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TALKING HEADS:
CLASSICAL PORTRAIT
BUSTS IN THE
COUNTRY HOUSE 1715-
1832

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Submitted for PhD Examination

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to examine the classical portrait bust in the country house, rehabilitating and interrogating a type of sculpture which has been neglected or dismissed in scholarship. The bust, a ubiquitous object type of the long eighteenth century, is now somewhat unfashionable, and thus treated by modern scholarship as merely decorative. In fact, bust portraiture was a crucial part of country house symbolism and the self-fashioning of the English elite. Over a period of 117 years, between the Hanoverian Succession in 1715 and the passing of the Reform Act in 1832, eight country house case studies are analysed. In each case, ancient busts are considered alongside neoclassical copies, versions, fakes, and restorations. I will argue that the interplay between the bust and the eighteenth century's intense engagement with the classical Greco-Roman past allowed the aristocracy and gentry to elide past and present, and to claim ancient ancestors and allies. The bust emerges from the eight case studies as no mere ornament. This thesis will demonstrate that political and personal hopes, loyalties, and losses were expressed and embedded in the country house using this versatile and desirable sculptural medium.

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Introduction

Talking Heads: Why Study the Portrait Bust?

*...the citizens of Rome placed the images of their ancestors in the vestibules to their houses; so that, whenever they went in or out, these venerable bustoes met the eye and recollected the glorious actions of the dead, to inspire the living, to excite them to imitate, and even to emulate, their forefathers.*¹

- Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751), *Letters on the Study and Use of History*.²

[when we are in the presence of] *emperors, consuls, generals, orators, philosophers, poets and other great men, whose fame in history engaged our earliest notice, standing as it were in their own persons before us.....the past becomes present.*³

- John Northall (1729-1759), *Travels through Italy*.

People buy art, and display it in their homes, and have done so for centuries. They do so for a multitude of reasons, including personal preference, demonstrating wealth and connoisseurship, and conforming with fashion. This thesis considers why a specific type of art was purchased, during a specific moment in history, to adorn the country houses of the English elite. The type of art in question is the portrait bust, a three-dimensional head-and-shoulders depiction of a person, living, deceased, mythical or romanticised. In all the cases considered, the bust derives from the cultures of Ancient Greece or Rome, either as a historical artefact or drawing on classical visual traditions for its format and/or subject matter. These busts were incredibly popular and their desirability, as well as the arrangements made with them can, I believe, tell us a great deal. As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, we can learn about the lives, beliefs, allegiances, politics, and passions of the collectors who purchased, prized, and presented

¹ Bolingbroke, 1752, 14. Published posthumously.

² N.B. that throughout this thesis birth and death dates are included, where possible, for named individuals, post antiquity. Ancient Greek and Roman individuals are not given life dates, as these are often indefinite.

³ Northall, 1766, 362. Published posthumously.

busts. I will argue that we can reconstruct a lost language of visual signs and clues which were expressed, through busts, for a society far more deeply and intimately invested in classical history than we are today.

Csikszentmihalyi and Halton propose that “what things are cherished, and why, should become part of our knowledge of human beings”, and this thesis aims to broaden that knowledge for the long eighteenth century.⁴ They add that “household objects are chosen and could be freely discarded... [they] constitute an ecology of signs that reflects as well as shapes the pattern of the owner's self”.⁵ In her study of the eighteenth-century painted portrait, Pointon declares that “knowing when and where objects were seen and in relation to which other artefacts they were apprehended allows the historian to begin to grasp their specific historical meanings”.⁶ The bust has been neglected in studies of such ecologies and meanings, but will, over the following chapters, come into its own as a versatile, ubiquitous part of country house self-fashioning. The country house, as we shall see, was a crucial location for the apprehension of artefacts, including the bust, during the period in question. Ousby suggests that the eighteenth century was the great age of the ‘show house’, in the countryside, and these venues for display and commemoration, straddling the public and the private, were pivotal in eighteenth-century English society.⁷

Rather than attempt a broad survey of the portrait bust in this period, which would allow minimal exploration of each instance, I have selected eight English country houses on which to focus. They have been chosen, in some cases, for the richness of their collections or for their previous neglect in the scholarship of long eighteenth-century visual culture. The approach owes a great deal to Joan Coutu’s *Then and Now* (2015). Coutu acknowledges her own study’s debt to James Lees-Milne’s *Earls of Creation* (1962). Both have sought to explain a phenomenon (classical collecting and eighteenth-century art patronage respectively) through the mode of case studies. This approach has

⁴ Csikszentmihalyi and Halton, 1981, 1.

⁵ Ibid., 17. Whilst their study focuses on twentieth-century America, the idea of things, signs, and meanings, is useful to think with.

⁶ Pointon, 1998, 13.

⁷ Ousby, 1990, 63.

been crucial to my project, interweaving the biography and concerns of each country house owner with their antiquities. I have been, as Coutu says of her own study, “...proceeding from the premise that each collection is as much about the collector as it is about the objects within it”.⁸

Methodology

It is important to preface the study with some caveats around the scope of this project and the particular focus and methods of enquiry. This topic has the potential to be extremely broad, and some boundaries around what is examined have been needed, as well as clarification and qualification of the terminology used.

The collections discussed in this thesis range across the ‘long eighteenth century’, a common term used by historians to acknowledge that the culture of early modern Europe was defined more by monumental events than decade boundaries. Whilst some historians have seen this as extending from the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, I have taken the stance of Frank O’Gorman, who puts the end date of this period in 1832, with the passing of the Reform Act. The earliest period of collecting examined here is the 1720s and the latest the 1820s/1830s. The other six chapters are spread across this hundred-year period.

As to the collectors themselves, Coutu’s use of the term ‘patriciate’ for the class collecting and commissioning classical sculptures has been very helpful to replace clunky terminology with modern connotations, such as ‘upper classes’. Arguably, all but one of the case studies examined here fit within the patriciate class. The patriciate’s physical location, as well as that of their possessions, has also been key to the investigation in this thesis. The men at the centre of elite, classical culture would have many ‘stages’ on which to perform their masculinity, status, and political affiliations. Parliament, or the House of Lords, Balls, their Clubs, and town houses, are all well-known scenes for politicking and self-fashioning. But land ownership was paramount

⁸ Coutu, 2015, 3.

and, as Lewis neatly puts it “political power was rooted in acreage and community”.⁹ The country house was, I will argue, the pre-eminent stage for making manifest one’s wealth, worth and connections as both a political and social animal. It was also a domestic space, although I have avoided the use of the term ‘home’ throughout, concurring with Karen Harvey that this modern label is too narrow to encompass the eighteenth-century domestic experience, and the conception of domestic spaces which straddled the public and the private.¹⁰

Definitions of ‘the country house’ are surprisingly scarce, and the concept is complicated by the fact that the patriciate had different types of dwelling. In the capital city they might have a permanently owned home, like the grand Devonshire House of the Dukes of Devonshire, alongside which would be the country seat, usually associated with land owned by the family. Many families among the gentry and nobility simply leased houses in London, and often accommodation was rented elsewhere, as needed, perhaps on visits to the Spa at Bath. A suburban villa, such as Horace Walpole’s (1717-1797) Strawberry Hill or Lord Burlington’s (1694-1753) Chiswick, sometimes filled the gap between town and country, and even in the countryside, some families had multiple country properties. There is, however, a peculiarly British tradition of the country seat as the embodiment and heart of a family’s power. As Retford and Avery-Quash note, the fact that the family’s painted portrait collection, an important visual list of their ancestors, would typically be housed in the country, “underscores the degree to which these ‘seats’ embodied the owners’ ancestry and lineage, whatever their personal priorities”.¹¹

Retford, in another publication, further emphasises this, declaring that country houses were the foundations of “the political power exercised in town, and the images of military heroes, politicians and statesmen displayed there testified to the roots of affiliations apparent in more transient party politics”.¹² Indeed, as we shall see, party political affiliations and their roots were often prominently displayed in the country house and, with regards to the images of heroes and illustrious forebears, these were

⁹ Lewis, 2009, 339.

¹⁰ Harvey, 2012, 10, 12 & 71.

¹¹ Retford and Avery-Quash, 2019, 5.

¹² Retford, 2007, 317.

desirable enough to be replicated, substituted, or enhanced through ancient portrait busts.

As well as being confined to the countryside, all eight case studies are confined to England. During the period in question, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were under English control, and many studies of the period consider a 'British' culture. Yet, in terms of material and visual culture, and particularly antiquities and the bust, it makes sense to consider England separately. There are certainly instances of collecting and display to be assessed within what we now think of as the devolved home nations. English aristocrats, for example, often also had Irish titles, such as the 4th Earl of Bristol (1730-1803), himself a collector of antiquities, who also held the Bishopric of Derry, and at various points kept some of his art collection in Ireland. In Scotland, at Rossie Priory, a beautiful, small collection of busts was amassed in the 1820s, by the 8th and 9th Barons Kinnaird (1780-1826 and 1807-1878), a hidden gem much lauded by Frederick Poulsen a century later.¹³ Similarly, in Wales, Thomas Mansel Talbot (1747-1813) of Margam Park and Penrice Castle, purchased widely in Rome; much of his collection centred on busts. I am, however, confining this study to England. Works such as Vicky Coltman's monographs and articles on the Scottish Enlightenment and the Scottish Grand Tour show that the devolved nations cannot simply be collapsed into the dominant English tradition.¹⁴ Furthermore, political considerations, addressed later in this introduction, are fundamental to the project. The division between Whigs and Tories was most strongly articulated in England, where they came to lie at the heart of a cultural sense of Englishness. Competing ideas of what the English patriciate's history meant were debated by the Whigs and Tories and articulated in their country house displays.

The scope of the project has also been closely defined in terms of format. Within the case studies busts and heads will be considered, not full-length portrait sculpture. The bust format was more widespread and coordinated well with both domestic interiors and contemporary portrait sculpture, which often took on a classicising form. I will also argue that the scale of the bust, its placement at near eye level and its relative

¹³ Poulsen, 1929, 23.

¹⁴ See Coltman, 2019 and 2011 amongst others.

portability allowed deeper engagement from owners and viewers than was possible with a statue. Baker also notes the closer parallels of the bust format to painted portraiture, which was ubiquitous in this period, allowing the two to stand in dialogue, in a way rarely possible for the full-length statue.¹⁵ The bulk of the portraits in this thesis are roughly lifesize and marble or stone, or plaster casts made to look like marble.

Kedleston's Caesars, as we shall see, are outliers, painted to look like bronze. Bronze portraits are very rare and where they exist in collections, were often miniatures.

Miniature heads have not been included, as the apprehension of the lifesize bust, and its relation to the contemporary viewer, is essential. Brilliant emphasises that this is "comparable to the I-You relationship that comes to the fore when one encounters another person".¹⁶

In my study I have incorporated ancient Greek busts and heads (although they are few), their ancient Roman counterparts (the most numerous group in this study) and seventeenth-nineteenth century versions, copies, restorations and fakes. The general 'rule of thumb' has been to include, for each chapter, that which engaged with the classical tradition of portrait sculpture. Particular focus is given to historical figures, such as Roman emperors and Athenian statesmen, or persons seen as historical/quasi-historical, even where twenty-first century scholarship deems their identification wishful thinking. For example, heads of the poet Homer were popular, and three famous ancient versions are now in the Capitoline, Naples, and Munich. Copies, casts, and versions of the Homeric head proliferated in eighteenth-century displays. Twentieth and twenty-first-century scholars might debate whether Homer was a real person, but his acceptance as a historical figure in the period in question makes him eligible for consideration. Conversely, heads of Zeus and other deities have not been included, except in passing where they contribute to a group arrangement. Deities and those *acknowledged* as mythical were important signifiers of classical knowledge, but I will

¹⁵ Baker, 2015, 49.

¹⁶ Brilliant, 2007, 92.

argue that they were not put in dialogue with and fused with British history, politics, and culture, in the same way as sculpture depicting persons from Greco-Roman history.

The significance of these busts will be considered under the names they were given by collectors at the time, although now often recognised to have been optimistic identifications, the desire to have a historical figure's bust was widespread. A named head "strengthened the link between the material culture and literary texts", and such a link was deeply important.¹⁷ John Ma, writing about a Roman viewer apprehending the image of the Classical Greek politician Demosthenes, imagines a scenario and a thought process which rings equally true for the eighteenth-century country house context:

'This is what Demosthenes looked like,' thinks the Roman owner of the replica. He (definitely he) is looking at a portrait of a great man, and trying to see the great man himself, past the image. Before him, for him, the statue makes visible a famous person from the past, in his human and social specificity; the viewer pays particular attention to Demosthenes's face... ...privileging the facial portrait, in which the viewer might look straight at Demosthenes's sunken eyes and tortured brow.

*Furthermore, the statue serves as a visual cue for a personal meditation on Demosthenes's work, his biography, and on his place in history... ...great-man-ism is also about consumption of (images or artefacts of, texts about/on) the great man.*¹⁸

The process of apprehension, contemplation, and linking to a historical narrative, which the viewer is keyed in to elide with their own contemporary culture, cannot be overstated in its importance. The portrait of a figure seen to be historical has layers of meaning and different ways of viewing than the image of a goddess or an anonymous citizen.

¹⁷ Adams, 2009, 73.

¹⁸ Ma, 2006, 328.

Such significant strata are what is often missing in scholarship about collections of antiquities during the long eighteenth century. Ancient portrait busts are most often considered by scholars as archaeological artefacts, with their publication focused on the material, origins, and the historical context of the item at the time it was created. Sometimes art-historical judgements on the merit of the workmanship or the symbolism of the piece are added to this. With early modern busts, the approach is more likely to consist of the art-historical judgement, supplemented by biographical details of the sitter, the artist, or the item's owner. This is often impossible to reconstruct for ancient heads. To marry the ancient and the eighteenth-century, I have aimed for a middle ground, which acknowledges the historical connotations of both antique and neoclassical busts, as well as their aesthetic qualities. The context which is privileged here is not necessarily that of their origin, but rather that of a particular moment of display, and to shed light on this moment, I have turned primarily to archival papers.

Archives (where they survive) allow us to study how country house owners and visitors were writing about portrait sculpture, and about the display of art more generally, and one of the ultimate aims of this thesis is to balance historical evidence from written records with art-historical considerations of the portrait bust. The cultural milieu of classical appreciation can also be added through archival papers. Several of the eight case studies have a strong archival collection. Woburn Abbey, for example, has a wealth of uncatalogued and detailed material. Kedleston and Farnborough, however, had such intriguing assemblages of busts that their interest outweighed the lack of information available. In some cases, the very absence of the archive is poignant for the study of the bust. Whilst we can only speculate, using what contextual information is available, interpretations of the bust can posit theories to fill archival gaps. What did a country house owner want to demonstrate when they rebuilt? What were their biggest influences? What were the family's concerns for the future? In the chapters without archival material, I have demonstrated how we can still say something in answer to these questions, by following the classical ley-lines of their display scheme. Busts are often an underrated and powerful component in these.

The Bust in Roman Society

Whilst the eighteenth-century apprehension and interpretation of the bust is the focus of this study, the epigraphs by Bolingbroke and Northall make it very clear that the English were keenly aware of the importance of this type of sculpture in Ancient Rome. To borrow a phrase from Jonathan Sachs, this thesis is a study “of the way one historical period uses another historical period and of the meaning of that use”.¹⁹ We shall see throughout the following chapters that the English educational system relied on classical texts, with rote learning of large sections, and the veneration among the patriciate for such authors as Cicero often meant intense familiarity with the customs described in Latin literature.

