



J.W. WATKINS HOUSE

J·W·WATERHOUSE

PETER TRIPPI





For Rose and Frank Trippi  
my parents  
with love and thanks

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ALTHOUGH THE MAJOR PAINTINGS OF JOHN WILLIAM WATERHOUSE RA (1849–1917) are recognized by millions worldwide, relatively few admirers know about his life and the full range of his production. This book's objectives, therefore, are to examine how and why Waterhouse's art developed as it did, and to situate the artist within his era.

He lived not so long ago, yet we have remarkably little documentation about Waterhouse as an individual. It takes only one fire, accidental or otherwise, to erase the texture of a person's life, no matter how prominent he or she was. Waterhouse's widow survived him by almost 28 years, and it is likely that she destroyed or discarded his correspondence and records. Moreover, Waterhouse is rarely mentioned in the correspondence of his contemporaries, not even in the ample papers of Sir Henry Tate, who owned three Waterhouse paintings. At first this seems odd, yet also missing from the customary sources and shelves of artists' memoirs are Waterhouse's friends Briton Riviere and Frank Dicksee (despite the fact that Dicksee became President of the Royal Academy), as well as William Dyce, J.W. Godward, Benjamin Williams Leader and others.<sup>1</sup>

In such a situation, any reference becomes precious to the biographer. Constructing a continuum from uneven documentation results in disappointing gaps, which I have called out as necessary. Fortunately, Waterhouse's art remains to speak for him, and for this reason I have paid closer attention to his subjects than one might normally.

In his maturity, Waterhouse painted themes of Pre-Raphaelite intensity, if not always of Pre-Raphaelite lineage, in an Academic modification of Impressionism. He was born in 1849, the year Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt and their Pre-Raphaelite Brothers first appeared on the London scene to reinvigorate English art by overturning Academic conventions. Today, Waterhouse is their most widely recognized inheritor, even though he painted quite differently and participated enthusiastically in the Academy's governance. This paradox confirms how Pre-Raphaelitism was continually redefined by late Victorian artists and critics and evolved away from the Brotherhood's meticulous detail and quaint figures.

This flux accommodated Waterhouse's highly individual synthesis of English and French impulses; his signature style is more painterly than 'first-generation' Pre-Raphaelitism, and more convincingly naturalistic than the 'second generation' who gathered around Edward Burne-Jones. *The Times* offered a useful description in 1917: 'He painted pre-Raphaelite pictures in a more modern manner. He was, in fact, a kind of academic Burne-Jones, like him in his types and his moods, but with less insistence on design and more on atmosphere.'<sup>2</sup> Because Waterhouse's countrymen in the 1880s applied painterly naturalism more often to scenes of modern life than to myth and poetry, his novelty drew attention then, as it does today.

He came to Pre-Raphaelitism after almost two decades of successful work in other styles; he had embraced both Academic and progressive art from France, and was known in the 1870s and 1880s as a talented follower of Lawrence Alma-Tadema, the Dutchman who had worked in Belgium and France before coming to England. In 1886, George Bernard Shaw felt that 'giving reminders of other artists is quite a speciality with Mr Waterhouse,' and indeed the London art scene presented the young man with a cosmopolitan array of contemporary and historical models.<sup>3</sup> Waterhouse selected his heroes with discernment, and my

1  
Photograph of  
John William Waterhouse  
c.1886  
Studio of H.S. Mendelssohn





frequent references to other artists are intended to clarify his sophistication, not to suggest he was derivative.

Previous biographers have emphasized, with justification, Waterhouse's 'discovery' of Pre-Raphaelitism at Millais's 1886 retrospective. A review of the younger man's prior work shows that he was well prepared to admire, in equal measure, Millais's youthful meticulousness and mature painterliness. More significantly, the unusual classical subjects Waterhouse had painted before this epiphany reveal his predisposition towards the Romantic intensity of early Pre-Raphaelitism. In his innovative *Lady of Shalott* (1888), therefore, I hope that the reader will ascertain the continuity of this magical subject from earlier Waterhouse paintings of completely different heritage and style, such as *Consulting the Oracle* and *Saint Eulalia*.

