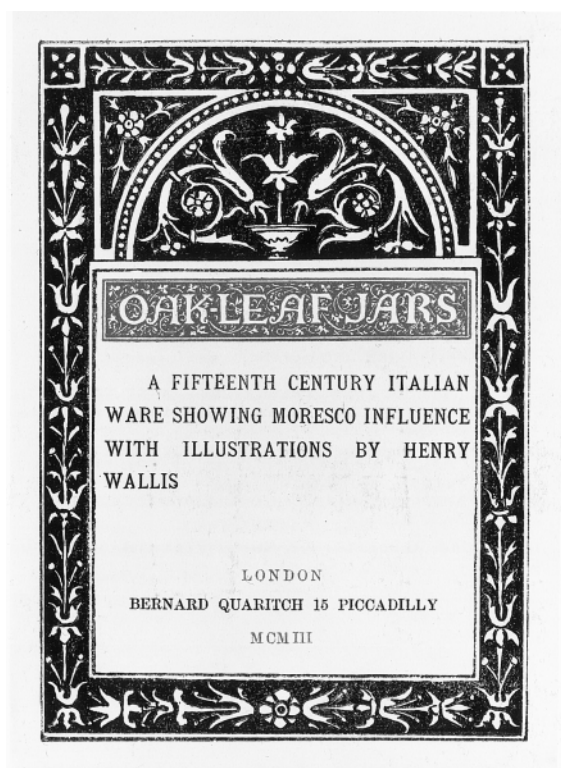


Fig. 2. Title page of Henry Wallis, *Oak-leaf Jars*, 1903. Designed by Wallis in the style of a Venetian printed book of the end of the fifteenth century. Printed area 13.5 × 9.5 cm.

of ceramics in certain departments would have equipped two or three professed archaeologists to treat thereof with greater appearance of learning, but with the dryness still supposed, in certain quarters, proper to the exposition of all manifestations whatsoever of art or science . . .²⁷

Although the advances in knowledge his researches produced are not derisory, Wallis's importance in the history of maiolica studies is twofold: first, as a protagonist in a clear-cut shift of taste, among collectors and museums, from an exclusive focus on sixteenth-century maiolica towards an appreciation of the maiolica of the fifteenth century and earlier; and secondly, as a key figure in the creation of the collections of fifteenth-century maiolica in the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The established view among 'amateurs' and museum curators in the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s, was that the greatest achievements of Italian maiolica were of the high Renaissance, especially *istoriato*. In the catalogue he wrote for the South Kensington Museum, published in 1873, C. D. E. Fortnum summarized the aesthetic that had governed the development of maiolica collections in England and elsewhere:

We may therefore affirm that the choicest works in Italian pottery were produced during a period which extended from 1480 to 1520 or 1530; thence till 1560 was its meridian, although some fine works were produced by the Fontana till 1570.²⁸

This was indeed the period that Fortnum's own collection, now the basis of the holdings of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, represented: it contained no Italian maiolica earlier than the mid-fifteenth century.²⁹ Fortnum's words reflect the emphasis of all the major European museum collections at the time he wrote.

This may be contrasted with the view, expressed by Émile Molinier in an article on recent acquisitions for the Louvre in 1897, that fifteenth-century maiolica was superior in its artistic achievement to that of the sixteenth:

Les estampes de Marc-Antoine Raimondi sont sans doute fort bien en leur genre; mais je ne sache pas qu'il existe de plus médiocre modèle de décoration céramique . . . la Renaissance mieux comprise, le xv^e siècle remis à sa place et au dessus du xvi^e siècle, nous révélaient un céramique plus délicate, plus artistique, et par bien des côtés, assimilable au point de vue de la composition décorative à la céramique orientale.³⁰

Wallis would have agreed. In a letter³¹ of 1909 to Gaetano Ballardini, for example, he asserted that: 'the latter half of the fifteenth century is of all others the most interesting in the history of the art'.

In 1903 Wallis himself wrote about the relatively recent taste for collecting 'oak-leaf jars',³² the wares decorated in relief blue made in mid-fifteenth-century Florence and nearby, which engaged him intensively (Fig. 3). Following the precocious acquisition of an example in Paris by J. C. Robinson³³ for the South Kensington Museum in 1856³⁴ and three examples by the Musée de Céramique at Sèvres³⁵ around the same time:

the Italian dealers, who had found several pieces in their search for the national maiolica, offered them to their clients. The first purchasers appear to have been the foreign painters in Italy, who regarded the jars from a purely decorative and artistic point of view. Then they were acquired by Museum Directors, who, naturally, recognised their historic interest as examples of early maiolica.³⁶

As demonstrated by Paul Tucker in this volume, the crucial pioneering role in collecting and instigating interest from European museums in 'oak-leaf jars' and other mid-fifteenth-century and earlier maiolica was played by an artist-dealer younger than Wallis:



Fig. 3. 'Oak-leaf jar', maiolica, decorated in relief blue, bought by the V&A from Wallis with other early Italian maiolica in 1904. Florence or Florence region, c.1420–50, H: 12.5 cm, V&A 1124-1904. © V&A Picture Library.

Charles Fairfax Murray (1849–1919). Murray sold items from his important collection of early maiolica³⁷ to Berlin in 1885, to South Kensington in 1889 and to the Bargello in 1890, as well as to private collectors such as the Prince of Liechtenstein; part of Murray's collection also passed via Wallis to the British Museum in 1897.

On the Continent, the key figures in this development of taste, from the 1880s onwards, were two museum curators who were energetic in acquisition for their museums and in the encouragement of private collectors: Wilhelm Bode³⁸ of the Berlin Museums, and Émile Molinier³⁹ of the Louvre. In England, the museums were slower off the mark, and the curators had to be prompted by artists. Mediterranean ceramics had caught the imagination of a number of Victorian artists, including Holman Hunt,⁴⁰ William Bell Scott⁴¹ and Frederic Lord Leighton.⁴² Wallis, whose interest in ceramics was both more single-minded and more wide-ranging than Murray's, became an insistent gadfly to the South Kensington and the British Museums. Both museums acquired hundreds of items through him – sculpture, textiles and metalwork, as well as pottery. Sometimes he gave things or encouraged others to do so, sometimes he sold at cost,⁴³ sometimes he acted as a dealer and took a profit⁴⁴ and sometimes he simply pointed out desirable acquisitions to the curators and urged them to take action; but he never flagged in his determination and importunity that pre-Renaissance and early Renaissance Italian pottery should be as well represented in England's national museums as in Paris and Berlin, so that (as he wrote in 1896 to the British Museum, but similar would have applied to South Kensington) 'your splendid collection of maiolica will not have the appearance of having started its existence in full bloom, having neither buds, leaves, stalks or roots'.⁴⁵

Unlike Murray,⁴⁶ Wallis was a copious and fluent writer, of letters as well as books, and the letters to the officials of the two museums, and to Bode, give an unusually vivid picture of the dealings between collector-dealer and museum curator at the time. The letters to Bode and to Hercules Read⁴⁷ of the British Museum give a sense of the excitement of the collector's pursuit of his quarry, and of his sporadic grumpy exasperation⁴⁸ with museums, politicians, builders, architects, printers, bureaucrats and for-

eigners (especially Frenchmen). They reveal the rivalry for Italian and other art between London, Paris and Berlin and, from about 1900, the growing impact on the market of American millionaires like J. Pierpont Morgan,⁴⁹ as well as the politics of and periodic tension between the two national collections in London. The acuity of Wallis's pleas to the museums to buy early maiolica before prices rose is shown by the sharp increase in prices for fifteenth-century wares during the period covered by the letters. They also record, from the 'coal-face' in Italy and Egypt,⁵⁰ that consequence of rising prices: the arrival of fakes.

The extracts that follow are from letters and documents in the archives of the South Kensington Museum (renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899); a future article will contain extracts from his letters to the British Museum, to Bode, to the maiolica historian and collector C. D. E. Fortnum and to Gaetano Ballardini, founder of the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza.⁵¹ They constitute only a selection from the lively and opinionated letters from him that have survived.⁵² The recent re-emergence of letters to Wallis (see Postscript) will shed more light on the issues discussed here.⁵³

Wallis's dealings with the South Kensington/Victoria and Albert Museum

Wallis's letters to the officials at South Kensington are not as personal or gossipy as some of his others. Following the dismissal of J. C. Robinson in 1867, the Museum had taken to buying in consultancy from external art referees, and the standards of curatorial expertise within the Museum in the 1870s and 1880s were, as its detractors frequently pointed out, unworthy of the collections. Neither this nor the Civil Service bureaucracy of the Government Department of Science and Art, of which the Museum was a division, encouraged the development of a passion for objects or object-based scholarship in the Museum staff.⁵⁴ As a result of this, in the 1880s and 1890s⁵⁵ Wallis found no kindred spirits at South Kensington with whom he could discuss issues of connoisseurship or archaeology in any detail. The letters between Wallis and the Museum and the internal Museum files, however, show well the workings of the long-standing

South Kensington system of taking collections on loan and then, sometimes much later, acquiring them. They constitute a detailed record of the processes, and the supporting arguments, by which important parts of the Museum's collections – especially the early Italian maiolica and the Hispano-Moresque – were built up.

The earliest dealings between Wallis and the Museum documented in the files⁵⁶ date from September 1880, when he wrote offering on loan 'my collection of Hispano-Moresco, Italian Majolica, Persian Ware and Greek vases'. R. H. Soden Smith, the librarian, but the member of the Museum staff with most relevant expertise, was sent to inspect the collection with grudging instructions to accept a loan only 'if *very good*'. He reported favourably and, with speed admirable by today's standards, a 'van' was sent the following week to collect thirty-eight pieces. Wallis revealed the artist's eye and his own self-assurance by adding to the list of items requested, apparently on his own initiative, three Persian bottles, 'because their colour serves as a valuable foil for the Hispano-Moresco'.