For the purposes of this thesis, the bust (a head and shoulders portrait), or the sculpted head (which ends at the neck and does not include shoulders or chest), begins in classical Greece. Herms, originally blocks of wood with faces or masks, and often male genitals, seem to have been early forerunners of the truncated portrait form, although lifesize and over-lifesize portrait statuary was adopted early in the Archaic Period (circa 800-500 BC).²⁰ Herms developed into stone pillars with the head carved on them (Figure 1) and whilst this format did not lose its popularity, busts without the associated shaft also emerged in the Classical (c.500-336 BC) and Hellenistic (c.336-146 BC) periods. Scholars now believe many Greek portrait busts survive through later Roman copies.²¹

The Romans then took the bust form to new heights.²² Beard has argued that the Romans made this type of sculpture a recognisable genre, and they are the reason why we do not simply see bust-length images, both in ancient and modern contexts, as bizarrely truncated, artificially guillotined.²³ The tradition appears to have developed

¹⁹ Sachs, 2009, 36.

²⁰ Boardman, 2006, 12.

²¹ See Anguissola, 2019, Oxford Bibliographies Online.

²² We should, however, note the proliferation of ‘busts’ in contemporary museums which are in fact heads surviving from full-length statues, buried or destroyed between antiquity and their discovery.

²³ Beard, 2011.

from death masks and funerary images. Roman magistrates were granted the right to display an *imago*, a wax mask portraying their face in a recognisable manner, which was first seen at the magistrate's own funeral and was a central part of mourning. These masks were not disposable funerary accessories, however, and Flower observes that "the special mask-portrait enjoyed pride of place in the family home to impress visitors and future generations of family members".²⁴ Figure 2 shows a Republican-era statue holding portrait heads. This statue, called the 'Togatus Barberini' after the Italian renaissance family who owned it, depicts a Roman nobleman, and the two portrait heads he holds are thought to be the funerary *imagines* of his ancestors. His illustrious family, whose identity is unknown, and his own piety and veneration in choosing to commemorate the *imago* tradition in marble, are manifest.

Examples of the *imagines* abound in Latin literature. Cicero, a staple of the eighteenth-century public-school curriculum and the gentleman's library, uses the tradition of *imagines* in an invective against Lucius Calpurnius Piso. He claims Piso "crept into office by mistake, by the recommendation of your dingy family busts, with which you have no resemblance save colour".²⁵ Cicero draws a pointed distinction between the mismatch of Piso's dirty character and the inherent virtue of his forebears, whose *imagines* still signify virtue despite their physical condition. The 'dingy' busts, perhaps better translated as 'soot-stained', imply ruin, disgrace, and a lack of care for an ancestral gallery of these masks, which were kept in the entrance hall, or *atrium*, of the house. Chapters 1-3 of this thesis focus on country house arrangements which mimicked this venerable Roman tradition. Eighteenth-century gentlemen, invested in and educated by the classics, were deeply aware of the importance of the ancestral images.

Sallust, in his *Jugurthine War*, has the general and future dictator, Marius, make a speech, lambasting his rivals. The Senate, he says, might select another man who is "part of a clique of nobles, a man of ancient lineage and many ancestral images" to do the job of fighting the Numidian king, Jugurtha, but whilst Marius is without noble ancestors

²⁴ Flower, 2006, 54.

²⁵ Cicero, *In Pisonem*, 1: *obrepisti ad honores errore hominum, commendatione fumosarum imaginum, quarum simile habes nihil praeter colorem*.

(who held the right to *imagines*, and thus he “cannot display ancestral images”), he can demonstrate wars won and conquests made.²⁶ Whilst Marius highlights that he has his own virtue to speak for him, his rivals are trading on the bygone virtue of their ancestors. It is the *imagines* which stand for this past virtue, a recognisable symbol of moral rectitude. They also constitute the physical connotation of a man’s noble lineage, a concept which must have appealed profoundly to the patriciate. *Imagines* were the ancestors by blood, but Romans often extended their sense of kinship to a broader circle, encompassing those figures of earlier generations with whom they identified and sympathised.

A reverence for great men, and assimilating them into one’s own family tradition, aligns with another theme which will recur within the following chapters (see 1.5 for first reference), a lineage of association, rather than blood. This is picked up on by Seneca, in his essay *On the Brevity of Life*:

*We are wont to say that it was not in our power to choose the parents who fell to our lot, that they have been given to men by chance; yet we may be the sons of whomsoever we will. Households there are of noblest intellects; choose the one into which you wish to be adopted.*²⁷

Seneca also wrote to his friend Lucilius that:

*Our predecessors have worked much improvement but have not worked out the problem. They deserve respect, however, and should be worshipped with a divine ritual. Why should I not keep images of great men to kindle my enthusiasm, and celebrate their birthdays? Why should I not continually greet them with respect and honour?*²⁸

An individual could choose, in accordance with their own values, which figures to add to the roster of *imagines*, as a source of moral inspiration. Lineage, to the Roman or eighteenth-century viewer, could be a more fluid concept, claiming spiritual inheritance, affection for, or affiliation with, certain historical figures. Throughout this thesis, the bust

²⁶ Sallust, *Jugurthine War*, 85.

²⁷ Seneca, *De Brev. Vit.* 15.3.

²⁸ Seneca, *Epist.* 64.9. The original translation has been amended, as it rendered ‘images’ as statues, which is not strictly accurate.

is one of the methods of adoption used by eighteenth-century men to assimilate admirable classical forebears.

The History of the Portrait Bust

The bust's journey to eighteenth-century England from Ancient Greece and Rome explains some of its versatility as a medium.²⁹ After the period of the Roman Empire, the Eastern Empire (Byzantium) preserved the bust tradition with its own imperial and religious sculpture. The Byzantine period ran from the 4th Century AD to the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, and this, therefore, fed the format into medieval and renaissance art where it was preserved, in part, by reliquary busts. These painted receptacles often contained the skulls of saints, but were also used for other body parts, with the format considered suitable for showing the likeness of the saint.³⁰ Brilliant believes these elaborate cases are useful for "suggesting an implied completeness of the absent body. The artistic convention of the truncated figure, so clearly dominated by the head, intensifies the immediacy of the en-face relationship".³¹ Donatello's (1386-1466) *Reliquary of Saint Rossore* (circa 1424-1427, Figure 3) is an example of a quasi-bust as the object of religious devotion.

That initial Roman funerary function of the bust never really disappeared because of the association with the remains of dead saints, and because sculptural images of the deceased, whether truncated, full-length or in relief, were common on elaborate tombs. Therefore, busts remained a recognisable form, if not an ubiquitous or fashionable one. Busts next came to prominence in mid-sixteenth-century Italy, primarily Tuscany.³² Pioneering works such as the busts of the sculptor Antico (1460-1528), commissioned for the court of Isabelle d'Este (1474-1539) in Mantua, used the classical format and classical subjects to make new works of art. The most famous of the sixteenth-century Italian heads are Michaelangelo's (1475-1564) *Brutus* (Figure 4) and the busts of Cosimo

²⁹ This attempt to chart its progression is inevitably very partial and Euro-centric, ignoring traditions of sculptural representation in ancient China, among the Mayans, and many other cultures.

³⁰ Brilliant, 2007, 93.

³¹ Ibid. 92.

³² Lavin, 1970, 353.

de Medici (1519-1574) by Baccio Bandinelli (1493-1560) and Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), all from the 1540s.³³ The revival of the genre was not confined to Italy, with the new fashion being popular at the court of Emperor Charles V (1500-1558), and even reaching England in the bust of Henry VII (1457-1509), probably by the Italian artist Pietro Torrigiano (1472-1528).³⁴ The latter work, from the same mould as his funeral effigy in Westminster Abbey, shows both the relationship between, and the start of a gradual separation of, the memorial bust and the sculpted head as a decorative object.

It was the Italian influence, both ancient and modern, which brought the bust into the spotlight of eighteenth-century England. As the Grand Tour (see next section) gained popularity, more and more of England's wealthy gentry and aristocracy visited the emerging museums of Italy, encountering not only a wealth of busts but displays which showcased them. The Capitoline Museum, in Rome, one of the highlights of the Grand Tour, which opened in 1734, had a Hall of the Emperors (Figure 5). The room was, and still is, famous for its survey of imperial portraiture in one room, and a Hall of the Philosophers. The Museo Pio-Clementino, set up between 1771 and 1784 had its own room – the *Sala dei Busti* – (Figure 6) devoted to sculptural portraiture.³⁵ Busts, due to their reduced format, were eminently collectable items. A full-length statue might be more costly to purchase and transport and require a significant section of a room back home in England for its display. I will argue throughout this thesis that busts have more significance than being simple decorative elements, but their convenience as a smaller commodity must be noted, as part of the reason why they flooded into the homes of the English.

Classicising heads and busts (often referred to as 'neoclassical' in the chapters which follow) developed alongside this practice of touring and purchasing.³⁶ Young men travelling to Italy, had they the means, considered it essential to have their portraits

³³ Gallo, 2010, 57.

³⁴ Ibid., 58. Galvin & Lindley, 1988, 895.

³⁵ Baker, 2010, 306.

³⁶ Neoclassicism is a mid-eighteenth-century stylistic movement in its own right, but neoclassical is used as an adjective throughout to refer to objects "relating to, characteristic of, or designating a style of art, architecture, music, literature, etc., that is based on or influenced by classical models" – Oxford English Dictionary Online.

painted by Grand Tour portraitists, such as Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787), the doyen of the Roman artistic scene. Sometimes they also had their likeness *sculpted* by artists who were themselves often undertaking a learning period of several years in Rome, Florence, or Venice. Consider, for example, Edmé Bouchardon's (1698-1762) bust of John, Lord Hervey (1696-1743) from 1729 (Figure 7) and Christopher Hewetson's (1737-1798) bust of Thomas Mansel Talbot (Figure 8), made around fifty years later. The bust was, by this point, a strong and enduring tradition and Italian-made busts came to be supplemented by those commissioned from, or executed in, Britain.

Joseph Nollekens (1737-1823), whose works will recur in the later chapters of this thesis, spent a few years in Rome refining his art, acting as a part-time dealer, and eventually returning to become one of England's most celebrated portrait sculptors. The diffusion from the south to the north of Europe of this new, popular format was also aided by émigré artists from the European mainland. Two of the most famous sculptors operating in England during the period, Louis-François Roubiliac (1702-1762) and Michael Rysbrack (1694-1770, another familiar figure throughout this study) were French and Flemish respectively.

By the early nineteenth century busts were in private homes, public spaces, educational establishments, libraries, and Court, all while still retaining their usefulness for churches and tombs. Their popularity as a genre has waned since then, although never quite disappearing. In the 1930s, John Updike, in his poem *Roman Portrait Busts* deplored their "putrefying individuality", claiming "never has art so whorishly submitted to the importunities of the real".³⁷ Milano's 2015 study of French eighteenth-century busts begins by noting that most contemporary art connoisseurs would go out of their way to avoid a gallery devoted to sculpted busts.³⁸ Busts are now somewhat unfashionable, both as a medium and an object of academic study.

³⁷ Updike, 1970, 59.

³⁸ Milano, 2015, 1.

The Grand Tour

How Greco-Roman busts and heads reached the country houses of the English aristocracy and gentry as a phenomenon has been addressed above, but the physical and social mechanisms by which art was accessed and exported does bear expanding on. The ‘Grand Tour’ as a phenomenon and as a theme in academic study of eighteenth-century art is crucial to the context of this thesis. A discussion, however, of the Grand Tour as a pastime, a fashion, or an aspect of elite masculinity, could take up (and indeed has taken up) an entire thesis or book.³⁹

In brief, during the long eighteenth century, aristocratic men, usually young men in their late teens and early twenties, often took a period between six months and several years to travel in mainland Europe. The goal, for most of them, was to reach Italy and to consider the ruins of Ancient Rome, to view the sites referenced by the ancient authors on whom their schooling had been based. Joseph Spence (1699-1768) wrote to his mother in 1732:

*This is one of the pleasures of being at Rome, that you are continually seeing the very place and spot of ground, where some great thing or other was done, which one has so often admired before in reading their History.*⁴⁰

The Grand Tour became a rite of passage for young men of the patriciate, a ritual of elite masculinity. As Sarah Goldsmith writes:

The Tour was understood as a finishing school of masculinity, a coming-of-age process, and an important rite of passage that was intended to form young men

³⁹ Publications include Jeremy Black’s *Italy and the Grand Tour* (2003), and Edward Chaney’s *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance* (1988). Outside of the more typical Italian-centric tour, *In the Footsteps of the Gods* (2011), by David Constantine, tracks the impact of Greek travel on its visitors from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. The tour has also been the subject of numerous exhibitions including The Tate’s 1996 *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, three parallel Grand-Tour-themed exhibitions at The Getty Museum in 2002 and most recently, at the Gallerie d’Italia in Milan, *Grand Tour: Sogno d’Italia da Venezia a Pompei*, in 2022.

⁴⁰ Boulton & McLoughlin, 2012, 119.

*in their adult masculine identities by endowing them with the skills and virtues most highly prized by the elite.*⁴¹

She adds that the patriciate “primarily understood this element of continental travel as a means of maintaining their cultural, social and political power, through the process of educating and forming their sons”.⁴² To this end, the tourists often travelled with a ‘Bear Leader’, an academic guide appointed by their parents. They might learn courtly manners or draughtsmanship, engage dancing masters, sketch, and paint ancient sites, or simply gamble and drink away their allowances. Portraits of the young men on their travels were painted and souvenirs purchased. These souvenirs often took the form of contemporary paintings and sculpture, but one very popular type of souvenir was the ancient artefact.

Statues, busts, pots, inscriptions, and all manner of archaeological items changed hands in Italy, catering to a voracious English market. The antiquities trade was big business. British artists abroad became dealers and *cicerones*, guiding young men to the best sites and the best purchases. Sculptors set up workshops to restore (or fake) statuary for the inevitable spending spree. Some of the dealers became diggers, plundering sites such as Hadrian’s villa at Tivoli for new items to bring to the market. Italian families, who had collected antiquities from digs on their estates over generations also sold, individually and wholesale, to the tourists. The Papacy even issued edicts, in 1712 and 1733, to control the trade through the Inspector of Antiques, trying to ensure that the ‘best’ items would not leave Italy and could remain in the Vatican collections.⁴³ Many beautiful and important antiquities nevertheless left Italy by hook, crook, or bribe. *Milordi Inglesi* (as the Italians knew the tourists) might buy for their ancestral home on the orders of their father, as we will see at Woburn Abbey, or for their own redecoration and building, as we will encounter at Farnborough and Holkham. Antiquities often

⁴¹ Goldsmith, 2020, 2.

⁴² Ibid., 5.

⁴³ See Mannoni, 2021.

decorated the London town house but were most often destined for the country seat of the family, the reasons for which will be further explored later in this introduction.

The historiography of the Grand Tour has a lengthy pedigree. From the time of its inception, the tour as ‘finishing school’ of taste and education has been pondered through travel guides, travelogues, and analysis. Richard Lassels’ *Voyage to Italy* (1670) is considered a foundational work in this genre, setting the standard of many similar narratives to come. Lassels also, according to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, made the earliest reference to the modern name of the tour, declaring “and no man understands Livy and Caesar... ..like him, who hath made exactly the *Grand Tour* of France, and the *Giro* of Italy”.⁴⁴ The Grand Tour account, with moral, artistic and historical emphasis, as well as a description of the travel and the cities and sites visited, proliferated throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The other countries travelled through, including France and the Low Countries, were often acknowledged, but the Italian cities (primarily Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples) were the pinnacle of the experience.⁴⁵

Authors such as Chloe Chard (*Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour*, 1999, and *Tristes Plaisirs: A Critical Reader of the Romantic Grand Tour*, 2014) anthologise some of these private accounts. As the horizons of the Grand Tour began to expand in the nineteenth century, accounts of Greece also became popular. Several Grecian travelogues and sets of engravings, including *Antiquities of Athens* (1762), which had an enormous impact on country house architecture, will be referenced in later chapters.