Waterhouse brought to Pre-Raphaelitism a unique Symbolist sensibility, and although he did not feature in Tate Britain's ground-breaking 1997 exhibition about Symbolism in late Victorian Britain, he might well have done.<sup>4</sup> From both Greek myth and Romantic poetry, he began to paint scenes of passionate transformation, the mystery and eroticism of which fascinated English Pre-Raphaelites and continental Symbolists alike. He surely prized such narratives for the insights they offer into desire, death, regeneration and immortality, all age-old concerns of urgent interest to an era of modern anxieties. Although Waterhouse is best known today for Tennysonian scenes already associated with Rossetti, Millais and Hunt, it was Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to which he returned in every phase of his career, celebrating physical transformations as emblems of the passage from suffering to acceptance, from death to eternal life.

Unlike Frederic Leighton or E.J. Poynter, Waterhouse viewed Greek myth through the Romantic lens of Homer, Ovid, Shelley and Keats. His fashionable neo-pagan leanings, tinged with evocations of Pan's permeation of nature, differed from the early Pre-Raphaelite foregrounding of medievalism and the Christian spirituality of nature, yet both traditions are highly charged. In 1882 Oscar Wilde argued that nineteenth-century England's 'renaissance of art' sprang 'from the union of Hellenism, in its breadth [and] calm possession of beauty, with the passionate colour of the romantic spirit'.<sup>5</sup> Although Waterhouse had not yet entered his mature phase by 1882, Wilde's statement anticipates the glowing, serene yet emotionally powerful pictures the artist would create from the 1890s onwards.

Waterhouse was pre-eminently a painter of women, yet his female figures do not make clear his personal views on the 'Woman Question' that vexed his generation. In an age when women clamoured for equal opportunities in education, employment and politics, the females that Waterhouse painted in his maturity alternate — from canvas to canvas — between innocence and culpability, physical strength and frailty. Certain pictures bring these issues to mind quite forcefully. A related theme which surfaces consistently is the tension between one's erotic desire and one's proper course, be it weaving or returning home from war. In such masterpieces as *The Lady of Shalott*, *Ulysses and the Sirens*, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and *Penelope and the Suitors*, Waterhouse positions desire as both liberating and destructive. Simultaneously ecstatic and cautionary, these pictures can thrill with the promise of pleasure or danger, without shocking or upsetting viewers.

This decorum is a feature of lyricism, and many commentators have compared Waterhouse to a poet, an analogy which seems trite until one considers



it carefully. The narratives that Waterhouse treated were originally transmitted in verse to celebrate beauty, passion and nature, to express universal concerns and to spark the audience's imagination. Waterhouse used strokes of paint to accomplish the same objectives. For relevant pictures I have summarized the narratives because many are unfamiliar to modern readers. Waterhouse's contemporaries were likely to recognize the subjects quickly, allowing them to 'move through' the images more rapidly to contemplate the underlying themes.

Rather than imposing a theoretical framework upon this idiosyncratic career, I address each picture and series more or less chronologically, saving an assessment for the Epilogue to avoid colouring the reader's opinion. In that final section I touch on the tremendous appeal of Waterhouse's art today, an aspect which should not go unmentioned even if it falls outside the strict scope of a biography. Woven throughout this story are glimpses of Waterhouse moving his loaded brush across a canvas; his feeling and confidence are visible in every stroke. His working process became clearer during the technical examination of six paintings conducted for me in 2000 by Libby Sheldon of University College London. Her findings are cited here, and I am grateful to Libby for the insights they provide.

The absence of Waterhouse's papers necessitates close examination of both his paintings and of contemporary commentary about them. I have paid particular attention to the six substantial pieces which must have benefited from conversations with Waterhouse himself. These are James A. Blaikie's 1886 article in *The Magazine of Art*, Alfred Lys Baldry's pieces in *The Studio* (1895, 1908, 1911 and 1917) and Rose E.D. Sketchley's profile in *The Art Annual* of 1909. Special tribute is owed to the late Anthony Hobson, whose Ph.D. dissertation of 1978 led to his ground-breaking 1980 monograph. The latter contains a valuable checklist of the Waterhouse artworks known up to that time. Insights on Waterhouse's influences were also provided by Andrew Marvick in his 1994 Ph.D. dissertation. Finally, most of the information and images related to Waterhouse's private life have been provided by John Physick FSA, the artist's great-nephew. I am grateful to John for his assistance, and applaud his pride in the remarkable achievements of his relative.