In 1886, Wallis offered for sale a collection of early textiles from Egypt. Thomas Armstrong, Director for Art,⁵⁷ reported that the textiles were 'of the greatest interest as much from the decorative as from the archaeological point of view . . .' He added, in a telling tribute to Wallis's knowledge of the Egyptian scene, that 'until recently the secret of the source from which these interesting stuffs were obtained was well kept even in Egypt, but Mr Wallis has ascertained that they were found on mummies at Annapolis' [corrected in margin to 'Panopolis']. In accordance with South Kensington practice, a member of the Museum's team of art referees, the artist Lawrence Alma-Tadema, was asked for a second opinion. He reported that the textiles were from the Roman period, some Ptolomaic or Byzantine, and recommended the price as reasonable; whereupon the collection was bought for £300, forming the foundation of the Museum's extensive collection of these textiles.⁵⁸ Wallis, ever keen on asserting copyright, and adopting the South Kensington jargon, suggested that he do drawings of them, as being 'useful for designers', adding, 'I should like to stipulate that I do the account of them – I ought to have the credit for the collection'.

Wallis continued to take an energetic interest in



Fig. 4. One of two marble lions bought by the South Kensington Museum from Naples in 1889 on Wallis's recommendation. Italian (Campania), thirteenth-century. V&A 324-1889. © V&A Picture Library.

acquisitions for the Museum, suggesting that the Museum obtain casts of enamelled bricks from excavations at Susa, and presenting drawings of mosque lamps in Cairo 'on condition that they be hung near the lamps of the same kind . . . and be not sent to the Art Library'.⁵⁹ In 1888, he offered as a gift some Coptic illuminations which were judged 'of doubtful value' to the Museum, but none the less diplomatically accepted.⁶⁰ These years saw a flow of small-scale gifts and purchases of textiles and other items from Egypt, Persia and Italy. In 1889 his recommendation to purchase two thirteenth-century Campanian lions led to the acquisition of two of the earliest examples of monumental sculpture in the Museum collection (Fig. 4).⁶¹

Wallis could be querulous and mistrustful. The organizers of the 1895 Exhibition of Spanish Art at the New Gallery in London are unlikely to have been charmed to receive a note from him with instructions as to how some pottery they proposed to borrow from him should be handled and who should arrange it: 'I beg that in handling them they be taken in two hands. Perhaps Mr C. H. Read will kindly arrange them?' His never-very-abundant patience was often strained by officialdom and foreigners. In 1890 he reported that 'it may be possible to get the interior decoration of a room, probably the most important artistically of those remaining in Cairo'; but the following February he reported failure, inveighing against the 'cussedness' and 'religious fanaticism' of

the Egyptian concerned and the feebleness of support from British diplomats. Two years previously, he had complained in the *Art Journal* of 'the native Egyptians, not one of whom, from the highest to the lowest, would stir a finger or spend a piastre to save any monument of their ancestors ancient or Mediaeval . . . The British officials . . . are passive while a continuous destruction of ancient monuments is taking place in Egypt.'⁶² Despite failure on this occasion, the episode makes clear the potential advantage to the Museum of having agents on the spot able to act on its behalf opportunistically and with local knowledge. None the less, when Wallis suggested in September 1892 that he might be authorized to make purchases for the Museum up to £500 in Siwas,⁶³ Armstrong killed the idea with the comment that Wallis must have 'some more definite offer' if he wishes to have 'power to spend money for the Museum'.

In 1891 Wallis placed on loan his collection of Egyptian pottery, which remained in the Museum until 1895⁶⁴ but from this point onwards the focus begins to shift from Egypt to Italy. In 1896, at the direct initiative of the Director, J. H. Middleton, the Museum purchased for £200 three pieces of Italian lustreware that had been part of Wallis's loan.⁶⁵ One of these has proved a likely fake, but in any case there was nothing 'advanced' about these purchases, since lustreware had long been a focus for maiolica collectors. However, in May 1898, Wallis extended the range of the Museum collections in an archaeo-

logical direction by presenting a series of fragments of pottery from Padua and Faenza,⁶⁶ and the following September he placed on loan a collection of 'early Italian maiolica', which greatly enhanced the Museum's still sparse representation of fifteenth-century wares.

Wallis's local knowledge and contacts abroad procured for the Museum some remarkable bargains. In November 1901 he reported from Cairo that he had been offered twenty-four Cypriot pottery bowls for £5. The Museum agreed to buy them and obtained authority, 'to avoid the chance of losing them by delay', not only to make the purchase, but to send a telegram to Wallis at the strikingly high cost of eighteen shillings and fourpence (Fig. 5).⁶⁷

An unsuccessful venture to acquire an archaeologically significant group of material was Wallis's attempt in 1901 to arrange for a large collection of maiolica and excavated fragments from Faenza, which had been accumulated by Federico Argnani, to be divided between the Louvre and the V&A. The Museum was interested but was too late; the whole collection was bought by a dealer for the sum that the Museum had been in principle willing to pay for only part of it. The outcome, whereby some of the best of the collection passed to the Louvre,⁶⁸ and nothing came to South Kensington, no doubt reinforced Wallis's views of the bureaucratic ponderousness of the V&A and the self-serving perfidy of the French.

In 1904 Wallis offered for purchase much of the



Fig. 5. Two incised slipware bowls from the group of pieces bought by Wallis for the V&A in Cairo in 1901. Cypriot, fourteenth- or fifteenth-century, Diam. of each: c.14 cm, V&A 1396, 1401-1901. © V&A Picture Library.

early Italian maiolica he had on loan in the Museum. The importance of the opportunity was recognized and, following careful consideration of market prices and favourable reports from its advisers, the designer Walter Crane⁶⁹ and the architect T. G. Jackson,⁷⁰ the Museum purchased thirty-six pieces.⁷¹ The Director wrote to his Civil Service boss that 'these thirty-six pieces, if acquired, will free us from any future anxiety with respect to this class of pottery . . .' Alongside the pieces acquired in 1889 from Charles Fairfax Murray, Wallis's pieces still constitute the bulk of the V&A's representation of fifteenth-century maiolica.

The V&A's own collection of Spanish pottery was less comprehensive than its collection of Italian maiolica, and Wallis's loan of Hispano-Moresque was visually more spectacular than the maiolica. When, in 1907, this too was offered for purchase, at a price of £3,000, Walter Crane wrote an enthusiastic report, backed by the collector F. D. Godman and the artist Sir William Blake Richmond, and the purchase was successfully completed (Fig. 6).⁷²

A third purchase of pottery on loan was offered by Wallis in 1910, but with a less happy outcome. Wallis, now eighty, offered for a total of £5,000 the contents of two cases of Near Eastern pottery and Italian maiolica. Bernard Rackham,⁷³ the Museum's ceramics specialist, was keen to proceed, but Wallis was impatient and, in the eyes of the Museum officials, recalcitrant and inflexible in the negotiations, insisting that it was 'all or nothing'. The National Art-Collections Fund, which had been formed in 1903, was approached but pleaded other commitments and declined to fund the purchase, although it was noted that Wallis was 'the best known of British connoisseurs'. When Wallis, already exasperated by the long negotiations, received the Museum's official letter that it could not buy the whole collection, but would like to negotiate for individual pieces, he abruptly withdrew the entire loan. After his death in 1916, however, his more amenable son Harold (a member of the staff of the Bank of England), conscientiously trying to do what he thought his father would have wanted, presented a large number of fragments and other items, and agreed to sell some of the pieces that the Museum had previously tried and failed to buy. In the long run, the greater part of Wallis's collection⁷⁴ found its way to the Museum.



Fig. 6. Lustred albarello, bought by the V&A as part of Wallis's collection of Hispano-Moresque in 1907. Spanish (Valencia region, probably Manises), c.1435–60. V&A 41-1907. © V&A Picture Library.



Fig. 7. Hexagonal jar decorated in blue and white. Syrian (Damascus), early fifteenth-century. Acquired by Wallis in Sicily and purchased from Harold Wallis by the V&A in 1918. V&A C413-1918. © V&A Picture Library.

A final episode brought to the surface a long-submerged rivalry between the V&A and the British Museum. Among the items that had been on loan to the V&A and withdrawn in 1911 was a fifteenth-century Syrian vase⁷⁵ (Fig. 7) which had long been coveted by Sir Hercules Read, Keeper of British and Mediaeval Antiquities at the British Museum. Read, who had known Wallis for nearly forty years, was by this time immensely grand – a knight and past

President of the Society of Antiquaries – and claimed the right to buy it from Harold Wallis for the British Museum. Rackham stuck to his guns, and Read withdrew, with an ill grace.⁷⁶

One of the arguments used by Rackham was that the Syrian vase was particularly appropriate to the V&A's historic role as a museum of industrial art. This contrast between the British Museum as an archaeological and historical collection and South Kensington as a museum of art applied to industry goes back to the 1850s, when the two museums divided purchases from the Bernal collection nominally according to this principle.⁷⁷ Rackham, in his private memoir of his career written in 1962, returned to the subject when commenting on the creation in 1921 of a Department of Ceramics and Ethnography in the British Museum, with Read's former assistant, the ceramics specialist R. L. Hobson,⁷⁸ as its Keeper:

The Departmental titles already current at South Kensington seemed to me to indicate the difference in aim and function between the V. A. M. as primarily a museum of art, especially in its aspects as craftsmanship (*Kunstgewerbe*) and the B. M., which was organized primarily on a historical basis, along lines of ethnic or national cultures. I must admit that, when I aired these views afterwards in a personal discussion with Hobson (with whom, I hasten to explain, I was always on very friendly terms) he demolished my argument magisterially, *more britannico*, by insisting that history was universal and 'art' was but one department of culture!