Among recent studies of the Grand Tour, Bignamini and Hornsby’s two-volume *Digging and Dealing in Eighteenth-Century Rome* (2010) is something of a Bible for those researching antiquarianism, *milordi*, and antiquities purchasing. The focus of this thesis, however, is the perception and utilisation of antiquities purchased on the tour (or

⁴⁴ Oxford English Dictionary Online.

⁴⁵ Important travel accounts included Joseph Addison’s *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705), Thomas Martyn’s *A Gentleman’s Guide in his Tour through Italy* (1787) and the later works of Coxe, the pseudonym of John Millard (*A Picture of Italy*, 1815) and Eustace (*A Classical Tour through Italy*, 1814).

indeed ‘mail ordered’ from England, via one’s Italian dealer, or acquired from another tourist) once they were back in England. Experiences of travel in Italy or Greece are called upon in individual chapters to supplement and contextualise the experience of the collectors discussed. This thesis makes more use of the literature of domestic travel and the practice of country house visiting which arose during the eighteenth century.

Studies on the Portrait Bust

Amongst monographs on the country house collection of antiquities/neoclassical artefacts the most formative for this project have been those of Scott, Coltman and Guilding, which all explicitly consider the reception of ancient sculpture in the eighteenth-century, its meaning and significance.⁴⁶ In particular, Ruth Guilding’s perceptive examination of the impetus to collect sculpture by the English elite has been crucial to my thinking. Busts, however, most often appearing as part of larger decorative schemes, are rarely given prominence even in these analyses.

Certainly, in Roman studies portraits occupy a prominent place in analyses of Roman art, notably Kleiner’s *Roman Sculpture* and Stewart’s *A Social History of Roman Art*. Both studies take a cultural history approach, situating Roman sculpture in its social context. My project too aims to take a cultural history approach, but with regard to classically-educated eighteenth-century England. Portraits, particularly those of the imperial family, are also an important feature of historical and interdisciplinary studies of the ancient Roman world. The Wiley-Blackwell *Companion to Marcus Aurelius*, alongside historical and literary chapters, and examinations of his philosophical writings, contains an entire chapter on his portraiture by Dietrich Boschung. Boschung, in fact, uses two of the portraits considered in this thesis, from Holkham Hall and Farnborough Hall, as examples.⁴⁷ They are divorced from their secondary context as

⁴⁶ Scott’s *The Pleasures of Antiquity* (2003), Coltman’s *Classical Sculpture and the Culture of Collecting in Britain Since 1760* (2009), and Guilding’s *Owning the Past: Why the English Collected Antique Sculpture* (2014). Several in-depth publications on case studies outside the scope of this thesis, such as Jane Fejfer’s multi-volume survey of the portrait busts at Ince Blundell from the 1990s, and Peter Stewart’s monumental *A Catalogue of the Sculpture at Wilton House* (2020), have provided useful parallels and frameworks for consideration.

⁴⁷ Boschung, 2012.

collected items in a deliberate arrangement, and viewed in their primary, Roman, historical context. There is nothing wrong with this, *per se*, but the variation in how an object can be framed, and its biography presented, is striking. The afterlife of portrait heads in modern collections is a neglected episode. In terms of exclusively portrait-orientated works, *Das römische Herrscherbild*, a mammoth undertaking from the last century, analysing portrait busts from throughout the Roman period, has originated influential ways of looking at features of busts. It has, for instance, focused on *lockenzählen* (lock-counting), which has been central to discussions of Augustan and Julio-Claudian typology. More recent works, including Fejfer's *Roman Portraits in Context* (2008), situate this pervasive genre in historical and literary terms within their own primary era.⁴⁸

Portraits, removed from their ancient context, and transplanted to England, are the subject of nineteenth-century antiquarian cataloguers. James Dallaway's *Anecdotes of the Arts in England* (1800), Gustav Waagen's *The Treasures of Art in Great Britain* (1854 onwards) and Adolf Michaelis' *Ancient Marbles in Great Britain* (1882) list a variety of country houses and include discussions of provenance and identification. They tend to view the assemblage, however, in museological terms, more interested in sniffing out restorations, assigning rankings of quality, or rubbishing identifications, than considering the collection as a whole, with any meaning or significance. They exclude (or lambast) neoclassical works displayed alongside ancient heads.⁴⁹ As we will see throughout the thesis, the interplay between busts sculpted in the long eighteenth century with their ancient counterparts is crucial to understanding country house displays. Nonetheless, the 'big three' of nineteenth-century visiting are essential for many of the collections in this thesis, often supplemented by Poulsen's *Greek and*

⁴⁸ Portraiture on a smaller scale, at a specific archaeological site or a in a particular museum has also provided a useful lens for considering the bust as a genre.

⁴⁹ The same could be said of Bernoulli, J.J, *Römische Ikonographie*, 1882 onwards, which included country houses in a survey of portraits across institutions and private collections. This published heads which would have been otherwise ignored and brought them into the 'canon' of imperial imagery and chronological studies, but similarly ignored the secondary context of their collecting.

Roman Portrait Busts in English Country Houses (1929). He also considers the heads in art-historical terms, as objects to be rated in isolation. Poulsen even arranges his list by chronology of the figures depicted, across all the houses he visited, rather than grouping them by the house. The series *Monumenta Artis Romanae*, which covers in its volumes four of the eight case studies discussed here, does arrange busts by house. Written by a variety of authors, including Elizabeth Angelicoussis and Andreas Scholl, these publications catalogue and photograph individual country house collections, putting an in-depth essay about the house's context alongside each location. The object entries are detailed and often speculate on the how and why of collecting in individual cases, as well as the typology and style, but the links between houses, and even within a single house, the thematic link between items, are not considered.

The identity of craftsmen in the ancient world is almost impossible to reconstruct, and studies of the Greco-Roman bust focus, therefore, on the subject depicted and sometimes the context of viewing. In both the early modern and modern eras, with artist biographies and identifiable *oeuvres*, the emphasis changes and early modern portrait busts have often been explored in terms of a particular artist. The famous early nineteenth-century bust of Charles James Fox (1749-1806), whose image appears multiple times in this thesis, almost always has the name of the sculptor, Nollekens, attached to it.

Some approaches developed in the study of portrait sculpture in a specific context have been highly influential to this thesis. Matthew Craske's *The Silent Rhetoric of the Body* considers the funereal aspect, and portrait sculpture's centrality in the French *ancien régime* is examined by Ronit Milano, both of whom formulate 'ways of viewing' (to borrow the art historian John Berger's phrase) which re-evaluate the bust as an important and meaningful genre, meant for close consideration and admiration.⁵⁰ Milano's discussion of different types of French bust, including the maternal feminine

⁵⁰ See Berger, 1972.

archetype, the young child and the aristocratic man are, despite their lack of reference to classical models and traditions, useful to think with for their English counterparts.⁵¹

Ways of Viewing and Object Biography Theory

Malcolm Baker, whose work on the early modern bust has been transformational, notes that, “by the late eighteenth century, the portrait bust, often with classicizing drapery, became so familiar, so naturalized, that the viewing of the antique originals was done through the lens of the modern bust. In the eyes of many viewers, if not in the eyes of art historians, original and copy have become reversed”.⁵² This inversion of the relationship between the two categories helps explain the temporal elision in the country house context, where Roman and English can sit, side-by-side, as part a coherent, single decorative scheme. All eight houses in this thesis engage in this elision, displaying a marked atemporality in their displays.

Throughout the chapters that follow I attempt, for each case study, to take into account the ways eighteenth-century viewers made sense of the busts. Modern scholarship has put paid to many of the speculative (and downright fanciful) identities assigned to busts and wormed out the fakes and extensive restorations (themselves bordering on forgery), which pervade private collections. We must also be aware that eighteenth-century viewers saw these busts as a lifelike image of the people they represented, and as illustrative of ancient sources which were factual history. Our own modern viewing (and reading) has a less credulous approach to biographies, from ancient authors, which are attached to the persons depicted. For example, the *Historia Augusta* claiming Lucius Verus put gold dust in his hair, or Suetonius’ tales about the vices of Caligula, are not now taken as gospel.

The loss of eighteenth-century contextual milieu is only exacerbated by the vagaries of preservation and retention in private collections. Many busts and sculptures have been

⁵¹ Elizabeth Angelicoussis, quite apart from her two contributions to the *Monumenta* series has been an important reference point, considering private collections from the standpoint of their owners and shedding light on little-researched assemblages such as that at Houghton Hall.

⁵² Baker, 2010, 308.

sold from the late eighteenth century to the present, at auction houses, to pay death duties or simply to clear out the decorative scheme of previous generations. Incomplete bust arrangements lose their meaning. The case studies selected for this thesis have, therefore, intentionally been those without significant sales or losses from the collection.

Disassembly of the 'hang' of the busts (to borrow a term most often used for the arrangement of paintings), even when busts remain elsewhere in the country house, also hampers the contemporary viewer in their examination of busts. The Woburn Sculpture Gallery (Section D) has been cleared of its contents and busts are dotted around the house, on windowsills and spare plinths, or are off display in storage. The effect of The Temple of Liberty, or the bust of Napoleon (1769–1821), amongst a plethora of Roman emperors, is lost. Similarly, Castle Howard, in Yorkshire, has one of the most famous arrangements of antiquities in England. It is known as the Sculpture Corridor or the Antiquities Corridor (Figure 9). Busts, and some statues, line either side of this relatively narrow walkway. They are impressive in their numbers, but this is a late-nineteenth century change to an eighteenth-century arrangement. Pairings, groupings, and prioritisation of individual heads (such as a grander plinth, display in a focal point or at a greater height) are totally obscured by the loss of the 'hang'.

In some cases, however, this deviation from the original arrangement, especially where it occurred during the long eighteenth century, adds something new. At Petworth House, in Sussex (Section C), we will see how the second generation individual to own the collection of antiquities moved and rearranged busts to align with his own personal, familial circumstances, as well as aesthetic preferences. Much depends on the engagement of subsequent generations with their antique possessions. Some families chose, and still choose, to fossilise their arrangement in accordance with the 'hang' of the original owner. This occurs at Farnborough Hall and Houghton Hall, for instance (Section A).

The modern viewer inevitably puts a different context onto the bust due to the circumstances of viewing. Whether run privately or through the National Trust, English Heritage or similar, the country house is, to touristic viewers and academics, seen in

terms of heritage and museological quality. It is difficult to reconstruct the eighteenth-century context of examining busts within a private individual's lived-in house as fashionable and meaningful décor

The theoretical framework for regarding the eighteenth-century arrangement (or what remains of it) also requires exploration. The stance taken in this thesis owes a debt to the theory of object biography, which Ann-Sophie Lehmann describes as “the trajectories of objects and how these change over time”.⁵³ The trend in regarding objects as having a biography, a life outside their original moment of creation, use, or display, has been in currency for a long time, but was first articulated as a theoretical approach in 1986, with the seminal collection *The Social Life of Things*.⁵⁴ In particular, the contribution to that volume by Igor Kopytoff launched the theory, considering the way objects are “culturally redefined and put to use” throughout their existence.⁵⁵ Kopytoff's influential work has been applied by numerous other scholars. Classic works such as Haskell and Penny's *Taste and the Antique* (1981) and, more recently, Carrie Vout's *Classical Art: A Life History from Antiquity to the Present* (2018), take a life history approach to classical sculpture. What is missing in both these cases, and across the genre, as noted by Joy, is the “interplay between people and objects”.⁵⁶

That key relationship between the purchaser, owner, or viewer of an item of classical portrait sculpture and the sculpture itself is an essential part of what this thesis aims to reconstruct. These chapters cannot aim at a full object biography of the busts and heads discussed in each case study, but rather seek to rehabilitate a moment in the object's lifetime which is often obscured. Exploration of how sculptures came to be in an English hall or library, rather than a Greco-Roman dig site, is almost entirely absent in

⁵³ Lehmann, 2021.

⁵⁴ Although Lehmann, 2021, notes the Sergei Tretyakov essay of 1929, *The Biography of the Object*, untranslated at the time of Kopytoff's study, as an earlier instance of the theory's explicit articulation.

⁵⁵ Kopytoff, 1986, 67.

⁵⁶ Joy, 2009, 544.

conventional museological studies. An appreciation of the ‘second life’ of the object is equally important.⁵⁷

Gender

Attempting to reconstruct the context of the bust also exposes lacunae where, often, records cannot help us to fill in the blanks. For instance, gender is an important consideration and many historical studies of the last few decades have attempted to correct historical male bias. Women have often been erased or silent in traditional historical narratives, and the eighteenth-century collecting of antiquities is no different. Men purchased antiquities and men owned the houses they were displayed in. Men dominated the Grand Tour, that “institution of elite masculine formation”.⁵⁸ Women did travel, infrequently, as wives and daughters, and this increased as time went on, with a burgeoning number of travel accounts by women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including Marianna Stark.⁵⁹ Her *Letters from Italy Between the Years 1792 and 1798* (1800) was highly influential. She is notable, in a genre dominated by men, as women’s accounts are, more usually, contained in travel diaries. Men’s diaries were more likely to have been published in their lifetimes, and women’s often remain unpublished, in archival collections. Chloe Chard has also anthologised excerpts from some of these female travel diaries in her works on Grand Tour literature. Despite the number of these diaries, and the records of women travelling alongside their male family members, the female traveller was not understood as having made a ‘Grand Tour’, nor to have received the education which allowed full appreciation of the tourist sites. This was the preserve of the men.

⁵⁷ Object biography, despite being a versatile and useful way of thinking which moves us away from the primacy of the context of creation, has received its fair share of criticism. This extends from whether it is legitimate to ‘biographise’ objects in the same way as people to, more recently, colonial accusations. Dan Hicks has claimed that object biography overestimates the object’s physical constancy in the face of movement between shifting human contexts, which makes it unhelpful when trying to decolonise art history. Hicks, 2018.

⁵⁸ Goldsmith, 2020, 3.

⁵⁹ Edwards, 2012, 189.

Women's experiences of Rome and antiquities were often either coloured with sensibility, through romantic, person-centred literature, or possessed of a self-conscious concern for their deficiency.⁶⁰ This is articulated by Mrs Robert Arkwright (1786-1849), who travelled to Rome in 1844. Frances Arkwright was a former actress, who married well and became a friend and neighbour of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. Her travel journal survives in their archive, at Chatsworth House. It amply demonstrates the traditional gender division in education and particularly the study of classical antiquity. She writes, on encountering the Italian countryside that "I lamented my own ignorance and thought how delightful such scenes must be to those whose minds are stowed with classical recollections". On viewing galleries of sculpture and paintings, she claims that "in looking at and thinking of these prodigies, I feel how silly it is in me to say a word about them, all my remarks must be so trite and hacknied".⁶¹ Women were socialised to see themselves as not connoisseurial in the way their male counterparts could be, and that anxious self-reflection is obvious throughout Frances's account of Italy. Female collectors, such as Isabella d'Este, Queen Christina of Sweden (1626-1689) and Margaret, Duchess of Portland (1715-1785) are outliers in an age where men dominated not just education and the experience of travel, but record-keeping and public life. Even in terms of the country house, as a staging where women encountered antiquities, daughters rarely inherited the family seat, and women moved into another family's house at their marriage. Even moving into your husband's country house was no guarantee of security – after all, a widow was often expected to move compliantly out of the main seat and into a dower house.⁶² A few rare women, such as Margaret, Dowager Countess of Leicester (1700-1775, Chapter 6), made lasting marks on their country residences and their décor, after the loss of a husband.