It has been a great pleasure to spend five years researching and thinking about Waterhouse's magnificent paintings. I hope that this book will stir others to admire his art as much as I do.







THE LIFE OF J.W. WATERHOUSE IS DOCUMENTED SO UNEVENLY THAT EVEN HIS BIRTHDATE REMAINS ELUSIVE.

HE WAS DEFINITELY BORN IN ROME. HIS ITALIAN BIRTH CERTIFICATE, NOW LOST, INDICATED 6 APRIL 1849, WHILE THE REGISTER OF THE LOCAL ANGLICAN CHAPEL RECORDS HIS BAPTISM THAT DAY.<sup>1</sup> THE LATTER IS MORE LIKELY BECAUSE THE EVENT WAS RECORDED MANUALLY BY THE CHAPLAIN. AS IT WAS CUSTOMARY TO WAIT BEFORE BAPTIZING A CHILD, CONFIRMING WATERHOUSE'S BIRTHDATE AWAITS THE DISCOVERY OF FURTHER DOCUMENTATION, YET IT SEEMS THAT HE WAS BORN BETWEEN 1 AND 23 JANUARY 1849.<sup>2</sup> THE CHILD WAS NICKNAMED 'NINO' FOR GIOVANNINO ('LITTLE JOHN'), A NAME HE USED THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE.<sup>3</sup>



A MAN'S STORY BEGINS WITH HIS PARENTS, AND THIS IS ESPECIALLY true for an artist born to two artists. The painter William Waterhouse (1816—90, Pl. 2) was baptized at Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire, a small town southwest of Leeds renowned for textile manufacturing. The baptismal register lists William's father, also William, as a carpet weaver,<sup>4</sup> but by 1841 he described himself as a carpet manufacturer, so he must have had a successful career.<sup>5</sup> William junior may have discovered art in Leeds, but for advanced training he needed to study elsewhere. From 1840 directories listed him as resident in London, and from 1846 he could be contacted via the framecarver-gilder Joseph Green in the artists' neighbourhood of Marylebone. Green's representation was necessary because in 1844 and 1846 William's address appeared as Antwerp in Belgium, a city renowned for its art academy.<sup>6</sup> William may have studied there with Gustaaf Wappers (1803—74), who taught students from around the world.

PREVIOUS PAGE  
**Diogenes**  
(detail of Plate 31)

<sup>2</sup>  
Photograph of  
William Waterhouse  
c.1873  
Studio of Arthur James Melhuish

<sup>3</sup>  
William Waterhouse  
**Guarda**  
1846, oil on canvas  
61 x 51.7 cm (24 x 20 3/8 in)  
Private collection



By 1846 William had reached Rome, then in its final decade as the world's artistic capital; and by 1847 he had buried his 28-year-old wife, Maria, and their two infant sons there.<sup>7</sup> Charles Dickens's *Pictures from Italy* (1846) outlines the conditions endured by the English resident in Rome, including heat, malaria, banditry, beggars and anti-Protestant sentiment. However, it was cheap to live there, and every corner seemed to suggest a picture. At 31, William briefly returned to London, and in February 1848 he married 27-year-old Isabella Mackenzie, who lived with her father and sisters in the growing neighbourhood of Brompton.<sup>8</sup> Wedding guests would have recognized the social distinction between William's father, a manufacturer, and his new father-in-law, a gentleman born, like Isabella, in Scotland. Since 1823 John Mackenzie (c.1793—1860) had served as secretary to the exclusive Union Club in Trafalgar Square.<sup>9</sup>

William and Isabella may have met in London as early as 1846 during the

Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, when he exhibited an Italian genre picture and she a portrait miniature. It is not known if Isabella continued to paint after the newlyweds moved to Rome, but she probably gave birth to Nino there less than a year after marrying. The boy's 'first year or two' was spent on an Italian farm, and he had 'as foster-mother an Italian country-woman'; it was common for middle-class women to hire wet nurses.<sup>10</sup> He probably learned Italian as a child and may have retained fluency.