Over the years this is a distinction that curators in the two museums have deftly exploited or ignored to suit expediency and their own predatory instincts.⁷⁹ In the long term what matters to curators is what they perceive as the quality and interest of their collections. Few have contributed more to the ceramic collections of both museums than Henry Wallis.

Extracts from letters from Henry Wallis to officials of the South Kensington/Victoria and Albert Museum, and from the Museum files

The letters that follow are from Wallis from his home addresses in or near London, unless otherwise indicated:⁸⁰

Wallis to the Director of the South Kensington Museum, 7 September 1880:

I beg to offer for Ex^{bn} at the S. K. Museum my collection of Hispano-Moresco, Italian Majolica, Persian-ware & Greek vase . . .

Memo, Richard Thompson⁸¹ to Robert Soden Smith,⁸² 8 September 1880:

Please arrange to inspect the collection and if very good accept on loan for not less than six months. Do not accept unless very good.

Memo, Soden Smith to Thompson, 10 September 1880:

I saw Mr Wallis's collection this morning – He has some very good specimens – especially lusted Hispano-Moresque ware – of these & some maiolica I have selected enough to fill a case. Also a Greek terra cotta vase on w^{ch} is delicate painting in colours in good preservation – a rare specimen.

Note by Wallis (undated):

The Greek painted vase, wth terra cotta figures, was found in a tomb at Cumae; it was I suppose a prize for a tragedy, or chariot or horse race. It is important from the painting being in a very perfect state – more so, I am told, than in any other known specimen.⁸³ Pray be so good as to keep it always under glass, and not in the sun.

I have sent the three Persian bottles because their colour serves as a valuable foil for the Hispano-Moresco

To Major-General John Donnelly⁸⁴ for the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education, 26 February 1888:

I beg to call your attention to the serious and alarming destruction of Ancient Monuments occurring in Egypt . . . a question of the gravest importance from scientific & artistic points of view . . . It must be remembered that all sculptured representations of human or animal form are considered by the Mahomedans to be accursed, and they are adjured by their religious books to destroy all such images.⁸⁵

To Donnelly, 9 October 1890:

I have been privately informed that it w^{ld} be possible to get the interior decoration of a room, probably the most important artistically of those remaining at Cairo – one that has been long known to me⁸⁶ . . . I shall probably be going to Egypt shortly & might, perhaps, secure it.

You quite understand there will be expenditure for baksheesh, & also that it may be necessary to make terms at once – wthout delay.

Memo from Caspar Purdon Clarke,⁸⁷ 16 October 1890:

I quite agree with Mr Wallis that it is useless to attempt to obtain any antiquities through the assistance of Sir Evelyn Baring⁸⁸ who is forced from fear of French jealousy to discountenance any claims on the part of British official or non-official Departments or Institutions, for assistance or even toleration from the Egyptian Government . . . In all sales of property in the East there are many others concerned besides the nominal vendor and their interest has to be bought often in an indirect manner. Sometimes a small nominal sum is fixed as the price but a much larger amount must be given as presents 'baksheesh'. Such a negotiation can only be conducted with ready money and full discretionary powers and therefore would best be left to an agent who would at its conclusion charge a single sum and save complicated accounts.

To Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen,⁸⁹ from Cairo, 5 February 1891:

. . . the Mufti (the owner of the room) . . . prefers to see the room wrecked & the ornamentation demolished to selling it. I suppose religious fanaticism has something to do wth his determination, or possibly it is pure 'cussedness' . . .

To Donnelly, from Cairo, 18 February 1891:

Your telegram reached me today, & from receiving no answer you will know that I have not been able to purchase the decoration . . . If I do succeed in getting it

before leaving – or rather putting the offer in train for purchase . . . I asked the Ottoman Bank if they w^{ld} advance the money. The Manager said he w^{ld} do so at the usual interest – 6 per cent. If I had been negotiating for Paris or Berlin the matter would have been settled long ago, because the French or German Consul generals w^{ld} have at once put the screw on. Either Moncrieff⁹⁰ or Baring w^{ld} have done so if it had been for any other than an artistic interest. After all, it is entirely our own fault if the British agents are so negligent when the interests of our national museums are in question . . . Unfortunately Ld. Salisbury⁹¹ cares nothing about art – & still more unfortunately none of the Royal Family care about it either, & they are the people who keep ministers up to the mark abroad . . .

The East seems as if it was cleared out. If anything good is ever offered to you in the way of Oriental art I recommend you to secure it – you won't get much more from Egypt.

To Thompson, 2 September 1891:

I have a collection of Egyptian pottery, interesting to students & collectors, w^{ch} I sh^{ld} be willing to lend the Museum for a period, if you w^{ld} like to have it . . . I have been collecting it for some years; it has been nearly all got in Egypt, & contains some rare historical pieces & also a series, only yet known in Museums by small fragments . . .

Skinner⁹² to Clarke, 15 September 1898:

Mr Henry Wallis has offered to lend the Museum his collection of early Italian pottery, consisting of vases, drug jars &c.

They are of very considerable interest as illustrations of the early wares – for the most part 15th century – of Italy . . . I saw a good many specimens of this kind of pottery when I was in Berlin, especially in the collections of Dr Bode and Herr Beckerath.⁹³ We have some specimens in the Museum amongst our maiolica, but some additional pieces, I should think, would not be amiss . . .

To Clarke, from Cairo, 8 February 1901:

I sent you from Luxor, by parcel post, an example of early Coptic sculpture w^{ch} besides its historic interest sh^{ld} be instructive as a motive of ornamentation. It belonged to the Dept. of Antiquities, but as X^{tian} art holds a very subordinate position at Ghizeh Mas-

péro⁹⁴ ceded it to me at a nominal cost. The price, including carriage, is 16/- . . .⁹⁵

Proposal to purchase fragments of maiolica from the collection of Federico Argnani, 1901

To Clarke, 1 April 1901, from the Hôtel Lille et Albion, Paris:

I was the other day at Faenza and saw Argnani's Collⁿ, to w^{ch} he has added some interesting early pieces, found last year, & w^{ch} he is going to publish.

Coming here, I spoke to Molinier about buying the Collⁿ for S. K. M. & the Louvre. He appears to be quite willing, so I proposed that either you or Skinner sh^{ld} go wth him to Faenza to make the acquisition. To this also he agreed, saying he c^{ld} not go just now but w^{ld} be able to in June. He mentioned taking in Berlin but agreed wth me that it might be better to divide it between two, then there w^{ld} be two important series, one in London and one Paris. Molinier spoke of handing over the rest of his share to Sèvres & I suppose you w^{ld} divide among the provincial Museums.

As to the price, I did not discuss the matter wth Argnani, he mentioned that he wanted 10,000 Lire Ital.⁹⁶ for the whole. Molinier thinks he might take five thousand. I confess this appears to be cutting A. down rather too low.

You think over the affair & communicate wth Molinier . . .

To Clarke, 11 April 1901:

. . . You can of course make the acquisition of the Argnani Collⁿ on any terms you think desirable. But I w^{ld} suggest that Molinier's proposal is worth considering. He & Marquet de Vasselot⁹⁷ saw the Collⁿ a couple of years ago &, as I understand him, only refrained from purchasing on account of the large number of examples. He said he sh^{ld} only want for the Louvre a few of the early pieces w^{ch} were practically intact. That I take it w^{ld} be about your case for S. K. M. There w^{ld} then remain at y^r disposal a vast quantity of fragments, invaluable for students, for distribution among the provincial museums. Perhaps Molinier w^{ld} agree to your having two thirds of the Collⁿ. As to the division: – if you cast lots for first choice & then selected piece by piece alternately the division ought to be fair.

My feeling is that it w^{ld} be mutually advantageous

to maintain cordial relations wth the Louvre, & indeed wth all the French Museums . . .

Memo, Clarke to Sir William Abney,⁹⁸ 22 May 1901:
I received the first of the attached letters in April from Mr Henry Wallis – who had then arrived in Paris from Florence, where he had seen a collection of early examples of Maiolica – principally fragments – which had been collected by Professor Argnani with a view to publication in his work on the history of Italian faïence. Signor Argnani is now disposed to sell this collection – which he values at £400, but as it contains many duplicates Mr Wallis thought that an arrangement might be made to share it with the Louvre, and on arriving in Paris he spoke to Mr Molinier, the Director,⁹⁹ who expressed his willingness to share the collection with South Kensington and to visit Florence and meet the officer we would depute to go and to arrange the division.

Having since had several interviews with Mr Wallis, and being perfectly assured that the collection – which is very well known – would be quite worth our acquisition, I beg to propose that sanction should be asked to purchase one half of it at a price not exceeding £200, and that Mr Skinner should be deputed to go out at once to Florence to make the selection on our behalf . . .

I am sorry that the affair was mentioned to Mr Molinier as, from what I have ascertained, the collection could very easily have been distributed in the United Kingdom, but it would not be fair to go back on the arrangement proposed by Mr H^y Wallis.

There is also a collection of Early Italian pottery – at Milan, belonging to Signor Loretz,¹⁰⁰ which is offered to us at from £160 to £200 . . . which Mr Skinner might also see and report upon . . .

Memo, Skinner to Clarke, 26 July 1901:

According to your instructions I made enquiries respecting the sale of the Argnani collection of fragments of Italian maiolica to Mr Brauer the dealer.¹⁰¹

I have had two interviews with Mr Brauer on the subject.