Women are disappointingly silent in this thesis, although where possible, I have attempted to reconstruct female experience or agency. Women who lived alongside these antiquities were not passive recipients of them. In Chapter 7, we will meet Elizabeth

⁶⁰ For women's experiences of Rome, mediated through romantic literature, see Edwards, 2012 on Mme. de Staël's (1766-1817) *Corinne* and romantic sensibility.

⁶¹ Chatsworth House Archives CS/6, 435.

⁶² Lewis, 2009, 336.

Ilive (1769-1822), long-term mistress, and eventually wife, of the Earl of Egremont. A keen amateur scientist and patron of the arts, Elizabeth cannot have been ignorant of, or uninterested in, her husband's extensive collection of sculpture. She was, herself, commissioning art for the house. Yet her involvement is almost impossible to trace. Hints of female agency are scant and tantalising – the latter a word I will use throughout this thesis, for the many poorly-recorded but intriguing asides which indicate how contemporary visitors and owners regarded their busts. For example, Gertrude, the Dowager Duchess of Bedford (1715-1794) had a neoclassical head of Faustina the Younger, purchased for her by Horace Walpole.⁶³ She wrote to him specifically requesting that, were it in tolerable condition, he buy it for her. Faustina, despite some unflattering stories about her virtue in ancient literature, was a popular subject for eighteenth-century collectors.⁶⁴ Faustina's most desirable incarnation for collectors seems to have been the Capitoline Museum's (Figure 10) head of the empress, when young. Her perfect, delicate features made it an attractive ornament, and her place as the daughter, wife, mother-in-law, and mother of emperors made her a compelling historical figure for an upper class so interested in their own dynasty and lineage. Copies of the Capitoline Faustina abounded. The sculptor and restorer, Bartolomeo Cavaceppi (1716-1799), who had done some work on the original, made copies which came to such private collections as those of Syon House, Broadlands, and Ince Blundell Hall. The Woburn Faustina is also a copy of the Capitoline head. Duchess Gertrude was perfectly placed as a woman within dynasties – granddaughter of a Duke of Rutland, wife of a Duke of Bedford, mother of a Duchess of Marlborough and grandmother of two future Dukes of Bedford – to appreciate the connotations of Faustina.

In the Faustina example we see both the agency of women, and the depiction of women, which are two different strands of gender in this thesis. The latter is certainly easier to trace. The depiction of women steadily increased in eighteenth-century portrait sculpture and instances will be cited throughout. For instance, at Shugborough Hall, I

⁶³ Yale Online Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence.

⁶⁴ These stories will be explored in Chapter 5.

will argue for the centrality of a woman in the decorative scheme. Yet, to paraphrase Milano, the numbers of portrait busts are still skewed, with far more representing men, which makes clear that this surge in the sculpted visibility of women did not come at the expense of male visibility.⁶⁵ Ancient women are also relatively visible in the collections of this thesis, which reflects their selection in the eighteenth century as interesting and slightly different examples, compared to the traditional view of sets of men, often Caesars or statesmen. Several properties considered in the following chapters, including Houghton, Farnborough, and Petworth mix women (and children) liberally with the more common masculine historical figures. We will see that contemporary dynastic ambitions and commemorations are often at the heart of this representation and, at Petworth and Stourhead, there is sometimes a sentimental aspect to their inclusion.

It is worth noting that eighteenth-century women were neither ignorant of, nor uninterested in, this kind of dynastic commemoration. Henrietta, Lady Oxford (1694-1755), retreated in her widowhood to Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire, where she decorated the house with heraldry and portraits of three powerful English families: her husband's - the Harleys, her mother's - the Cavendishes, and the Holles, that of her father. She collected and displayed the "portraits and reliques of all the great families from which she descended, and which centered in her", according to Horace Walpole.⁶⁶ She commissioned new dynastic portraits (of, for example, her daughter and son-in-law, a Duke and Duchess) and moved portraits from other properties she owned. Rooms were then devoted to branches of the family and schemes based around gender and descent. The Great Drawing Room was dominated by full-length and three-quarter portraits of her grandmother, great-aunt, mother, and aunts, alongside her own image. Lady Oxford was not only deeply invested in dynastic representation, but she was aware of the important role women played in it.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Milano, 2015, 138.

⁶⁶ Lewis, 2009, 341. Henrietta's patronage and ancestral veneration have also been covered by Worsley, 2005.

⁶⁷ Retford, 2007, 337-9.

Reconstructing other marginalised groups is even more difficult than considering gender. A white, outwardly heterosexual, wealthy group of males dominated purchasing power. Deviations from this are few and far between. At Kingston Lacy, in Dorset, William John Bankes (1786-1855), a gay collector, forced to flee England due to his homosexuality, arranged busts of Emperor Augustus and his general, Agrippa, facing one another above doorways. The collection is too small to merit inclusion here, and more focused on Egyptian artefacts, but this is one of the few visible instances of LGBT+ involvement in such a country house assemblage.⁶⁸ Ethnicity is similarly out of reach. At Farnborough Hall we will encounter the head of a 'Nubian', a young Black man, based on the Borghese Moor sculpture, which stood in pride of place in the Drawing Room. This sculpture appears to have been prized for its exoticism but is the only example of a non-white person in this thesis. Contemporary discussions about the ethnicity of Septimius Severus and his fellow Romano-African emperors had not yet entered scholarly consciousness at this time.

Finally, the colonial influence of the collections examined within this thesis must be acknowledged. At Shugborough, one of the case studies, a fortune was made on voyages to China and the looting of ships crossing from South America, but these experiences are reframed as artistic influences and commodities. The owners of Houghton and Holkham both made and lost money in the South Sea Bubble, which was formative in the fortunes of Hoare's Bank, and allowed the Hoare family to purchase Stourhead. The South Sea Company was formed on a monopoly to supply slaves to South America. Whilst there is often no outward reflection of the colonial links and wealth within many of these collections, Shugborough being a notable exception, to obscure those origins does a disservice to twenty-first century scholarship's attempts to identify colonial systems, structures, and relationships.

⁶⁸ See also Carabelli, 1996, for sexuality and classical appreciation during the eighteenth century.

Politics

*A new name lately come into fashion for Ranters calling themselves by the name of Torys... A gentleman had a red Ribband in his hat... ...he said it signified that he was a Tory... ...instead of Cavalier and Roundhead, now they are called Torys and Wiggs.*⁶⁹

This observation is from the diary of Oliver Heywood (1630-1702), a presbyterian minister, writing in 1681. He was referring to the political split which would define party politics from the late seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries, a divide which was strongly felt by the two sides, in terms of both political affiliation and a sense of identity. The deeply held differences between the parties, and the lengths to which the affiliations were a part of upper-class identity during the long eighteenth century, have been played down in twentieth and twenty-first-century historiography. I would like to suggest a more immersive view of these labels, not simply as political terms, but rather as ‘cultural’, imbuing a sense of caste and taste, which played a decisive role, even in the consideration and veneration of antiquity, and the collecting of art. The complexities of politics in the long eighteenth century are beyond the scope of this thesis, but an awareness of the divisions is integral to its scope. Of the eight case studies explored in the following chapters, five look closely at the political affiliations of the owner of the house in question, attributing values and viewpoints to them, depending on which side they fall of a binary distinction, Whig or Tory.

O’Gorman suggests that Tories versus Whigs “were mainly defined by their stance on three issues: monarchy, religion and foreign policy”.⁷⁰ Inevitably, this study generalizes, along these lines, and for our purposes, the Whigs were a more liberal oligarchy, championing liberty (albeit just for their own peers) and independence from the Crown. The Tories, not to be confused with the modern Conservatives, were more conservative, with a small c, and upheld the sanctity of ecclesiastical and royal authority. Church and

⁶⁹ Oxford English Dictionary Online

⁷⁰ O’Gorman, 1997, 45.

Court, nostalgia for the reign of Queen Anne (born 1655, reigned 1702-1714), as well as an affection for 'native' gothic history which revered King Alfred the Great (849-899) and medieval knights, helped define Toryism. This contrasted with the Whigs' enthusiastic embrace of classical history and motifs. This is not to say that the Tories did not, on occasion, utilize the language of classicism, as we will see at Kedleston and Stourhead, and nor did the Whigs always spurn the gothic.

The division between these two 'parties', to utilise a modern term for an early modern phenomenon, arose from the Exclusion Crisis of the late seventeenth century. Since Henry VIII's (1491-1547) secession from the Catholic Church in Rome, England had moved towards being a Protestant country, during the reign of his son Edward (b. 1537, reigned 1547-1553). This was consolidated during the reign of Elizabeth I (b.1533 reigned 1558-1603). On the death of King Charles II (1630-1685), however, the Crown passed to his Catholic brother, James, Duke of York (1633-1701), who became James II and VII, King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. In the years preceding Charles' death, Parliament had split along the lines of those willing to accept a Catholic King and to honour the line of succession and those backing an 'Exclusion Bill', which would cut Catholics out of the succession. Those willing to accept James were to become the Tories, and those unwilling to do so were the early Whigs. The division developed into what effectively became two-party politics from then on. Two major events after the Exclusion Bill, but before the period considered in this thesis, further delineated the distinction between Whigs and Tories: the Glorious Revolution and the Hanoverian Succession. After his accession, James' attempts to roll back restrictions on Catholics were unpopular, and the birth of a son by his second, catholic, wife, in 1688, caused fear of a return to enforced papacy in England. In 1677, James's eldest daughter, Mary (1662-1694), had married her Protestant cousin, William of Orange (1650-1702) and William and Mary were invited to take the throne by a cadre of British noblemen, across both Whig and Tory divisions, and successfully staged a coup. Their seizure of power, in 1688, was known as 'the Glorious Revolution', a name which has persisted in England ever since. The Whigs, vindicated in their desire to remove James, considered the Williamite success a badge of honour to their cause.

William and Mary, childless, were eventually succeeded by Mary's younger sister Anne, but she grew sickly and middle-aged, with no surviving children, and English thought turned once again to the succession. The Whigs proposed the family of the Protestant Sophia, Electress of Hanover (1630-1714), cousin of both Charles II and James II. More than fifty of Mary and Anne's closer blood relations, all Catholics, were excluded by the Act of Succession. On Anne's death, in 1714, Sophia's son, George (1660-1727), inherited, becoming George I of England. Some Tories, however, supported the return of James' son, also James, who had been in exile. These 'Jacobites' (from Jacobus, the Latin for James) staged an unsuccessful uprising in 1715. One of them, Sir William Wyndham (1688-1740), was the father of the collector considered in Chapter 7. After their failure, George I was successfully crowned, but thus mistrusted the Tories for the rest of his reign, and they languished in opposition until 1760. The Whigs claimed the Hanoverian Succession as another success for their pursuit of liberty and the cultural lines of affiliation between the two groups deepened further.⁷¹

Whilst, as we will see in Chapter 2, there has been scholarly skepticism about the survival of the Tories as a true party, with any political force, in the years before 1760, there was certainly a broad fissure along which opposing sides of the English political elite differed in the early eighteenth-century. As Dan Bogart puts it:

*The Tories protected the interests of the Church of England and were committed to the hereditary rights of the monarch. Appealing to their base, the landed gentry, the Tories also favoured isolationism from continental wars and lower taxes on land. The Whigs promoted toleration to Dissenters from the Church of England and a contractual theory of the monarchy. The Whigs also appealed to one of their bases, the aristocrats and the financial interests, by pursuing an aggressive foreign policy supported by a well-funded army.*⁷²

⁷¹ This is a necessarily brief account of how the divisions came about. See, for instance, Harris, T and Taylor, S *The Final Crisis of the Stuart Monarchy: The Revolutions of 1688-91*, 2013, or, Harris, T *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720*, 2006.

⁷² Bogart, 2016, 271.

In practice, neither party was harmonious, and in-fighting was as common as unity. The Whigs splintered into multiple factions (one of which, the Foxite Whigs, will be a focus for Chapters 6-8). Colley notes that some Tories were “neither fish nor fowl: sufficiently critical of the Hanoverian regime to be regarded as seditious by Whigs and Jacobites alike but failing to convert their disaffection into active treason”.⁷³ For the Whigs, Coutu observes the futility of trying to corral Pittite Whigs, Reform Whigs, Court Whigs, Old Whigs, Rockingham Whigs and the various tribal cabals of different eras and friendship groups into something coherent across two centuries.⁷⁴ The Whigs-versus-Tories divide is, therefore, perhaps a relatively blunt instrument. It is, nevertheless, an instrument just sharp enough to cut to the heart of political and cultural affiliations in the period between 1715 and 1832. Rather than denoting party membership or allegiance in the way we think of it today, belonging to either of these two groups was about a pervasive worldview, who your friends were, who you married, and crucially, who your ancestors had been, as well as how you saw Parliament, the monarchy, the Church, and other institutions of power.

Throughout the following chapters, I will argue that in their country houses the elite made manifest their political allegiances, and often used art to do so. From the Whig Magna Carta in Chapter 6 to the Temple of (Foxite) Liberty in Chapter 8, or the Tory Caesars of Chapter 2, classical (or consciously classicised) art was being used in the service of politics. History was a political weapon in the highly visible sphere of the country house, which blurred the lines between public and private space.

The Country House in English Society

Earlier in this chapter, I noted that the country house was the seat of power, its location charged with dynastic memory and ambition. This English veneration stretched back to a medieval, feudal control of parcels of land. Dana Arnold has stated that “every house was a microcosm of the social, political, and cultural trends in Britain and had a crucial

⁷³ Colley, 1982, 30.

⁷⁴ Coutu, 2015, 222.

role in maintaining the status quo”.⁷⁵ The country house was often the source of a family’s inherited title: for example, the Duke of Bedford’s ancestors were given the title Earl of Bedford by Henry VIII and with it land in Bedfordshire from which to draw their wealth. The country house was also the root of political power, sitting in an electoral borough very often, from which the local magnate could run for Parliament or, if titled, could exercise influence over the choice of candidates.

The importance of country houses as social and political monoliths is demonstrated by their desirability and the expansion of this architectural type during the late seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century. Eighty-four such properties were built between 1660 and 1700, and one hundred and five large country houses were erected between 1710 and 1740.⁷⁶ Prior to the 1660s, Charles Saumarez Smith has argued that political instability prevented widespread building projects, their number fluctuating, depending on the fortunes of England in any given decade. After 1700, however, more favourable economic conditions, including the stabilization of coinage and the establishment of machinery for credit, allowing landowners to borrow money for building projects, made for a better environment in which the landed elite could invest.⁷⁷

The very presence of this singular architectural structure of social importance symbolised ownership of land and provision of employment for the surrounding areas. The structure was also the stage on which the aristocracy and gentry performed social rituals, such as dinners, shoots, and balls. Crucial for such events was not only the architectural setting itself, and the provision of hospitality therein, but the interior and art collection of the house. Interiors, which included furnishings, paintings, sculpture, and the very fabric of the house, such as wallpaper, woodcarving, and fabrics, were not a backdrop in any simple sense, and were often items of note. Arnold speaks of the value of the country house as “a site of display and conspicuous consumption... ..and the

⁷⁵ Arnold, 1998, 16-17.

⁷⁶ Summerson, 1959, 540. Saumarez Smith, 1988, 4.