The Waterhouses apparently fled the French siege of Rome in April 1849 to live near Frascati in the Alban Hills; a picture exhibited by William in 1850 depicted this village's church.<sup>11</sup> Through the family has descended an unsigned painting of a weathered house in the Italian countryside, possibly their Frascati refuge.<sup>12</sup> William later thrilled his son with stories 'of Italy in arms for freedom and honour'.<sup>13</sup>

The family continued to grow: Nino's brother Edwin was baptized in 1850 and



his sister Jessie was born in 1853, by which time they were back living in central Rome.<sup>14</sup> They resided in the lively district described by the artist-poet Edward Lear as 'close to the [British] church and the piazza di Spagna — the [British] Academy — the eating and coffee houses — all the English and all the artists'.<sup>15</sup> The English painters Frederic Leighton (1830–96) and E.J. Poynter (1836–1919), both of whom would figure in the younger Waterhouse's career, met in Rome in 1853.

English tourists in Italy and collectors in England wanted portraits, Old Master copies and bright pictures of Italian ruins and peasants. Painting these could prove lucrative, and William Waterhouse probably sought to emulate his successful compatriots Thomas Uwins, Penry Williams and Charles Eastlake; their genre formula is typified by Waterhouse's *Guarda* (Pl. 3). Baldry described William as a keen student of the Old Masters, and Sketchley called him 'a portrait-painter of the



tradition of [Sir Thomas] Lawrence, with unsatisfied ambitions as an historical painter'.<sup>16</sup> All of these avenues were later explored by Nino, who observed his father's efforts at close range. William undoubtedly showed paintings to his studio visitors in Rome, and from 1840 to 1861 he exhibited 26 pictures at the Royal Academy, the British Institution, the Liverpool Academy, and the Society of British Artists where he sent *Guarda* in 1846. William did not exhibit in England only; when *A Roman Fruit Stall* (1852) failed to sell in London, he sent it to Dublin.<sup>17</sup>

In 1854 the Waterhouses returned permanently to London. Still responsible for three unmarried daughters and two servants, John Mackenzie accommodated Isabella's family in Brompton temporarily.<sup>18</sup> This must have been an artistic household as Isabella's younger sister, Jane, exhibited at least 17 miniatures in London from 1846 to 1858, including portraits of young Edwin and Jessie. In 1857 Eliza Mackenzie exhibited a portrait of Nino.<sup>19</sup>

The Waterhouses moved to a newly constructed house in an upper middle-class street in Kensington, and their fourth child, Charles, was baptized in 1856.<sup>20</sup> Two of William's pictures, both unlocated today, anticipated the disparate directions his son was to take. *Cupid on a Bed of Roses — Vide Anacreon* (1855) signals his fashionable interest in the eroticism of classical literature, alluding to the Greek Anacreon, whose elegant poetry addresses romantic love such as that engendered by Cupid.<sup>21</sup> (Two decades later, in 1875–6, a mining agent exhibited at San Francisco an undated *Cupid and Venus* painted by a London artist named Waterhouse.<sup>22</sup> Although it is unclear which Waterhouse made this picture, the theme surely figured in Nino's early consciousness.) In 1858 William exhibited a scene from Livy showing the Roman princes praising the merits of their wives, an episode which led indirectly to the rape of Lucretia and the founding of the Roman republic.<sup>23</sup> Nino's fascination with Roman history surely grew from this and similar canvases that his father had painted.