He says that he has bought the whole collection from Professor Argnani for the sum of 5000 lire or £200.

He told me that he had promised to let M. Molinier have a few of the pieces for the

Louvre. I then saw M. Molinier and asked him if he had received your letter offering to divide the collection between this Museum and the Louvre. He said that he had had it,¹⁰² but that his arrangement with Mr Brauer had been made some time ago. In this way I suppose that M. Molinier thought that he was able to explain away his neglect in not answering you, as his reply would not have affected the fact that he had contrived to get the first choice . . .

Memo, Clarke to Abney, 17 August 1901:

. . . In order to save time I asked Mr Wallis to ascertain from Mr Molinier the time when it would be convenient for him to go to Faenza with our representative, but not hearing from Mr Wallis I wrote directly to Mr Molinier to the same effect, but received no reply.

No further action was taken until towards the middle of July when Mr Brauer, a well-known dealer of Florence, came to London and saw Mr Skinner and informed him that he had purchased the collection from Signor Argnani for £200 and had arranged to sell 21 of the examples of which there are illustrations in Signor Argnani's book to the Louvre; the remainder of the collection he offered to sell to us for the sum of £400, plus 20 percent export duty and the cost of carriage to London . . .

I have made enquiries respecting this matter and have today seen Mr Henry Wallis, and am of opinion that we ought to have nothing whatever to do with Mr Brauer's offer.

V&A to G. Brauer, Fano, 21 September 1901:

. . . it is not desirable that you should retain the collection in anticipation of its purchase for this Museum.

Purchase of early Italian maiolica from Wallis, 1904

Report by C. H. Wylde,¹⁰³ 12 July 1904, to A. B. Skinner:

. . . It is important that this Collection should not be lost as it comprises examples of the very earliest types of Italian Maiolica which are not represented in the Museum. If Mr Wallis's specimens of pottery are acquired our collection will then show the development of Italian Maiolica from the most primitive

forms to the splendid achievements of Maestro Giorgio of Gubbio.

Report of a committee meeting by Walter Crane, 12 July 1904:

. . . an excellent opportunity now offered itself of completing the links in the present Museum collection of maiolica: Mr Wallis's collection further recommended itself as containing very good examples of pottery decoration and the various specimens in it were quite characteristic of the period.

Memo, Skinner to Clarke, 29 July 1904:

. . . When our collection was formed many years ago, these but little known wares – and in some cases rather rough – were not thought worth collecting, and the Museum has always suffered for the want of them.

There is very keen competition in securing these early specimens, especially in Germany . . . and it is very difficult to obtain examples even in Italy.

I do not think it will be possible to gather together again so good a collection, and certainly not at the price asked by Mr Wallis . . .

Memo, Clarke to F. G. Ogilvie,¹⁰⁴ 10 August 1904:

We have watched with great interest the growth of Mr Wallis's collection of early Italian 'albarelli' during the past six years, especially as so very few examples of this maiolica ware come on the London market. These thirty-six pieces, if acquired, will free us from any future anxiety with respect to this class of pottery . . .

Memo from Ogilvie, 23 August 1904:

I have no special knowledge of Italian Majolica, but could see the advantage which the objects included in Mr Wallis's collection would afford in the arrangement of a series showing the development and characteristic features of this ware.

Purchase of Hispano-Moresque pottery from Wallis, 1907

Memo, A. B. Skinner to Ogilvie, 8 November 1906:

You will remember that I spoke to you some months ago respecting the purchase of Mr Henry Wallis's collection of Hispano-Moresque ware now exhibited in the Museum . . .

I learned recently from an outside source that a

French dealer had written to Mr Wallis to enquire if he would part with his collection as he (the dealer) was buying up all the Hispano-Moresque ware procurable for Mr Hillingdon, a Chicago collector.¹⁰⁵ This dealer has been scouring London for this kind of pottery and secured all the specimens in Messrs. Durlacher's possession . . .

I had an interview with Mr Wallis as soon as possible after coming into possession of the above information, as I did not like the idea of the possibility of our losing a collection which I had long desired that the Museum should possess. He acknowledged that he had received the letter, but was agreeable to giving us the opportunity of acquiring the collection for £3000, as he had always hoped that it would never leave the Museum.

I then prepared an independent valuation . . . £3482.

Mr Wallis has now sent me a letter . . . he is prepared to let us have his collection of Hispano-Moresque pottery . . . for £3000; he will allow the payment to be made in two instalments . . . I think Mr Wallis would easily obtain this sum in the trade, if not more . . .

There is no doubt in my mind as to the advisability of seriously considering the acquisition of this collection to complete our own, which possesses some very fine specimens such as the winged vase,¹⁰⁶ some bowls and dishes, but is deficient in really good drug-jars . . .

It may be suggested that the Museum might be content with a selection, but I do not think we could afford to cut out very many pieces, and this elimination would be of but little use in bringing down the total price . . .

Report by Walter Crane, 17 November 1906:

I have inspected this remarkable and beautiful collection (which I have long known as one of the most distinguished loans for its artistic value & decorative beauty in the Museum) & I am very strongly of the opinion that such a unique opportunity for adding to the collection should not be lost. The addition of the very choice examples in Mr Wallis's collection, which has been acquired during many years travels, & by the exercise of fine taste, experience, and artistic judgement, would make the collection in the Victoria & Albert Museum an unrivalled one . . . It also contains many interesting types of pattern not in the

Museum collection, besides supplying valuable historic links, so that a complete exposition of the evolution of this beautiful ware could be illustrated in the collection in tracing the variations in the style & treatment of the lustre designs from the earliest more restrained type of pattern through the rich full & free efflorescence of its prime, & so its decline though still rich and splendid.

From the point of view of its artistic interest & its value to students of design, & decorative art Hispano-Moresque lustre ware can hardly be overestimated. In its finest development we find the most refined & instructive examples of pattern and design and its appropriate distribution over & adaptation to various spaces, surfaces, & shapes. We see an extraordinary just instinct for decoration, & a beautiful kind of convention as effective as it is simple and bold.

Report from Sir William Blake Richmond,¹⁰⁷ 24 November 1906:

. . . The specimens are not only very rare but singularly beautiful . . .

Report from F. D. Godman, 1 December 1906:

. . . I have little doubt if it were sold by auction at Christie's it would realise more than the sum named above – The price of this class of Pottery appears to be steadily rising in value.

Proposal to purchase Near Eastern and Italian pottery from Wallis, 1910–11

Memo, Bernard Rackham to A. P. Oppé,¹⁰⁸ 30 December 1910:

Mr Henry Wallis called this morning and complained that he had heard nothing further with regard to the proposal, discussed between him and Mr Wyld, for the purchase of the two cases, of Near Eastern and Italian pottery respectively, at present exhibited in the Museum on loan from him . . . Another would-be purchaser, whom I suspect to be the representative of a foreign Museum, has approached Mr Wallis and is desirous of purchasing the collection . . .

It appears to me to be of the utmost importance, unless Mr Wallis's terms are considered altogether unreasonable, that the opportunity of acquiring this collection should not be allowed to slip. All the objects comprising it are of great artistic and histor-

ical value, while several are of such an exceptional character that their withdrawal from exhibition here would be a disaster to the Museum.

Oppé to Wallis, 10 February 1911:

I am directed to inform you that the Board, after full consideration, decided not to purchase at the price named, the collection of Near Eastern Pottery and Italian maiolica now on loan from you in this Museum. This decision applies only to the purchase of the collection en bloc. Should you be prepared to allow a selection to be made from the collection, the Board would be glad to consider the acquisition of some of the more important pieces . . .

A dramatic proposal

To Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith,¹⁰⁹ 14 July 1914:

Private

Sir,

Very much obliged to you for the two photographs received this morning . . . They suggest to me that if you c^{ld} have all the really important objects in the Museum photoed in this style & set a capable artist such as you have on your staff to make colour copies of the originals, at least you w^{ld} have taken a step w^{ch} w^{ld} have secured records that c^{ld} not be destroyed by the suffragists. This w^{ld} be remembered afterwards by future donors.

The suffragists have announced their intention to make a stroke w^{ch} will be decisive. The first step to take is to make the Museum secure? The Gov^t c^{ld} do this by giving you a corporal's guard, with sentries at all the entrances and exits? But it has not the courage to take a step of this nature. But as the Museum is under your charge, w^{ld} not you be justified in laying the matter before his Majesty the King? Of course, the other Museums w^{ld} demand the same protection? Then as to our Museums the public w^{ld} feel they at least had been made secure.

Excuse this scrawl and destroy it when read . . .

P. S. You remember how at the siege of Paris the French Gov^t made the Venus of Milo secure?

Harcourt-Smith to Wallis, 16 July 1914:

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for the useful suggestions contained in your letter . . . I will give them the very careful consideration that they deserve . . .

Posthumous acquisitions from Wallis's collection for the V&A

Memo, Rackham to Harcourt-Smith, 25 June 1917:

I received a letter . . . from Sir Hercules Read making enquiries as to the collection of the late Henry Wallis and hinting that he considered it somewhat odd that he should not have been consulted as to its destination . . .

I had an interview about the matter with Mr Harold Wallis . . . I reminded Mr Wallis of the request that had been put to him on previous occasions that in the event of his desiring to part with the whole or part of his father's collection, he should give this Museum first refusal of purchase . . .