⁷⁷ Saumarez Smith, 1988, 5.

owner's ability to outshine rival estates and project an appropriate symbol of status and socio-economic power".⁷⁸

The French aristocracy, by comparison, did not use their country residences in such a way, and their artistic collections were most often concentrated in the city – similar French busts from the *ancien régime* were usually located in Paris.⁷⁹ In Britain, a gentleman or aristocrat's countryside residence was a far more important expression of his lineage and wealth, even if he decamped to London for the social season, for Parliament or the Lords, or to Bath Spa for his health, for months at a time. Francis Haskell suggested that the town house was initially a repository of art in the seventeenth century, but from the 1730s to the 1760s the aristocracy and upper echelons of the gentry began to move their collections, wholesale, to the country house, from whence they did not return.⁸⁰ This was the period of Ousby's 'show house', and the tourism phenomenon to be discussed below.

The country house as a phenomenon, with shared attributes across properties and its cultural significance, first began to be considered as a key indicator of English history during the mid-twentieth century. The development of the field can be attributed almost entirely to two men: John Habakkuk and John Summerson. Habakkuk pioneered the genre of the country house in society from the 1940s, with *English Land Ownership, 1640-1740*, and the monumental *Marriage, Debt, and the Estate System*. His exploration of the mechanisms by which estates and their grand houses were built, lost, managed, and saved, brought the centrality of the country estate to scholarly notice. It was Summerson, however, who began to consider the buildings themselves. *The Classical Country House*, a 1959 transcription of his Cantor Lectures, has been formative to many people's conception of this topic, including my own. In it, he acknowledges the disparity of individual house studies, versus a cohesive narrative of form and importance across the genre.⁸¹ In the 1990s, the Treasure Houses of England

⁷⁸ Arnold, 1998, 19.

⁷⁹ Milano, 2015, 83.

⁸⁰ Haskell, 1981, 51.

⁸¹ Summerson, 1959, 539.

group (of which two of the following case studies are members) staged a landmark exhibition in Washington, where entire room interiors were recreated, and a wealth of objects and artworks were displayed. The 1990s represented the apogee of country house scholarship, and since then it has become an unfashionable topic. The current trend is to recover the experience of more marginalised groups and not the elite, who have been well-studied. Into this saturated market though, the country house bust comes as a fresh and new topic, and one with much to contribute to the holistic study of the eighteenth-century patriciate.

Tourism and Taste

The country house's contemporary visibility during the long eighteenth century is likewise notable. In a modern age where many houses, whether owned by heritage trusts or private occupants, are open to the public, it might seem natural to assume access to, and awareness of, country house interiors. The origins of country house tourism stem from the period considered in this study, and it was a revelatory change. Concurrently, country houses were becoming known for their art collections (partially inspired by the aforementioned spoils of the Grand Tour) and the English road networks were improving, allowing people greater speed and comfort in domestic travel.⁸² Pioneers, such as Celia Fiennes (1662-1741) and Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), published their accounts of travels around England, to natural beauty spots, towns and country residences of the nobility and gentry during the late seventeenth century. Yet, it was during the eighteenth century that the industry exploded, and polite society, nobility, and gentry were admitted to country houses on certain days of the week. These were advertised in advance, and visitors were often conducted on a tour by the housekeeper. Of the eight houses in this thesis, only Farnborough and Shugborough lack a strong history of touristic visitation, and even these did receive visitors. Holkham was particularly known for its antiquities, Woburn was often "damned with faint praise",

⁸² Anderson, 2018, 1 & 95.

and few viewers failed to admire Kedleston.⁸³ Guidebooks were published, particularly after the 1760s, although Wilton House pioneered the genre from 1730, and inns for visitors sprang up around such houses.⁸⁴ Travel accounts proliferated, both in published format and letters between friends, both of which are frequently cited in the following chapters. ‘Must-see’ attractions among the country house circuit came to be accepted wisdom: one was no connoisseur, in the eighteenth century, without having seen Blenheim, Wilton, Houghton, and Holkham, with Kedleston, Castle Howard and Hardwick high on the list of those of second rank.⁸⁵ Regional tours were given semi-prescribed routes. In Norfolk, Raynham, Holkham, Blickling, Houghton, Narford and Wolterton formed the accepted itinerary. In Derbyshire the discerning tourist had to view both Chatsworth and Kedleston, along with the Tudor mansion at Hardwick, to have seen the glories of the Peak District.⁸⁶

Eighteenth-century visitors loved to see how the rich and titled lived, just as modern tourists delight in peeking behind the curtain to see how the ‘other half’ live. Passing judgment on interiors, architecture, gardens, and even the hospitality of the place, recurs throughout travelogues of the period. Crucially, judgements often focused on questions of taste. The concept of taste is too big a topic for this introduction, but was defined by the respected author Joseph Addison (1672-1719) as, “that faculty of soul, which discerns the beauties of an author with pleasure, and the imperfections with dislike”.⁸⁷ Several decades later, in 1754, *The Connoisseur* journal claimed that “taste is at present the darling idol of the polite world... ..yet in this amazing super-abundance of Taste, few can say what it really is”.⁸⁸ Country houses were a central arena for this slippery yet important concept of discernment, and “to most visitors the real proof that a country house owner had taste as well as wealth and power was his collection of art”.⁸⁹ In this arena of hyper-interest and aesthetic judgment, the bust, as both an artwork

⁸³ Moir, 1964, 67-8.

⁸⁴ Anderson, 2018, 51.

⁸⁵ Moir, 1964, 63.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 65.

⁸⁷ Addison, 1712, 409.

⁸⁸ Oxford English Dictionary Online.

⁸⁹ Ousby, 1990, 74.

(and therefore an object of taste, whether good or bad) and a symbol of the classical culture so revered in the eighteenth-century, plays a crucial role. The first three chapters, forming Section A, consider the bust as classical symbol, in the guise of Roman *imago*. The three entrance halls in Section A reinterpret the notion of the venerable ancestral image, eliding the ancient *atrium* with the elaborate stone entryway of the eighteenth-century country house.

Section A:

Busts in the Eighteenth-Century Entrance Hall

The grand entryway to the eighteenth-century country house is one of the most common locations for the display of antiquities. Spaces like this symbolically set out their owner's intentions, a static version of the modern 'elevator pitch', summarising key facets of identity. Jonathan Scott, consistently damning about the intent and engagement of country house collectors, dismissed those who populated their entryways with sculpture, declaring that such a man was often, superficially "only interested in acquiring furnishing antiquities that could proclaim his taste to guests arriving in the entrance hall".⁹⁰ I disagree with Scott. The entrance hall was the perfect staging for a carefully crafted statement or sentiment, and, had venerable Roman precedent (as we will explore further in Chapter 3). The three houses in this section are not merely littering their lobbies with tasteful décor, and the context behind the halls must be brought to bear on their busts.

The entry hall has an additional resonance, as there was a contemporary awareness of Latin literature which referenced the *atrium* or *vestibulum* in the Roman house.⁹¹ Eighteenth-century gentlemen and aristocrats, from their classical education, would have encountered references to the entrance hall as a place for receiving one's *clientes* and displaying the *imagines* of one's ancestors, in the works of such authors as Cicero, Ovid, Seneca, Statius, Suetonius, Tacitus, Juvenal, and Valerius Maximus.⁹² The first-century BC architectural treatise of Vitruvius (*De Architectura*), which sets out the proper space and importance of *atria* was similarly well-known, and inspired the architect Colen Campbell's (1676-1729) immensely popular *Vitruvius Britannicus*, three volumes of country house plans and elevations, published between 1715 and 1725.

⁹⁰ Scott, 2003, 209.

⁹¹ Instances of *atria* in the Latin canon have been helpfully catalogued by Jacqueline Dibiasie. See Dibiasie, 2011, *The Atrium and Models of Space in Latin Literature*.

⁹² Dibiasie, 2011, 17. For the classicism of contemporary education, see Clarke 1959. Gallo, 2019, 200, notes that three quarters of the curriculum would have been delivered in Latin or Greek.

The entrance as a key space in wealthy and important dwellings continued well beyond antiquity. The eighteenth-century hallways we will discuss also have their roots in the central (literally and figuratively) medieval hall which “entirely dominated” household configuration and daily life in England, and around which smaller rooms, such as the kitchen and chapel, would have been arranged.⁹³ From these roots, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, larger and more affluent houses adapted the tradition and came to contain a ‘Great Chamber’, for eating, dancing, cards, prayers and the lying in state of bodies before funerals.⁹⁴ Gradually, as the eating function moved into specialised spaces, the hall became a place dominated by entry into the house rather than dining. Furthermore, French influences dictated that a ‘Salon’, or ‘Saloon’ further into the house should take the place of the Great Chamber, as a space for entertaining.⁹⁵

The historic hall was not totally forgotten in the country house, where the ample space available meant that eighteenth-century aristocrats and gentry could keep their traditional Great Hall, whilst also incorporating a new saloon. In fact, the facility to have *both* was indicative of the means of the householder. A space purely for entrance, a liminal place of admission, also implied the owner would selectively receive visitors and that access to the interior was not a foregone conclusion. Impressive spaces for entry, waiting, special occasions and – crucially for this thesis – display, became *de rigueur* in England. The entrance hall and saloon, as a central axis, with rooms on either side, became a common arrangement in eighteenth-century country houses.⁹⁶ The physical and social proximity of the two rooms is partially based on Palladian architectural ideas, which were fashionable in England between approximately 1715 and 1760, although elements of Palladian style had achieved fame in the seventeenth century with the designs of Inigo Jones (1573-1652). Some seventeenth-century houses, such as the baroque Blenheim Palace, also included this axis.⁹⁷ Visitors from across England and

⁹³ Girouard, 1978, 30.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 88.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 136.

⁹⁶ Anderson, 2018, 87.

⁹⁷ In the highly influential architectural style of Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) a central hall provided the middle point from which symmetrical wings and arrangements of rooms fanned outwards. See Wittkower, 1974, *Palladio and English Palladianism*.

beyond would have instantly recognised the model. Girouard posits that the importance of the hall-saloon axis declined in the later eighteenth century, replaced by a series of connected, large rooms, removed from the front entranceway.⁹⁸ This goes some way towards explaining why my three studies on the hall (and indeed comparanda used throughout the section) are from the early and mid-eighteenth century. Later case studies embraced different spaces for their portrait busts, including gardens and purpose-built galleries.

The entryways in this thesis are not only linked to the Roman *atrium*, and the medieval Great Hall, but embedded in the tradition of the English Long Gallery. As demonstrated in the introduction, the sculpted image of the deceased or the venerable had a long history from ancient times to the eighteenth century. The painted image of ancestors, heroes, allies, and friends, however, had carved out more of a role in the country house. Displays of lineage and other forms of affiliation had been staged in a Long Gallery; aristocrats of the eighteenth century and, in fact, further back, frequently hung galleries of painted portraits. Indeed, Coope has demonstrated that the galleried space on the country house, for indoor promenading and socialisation, has roots in the fifteenth century and had, by the mid-sixteenth, become a place to display paintings.⁹⁹

Portrait series were popular, including kings and queens, Roman emperors, and illustrious family members.¹⁰⁰ By the late seventeenth century, it was common to have family portraits in these spaces. The aim was to have the fullest possible lineage extending back generations, and “if lacking particular links in their visual displays of primogeniture, they [owners] ordered copies of paintings of ancestors not in their possession or commissioned entirely fabricated portraits from contemporary artists, suitably antiquated in style, costume, and pose”.¹⁰¹ People at the time were envious, reputedly, of the Dukes of Rutland, and their unbroken set of ancestral portraits at

⁹⁸ Girouard, 1978, 194.

⁹⁹ Coope, 1986, 43-50.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 62.

¹⁰¹ Retford, 2007, 317.

Belvoir Castle. In 1735, John Loveday (1711-1789), a country house tourist, remarked upon these:

*In the Gallery are Lengths of the Peers of this House beginning with the first Earl of Rutland and continued without any interruption to the present Duke. Some of these are painted excellently well; and what family can shew so fine a series of Portraits belonging to it?*¹⁰²

Several decades later, the American traveller, Samuel Curwen (1715-1802), professed admiration for Longleat's ancestral gallery, praising that it contained "all or most at full length, continued down from the first Sir John to the present Lord".¹⁰³

At Houghton Hall, Kedleston Hall, and Farnborough Hall, three very different entrance halls convey three distinct messages, blending the political with the personal, dynastic hopes with ancestral reverence, and the classical with the contemporary. The three chapters in this section will demonstrate that the entrance hall is a significant window into the intentions, aspirations, and achievements of the men on whom these houses centred, who built, rebuilt, and decorated their ancestral strongholds, and who chose busts to adorn their *atria*.

The houses have been selected to provide differing viewpoints on the entrance hall and different aims and allegiances for their owners. Houghton is the primary focus of this section, with Kedleston and Farnborough acting as smaller, contrasting case studies, each adding something different to the examination of the entryway.

¹⁰² Cited in Taylor, 2016.

¹⁰³ Cited in Retford, 2007, 317.

Chapter 1: Houghton Hall

Honoured Sir,

*The pleasure I received at Houghton is completed by hearing you
returned safe to Chelsea... ...I wish all your other actions could afford
you as much ease to enjoy their success as those at Houghton do...*¹⁰⁴

- Horace Walpole, to his father, 1736.

Houghton Hall is a Palladian mansion near King's Lynn in Norfolk, on which work began in 1722. Although not one of the most visited or best-known of England's stately homes (overshadowed by its close neighbour, Holkham, the subject of Chapter 6), Houghton is arguably a defining work for the Palladian movement in British architecture. The great twentieth-century country house historian, John Summerson, selected (the now demolished) Wanstead House and Houghton as the two great early prototypes of English Palladianism.¹⁰⁵ Houghton was the grand country seat of Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745), one of the most important figures in early eighteenth-century politics, and the leading minister of the first two Hanoverian kings. Beasley describes him aptly as, "a politician of splendid abilities and notorious corruptions whose presence dominated Parliament and the English court from the early 1720s to the early 1740s".¹⁰⁶ Sir Robert, as first minister for George I, and then George II (1683-1760), was in power from the late 1710s until 1742, when he lost a vote of no confidence and resigned from government, dying only three years later.

The small collection of classical and neoclassical sculpture at Houghton is almost entirely concentrated within its formal entrance hall. The assemblage is composed, for the most part, of portrait heads and busts, the bulk of which remain in situ – and often in their original placement. The collection comes from one distinct period of Houghton's

¹⁰⁴ Yale Online Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence.

¹⁰⁵ Summerson, 1959, 554.

¹⁰⁶ Beasley, 1981, 406.

history (that of its rebuilding under Walpole), and the sculptures were all in place by 1732. The arrangement provides a window into relatively early antiquities collecting before the true pinnacle of the Grand Tour. Despite its being a relatively small collection, I will argue that Houghton's portrait sculpture is an excellent example of ancient busts used to fashion contemporary identities, and to make statements about the collector himself. Houghton also allows us to reflect on the early Whigs, of whom Walpole was leader. A central argument of this chapter, and those which follow it, is that the 'tribal' culture of belonging and loyalty felt by Whigs and Tories alike, was expressed in their grand country houses.