In 1857, when Nino was eight, his mother died of tuberculosis in the family home at the age of 36.<sup>24</sup> Nino's early impressions of womanhood had probably centred on his mother wasting away, and it is likely that her frailty embodied, in a tragic sense, the ideal of passive female domesticity celebrated in the popular poem *The Angel in the House* (1854–63) by Coventry Patmore (1823–96). Three years later, William married Frederica Perceval (1828–1903), the 32-year-old granddaughter of the assassinated prime minister Spencer Perceval (1762–1812) and cousin to Lord Egmont and Arden.<sup>25</sup> William's most advantageous marriage changed the lives of Isabella's children, particularly through the birth of their four half-siblings between 1861 and 1870.<sup>26</sup> By April 1861, Nino had departed for schooling in Leeds, though it is not known if he boarded or lived with relations there. Jessie went to live with her Mackenzie aunts, and the growing Waterhouse family moved with their female servants to a series of new streets in the expanding suburb of Kensington.<sup>27</sup>

William's last recorded exhibits appeared in 1861.<sup>28</sup> As he was only 45, this suggests that Frederica's income allowed him to focus on portrait commissions. During the 1860s he made competent, uninspired portraits of such worthies as Archbishop H.E. Manning (1808–92) and the explorer John Hanning Speke (1827–64).<sup>29</sup> The Waterhouses enjoyed a comfortable existence that included the presentations at Court of Nino's half-sisters May and Alice. This prosperity afforded Nino the schooling in classical history, literature and mythology that constituted the canon of knowledge he would always share with other educated

men. At his Leeds school, which remains unidentified, he learned Latin but perhaps not Greek, as in 1891 he cited a translation of Homer.<sup>30</sup> The intensity of Waterhouse's identification with the classical heritage was borne out not only by the subjects he would paint, but also by the learnedness he brought to their treatment. The boy dreamed of returning to his birthplace: 'That sense of partly belonging to Rome made ancient history very stirring, and among school books *Smith's Classical Dictionary* was singled out as stories to be read for pleasure, again and again.'<sup>31</sup>

In Waterhouse's youth, classical narratives were considered particularly beneficial to boys. The Reverend Charles Kingsley (1819–75) promoted the Greek ideal in *The Heroes* (1855), his bestselling adaptation of the Perseus, Theseus and Jason myths, drawing on both the Platonic concept of courage and Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841).<sup>32</sup> Such tales of adventurers rescuing maidens and embarking upon quests appealed to middle-class youngsters, whose lives lacked excitement. Nino expressed

the most perfect confidence in the Roman soldiers, and was sure that they were equal to thrashing any fabulous number of moderns ... At eight years of age he acquired, through a friend of his mother, a veritable relic of Pompeii, a fragment of plastered wall which the young archaeologist treasured [as] a precious link between the present and the Italy of his dreams.<sup>33</sup>

Many other Englishmen were passionately interested in ancient Rome. Archaeological discoveries were reported widely, and historical novels sold well, though none matched the 25 reprintings of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834). The Crystal Palace, reopened in the suburb of Sydenham in 1854, contained Roman and Pompeian courts that evoked this vanished world. In 1859 Lord Acton, who forty years later supported Waterhouse's admission to the classicist Athenaeum Club, declared: 'Two great principles divide the world and contend for mastery, antiquity and the Middle Ages. These are the ... two elements of which ours is composed.'<sup>34</sup> During the 1860s, Nino probably read Homer's *Odyssey* at the same time as Alfred Tennyson's Arthurian *Idylls of the King*, the first instalment of which appeared in 1859. In his young mind, adventure, chivalry and romance surely came to be associated with both classical and medieval societies.

Nino did not feel 'an all-compelling call to become a painter', but 'towards engineering in particular was favourably inclined'.<sup>35</sup> If he cared to look at art, Leeds offered dealers and exhibitions, and he could enjoy the cultural amenities of London during the holidays. His studies concluded, he was put to work 'painting in the backgrounds of portraits' for his father.<sup>36</sup> He and his family were living in the burgeoning capital of a global empire, the richest and largest ever: 2.7 million people lived in London in 1851, 4.5 million in 1881, and 6.6 million when Queen Victoria died in 1901. Although Waterhouse remained in London all his life, the metropolis never appeared in his art. In the spirit of A.W.N. Pugin, John Ruskin and other foes of rampant industrialization, the critic and curator Sidney Colvin (1845–1927) argued that art 'must surely deal with beautiful materials ... and beauty is precisely the element wanting in the ordinary aspects of modern London.'<sup>37</sup> Waterhouse evidently also agreed with William Morris (1834–96), who advised that if an artist 'wants to do anything beautiful he must just choose the epoch which suits him and identify himself with that'.<sup>38</sup>