Mr Wallis quite appreciates the position. He said he had found much correspondence between his father & Sir Hercules Read, which came to an abrupt end, indicating possibly some disagreement . . . he himself had not been swayed by any personal considerations, but believed that he had only carried out his father's intentions in offering to the Museum as gifts and loans the greater part of the collection . . . He was surprised that Sir Hercules had not heard about the disposal of the collⁿ from Dr Budge,¹¹⁰ with whom he had been in constant communication as to Egyptological specimens.

Read to Harold Wallis, 1 July 1918:

. . . There are certainly one or two pieces I should be glad to see here if I can only find the means . . .

Read to Rackham, 20 September 1918:

Harold Wallis came to see me yesterday – rather in a state of puzzlement. For he had never hitherto realised that you and I might conceivably want the same things! He asked me specifically if any of the pieces you had in mind would be useful here, and I was obliged to say that I had desiderated that blue vase about which I think Hobson spoke to you – that his father and I had argued over it many years ago, the old man having a very high idea of its value . . .

Can you let me know about this matter? As far as I can judge Harold Wallis wants me to have this pot, and if so I think it would be better policy for both of us – if he had his way.

Rackham to Read, 27 September 1918:

Sir Cecil Smith and I have been conferring with Harold Wallis as to the proposed purchase from his collection. It is evident and quite intelligible, that Wallis does not wish to be involved in a discussion as to the relative claims of our Museums, and I have no doubt at all that he was unaware that the two institutions covered the same ground at all. The Director and I are very anxious to meet him in his desire to avoid any sort of friction. May I therefore suggest that we might come to some kind of compromise.

I understand from Hobson that the fine turquoise vase with black inscriptions from Rakka (Fig. 8 in 'the Oriental Influence') is one that you would be glad to have for the British Museum. It is also a thing I should like to see kept here, but it is not essential to us, as we have already fairly good pieces of that type. The blue and white hexagonal vase, on the other hand, I feel to be highly desirable for us, to exhibit side by side with our panels of hexagonal tile from the Great Mosque in Damascus, many of which came to us through Henry Wallis several years ago. It also has a great value, as a splendid type of industrial art, from the special point of view of this Museum . . .

I hope therefore you will not mind if he sells us the blue and white vase . . .

Read to Rackham, 4 October 1918:

My dear Rackham

By all means act as you propose, but I do not care about the Rakka vase.

Memo, Rackham to Harcourt-Smith, 16 October 1918:

. . . All these pieces have been known for many years to students of Near Eastern Pottery from the writings of their late owner Mr Henry Wallis . . . They were all exhibited here as part of a large collection on loan in Mr Henry Wallis's lifetime . . .

I attach memoranda relating to abortive negotiations between Mr Wylde and Mr Henry Wallis as to the purchase of this loan collection in January 1911. Mr Wallis offered the whole of his Near Eastern collection for £2,700, and the money not being available for a purchase en bloc, Mr Wylde in consultation with myself . . . endeavoured to induce Mr Wallis to sell piecemeal. The negotiations fell through because Mr Wallis not only refused to split up the collection but at last stipulated certain additions . . .

Postscript

After the present article had been consigned to the press, an important group of letters to Wallis and other family papers was put up for sale at Bonham's, Knightsbridge, London, 13 March 2002, lot 975. It was acquired by the Bodleian Library, Oxford. These papers will be taken account of in part 2 of this article. I am indebted to David Park for access to them. The following is an extract from a letter written by William Morris at Kelmscott to Wallis on 11 March 1882:

My Dear Wallis

. . . As to the question of the Museums, I don't think I quite agree: all the more as I have just this moment come from S.K.M. which I have found in its usual state of muddle: that museum is overburdened with articles & don't know where to put them, it is true that about one third of the articles are useless & ought to be destroyed, but even if that were done there would still not be room for a proper arrangement of what is left: that arrangement should be nearly a permanent one or the museum is no use to students: take an example: the SKM. possesses in the Bock Collection a treasure of textile examples which is invaluable; it is several years (15 I should think) since the public has been able to see anything but a small part of this stowed away in a dark corner: in the meantime the SKM. has exhibited all sorts of sickening rubbish; fans; rococo embroideries; the sweepings of the Venice dealers shops and other twaddle: now it really would be better that these things should be visible at Manchester or Nottingham or Birmingham than invisible in London. Besides (I am speaking of industrial art, as the Slang goes, not of pictures all this while) it seems to me that if museums are of use to the art of today (which may be questioned) they are wanted in manufacturing towns more than in London. At the same time I don't agree with the extension of the lending system, which I think a bad one in any case.

Not to bore you with my opinion of what I should call a difficult question here it is:

1. The SKM wants thorough reform
2. that reform should consist A. of weeding out the useless articles, a committee of artists to sit upon them as works of art not curiosities, no dealer's

opinion to be asked on them. & B of arrangement: a committee of artists should settle where the things could be put to best advantage, and that arrangement should be permanent, one court might be kept for articles on loan (as now) but the permanent arrangement should never be disturbed.

3rd this collection should consist of things typical of their kinds, and all duplicates and all things so much alike as to approach the nature of duplicates should be set aside and handed over to the provincial museums as a nucleus in each case for their collections.

4th I don't see why, in buying new things, those provincial museums should not have some share of things acquired. . . You see I would not on any account do anything which would injure the Museum as a collection of typical works of art; but at present its situation is chaotic; I believe chiefly because it has more things than it knows what to do with. As to the lending business, once more I think that a mistake from beginning to end; things are no use in a museum if a student can't come to them whenever he wants to study them & bring his master and scholar to look at them – also the risk makes one shudder: if I had a fine picture I would see everybody Italians before I would lend it to go jig-jog on a railway.

Well pray excuse my scrawl; only I am much interested in the matter as you are, & am glad of a chance of airing my views in a crude and irresponsible manner.

Address for correspondence

Timothy Wilson, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford OX1 2PH
timothy.wilson@ashmus.ox.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

Wallis's letters and other documents in this and the subsequent part of this article are published by kind permission of the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum; the Keeper of Medieval and Modern Europe in the British Museum; the Zentralarchiv of the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz; the Director of the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche, Faenza; the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna; the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford; and the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum. I have not managed to trace anyone with a claim to own the copyright of Wallis's letters. The photographs of items in the V&A and of the British Museum are reproduced by

permission of the Trustees. I am grateful to the following for assistance of various kinds with both parts, sometimes above and beyond the call of duty or friendship: James Allan, Angelina Altobellis, Luciana Arbace, Malcolm Baker, Gayle Barkley, Morris Bierbrier, Lisa Bingham, Terry Bloxham, Michael Brody, Anthony Burton, Marian Campbell, Marjorie Caygill, Alan Coates, Sarah Collins, Rachel Connolly, Judith Crouch, Martin Durrant, Caroline Elam, Chris Entwistle, David Gaimster, Gabriella Gherardi, Jörn Grabowski, Robin Hamlyn, Colin Harrison, Janeen Haythornthwaite, Norman Jacobs, Jane Jakeman, Diane Johnson, Serena Kelly, Christine Lahaussois, Johanna Lessmann, Reino Liefkes, Jaromir Malek, Arthur MacGregor, Margaret Connors McQuade, John Mallet, Christopher Marsden, Michelangelo Munarini, Sergio and Santa Nepoti, Anthony North, Jennifer Opie, David Park, Saul Peckham, Venetia Porter, Lorella Ranzi, Carmen Ravanello Guidotti, Nicholas Reeves, Richard Repp, Jeremy Rex-Parkes, Daniel Robbins, Timothy Rogers, Carolyn Sargentson, Alberto Satolli, Gill Saunders, StJohn Simpson, Virginia Smithson, Marco Spallanzani, Patricia Spencer, Anna Taylor, John Taylor, Ben Thomas, Dora Thornton, Paul Tucker, Clive Wainwright, Jeremy Warren, Catherine Whistler, Helen Whitehouse, Dyfri Williams, Paul Williamson, Alastair Wilson, Linda Woolley, Mary Yule, Diego Zancani. My initial interest in Wallis was in fruitful collaboration with Patricia Collins. Rainer Zietz has provided generous long-term support of my research on the maiolica in the British Museum.