1.1 Robert Walpole – the First 'Prime Minister'

To better understand the collection at Houghton, the collector's life must first be understood, and Walpole's life was extraordinary. There had been powerful ministers before, royal favourites and courtiers, but Robert Walpole was perhaps the first career minister who balanced the favour and service of the Crown with control of the increasing power of the House of Commons.¹⁰⁷ For the eighteenth century, Sir Robert was larger than life – in some senses, quite literally, as he was famed for being an imposing figure, in part due to his large body. Even his close ally, Queen Caroline (1683-1737), described his "gross body", with its "ugly belly", and his critic, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), jibed that his stomach protruded at least a yard before his nose.¹⁰⁸ Everything he did and represented was on an almost pantomime-like scale - he amassed comprehensive power and enormous wealth, and does not appear to have shied away from displaying it, as we shall see in the discussion of his entertainments. After his fall from power Walpole destroyed many of his papers, which presents some difficulties for the study of his purchases and motivations. A biography of Robert Walpole, and a full discussion of his importance in eighteenth-century politics, are beyond the scope of this chapter. Several scholars, including Jeremy Black (2001) and Edward Pearce (2007) have devoted whole books to his life. Monographs have also been

¹⁰⁷ Speck, 1996, 203.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 12.

written on the Machiavellian and long-lived political manoeuvring of Sir Robert and his circle, such as Paul Langford's *Society and Politics in the Age of Walpole* (1975) and Harry Dickinson's *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy* (1973). The main source for Walpole, however, in modern scholarship, is J.H. Plumb's magisterial biography (1956 and 1960).

For the purposes of this project, the discussion of Walpole's political career is necessarily brief. Born in 1676, to country gentry, and originally third in line to his father's estates, Robert was educated at Eton and King's College Cambridge. His two elder brothers had both died by 1698. He therefore left Cambridge early, to assist his father, and take up the formal role of heir. At this time, he also entered politics.¹⁰⁹ His family were Whigs, an affiliation which at that time usually described the stance taken in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and then, in Robert's own career, the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715.

The Walpoles, although not magnates, were established in Norfolk's political life, and Robert himself was to be an MP for King's Lynn from 1702-1742.¹¹⁰ His early career, under the Marlborough and Godolphin faction, in the final years of Queen Anne's reign and the early days of the Hanoverians, was not without its ups and downs, and Walpole's pre-eminence did not begin to solidify until the late 1710s. Finally, after establishing himself in positions such as Paymaster General to the Forces, Walpole became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.¹¹¹ Walpole was pivotal in the Whig ascendancy under the Hanoverians. The Tories had been in power in the latter part of Queen Anne's reign, but were suspected, by Walpole, the King, and other Whigs, of harbouring Jacobite sympathies and secretly wishing The Old Pretender on the throne. Partially, this was played up by Walpole and his compatriots, who circulated news of plots and counterplots, both real and imagined, keeping the spectre of Jacobitism, and the Pretender abroad, in the minds of the people.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Black, 2001, 3.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 43.

¹¹² Langford, 1984, 16.

The first major ‘event’, which cemented Walpole’s place in royal favour, governmental power and popular imagination was the collapse of the South Sea Bubble. Once again, the topic, and indeed Walpole’s involvement, could be the subject of a full thesis or monograph, and the explanation must be relatively brief and summarised.¹¹³ The South Sea Company, founded in 1711 to consolidate and reduce national debt, had a royal monopoly on trading with South America and nearby territories. Shares in this company rose to dizzying heights, before crashing in 1720, in what Patrick Kelly has called “the first major stock market crash in British history”.¹¹⁴ Many investors, including the aristocracy, were ruined. George I was Governor of the South Sea Company, and the Hanoverians were faced with an embarrassing situation, and public suggestions that the monarchy had profited from the losses of other investors. Newly appointed as First Lord of the Treasury, Walpole supervised the enquiry, shielding the monarchy, and placing blame firmly on the directors, all thirty-three of whom were removed and stripped of their wealth. Those who had bought state debt as shares at the highest valuations of the company were the main victims. At Walpole’s insistence, nothing was done to ease their predicament, as their lost investment was, in fact, servicing the national debt.¹¹⁵

Walpole emerged from the scandal well, as the man who restored order and faith in the financial system, bringing the culprits to justice. He had, furthermore, bought his own shares at the lowest valuation of the company, and then sold them at its highest point, before the collapse, making a sizeable profit. The affair was his first foray into the role of ‘Great Man’, as he was to become known. It was also the first red flag, so to speak, for his own corruption, as enemies accused him, with some justification, of profiting from the scandal financially. Kelly argues that the political profit was greater, noting that from the scandal’s resolution came his ascendancy, leading to a situation where “all forms of political power and influence became focused in a single individual”.¹¹⁶ The Bubble also set in motion Walpole’s career-long relationship with the financial

¹¹³ For a more detailed and nuanced account, Virginia Cowles, 1960, *The Great Swindle: A History of the South Sea Bubble*, or John Carswell, 1993, *The South Sea Bubble*.

¹¹⁴ Kelly, 1992, 59.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 67.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 74.

community, who had benefitted from his whitewash of the Bubble. As Kramnick notes, “in return for such favours, for contracts and continued support of the debt, funding, and stock-jobbing, Walpole was assured of votes in the Commons” by MPs from the financial community or with vested interests.¹¹⁷ The close relationship, was symbolised, for instance, by the gift of £200,000 from the East India Company to Walpole’s ministry, which did nothing to quell accusations of corruption.

The Bubble was the beginning of the Walpole monopoly and George I’s dependence on Sir Robert. Walpole’s power was considered increasingly absolute by his contemporaries, and his period in power was so personally driven that contemporaries and modern historians refer to the ‘Robinocracy’, based on a shortening of his first name. Public satire of, and anger towards, generalised corruption did not take long to focus on Walpole himself. In the wake of the Bubble and his newfound fame, satirical works, previously railing against overall political corruption, came to hone in on Walpole personally.¹¹⁸ Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) described the Walpole era as “the worst times and Peoples, and Oppressions that History can shew [sic]”.¹¹⁹ Yet historians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, have come to appreciate his cunning and his talent for fostering stability.¹²⁰ Walpole, although controversial, was not universally unpopular and remained in royal favour and surrounded by loyal supporters for much of his lifetime. In 1732, Lord Tyrconnell (1657-1731) wrote of him that “...there is no man in England that has been more steady to his friends and to those of ye. King and kingdom, and more effectively served both than you have done”.¹²¹ In respect of the King, during the same year, Lord Lovell, whose collection will be the subject of Chapter 6, demonstrated how keenly Walpole held George II’s ear, asking that “...if you approve of this prosecution all we desire is that His Majesty will pay costs of... [the case]”.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Kramnick, 1992, 50.

¹¹⁸ Langford, 1984, 21.

¹¹⁹ Hammond, 2016, 715.

¹²⁰ Langford, 1984, 16. The benefit of hindsight, as contemporaries saw Walpole as both symptomatic of, and responsible for, the uncertainty of the times.

¹²¹ University of Cambridge Library, Cholmondeley Correspondence, 1912.

¹²² University of Cambridge Library, Cholmondeley Correspondence, 1897.

Walpole's approval was thought to be proxy for that of George, and Walpole held the purse strings.

Sir Robert is a pivotal figure in the history of eighteenth-century England, and the analysis of how he used art, and specifically antiquities, as part of his self-fashioning, has been overlooked. His contemporary depiction as boorish, unrefined, and concerned with hunting, feasting and scheming, has left little room for any interpretation of his collections as anything but assemblages of 'things', bought because they were luxurious, expensive, and things one would expect a man in power to own.¹²³ I hope to argue that his Roman sculpture at Houghton is a thoughtful and powerful statement of his own identity, in relation to his position in England's political life, and in response to his critics.

1.2 Houghton Hall

As the centre of British political power, Sir Robert spent a large part of the year in London. But like all polite society, he was expected to retire to the countryside at certain times, and it was in the country that the elite built their monuments to dynastic power. The house that Sir Robert built befits the importance of its owner, a structure Vickery calls "the most notorious declaration of power" in Georgian building.¹²⁴ It was a vast and imposing symmetrical edifice of grey-white stone (Figure 11), each of its corners topped with domes. It replaced an earlier Walpole family house on the site, its owner desiring something more fashionable and fitting for the man often known as the first 'Prime Minister'.¹²⁵ Sir Robert certainly built the house with no expense spared, reportedly spending over £200,000 on what amounted to "a symbol and display of ministerial

¹²³ His contemporaries, Lord Chesterfield and Edmund Burke both reference his coarse manner. Franklin, 1993, 114-5. Burke, 1791, 62-3. In addition, the definitive nineteenth-century biography of Walpole, by William Coxe, published in 1816 emphasises Walpole as a boor, though no doubt posthumous denigration of his memory by political enemies plays a part.

¹²⁴ Vickery, 2009, 132.

¹²⁵ This is how Walpole is usually referred to today, but the title was not official in his time. It was, however, referenced in popular publications. Murdoch, 2006, 169, notes that Walpole's family had already torn down and rebuilt the family seat once in recent generations before Sir Robert's rebuilding.

greatness”.¹²⁶ The designs were by the architects James Gibbs (1682-1752) and Colen Campbell.¹²⁷ Interiors were designed and outfitted by William Kent (1685-1748). At the same time as the construction was underway, Walpole had the parkland extended and landscaped. Plans from 1720 and 1729 show that the park grew from 120 hectares to 200 hectares, and the village of Houghton was moved and rebuilt to accommodate this growth.¹²⁸ In 1735, *The Plans, Elevations and Sections, Chimney Pieces and Ceilings of Houghton in Norfolk* were published, by Isaac Ware, announcing completion of the ambitious work.

The Greco-Roman (primarily Roman) figuring of the house and its owner begins before the visitor has even entered the building. Atop the apex of the central pediment, on the front of the house, there is a statue of Robert in the guise of Cicero (Figure 12).¹²⁹ The figure, togate, with the right arm extended to the side in a typical ‘Roman oratory’ pose, apparently bears Walpole’s features.¹³⁰ Visitors would not be able to see the face from the ground, but as the figure shows, the positioning of the orator directly above Walpole’s crest makes implicit the intended identity. Of all the classical authors, Cicero was the most widely read in eighteenth-century England, and Walpole possessed multiple editions of his works in his library.¹³¹ Walpole’s skill in Parliamentary speeches and debates mean he almost certainly fancied himself a Ciceronian orator, and a laudatory medal, issued in 1741, confirms this association (Figure 13). On one side of the medal is Sir Robert’s bust, classically draped and surrounded by the legend ROBERTUS . WALPOLE . ORD : PERISCCELIDIS . EQVES.¹³² On the reverse is Cicero, depicted in an identical pose to the Houghton sculpture.¹³³ Around Cicero is the legend

¹²⁶ Black, 2005, 48.

¹²⁷ Murdoch, 2006, 169.

¹²⁸ Historic England Online, Entry for Houghton Hall.

¹²⁹ Ayres, 1997, 49. The assertion of Walpole as Cicero is notable, given that the opposition journal *The Craftsman*, compared him to Cicero’s nemesis, Catiline, in 1726; Byswater, 1987, 720.

¹³⁰ Walpole is flanked by two female sculptures, one representing Britannia and the other Justice.

¹³¹ Ayres, 1997, 136. Cholmondeley Mss. M26 a-g for library catalogues.

¹³² The legend translates as ‘Robert Walpole, Knight of the Order of the Garter’. The reference to the Garter Star is notable in conjunction with the later consideration of Walpole’s bust by Rysbrack at Houghton.

¹³³ Royal Collection Trust, item 443225.

REGIT. DICTIS. ANIMOS, from Virgil's *Aeneid*. It is a shortening of the line '*ille regit dictis animos, et pectora mulcet*' (with his words he rules their fury and softens their hearts) which refers to Neptune calming the sea. Quintilian, in his twelfth book on oratory, uses this quote to describe Cicero's oratory.¹³⁴ The medal both associates Walpole with Cicero and his own oratory (and leadership) with calming the impassioned spirits of the people.

The decision to portray Sir Robert in this way at Houghton was not without critique. In 1737, the Tory magazine *The Craftsman* commented satirically on a potential statue in London for Horatio (1678-1757), Walpole's brother:

*I had some thoughts of showing him in the attitude of a Cicero speaking, but was obliged to lay aside that design, because it would look too much like purloining from his brother, which is already set up at his country palace enveloped in flowing robes, which entirely hide his goodly port and show nothing of the orator but the easiness of his garments.*¹³⁵

The Craftsman was spearheaded by Henry St John, Viscount Bolingbroke, one of the great nemeses of Walpole's career, whose political philosophy underpins Chapter 2.

Back at Houghton, on arrival, having confronted the owner on the pediment, the visitor would come into the main relatively plain 'Arcade' entrance space, and then ascend to the Stone Hall via the Great Staircase, itself an impressive space, the full height of the house, and roofed in glass. William Kent (1685-1748) decorated the staircase with *grisaille trompe l'oeil* paintings of Roman architectural and sculptural features – including painted marble busts above doorways – suggesting an outdoor courtyard, on interlocking canvases, rather than wall murals. At the centre of the staircase void is a bronzed cast of the Borghese Gladiator by Hubert Le Sueur (1580-1658), given to Walpole by the 8th Earl of Pembroke (1656-1733), set atop a large marble plinth in the form of a

¹³⁴ Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* 12.27

¹³⁵ Cited by Craske, 2007, 145.

Doric temple (Figure 14).¹³⁶ Having entered a house in Palladian England, visitors then effectively went back ‘outside’, on the stairs, into a Roman garden. From the staircase, the visitor then enters the Stone Hall, the imposing temple-like room to which we now turn.

1.3 The Stone Hall

The most famous part of Sir Robert Walpole’s collection of art was, and is, the vast number of paintings he bought, later sold in bulk to Catherine the Great of Russia (1729-1796). Walpole amassed seventeenth-century Old Masters: Van Dyck, Salvator Rosa, Rubens, Rembrandt, Velazquez, and others. He devoted a whole room to the works of Carlo Maratta (1625-1713), whom he particularly favoured. Sir Robert also owned many portrait canvases, whose display articulated political values. One room was dominated by copies after original paintings by Van Dyck of portraits of James I (1566-1625), his wife, Queen Anne (1574-1619), as well as Christian IV of Denmark (1577-1648), Anne’s brother. It was through Anne and James’s daughter, Elizabeth (1596-1662), that the Hanoverian Electress Sophia and her descendants had claim to the throne. The borders were decorated with oval pictures of the children of the royal family, according to Pointon, who calls it an “overt declaration of allegiance to the Protestant succession”.¹³⁷ It was, she believes, “carried through the house and into the drawing-room, which contained portraits of Charles I (1600-1649) and Henrietta Maria (1609-1669) by Van Dyck, supported by Walpole family portraits”. The only painting in the library was a full-length portrait of George I, in his coronation robes, the apotheosis of this Protestant line. Walpole, George I and II’s loyal Minister, emphasised these Protestant (Whig) values through painted portraiture, a family tree across multiple

¹³⁶ The 8th Earl of Pembroke was himself one of the pioneering British collectors of antiquities. Ayres, 1997, 133 and Guiding, 2014, 50, for the Gladiator, and Stewart, 2020, for the Earl’s collection more generally.

¹³⁷ Pointon, 1997, 21.

rooms, and, as we shall see, he emphasised his own values, and similar associations of lineage, through sculpted portraits.¹³⁸

In 2013, most of Walpole's 200 pictures returned to Houghton for the exhibition *Houghton Revisited*. They were hung in a close approximation of Sir Robert's own arrangement, as recorded by his son, Horace (1717-1797), the celebrated writer, throughout the lavish suite of first-floor state rooms. As marvellous as they are, the fame of the paintings has overshadowed other forms of artwork at Houghton and, even during the exhibition, which was accompanied by an interactive app and a detailed catalogue, no real information on the ancient sculpture was provided.¹³⁹

While the paintings populate the formal spaces like the Saloon, backed onto rich red and green damasks, the sculptures are confined to one room, itself the entrance to the *enfilade* of state rooms. This is the Stone Hall, a double height, forty-foot pure white 'cube' of Whitby ashlar, riotous with stucco and ornament, but devoid of colour and paintings, devoted solely to stonework (Figure 15). The room has a balcony running all around its edge, from which the second-floor rooms are reached, and this rests on enormous carved stone brackets, with an ionic cornice featuring Greek Key fretwork, stucco swags and *amorini*. From the balcony visitors can take in the four family portrait reliefs which dominate the ceiling's frieze (see Figure 16 for one of these): Sir Robert, his first wife Catherine (1682-1737), their eldest son, and his wife.¹⁴⁰

The inclusion of the son and daughter-in-law is as firm a statement of permanence and aspiration for the family as the very presence of Houghton and its grand interiors. Walpole himself could not take on a title, due to his role in the Commons, so his eldest son became 'Lord Orford' and the very Roman process of a *novus* becoming a *nobilis* was depicted by Robert junior's presence.¹⁴¹ Whilst no fixed definitions of these concepts existed, broadly speaking, *nobiles* in ancient Rome were established families whose

¹³⁸ Moore & Crawley, 1992, 5, note that the portraits were of no interest to Catherine, and were therefore not part of the sale.