During the 1860s this attraction to past epochs intersected with artists' growing admiration for classical art at the British Museum. This institution served as an unofficial drawing school offering unique historical models, most significantly the Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon in Athens. During his tenure as Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities (1861–85), Charles T. Newton led tours and offered exclusive access to artists three times weekly. In 1878 he reported that 'the galleries are now so crowded with easels, that on public days it is exceedingly difficult to keep a clear gangway.'<sup>39</sup> Nino's name appears in various museum registers: he first visited the Department of Prints and Drawings in 1868, and the Library in 1870, with registration for the latter renewed annually from 1873 to 1877.<sup>40</sup> Nino's earliest surviving sketchbook depicts classical statuary, armour and musical instruments (Pl. 4), as well as annotations mentioning Pompeii and forms of drapery.

Nino did not limit his sketching to one institution. Sketchley cited his admiration of Old Masters at the National Gallery, and his family home's proximity to the South Kensington (now Victoria and Albert) Museum guaranteed frequent visits there.<sup>41</sup> The economist W.S. Jevons (1835–82) complained that 'neighbouring wealthy residents are in the habit, on a wet day, of packing their children off in a cab [for] a good run through the galleries'.<sup>42</sup> As one such youngster, Nino would have encountered diverse media and cultures at South Kensington, including the collection of early Victorian art bequeathed by John Sheepshanks (1787–1863). Several of Nino's early works reflect the influence of these pictures' sentiment and telling details, perfected by such masters as William Mulready (1786–1863) and Sir David Wilkie (1785–1841).

Presumably on the basis of Waterhouse's own comments, all of his interviewers noted the early training of his memory. Because the artist's earliest drawings remain untraced, it is impossible to determine whether he was relating fact, attempting to distinguish himself, or both. Baldry asserted that Waterhouse ignored Academic traditions 'to train his intelligence even more highly than his hand ... He would in the National Gallery get by heart ... some selected picture ... making now and then slight and rapid sketches, ... and would later strive to reproduce at home from memory the facts and details he had noted.' Baldry also admired Waterhouse's capacity to keep an 'imaginary picture unchanged through all the stages by which it is transferred to the canvas'.<sup>43</sup> Throughout his life Waterhouse drew on loose sheets and in commercially bound sketchbooks; the thirteen sketchbooks known to survive represent every phase of his career. Filled with poses, props and compositions that often trace the development of a completed painting, the sketchbooks also record subjects that Waterhouse did not pursue.

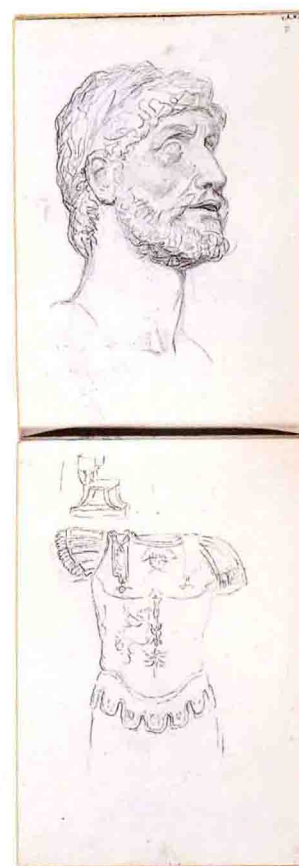
As with many artists, characterizing Waterhouse's early œuvre poses challenges because it is sparsely documented and he was experimenting with different styles. His production seems to begin with *The Death of Cocles* (c.1869, Pl. 5), a signed, undated canvas labelled with the Kensington address the Waterhouses occupied from 1867 to 1874.<sup>44</sup> (His drawing of the hero's breastplate appears in Pl. 4.) Although the label suggests the picture was exhibited, no such display has been identified. This canvas is conspicuously larger than Nino's other exhibits of the early 1870s, so it may have originated as an exercise or collaboration with his father.