Notes and references

- For Wallis's life, see A. Van de Put, 'Henry Wallis (1830–1916)', *Faenza* 5 (1917), pp. 33–8; D. Johnson, *The True History of the First Mrs. Meredith and Other Lesser Lives* (London, 1973); R. Hamlyn in *Dictionary of National Biography: Missing persons* (1993), pp. 697–8; J. Elkan in *The [Grove] Dictionary of Art*, vol. 32, pp. 800–1.
- For both paintings, see R. Hamlyn in *The Pre-Raphaelites*, exh. cat., Tate Gallery (London, 1984), nos. 75, 92. Also S. Wildman, *Visions of Love and Life*, exh. cat. (Alexandria, Virginia, 1995), pp. 156–9.
- A collection of paintings including watercolours of Mediterranean and Arab subjects, was sold (the property of Mrs V. G. Whiting, to whom they had passed by inheritance from Wallis), at Sotheby's, Belgravia, 10 April 1973. The watercolour in Fig. 1 was lot 205. 'Dóráks' and 'Kullehs' were types of earthenware water pots used in nineteenth-century Egypt; see E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1908), pp. 151–3. A further group of works by Wallis was sold at Bonham's, New Bond Street, London, 5 March 2002, lots 62–76.
- 120 letters to F. G. Stephens (1828–1907), art critic of the *Athenaeum*, are in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms. Don. e. 79; and one more, concerning Morelli, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, is ms. Don. d. 116, fol. 123.
- Including an article on 'The Fountaine collection', *Art Journal* (1884), pp. 305–8; and a well-informed review of 'The exhibition of ceramic art at Rome, 1889', *Art Journal* (1890), pp. 273–5.
- On Orientalism in nineteenth-century painting in England, France and elsewhere, see K. Bendiner in *The [Grove] Dictionary of Art*, vol. 23, pp. 502–5; L. Thornton, *Les Orientalistes: peintres voyageurs 1828–1908* (Paris, 1903); *The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse*, exh. cat., Royal Academy (London, 1984); G. M. Ackerman, *Les Orientalistes de l'école britannique* (Paris, 1991).
- H. Wallis, 'Ancient Cairo houses', *Art Journal* (1888), pp. 144–9.
- He was Honorary Secretary of the International Committee for the Preservation of the Basilica of Saint Mark's, Venice, from 1880 to 1882. His papers in relation to the campaign are in the British Library, Add. MS 38,831.
- See his vigorous polemic, 'The destruction of Egyptian monuments', *The Nineteenth Century* no. 165 (November 1890), pp. 720–32. Compare F. Petrie, *Seventy Years in Archaeology* (London, n.d.), p. 120: 'A society for the preservation of monuments was formed: Henry Wallis was a main mover; Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff joined it. There was a proposal to appoint an independent inspector from England, but it was quashed by the French in Egypt. The only action which took effect was that the society paid for erecting a house at Tell el Amarna over the painted pavement which I found.' For a more detailed and sympathetic account of the Society for the Preservation of the Monuments of Ancient Egypt, of which Wallis and the painter Edward Poynter were Honorary Secretaries, see M. S. Drower in T. G. H. James (ed.), *Excavating in Egypt. The Egypt Exploration Society 1882–1982* (London, 1982), pp. 29–32.
- H. Wallis, *Pictures from Greek Vases. The white Athenian lekythi* (London, 1896), p. 8.
- Wallis's main publications on Islamic pottery were: Introduction to the *Illustrated Catalogue of Specimens of Persian and Arab Art*, exh. cat., Burlington Fine Arts Club (London, 1885), pp. vi–xvi; *Notes on Some Early Persian lustre Vases* (London, 1885); *Notes on Some Examples of Early Persian Pottery*, no. 2 (Biggin Hill, 1887); *Notes on Some Examples of Early Persian Lustre Ware*, no. 3 (London, 1889); *The Godman Collection. Persian ceramic art in the collection of Mr F. DuCane Godman, F.R.S. The thirteenth century lustred vases* (London, 1891); *Typical Examples of Persian and Oriental Ceramic Art* (London, 1893); 'La céramique persane au XIII^e siècle', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 3rd ser. 8 (1892), pp. 69–79; *The Godman Collection. Persian ceramic art belonging to Mr F. DuCane Godman, F.R.S. The thirteenth century lustred wall-tiles* (London, 1894); *Persian Lustre Vases* (London, 1899); 'Thirteenth century Persian lustre pottery', *The Nineteenth Century*, no. 272 (October 1899), pp. 560–9.
- Wilhelm von Bode, on p. 207 of his ground-breaking article 'Altflorentiner Majoliken', *Jahrbuch der Königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 19 (1898), pp. 206–17, described him as *der beste Kenner der vorderasiatischen und hispano-moresken Fayencen*.
- Frederick DuCane Godman (1834–1919), naturalist and collector. His collection of Islamic and Hispano-Moresque pottery eventually came to the British Museum in 1983. See *The Godman Collection of Oriental and Spanish Pottery and Glass, 1865–1900* (London, 1901); R. Ward, 'Islamism, not an easy matter', in M. Caygill and J. Cherry (eds.), *A. W. Franks. Nineteenth-century collecting and the British Museum* (London, 1997), pp. 278–9.
- For C. D. E. Fortnum (1820–1899), scholar of maiolica and bronzes, and benefactor of the Ashmolean Museum, see 'C. D. E. Fortnum and the collecting and study of applied arts and sculpture in Victorian England', ed. T. Wilson and B. Thomas, *Journal of the History of Collections* 11 (1999), pp. 127–277.

- 15 'Inscribed to Dr Wilhelm Bode, who has earned the lasting gratitude and regard of all lovers of the art of the Italian Renaissance.'
- 16 Luigi Frati (1815–1902), Bolognese scholar, Director of the Municipal Library from 1858 and of the Medieval and Modern section of the civic Museum from 1878. See G. Fagioli Vercellone in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 50 (1998), pp. 332–4; also T. Wilson, "'Il papà delle antiche maioliche'". C. D. E. Fortnum and the study of Italian maiolica', *Journal of the History of Collections* 11 (1999), pp. 203–18, especially pp. 207–11. In the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna (Carteggio Carlo Frati xxvii, no. 3) is a letter from Wallis to Frati's son Carlo expressing Wallis's affection for the old man, who had died not long before: 'It was many years ago that he took me to the S. Sebastian chapel, at S. Petronio, to see its beautiful pavement, & always when I passed by Bologna I used to call at the Library & have a chat with him'. I am indebted to Sergio and Santa Nepoti for tracing this letter.
- 17 The drawings for this and some of Wallis's other books were presented to the V&A after Wallis's death by his son Harold and are in the Museum Print Room. Marked-up proof sheets for some of them are in the National Art Library.
- 18 Introduction to *Exhibition of the Art of Ancient Egypt*, exh. cat., Burlington Fine Arts Club (London, 1895); *Egyptian Ceramic Art. The MacGregor collection* (London, 1898); 'Ancient Egyptian ceramic art', *The Nineteenth Century*, no. 276 (February 1900), pp. 308–20; *Egyptian Ceramic Art. Typical examples of the art of the Egyptian potter* (London, 1900).
- 19 See Wallis, op. cit. (note 10).
- 20 *Byzantine Ceramic Art. Notes on examples of Byzantine pottery recently found at Constantinople* (London, 1907).
- 21 For Wallis's repeated stress on wasters as the only definite archaeological evidence of local manufacture, see, for instance, *Italian Ceramic Art. Examples of maiolica and mezza-maiolica fabricated before 1500* (London, 1897), p. xiii.
- 22 *Athenaeum* no. 3751, 16 September 1899, p. 392; this review of a book by Federigo Argenti is, like most of Wallis's reviews, unsigned, but certainly by him.
- 23 'Pottery represented in pictures and sculpture', in H. Wallis, *The Art of the Precursors* (London, 1901), pp. 80–6.
- 24 Wallis, op. cit. (note 23), p. ix.
- 25 For the plan of providing a series of illustrations for the use of 'students', and his preference for 'typo-etching' over photographs, see Wallis, op. cit. (note 21), pp. x–xi.
- 26 Nine of Wallis's note- and sketchbooks are in the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and one (given by Rackham to Ballardini) is in the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza.
- 27 See Van de Put, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 33–4. Wallis had been appointed by Ballardini the first English representative on the *Comitato di patronato* of the Faenza Museum, in 1910.
- 28 C. D. E. Fortnum, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Maiolica, Hispano-Moresco, Persian, Damascus, and Rhodian Wares in the South Kensington Museum* (London, 1873), p. lx. For Fortnum and the genesis of the 1873 catalogue, see Wilson, op. cit. (note 16). For the collecting choices made by the two museums in the 1850s, see T. Wilson, 'The origins of the maiolica collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum 1851–55', *Faenza* 71 (1985), pp. 68–81. For the Fountaine collection, the most spectacular exemplification of this taste, formed in the eighteenth century, augmented in the nineteenth, and sold at Christie's in 1884, see A. Moore, 'The Fountaine collection of maiolica', *Burlington Magazine* 130 (1988), pp. 435–47.
- 29 For Fortnum's collection, see C. D. E. Fortnum, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Maiolica . . . in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Fortnum Collection* (Oxford, 1897); T. Wilson, *Maiolica. Italian Renaissance ceramics in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford, 1989); T. Wilson, 'La collezione Fortnum all'Ashmolean Museum di Oxford', *CeramicAntica* anno 5 no. 8 (September 1995), pp. 38–53; see Wilson, op. cit. (note 16). The Ashmolean, unlike almost all the world's other great collections of Renaissance maiolica, still has no 'oak-leaf jar'.
- 30 E. Molinier, 'La céramique italienne au Louvre', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 3rd ser. 18 (1897), pp. 147–58.
- 31 To be published in the second part of this article.
- 32 The term seems to have been coined by Wallis in 1903; proof copies of his *Oak-leaf Jars* (London, 1903) in the National Art Library show the title was added in proof. For the present state of studies on this important group of fifteenth-century pottery in Tuscany and elsewhere, see G. Conti et al., *Zaffera et similia nella maiolica italiana* (Viterbo, c.1992).
- 33 For J. C. Robinson (1824–1923), see H. Davies, 'John Charles Robinson's work at the South Kensington Museum', *Journal of the History of Collections* 10 (1998), pp. 169–88; 11 (1999), pp. 95–115; H. Davies, 'John Charles Robinson and John Malcolm of Poltalloch. Collecting Italian old master drawings in nineteenth-century England', *Apollo* 153 (2001), pp. 35–42; and for his involvement with maiolica, see Wilson, op. cit. (note 16).
- 34 B. Rackham, *Victoria and Albert Museum. Catalogue of Italian maiolica* (London, 1940), no. 35.
- 35 J. Giacomotti, *Catalogue des majoliques des musées nationaux* (Paris, 1974), nos 33–35, acquired between 1856 and 1859. See also Tucker in this volume, p. 124.
- 36 Wallis, op. cit. (note 32), p. xiii.
- 37 Wilhelm Bode noted, in the useful note on collectors of early maiolica on p. 201 of *Altflorentiner Majoliken*, op. cit. (note 12), that Murray had possessed the 'historically most important collection, systematically assembled in Florence' (*historisch wichtigsten, systematisch in Florenz zusammengebrachten Sammlung*).
- 38 For Bode (1845–1929), see the annotated edition of his autobiography, *Mein Leben*, ed. T. W. Gaehtgens and B. Paul, *Quellen zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte* 4 (Berlin, 1997); the commemorative volume *Wilhelm von Bode Museumsdirektor und Mäzen* (Berlin, 1995); R. Scott in *The [Grove] Dictionary of Art*, vol. 4, pp. 208–9; and for his English contacts, J. P. Warren, 'Bode and the British', *Jahrbuch der berliner Museen*, new ser. 38, *Beiheft*, pp. 121–42. Bode followed up his 1898 article (note 12) with his monumental study, *Die Anfänge der Majolikakunst in Toskana* (Berlin, 1911). Bode himself accumulated one of the most important of all collections of fifteenth-century maiolica, many pieces of which were drawn by Wallis and illustrated in his books; those pieces not previously presented to the Berlin museums were sold in Berlin by Cassirer and Helbing, 5 November 1929.
- 39 E. Molinier (1857–1906), *conservateur* in the Département des Objets d'Art of the Louvre from 1879 until his resignation in 1902; see B. Jestaz in *The [Grove] Dictionary of Art*, vol. 21, pp. 816–17. His books *Les majoliques italiennes en Italie* (Paris, 1883) and *La Céramique italienne au xv^e siècle* (Paris, 1888)