¹³⁹ See Morel & Moore, 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Description from Historic England, entry for Houghton Hall.

¹⁴¹ Craske, 2007, 263.

members had served in the Senate, specifically with Consulship in their family line, and who dominated power during the republican era.¹⁴² Conversely, a *novus homo* was the first man of his family to hold political office, just as Walpole was. Poignantly for his assimilation by Sir Robert, Cicero was also a *novus*, something he refers to in several of his speeches. Given the number of Ciceronian works in Houghton's library, Sir Robert would have been very much aware of this terminology, and of the fact that his son was not a *novus* – the Walpole family had made the transition to *nobiles*.¹⁴³ The sensitivity to a two-thousand-year-old process might seem like speculation, despite the classicising context of the time, but was almost certainly on the minds of Walpole and his enemies. *The Craftsman* published a satirical essay, entitled *Novi Homines*, which mocked the deficiency of men of relatively mean origins in government and other positions of power.¹⁴⁴

Below the senatorial elevation of the *gens* Walpole, there are five relief scenes by Michael Rysbrack on the walls: one above Walpole's bust on the central fireplace, and one above each of the four doors on the side walls. Above the fireplace, the largest relief depicts four figures sacrificing to Diana, copied from the Arch of Constantine. This is taken from Bernard de Montfaucon's (1655-1741) plates of the arch in *L'antiquité expliquée* (1719), which was in Walpole's library.¹⁴⁵ The largest artwork in the Stone Hall is a bronze cast of the Laocoon group, acquired by Sir Robert's eldest son in Paris. It forms a pendant with the bronze copy of the Borghese gladiator in the stairwell leading to the Stone Hall. Other than the Laocoon, the Stone Hall is devoid of any larger artworks. It also has no highly decorative furniture, just console tables and wooden benches, designed by William Kent. See Figure 17 for a plan of the hall.

¹⁴² Van der Blom, 2010, 35-6.

¹⁴³ Cholmondeley MSS. M26.

¹⁴⁴ Kramnick, 1992, 77.

¹⁴⁵ Cholmondeley MSS. M26C, M26D. The other four reliefs are copies/versions of Roman relief scenes, also depicted by Montfaucon. Sacrifices to Hercules and Apollo also derive from the Arch of Constantine, and a sacrifice of a bull appears to be a slightly altered version of a relief in Florence (now in the Uffizi). The fourth relief is a hunting scene for which I have been unable to identify an antique precedent.

It is on the niches, plinths, and fireplaces of the Stone Hall, however, that the most prominent Roman analogies are played out, in the form of fourteen classical (and neoclassical) portrait busts. These busts were first published by Horace Walpole in 1743, as part of his *Aedes Walpolinae* catalogue. Whilst primarily devoted to the paintings, the text does list the ancient sculpture “on terms and consoles round the hall”. The seventeen portraits in the Hall are all, bar the Hesiod, still in the collection:

1. Marcus Aurelius (now known to be Commodus)
2. Trajan (now identified as an unknown Roman man)
3. Septimius Severus
4. Commodus
5. Young Hercules
6. Baccio Bandinelli (neoclassical- now thought to be an unnamed Venetian scholar)
7. Faustina the Elder
8. Young Commodus
9. Homer (neoclassical)
10. Hesiod (neoclassical)
11. Jupiter (accepted as a god, but may not depict Jupiter)
12. A ‘Philosopher’ (now identified as a Priest of Dionysus)
13. Hadrian
14. Pollux
15. A Roman lady
16. A Roman Empress
17. Sir Robert Walpole

Horace also notes six further busts in the porch near the Hall, reached by the stairs to the garden. Four of these are neoclassical, and there are two ancient heads, a ‘Philosopher’ and Julia Domna, wife of Severus.¹⁴⁶ Aside from Julia, the other five heads have left the collection. Julia has since been moved into the Stone Hall and is currently

¹⁴⁶ Walpole, 1743, 74-5.

placed on a console table beneath the Severus portrait.¹⁴⁷ Whilst several portraits have been renamed and re-identified, as with all the case studies in this thesis I will refer to the sculptures by the names associated with them during Walpole's time. Their identities in the eighteenth century, as opposed to those of the second century, are of interest for my exploration of Houghton's sculptural scheme.

Besides Horace's account, Houghton's busts are also recorded in 1800 by Dallaway, and by Michaelis in 1882. Neither text has much to say on the quality of the busts or their provenance, although Dallaway notes the modern busts are finer than the ancient ones, and Michaelis, who in keeping with his methodology, discusses only ancient busts, denotes the Roman lady as "a most beautiful antique".¹⁴⁸ Walpole, Dallaway and Michaelis all note the provenance of the Severus and the young Commodus, which were gifts from Cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692-1779) to Colonel Churchill (1656-1714, the brother of the Duke of Marlborough) who in turn gave them to Walpole.¹⁴⁹ The portraits were catalogued once again by Poulson in 1929, but receive little discussion, other than observation that the 'Marcus Aurelius' is so altered that it "has quite lost its character".¹⁵⁰ Poulson also contends that Matthew Brettingham (1699-1769) acquired these busts, whilst Angelicoussis, discussed below, believes William Kent was responsible.¹⁵¹

In modern scholarship, the ancient and neoclassical sculpture in the Stone Hall has received little attention. The collection features in Geoffrey Waywell's *Classical Sculpture in English Country Houses*, printed to accompany a private tour as part of the

¹⁴⁷ Other chapters will discuss the prevalence of pendant portraits in painting at this time. The portraits of married couples were hung together in matching frames and reciprocal arrangements. This fashion is often imitated in sculpture.

¹⁴⁸ Dallaway, 1800, 291. Michaelis, 1882, 324.

¹⁴⁹ Charles Churchill was a friend of Walpole and his son, another Charles, seems to have done the Prime Minister favours enough that he could remind Sir Robert of his promise to appoint Churchill's own friends to influential positions in the American colonies when they became available. University of Cambridge Library, Cholmondeley Correspondence, 2929. He is generally thought to have been born around 1720, but this makes little sense with the correspondence, which has Charles writing as an ally to Robert in the early 1730s. The younger Charles would later marry Robert's second daughter.

¹⁵⁰ Poulson, 1929, 12.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 11. Angelicoussis, 2009, 26. Poulson cannot be correct, as the elder Matthew Brettingham relied entirely on his son, the younger Matthew, living abroad, to procure antiquities, and he would have been in his early teens when Walpole's collection was formed.

International Congress of Classical Archaeology in 1978. The sculptures are listed, described as mostly modern or with modern additions, and Waywell subscribes to the Poulsen view of Brettingham as purchaser.¹⁵² Scott dismissed the busts as selected “for their homogenous size and colour rather than their importance as antiquities”, but provides no evidence of this, and no consideration of the subject matter.¹⁵³ In fact, Houghton’s Greco-Roman sculpture has received only one dedicated study - a 2009 article by Elizabeth Angelicoussis for *Apollo* magazine. Whilst Angelicoussis carefully reconstructs what possible provenances she can, faced with Walpole’s own destruction of many purchase papers, her analysis of the subject matter is limited. She claims that “conditions of the art market dictated Walpole’s choice of sculpture”, going on to suggest busts were more freely available and cheaper to buy than other works.¹⁵⁴ I would not argue against this, but believe that Walpole’s use of busts was more of an active choice relating to self-fashioning, rather than simple decorative happenstance. Angelicoussis does acknowledge the importance of illustrating historical figures with portrait sculpture but does not explore the potential meanings of those figures depicted at Houghton.¹⁵⁵ By referring to contemporary visitor accounts, and reconstructing the timeline of purchases, Angelicoussis suggests a layout for the busts in the Stone Hall. The current arrangement of the busts is quite similar to this.

1.4 In Good Company: Marcus Aurelius and Trajan

At the centre of the hall, above the fireplace, the bust of Sir Robert, in classical drapery, is by Michael Rysbrack (Figure 18). The choice of Rysbrack for this bust, and Kent for the decor, both favoured artists of Walpole’s Tory opponents, is emblematic of his desire to outmatch and aggrieve his rivals and critics.¹⁵⁶ The focal point of the room’s décor, Rysbrack’s marble bust, is accompanied by two imperial Roman busts selected to be Sir Robert’s direct companions. They are the only other busts on this wall of the room and,

¹⁵² Waywell, 1978, 12-14.

¹⁵³ Scott, 2003, 66.

¹⁵⁴ Angelicoussis, 2009, 27-8.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 29.

¹⁵⁶ Craske, 2007, 262.

as we shall see, the visual associations between them and Walpole are strong. On Robert's right, sits Marcus Aurelius, and on his left, Trajan (Figure 19).

The three busts are all dressed in an extremely similar manner. Walpole (Figure 20) wears a Roman *paludamentum*, pinned at his right shoulder with a circular brooch. Marcus Aurelius and Trajan (Figures 21 and 22) also wear this garment, pinned at the right shoulder with a circular brooch. The only difference is that Walpole's also bears the Star of the Garter on his left breast, a modern incongruity. The three figures also demonstrate a striking similarity in the drapery at their collars: the pronounced folds with which the tunic under the cloak gathers at the front. Given that Trajan is a composite, that is, a head placed on another unrelated bust, and Marcus Aurelius has been quite heavily restored and altered, I would suggest that this similarity is by design. Such simple visual details create an impression of homogeneity. Walpole and his Roman companions appear to wear a common uniform, though Sir Robert is denoted as superior, to some degree, by his garter star and his elevated position on the mantelpiece, surrounded by ornate swags.

If Rysbrack modelled Walpole's pose and attire on existing possessions, or busts were sought/alterd to fit, then the appeal of these two emperors as compatriots is easy to see. Trajan, the *optimus princeps*, and Marcus Aurelius, the Philosopher Emperor, are two of the most unambiguously 'good' Roman emperors Walpole could have chosen, popular throughout history. The image of this Roman *virtus* that Walpole was trying to project is best summarised by an unpublished item in the Houghton archives, a Latin poem, authored by one 'A. Stone', dedicated to Walpole. It is a Latin panegyric – a speech of praise, in the style of that delivered by Pliny for Trajan, or Eusebius for Constantine, which runs to three pages.¹⁵⁷ It begins:

To the most honourable man, Robert Walpole

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Head of the Treasury,

¹⁵⁷ Stone's example, and much post-classical panegyric is poetry, whilst ancient examples were prose speeches.

Confidential Councillor to the King, and

*Most noble Knight of the Garter*¹⁵⁸

The manner of address echoes Roman dedicatory inscriptions, as well as poetry of praise, and makes a bold statement of how Walpole wanted to be seen. It also links to a dedicatory inscription present in the Stone Hall, below Sir Robert's bust. The latter reads, in translation: "Robert Walpole, Prince of the British Senate, who built, lived in, and made famous this house". The phrasing *Senatus Britannici princeps* would inevitably, to his contemporaries, draw to mind Augustus, the first man to become emperor and consolidate power, akin to Sir Robert's consolidation of ministerial power, on whom the title 'princeps Senatus' had been bestowed.¹⁵⁹

Stone's poem runs to three pages of metric poetry, filled with conventions such as invocations to the Muse, as seen in epic, and discussion of the favour of, not a god(dess) in this instance, but rather Caroline, wife of George II, and Walpole's ally. For instance, one of the several stanzas referencing the Queen begins:

His numeris atque hoc sacravit carmine musa

Quod subiit Carolina, nemus,¹⁶⁰

(the Muse made sacred with these measures and this song the grove which Caroline herself sustained)

Caroline is painted in a religious role, as a supplicant (later offering 'munuscula' or little gifts to the Muse) and some form of woodland demigoddess herself, on whom the Muse looks favourably. Her insertion in the poem at the very least implies the intercession of a woman into the relationship between Walpole and the Muse and Walpole and divinity/classical antiquity more generally. Her intercession as semi-divine patron and supporter, above the noble yet mortal Sir Robert is perhaps visually reflected in the Hall, as the central relief contains the image of sacrificing to a female deity, Diana, in a woodland area. The placement of an image of men venerating a goddess in a central

¹⁵⁸ Cholmondeley MSS. M31. Translation my own.

¹⁵⁹ Ayres, 1997, 18.

¹⁶⁰ Cholmondeley MSS. M31. Translation my own.

position, right behind Walpole's own bust is just as indicative as Caroline's placement within a poem dedicated to Robert.

Walpole cast in roles of religious piety or statesmanship is in marked contrast to how many of his peers viewed him. Many of these peers might have baulked at Walpole's association with Trajan and Marcus. Both are known for militarism, whereas Sir Robert's policy was always avoidance of war.¹⁶¹ They were, however, also both renowned for providing stability and success to the Roman Empire, which was Walpole's view of his own achievement in England. Trajan, under whom the Empire reached its largest size, also instituted building projects across the Empire and introduced the *alimenta*, a welfare programme for orphans and poor children in Italy. Trajan's benevolent reputation is compounded by glowing accounts of his personality in ancient sources. He is recorded by Cassius Dio as:

*...most conspicuous for his justice, for his bravery, and for the simplicity of his habits... ...his mental powers were at their highest, so that he had neither the recklessness of youth nor the sluggishness of old age. He did not envy nor slay anyone, but honoured and exalted all good men without exception, and hence he neither feared nor hated any one of them. To slanders he paid very little heed and he was no slave of anger...*¹⁶²

Marcus, military conqueror, and author of the philosophical *Meditations* is similarly praised by ancient authors. He is described by the *Historia Augusta* as: "devoted to philosophy as long as he lived and pre-eminent among emperors in purity of life", and:

at all times exceedingly reasonable both in restraining men from evil and in urging them to good, generous in rewarding and quick to forgive,

¹⁶¹ Tombs & Tombs, 2010, 33. For instance, he pressured George II not to enter the War of Polish Succession in 1733, and afterwards, boasted to the Queen: "Madame, there are 50,000 men slain in Europe this year, and not one Englishman".

¹⁶² Dio, *Roman History*, 68, 15.6.

*thus making bad men good, and good men very good, and he even bore with unruffled temper the insolence of not a few.*¹⁶³

Walpole would have encountered these texts in his classical education at Eton and Cambridge.¹⁶⁴ He also possessed in his library at Houghton Raffaele Fabretti's (1618-1700) 1683 publication *De Columna Traiani Syntagma* (which makes numerous references to Cassius Dio as the main source for Trajan's life), the *Historia Augusta* itself, and Aurelius Victor's *De Epitome Caesaribus*, which covers the reigns of both men.¹⁶⁵ Sir Robert's bedroom was next door to the library, and it is likely that he used it as a sitting room, doing much of his work there whilst at Houghton. These shelves also contained *The Caesars*, a short satire, reputedly by the fourth-century Emperor Julian.¹⁶⁶ Whilst firmly satirical, this text revolves around a contest, pitting all noteworthy Roman Emperors, plus Alexander the Great, against one another, to decide who was the best. Marcus Aurelius wins the contest in Julian's satire, but Trajan also comes out of it well. From the illustrious figures listed, if Walpole had to pick two to sit with his bust, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius could well be the most flattering.