The painting centres on the farmer-soldier Horatius Cocles, who saved Rome by holding a bridge against the Etruscans and then swimming back across the Tiber after his comrades had demolished the bridge. Lauded by ancient authors, Horatius appeared in Thomas Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842), which celebrated

4  
Contiguous pages from  
Waterhouse's sketchbook  
c.1869, pencil on paper  
Each sheet 17.1 x 11.4 cm (6 1/4 x 4 1/2 in)  
(Sketchbook E.1109-1963, pp. 16–17)  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

5  
Attributed to J.W. Waterhouse  
**The Death of Cocles**  
c.1869, oil on canvas  
101.6 x 126.4 cm (40 x 49 1/4 in)  
Private collection

6  
Raphael  
**The Sacrifice at Lystra**  
1515–16, bodycolour on  
paper mounted onto canvas  
350 x 560 cm (137 1/4 x 220 1/2 in)  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London









heroic exploits in ringing couplets beloved of Victorian schoolboys. Ignoring the gods' dalliances, Macaulay held up as moral exemplars Roman men who had sacrificed private interests for the public good, a variation of the hero worship espoused by Carlyle and Kingsley. This painting illustrates Macaulay's descriptions of Horatius's welcome by 'the joyous crowd' and of the commemorative statue showing him 'upon one knee'.<sup>45</sup> The up-ended urn represents Father Tiber, to whom Horatius appealed as he swam; it constitutes the first known expression of Waterhouse's lifelong fascination with water, his namesake. As indicated by the picture's title, Horatius is expiring as he raises the laurel wreath of victory.

In the influential *Discourses* he delivered as the Royal Academy of Arts' first president (1769–90), Sir Joshua Reynolds praised both images of 'heroic action or heroic suffering', and the Renaissance artist Raphael (1483–1520) for his assimilation of classical ideals.<sup>46</sup> Revived by Prince Albert, English enthusiasm for Raphael centred on the cartoons he painted for the Sistine Chapel tapestries (1515–16). In 1865 Queen Victoria loaned these seven cartoons to the South Kensington Museum, where Waterhouse surely studied them. Drawing instructors urged emulation of Raphael's gestures, facial expressions, statuesque figures, perspective and harmonious composition, exemplified by the cartoon *The Sacrifice at Lystra* (Pl. 6). Nino's *Death of Cocles* probably stemmed from Raphael's influence and his father's classical pictures, but also from Poynter's popular pictures shown at the Summer Exhibitions. Given his enthusiasm for Roman heroism and warfare, Nino surely admired Poynter's *Faithful Unto Death* (1865) and *The Catapult* (1868). His attempt to replicate Poynter's dynamically arranged figures backfired, however, dissipating the dramatic impact of *Cocles* at the centre.

As Nino considered his future, he must have realized that it was increasingly acceptable for a middle-class youth to pursue art as a career, as it now offered the promise of both prosperity and gentility. The census of 1861 was the first to classify artists as practising a profession rather than a trade. More artists shared with other professionals an education in classics and mathematics followed by specialized technical training, the genteel aura of working not for profit but to benefit society, and the prospect of official honours and admission to a chartered society, in this case the Royal Academy.<sup>47</sup> Such prestige beckoned Waterhouse's generation, so it is hardly surprising that the approximately 3,500 artists in Britain at the time of the 1841 census had doubled 40 years later.<sup>48</sup> More surprising is Sketchley's report that William Waterhouse needed convincing before allowing Nino to pursue art.<sup>49</sup>

Anxious parents acknowledged admission to the Royal Academy Schools as the first step on their sons' path to official success. Founded in 1768 with the Academy itself, 'the Schools' offered professional training for painters, sculptors and architects. In 1869 the Academy moved into Burlington House, Piccadilly, which had been expanded with new studios and a lecture room. Once admitted, students paid no fees and needed only to provide their materials. Most prepared to apply by studying at a private school; Nino presumably studied with his father.

To become a student of painting, an applicant submitted for review a chalk drawing of an undraped antique statue. Nino drew a plaster cast of Myron's *Diskobolos* (*Discus Thrower*) at South Kensington, but, because he recorded dust and dirt on its surface, the jurors rejected him. He then sought admission as a sculptor, but first had to solve the problem of how to transport some thirty pounds of clay to and from the museum so that he could model his submission.<sup>50</sup> Permitted to store