- were milestones in the development of scholarly interest in Europe in fifteenth-century maiolica. His own collection, when sold in Paris (Galeries Durand-Ruel), 21–8 June 1906, contained only a few fifteenth-century pieces.
- 40 William Holman Hunt acquired a large collection of maiolica in Italy in the 1860s. See D. Holman-Hunt, 'The Holman Hunt Collection: A personal recollection', in L. Parris (ed.), *Pre-Raphaelite Papers* (London, 1984), pp. 206–25. For the 'long cheerful friendship' between Hunt and Wallis, see Johnson, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 217–19. For letters from Wallis to Hunt, see below, note 52.
 - 41 See Johnson, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 184, 220; where she cites a letter from William Bell Scott (1811–90) to Wallis of 11 October 1889 when Bell Scott was selling his collection. Scott draws Wallis's attention to 'the little early Italian pots you once called in to see', as well as to 'a number of Hispano: Moros. if you still collect such, and a remarkable Majolica platter with the subject of Jupiter and Juno in an interesting position (not improper) on it'. He refers to a sale at Bellevue House, Chelsea. Scott presented what was almost certainly the pride of his collection, a Valencian lustred aquamanile, to South Kensington: V&A 431–1889; A. Ray, *Spanish Pottery 1248–1898 with a Catalogue of the Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1998), no. 215. This letter, with five others from Bell Scott to Wallis, was sold at Bonham's in March 2002 and is now in the Bodleian Library: see Postscript.
 - 42 Leighton (1830–96) was the same age as Wallis, and shared his interest in the Islamic world and in pottery. Leighton House, in west London, retains the superlative Iznik tiles he installed, and others in Iznik style by William De Morgan, but most of his portable objects, including a few pieces of Italian maiolica and over 100 pieces of Islamic pottery, were sold after his death, at Christie's, 8–10 July 1896. Despite the range of common interests, I have found no evidence that the two men were friends. Eight lots of Islamic pottery (29, 59, 62, 149, 153, 163, 184, 189) were bought at the Leighton sale by 'Wallis', probably Henry.
 - 43 The earliest of his sales to the British Museum was the superb *istoriato* plate after Michelangelo, with the arms of Cardinal Bembo, which Wallis sold in 1888 at the price he had paid for it at the Fountaine sale four years before: T. Wilson, *Ceramic Art of the Italian Renaissance*, exh. cat., British Museum (London, 1987), no. 203. He had been a subscriber to the 'Syndicate' formed in 1884 to try to buy items from the Fountaine collection for the national museums, for which see Moore, op. cit. (note 28).
 - 44 Contrast the insistence of C. D. E. Fortnum on not taking a profit on things he bought for South Kensington: 'I am anxious to maintain my position as an *amateur* and not be looked upon as a *dealer*', in his letter to Henry Cole, 1865, quoted by J. Warren, *Renaissance Master Bronzes from the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*, exh. cat., Daniel Katz Gallery (London, 1999), p. 24.
 - 45 Letter to Hercules Read, 18 April 1896, to be published in the second part of this article.
 - 46 D. G. Rossetti remarked that Murray 'does know a great deal [about art history] but seems not to have the slightest faculty for writing it down', quoted by D. B. Elliott, *Charles Fairfax Murray. The unknown Pre-Raphaelite* (Lewes, 2000), p. 89.
 - 47 Charles Hercules Read (1857–1929), assistant in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities of the British Museum from 1880; succeeded A. W. Franks as Keeper in 1896; knighted 1912; retired 1921. See M. Caygill in Caygill and Cherry, op. cit. (note 13), pp. 94–5, 101–2.
 - 48 Nearly fifty years after Wallis's death, Bernard Rackham feelingly recalled dealing with his outbursts: 'Much indignation was expressed by people such as Henry Wallis when they came to find that the particular piece of maiolica or Persian pottery wanted for copying to illustrate a book was away at Kidderminster or Blackburn and would not come back for many months' (Rackham's private notes on his career, 1962, in the Department of Ceramics).
 - 49 J. Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), the highest-spending collector of the day; see A. D. Robson in *The [Grove] Dictionary of Art*, vol. 22, pp. 111–12; L. Horvitz Roth, *J. Pierpont Morgan, Collector*, exh. cat., Wadsworth Atheneum (Hartford, CT, 1986); L. Riccetti, 'La ceramica medievale orvietana: la pista americana ed alcune precisazioni', *Faenza* 87, nos 4–6 (2001), pp. 5–69.
 - 50 A lively and sympathetic account of the archaeological world in Egypt at this time is given by A. H. Sayce, *Reminiscences* (London, 1923).
 - 51 For Ballardini (1878–1953) see G. Liverani in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* vol. 5 (1963), pp. 567–8.
 - 52 Among other letters from Wallis consulted but used only as background in the present article are the following: (a) seven (or perhaps more) letters to Ford Madox Brown, c. 1872–4, in the National Art Library at the V&A; (b) three letters to William Bemrose (1831–1908, publisher, writer on wood-carving and ceramics) in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. They date from between 1891 and 1899 and are enquiries as to whether Bemrose would like to publish his books; (c) seven letters to Charles Fairfax Murray in the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, English MS 1281, nos. 678–684. They date from between 1894 and 1906 and deal with a variety of art matters. See Tucker in this volume; (d) thirty-eight letters to Albert Van de Put (1876–1951), Librarian of the V&A, in the National Art Library. They run from 1902 to 1913 and deal mainly with questions about pottery and heraldry. See D. Sutton, 'Early Italian art and the English: xvii: discoveries', *Apollo* 122 (1985), pp. 118–20; (e) the letters to F. G. Stephens cited in note 4; (f) four letters in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, three to Holman Hunt (see Ackerman, op. cit. (note 6), p. 208) and one to Marion Edith Hunt; (g) letters to Wallis Budge in the Archive of the Department of the Ancient Near East in the British Museum. I owe to Christine Lahaussois information on a group of copy-letters of 1887–9 from Édouard Garnier, *conservateur* of the Sèvres ceramics museum, to Wallis about Persian pottery and the purchase of a Persian plate from Wallis by the Museum; these letters, but not the letters from Wallis to Garnier, are in the archives at Sèvres. See also Postscript.
 - 53 Letters to him then in the possession of Mrs V. G. Whiting were seen by Diane Johnson around 1970 and used in her book (note 1). Most or all of these were sold at Bonham's, London, 13 March 2002, lot 975, and acquired by the Bodleian Library, Oxford. See Postscript.
 - 54 For the history of the V&A, see A. Burton, *Vision and Accident. The story of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1999), especially, for the curatorial problems at this date, pp. 130–8. In 1884, C. D. E. Fortnum described the Museum as 'under such incompetent direction . . . so niggardly & miserable in some ways, and ignorantly wasteful in others' (letter to Arthur

- Evans, cited by Warren, op. cit. (note 44), p. 19, note 53). In 1884, J. C. Robinson, admittedly a man with a grievance, wrote to Gladstone that 'there has not for many years been any persons officially connected with the South Kensington Museum possessing sufficient knowledge of works of art . . .' (Ashmolean Museum, Robinson papers, file 20). See also Tucker in this volume, p. 115.
- 55 For his letters to Albert Van de Put, beginning in 1902, which did involve serious academic discussion, see above, note 52.
- 56 Most of the documents are in the V&A Archive, nominal files on 'Wallis, Henry'; the Argnani papers are in the files on 'Purchases made by Officers Abroad'.
- 57 Thomas Armstrong (1832–1911), Director for Art 1881–98.
- 58 A. F. Kendrick, *Victoria and Albert Museum. Department of Textiles. Catalogue of textiles from burying-grounds in Egypt*, 3 vols. (London 1920–2), I, p. 9, calls Panopolis, now Akhmim in Upper Egypt, 'the most prolific in its yield of textiles of all Egyptian centres. The foundation of the Museum collection was laid, in 1886, by the acquisition of about 300 pieces from this site'. They are V&A 631 to 922–1886. I have not found that Wallis did publish any of them himself.
- 59 V&A 601, 602–1886.
- 60 V&A 434–1888.
- 61 V&A 324, 324A–1889; J. Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1964), nos. 10–11.
- 62 See Wallis, op. cit. (note 7), p. 9.
- 63 Now Sivas, in Turkey.
- 64 Wallis was one of the main lenders to the Burlington Fine Arts Club *Exhibition of the Art of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1895), and contributed the introduction. The Egyptian pottery does not seem to have gone back to South Kensington afterwards; a few pieces subsequently passed to the V&A, but Egyptological specialists I have consulted do not know the present whereabouts of most of the pieces.
- 65 V&A 124 to 126–1896. Two of these are Deruta lustreware (Rackham, op. cit. (note 34), nos. 455 and 762). The third, 125–1896, looks likely to be a nineteenth-century fake in the Gubbio or Deruta manner. J. H. Middleton, Director of the Museum since 1893, died of a possibly deliberate laudanum overdose in June 1896.
- 66 V&A 689 to 699–1898; Wallis had acquired them from the dealer Pacini; most are catalogued by Rackham, op. cit. (note 34). Wallis made a gift of fragments from Faenza the same year to the British Museum.
- 67 The group as acquired, 1384 to 1413–1901, included some fragments as well as the twenty-four bowls. Some of them were disposed of following a decision of a Board of Survey in 1951.
- 68 Giacomotti, op. cit. (note 35) catalogues the purchases.
- 69 Walter Crane (1845–1915), artist and designer for ceramic tiles, at this time Principal of the Royal College of Art.
- 70 T. G. Jackson (1835–1924).
- 71 V&A 1116 to 1151–1904; the importance of these pieces in the Museum collection is obvious from Rackham, op. cit. (note 34). The jar illustrated in Fig. 3 is Rackham no. 41.
- 72 V&A 1 to 56–1907; catalogued by Ray, op. cit. (note 41). The albarello illustrated here in Fig. 6 is Ray no. 165.
- 73 Bernard Rackham (1876–1964), entered the service of the South Kensington Museum in 1898, became a world authority on Italian maiolica and other areas of ceramics and glass; he retired as Keeper of Ceramics and Glass in 1938. See J. V. G. Mallet, 'Amicus amico dilecto: Gaetano Ballardini e Bernard Rackham', *Faenza* 78 (1992), pp. 134–56.
- 74 Diane Johnson informs me that a few pieces remained in the Wallis family and were sold by Mrs Whiting (see note 3) around 1973. A few residual pieces, mainly Chinese, were sold at Bonham's, New Bond Street, London, 5 March 2002, lot 70.
- 75 V&A C413–1918. Published by Wallis, *The Oriental Influence on the Ceramic Art of the Italian Renaissance* (London, 1900), fig. 20; A. Lane, *Later Islamic Pottery*, 2nd edn. (London, 1971), pl. 14.
- 76 This row is described by Johnson, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 187–8, quoting a letter in the Wallis estate from Read to Harold Wallis: 'I was a very old friend, of something near to forty years' standing, and I think he confided in me as much as he did in anyone'.
- 77 See Wilson, op. cit. (note 28), p. 75.
- 78 R. L. Hobson (1872–1941), ceramic scholar, appointed Keeper of Ceramics and Ethnography in the British Museum in 1921.
- 79 The present writer, then a curator in the successor department to Read's, recalls a difference of opinion with the V&A in the 1980s, conducted in much the same terms, over which of the museums should try to buy a gold heraldic collar.
- 80 Wallis lived at 24 Brecknock Crescent, Camden Road, London, from the time these letters begin until 1880; until 1895 at Woodbury, Biggin Hill; until 1909 at 9 Beauchamp Road, Upper Norwood; and thereafter at Claverton, Sutton, Surrey.
- 81 Richard Thompson (1819–1908), Assistant Director of the Museum.
- 82 Robert Soden Smith (1822–90), Keeper of the Art Library. He was himself a collector of pottery.
- 83 The vase has not been traced, but may be one of those illustrated from his own collection by Wallis, op. cit. (note 10).
- 84 Major-General Sir John Donnelly (1834–1902), Secretary of the Department of Science and Art (the South Kensington Museum's controlling department).
- 85 See above, note 9.
- 86 The house has not been definitely identified, but Jane Jakeman suggests to me it may have been one in Hâret el Medak mentioned in *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'art arabe. Exercice 1890*, fascicule 7, p. 128. In his article 'Ancient Cairo houses' in the *Art Journal* (1888), p. 148, Wallis had mentioned the possibility of removing the internal decoration of the semi-derelict house of the Musaffir Khana: 'It would not be of much interest in Cairo . . . but it would give the English public an idea of this special phase of industrial art.'
- 87 Caspar Purdon Clarke (1846–1911), at this date Keeper of the Indian Museum and of the Oriental Section; Director of the V&A 1896–1905.
- 88 Sir Evelyn Baring (1841–1917, later 1st Earl of Cromer), British agent and consul-general in Egypt.
- 89 Sir Francis Philip Cunliffe-Owen (1828–94), Director of the South Kensington Museum 1873–93.
- 90 Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff (1836–1916), at this time Under-Secretary of State for Public Works in Cairo.
- 91 Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury (1830–1903), at this time Prime Minister of Great Britain.
- 92 A. B. Skinner (1861–1911), Assistant Director of the Museum

- from 1896; Art Director 1905; Keeper of the Department of Architecture and Sculpture 1909. In a letter, now in the Bodleian, to his son Harold, Wallis complained that Skinner had not been made Director of the V&A in 1909: 'It was too bad to put Cecil Smith over Skinner's head.'
- 93 Adolf von Beckerath (1833–1915), silk manufacturer from Krefeld and one of the most prominent German art collectors of the time, formed an exceptional collection of fifteenth-century Italian maiolica; see Bode, *op. cit.* (note 38), pp. 128–9; R. Schmidt, 'Die Majolikasammlung Adolf von Beckerath', *Der Cicerone* 5 (1913), pp. 673–9; sale catalogues, Lepke, Berlin, 4–5 November 1915 (with foreword by Otto von Falke), and 23–6 May 1916; V. Krahn, 'Adolf von Beckerath und die Sammler italienischer Kunst der Renaissance im Kaiser Wilhelm Museum', in V. Krahn and J. Lessmann, *Italianische Renaissancekunst im Kaiser Wilhelm Museum Krefeld* (Krefeld, 1987), pp. 9–18.
- 94 G. C. C. Maspero (1846–1916), French Egyptologist, at this time Director of Antiquities in Egypt.
- 95 The carving is V&A 855-1901.
- 96 The exchange rate was 25 Italian lire to £1.
- 97 J. J. Marquet de Vasselot (1871–1946), curator in the French museum service.
- 98 Sir William Abney (1843–1920), adviser to the Board of Education.
- 99 An odd error – Molinier was never Director of the Louvre.
- 100 Giano Loretz (1869–1918), slipware potter, son of the painter and potter Carlo Loretz. See C. Loretz, 'Il ceramista Giano Loretz', *Faenza* 54 (1968), pp. 87–8; S. Nepoti, *Ceramiche graffite della donazione Donini Baer*, Catalogo generale del Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza, vol. 6 (Faenza, 1991), pp. 24–6 and references there cited. The V&A file 'Reports by Officers on visits abroad' includes correspondence, with photographs of the pieces, relating to the offer by Giano Loretz to sell the whole of his father's collection of slipware pottery and fragments; the offer was, after serious consideration and a visit to Milan by Skinner in November 1901, declined as not 'sufficiently interesting to warrant our taking them'. The collection, noted by Nepoti as the first extensive Italian collection of fragments of incised slipware, was partly sold in Milan in 1904 after Carlo Loretz's death; other parts are now in the museum at Lodi and in the Castello Sforzesco, Milan; for which see C. Baroni, *Ceramiche italiane minori del Castello Sforzesco* (Milan, 1934), p. 11. I am indebted to Jennifer Opie for showing me some of these documents. Four pieces by Loretz had been purchased by the Museum at the Paris exhibiton of 1900.
- 101 Godefroy Brauer (1857–1923), Hungarian-born dealer. See *Les donateurs du Louvre* (Paris, 1989), p. 157.
- 102 The letter has not been found by enquiry in the Louvre archive and was perhaps retained by Molinier among his personal papers.
- 103 C. H. Wylde, the first Keeper of Ceramics in the Museum. Bernard Rackham in his typescript 'Notes on a career in the South Kensington (Victoria and Albert) Museum (1898–1938)', written in 1962, noted that his real ambition had been a military career and that as soon as there was a call for volunteers at the time of the Boer War, Wylde left the Museum for the army, to return after the end of the war.
- 104 F. G. Ogilvie (1858–1930), Principal Assistant Secretary in the Board of Education, later Director of the Science Museum.
- 105 I have found no record of a collector of this name. Possibly, as suggested to me by Margaret Connors McQuade, a form deliberately garbled by the dealer of the name of A. M. Huntington (1870–1955) of New York, founder of the Hispanic Society of America, who was very actively collecting Hispano-Moresque pottery at this date.
- 106 See Ray, *op. cit.* (note 41), no. 180, acquired with the Soulages collection.
- 107 Sir William Blake Richmond (1842–1921), artist.
- 108 A. P. Oppé (1878–1957), now chiefly remembered as a connoisseur of drawings, was Deputy Director of the V&A, 1910–13.
- 109 Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith (1859–1944), Director of the V&A, 1909–24.
- 110 E. A. T. Wallis Budge (1857–1934), Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, British Museum, 1894–1924; see M. L. Bierbrier (ed.), *Who was Who in Egyptology*, by W. R. Dawson and E. P. Uphill, 3rd edn. (London, 1995), pp. 71–2. For his contacts with Wallis in Egypt, see Budge, *By Nile and Tigris* (London, 1920), I, pp. 82, 109, 132.