Their deployment as Walpole's companions also serves to rebut popular comparisons between Walpole and less savoury figures from Roman history. For instance, a cartoon of Walpole on a plinth, labelled 'Julius II' and surrounded by a horrified audience, circulated in the early 1730s.¹⁶⁷ In 1740, shortly before his fall from power, a cartoon was published of Walpole being dragged to his execution, captioned 'the downfall of Sejanus', who was advisor to the emperor Tiberius.¹⁶⁸ Walpole, in response to his imaging as a second Caesar, or the tool of a corrupt emperor, countered with more virtuous imperial models. Trajan and Marcus Aurelius were not, however, simply good emperors meant to double for Walpole and include him in their ranks. I would argue

¹⁶³ His. Aug. *Aurelius*, 1.1 &

¹⁶⁴ Clarke, 1959, 51. Through the prose anthologies of *Scriptores Romani* and *Scriptores Graeci* at Eton, which selected historically interesting and linguistically informative selections of ancient prose writers.

¹⁶⁵ Cholmondeley MSS. M26C, M26E, M26G.

¹⁶⁶ Cholmondeley MSS, M26C.

¹⁶⁷ Langford, 1984, 54.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 102.

that their position as adoptive emperors also reflects Walpole's own involvement in the issues of succession to the British throne. Trajan was the first emperor to be adopted from outside the family of his predecessor, by Nerva. Marcus Aurelius was adopted by Antoninus Pius, who in turn had been adopted by Hadrian, who was himself adopted by Trajan. Walpole's own son claimed that his father "fixed the House of Hanover on the throne".¹⁶⁹ Walpole, as chief minister, with his unprecedented influence and power, owed his place to the Hanoverians, but also aided them, smoothing their way as new, foreign monarchs, in early issues such as the South Sea Bubble. Therefore, Walpole's position, between two adoptive emperors, is a powerful statement about succession, an advertisement of the Whig role in 'choosing' the king.

In addition, it is not difficult to see how Robert himself might be interpreted as the adoptive emperor in this situation, rather than King George. The king left much of the business of government to his First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, preferring his home in Hanover to England, and reputedly speaking little English even at the end of his reign. Walpole's display of these three busts, in his lavish Norfolk home, a palace fit for a king, creates a certain ambiguity. He is openly imaging himself as an emperor, with his dress and position amongst the busts in the Stone Hall. Yet his Garter Star reminds us that he is, in name, but a servant of the monarchy. The proximity to the two 'good' adoptive emperors provides a potential subtle reading about who has bestowed power upon whom, and who is worthy to rule.

1.5 Antonines, Severans and the Walpole Ministry

Broadly speaking, the busts of historical persons within the room belong to two dynasties: the Antonines and the Severans. From the Antonines they include Trajan's adoptive son, Hadrian, as well as Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus who is represented in two busts in the Stone Hall, as well as Faustina the Elder, wife of

¹⁶⁹ Horace Walpole to Thomas Pownall, Yale Online Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence.

Hadrian's adoptive son, Antoninus Pius.¹⁷⁰ After Commodus' death and two short-lived emperors, Septimius Severus came to the throne, and is credited by ancient historians with restoring some stability to the empire. His bust is also in the hall, although curiously, that of his wife, Julia Domna, was not moved into the Stone Hall, but rather remained in the Porch in Walpole's day.

The second century Antonine and Severan period has come to be regarded as the last stable era of Roman rule and prosperity, before the wars and multiple emperors of the third century, and the eventual decline of the western empire. The argument for the Antonines and Severans as the final successful emperors is, in modern scholarship, often traced back to Edward Gibbon's (1734-1794) *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. This seminal work has been highly influential on historical writing ever since, and its first volume was published in 1776, long after Walpole was dead. Gibbon did praise the Antonines, entitling one of his chapters '*Of the Union and Internal Prosperity of the Roman Empire, in the Age of the Antonines*'.¹⁷¹ His praise of Severus is not quite so fulsome, but he acknowledges the skill of Severus and his contribution to Rome, before it fell into decline.¹⁷²

Gibbon did draw on earlier works for his history, however, and was heavily influenced by Baron Montesquieu's (1689-1755) 1734 essay *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence*. Montesquieu similarly places the beginning of decline after Severus.¹⁷³ Whilst the Houghton archives do not show a copy of any works by Montesquieu in the library during Sir Robert's lifetime, he may well have been acquainted with his ideas. Iain Stewart believes the two may have met, through Walpole's visit to the Club L'Entresol, where Montesquieu was a member.¹⁷⁴ Montesquieu's *Notes sur L'Angleterre* implies a familiarity with English politics and the main figures at the time, and we know he attended debates in Parliament, whilst in

¹⁷⁰ The inclusion of an empress from this favourable dynasty, especially one of good repute in ancient sources, is an interesting reflection of Walpole's own relationship to Caroline, wife of George II, of whom he was a close ally.

¹⁷¹ Gibbon, 1776, 56.

¹⁷² Ibid., 108-9.

¹⁷³ Montesquieu, 1734, 318.

¹⁷⁴ Stewart, 2002, Oxford Comparative Law Forum Online.

England, and would have seen Walpole speak.¹⁷⁵ Perhaps more influential to Walpole, however, was the writing of Laurence Echard (1670-1730). Echard's multi-volume *The Roman History* was purchased for Sir Robert's library in the 1720s.¹⁷⁶ Had Walpole been reading Echard, his choice of the Antonines (plus Trajan) and Severus would make a great deal of sense. Echard characterises the Antonine era as one of stability and prosperity and even makes some excuses for Commodus. Marcus' son was a generally reviled emperor, but Echard characterises him as having a good start to his reign, until "corrupted by the example of his companions".¹⁷⁷ Trajan, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, and Severus are all given credit for their endeavours and seen as good on balance, and as marking the last proper imperial order.¹⁷⁸ Echard records Severus' last words as:

*When I took the Empire upon me, I found it declining and languishing;
and now being aged and decrepit, I leave it in a state firm and lasting
to me sons, if they prove good; if otherwise, feeble and sinking...*¹⁷⁹

These are taken from his biography in the *Historia Augusta*. The idea of the death of Severus as a flashpoint for the decline of the Roman Empire had been around since antiquity. Echard reproducing these lines in his work demonstrates his agreement with that judgement. Walpole could empathise with the dynasties selected for his Stone Hall. The second century AD was a period of stability and prosperity, in the wake of civil war and decadence during the first century AD, with the reigns of various capricious Julio-Claudians and the Year of the Four Emperors in 69 AD. Even after Vespasian's triumph in this conflict, the instability created by his second son Domitian's assassination put an end to Flavian rule in 96 AD. The adoptive period saw a move away from dangerous dynasties and a restoration of stability. This was akin, perhaps, to the Glorious

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. Furthermore, the Cholmondeley correspondence kept at Cambridge University Library demonstrates several French correspondents of Sir Robert. It is large and mostly uncatalogued and therefore not inconceivable that he and Montesquieu might have exchanged letters.

¹⁷⁶ Interestingly, Echard was also one of the most prominent historians of the time to touch upon the Glorious Revolution – a subject of great Whig interest. Dickinson, 1976, 37. Deborah Stephan has argued convincingly for Echard, traditionally seen as a Tory writer, to be seen as a Whig historian, see Stephan, 1989.

¹⁷⁷ Echard, 1694, Vol. 2, 341-2.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 283-4, 286, 303, 388-9.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 388.

Revolution of 1688, the Hanoverian Succession, and Walpole's own peace-promoting foreign policy, an apt comparison onto which Sir Robert projected his own sense of *romanitas*.

Furthermore, the casting of Sir Robert as quasi-Antonine is, perhaps, not as ridiculous as a modern viewer might think. We know, objectively, that the Prime Minister was not a relative of these imperial Romans. But his image smoothly fits into their ranks, in a sort of three-dimensional family tree. The co-opting of classical figures to one's family, even on a surface level of display, will recur again and again in this thesis. Later case studies will create wholesale dynasties to compensate for their lack of an ancestral gallery, or pepper Roman women throughout their displays, evoking the strong female-line descent in their family. This has, I believe, great relevance to eighteenth-century conceptions of dynasty and lineage, outside of the strictures of traceable, actual bloodlines. The closest metaphor for this practice is perhaps the distinction made by Naomi Tadmor, in her examination of broader 'families', friendships and kinship groups during the eighteenth century. Tadmor draws a distinction between the lineage-family, a bloodline which persevered over long periods of time, and the household-family, a unit of grandparents, parents, and children.¹⁸⁰ This analogy is not perfect, as Tadmor is still speaking of a family by birth but is worth adapting to our purposes. The household-family, an immediate understanding of the preceding generation or two, and the imminent future of inheritance, is more recognisable to our twenty-first century commemoration of family. Yet it differs quite dramatically from concepts of lineage and allegiance, which could stretch to spiritual descent. I would propose to call this phenomenon 'associative lineage' and to argue that Walpole, and many of the other case studies in this thesis, were engaged with it.

1.6 Walpole's Public Image

Houghton's portraits are a paean to upstanding masculine, statesmanlike virtue. Yet, accusations of vice, whether corruption and largesse or simply a bad character, were

¹⁸⁰ Tadmor, 2009, 73.

levelled at Sir Robert throughout his career. *The Craftsman* put out regular critiques of Walpole in the 1720s and 1730s. In response, government-sponsored publications, including *The London Journal* and *The Free Briton*, published ripostes and pro-Walpole propaganda on an equally regular basis. Walpole kept a roster of writers for his work and the Cholmondeley archival correspondence contains a letter from one, a 'Mr Newcomb' who writes in 1732 to apologise to Sir Robert. He has, without the Minister's approval, addressed a newly published pro-government satire to Walpole. He sends a volume of further proposed satirical works of which, he writes, "I humbly beg your acceptance".¹⁸¹

Kramnick highlights one instance, where Walpole's unofficial title, Prime Minister, was debated back and forth between the two 'sides' of the press. The government-run *Grub Street Journal* declared that:

A Prime Minister is a person who in the name and by the authority of the supreme power, manages all affairs of states, disposes of all preferments, presides over the receipt and disbursement of public money; and has all the essential power of a monarch, without the pomp and the name.

And, as might be expected, Bolingbroke's *Craftsman* had a different take on this, stating:

*In absolute monarchies, we generally find a person invested by the Prince with the sole management and direction of all his affairs, under the title of **Prime Minister**, who is, by virtue of his office, as he commonly proves himself to be by his actions, an arbitrary Viceroy or deputy tyrant.*¹⁸²

Walpole was even dogged by mockery after his death. In *On the Conduct and Privileges of Sir Robert Walpole*, a posthumous essay published in a biography, the Prime Minister is compared to the dictatorial Roman general Sulla. The short essay is not entirely critical of Walpole, declaring admiration for his foreign policy and his role in supporting

¹⁸¹ University of Cambridge, Cholmondeley Correspondence, 2032.

¹⁸² Kramnick, 1992, 114.

the Hanoverians.¹⁸³ Nonetheless, Horace Walpole objected to the comparison with the Republican dictator:

*I own I am sorry to see my father compared to Sylla [sic], the latter was a sanguinary usurper, a monster – the former, the mildest, most forgiving, best natured of men, and a **legal** minister*¹⁸⁴

Beasley notes that, “as the most famous and even notorious public figure of his age, Walpole commanded the rapt attention of almost everybody, common folk as well as the elite. Mobs often swarmed him when he appeared in the streets; pamphleteers and Opposition journalists... assaulted him mercilessly and relentlessly, and he was the subject of innumerable popular ballads and satirical prints”.¹⁸⁵

The proliferation of printed comment on Walpole’s ministry was exacerbated by its being the first with any longevity after the lapsing of the Licensing Act in 1695. This lapse removed the government’s pre-publication control of newspapers and provided a new freedom of the press to target politicians and public figures.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, a number of prominent poets and prose writers composed scathing attacks on Walpole, which Black suggests is in part due to Walpole’s attitude of ignoring and showing no favour to any sort of literati.¹⁸⁷ Government patronage was instead awarded to pamphleteers, churning out propaganda. Walpole’s administration preferred to commission cheap, mass-distributed media for a wide audience. One such example is a panegyric of Walpole, entitled *The Patriot Statesman*. He is shown being conducted into the Temple of Fame by Lord Burleigh (1520-1598), the respected advisor to Queen Elizabeth I; Envy and other vices are repulsed by Minerva, while Age and Beauty look on in admiration.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ Pownall, 1908, 423.

¹⁸⁴ Horace Walpole to Thomas Pownall, October 27th, 1783, in volume 42 of the Yale Online Edition of Horace Walpole’s Correspondence.

¹⁸⁵ Beasley, 1981, 408.

¹⁸⁶ Black, 2001, 100.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 67. Swift called him ‘Bob, the Poet’s foe’ in his *Epistle to John Gay*.

¹⁸⁸ Burleigh a ‘good’ minister, and Elizabeth a ‘good’ ruler are perhaps references to Sir Robert and Queen Caroline.

Tory writers such as Swift, Alexander Pope (1688-1744), and John Gay (1685-1732), all felt excluded from the centre of public activity, kept at arm's length by those in power. Therefore, by the time he had decorated the Stone Hall, Sir Robert had already been satirised by Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, as the scheming treasurer of Lilliput, as Palinurus, the inept head of state in Pope's *Dunciad* and as a villain in John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*.¹⁸⁹ Further popular satire of Walpole included recognisable parts in Henry Fielding's (1707-1754) *The Life of Mr Jonathan Wild the Great* and critical essays on the ministry, with no attempt to disguise Walpole's identity, in Lord Lyttleton's (1709-1773) *Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Ispahan*.¹⁹⁰

Swift's *Character of Sir Robert Walpole* sums up the opposition mockery and indignation towards the Prime Minister:

With favour and fortune fastidiously blest
He's loud in his laugh and he's coarse in his Jest;
Of favour and fortune unmerited vain,
*A sharper in trifles, a dupe in the main.*¹⁹¹

As Bywaters and Beasley have demonstrated, contemporary literature of all kinds was full of scathing attacks on Walpole's greed, immorality, and corruption.¹⁹² These were not all high-brow literary attacks, however, but included crude caricature and cheap pamphlets, on a level with Walpole's own propaganda. The press carried many unflattering cartoons and prints, either depicting Walpole or alluding to him indirectly. He appears in the guise of Tudor arch-minister Cardinal Wolsey (1473-1530) in William Hogarth's (1697-1764) *Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn*, which references his continued ascendancy at the succession of George II. Some of the most famous direct portrayals of Sir Robert in cartoon form include *The Great Man, or the English Colossus* and *Idol Worship*. The latter criticises his control of the patronage system, with an ambitious man, understood as a would-be politician, expected to kiss his backside. Between his

¹⁸⁹ Downie, 1984, 171.

¹⁹⁰ Beasley, 1981, 420. Downie, 1984, 171-2.

¹⁹¹ Williams, 1958, Vol. 2

¹⁹² See Bywaters, 1987 and Beasley, 1981. Also, Hill, 2019.

legs, on the hoop the young man holds to roll through them, are listed a litany of vices, including wealth, pride, corruption vanity, and most importantly for my purposes, luxury. See Figure 23 for a selection of anti-Walpole prints including the two above. Walpole chose his dignified Roman virtue to stand against such unflattering characterisations.

1.7 Houghton and the Norfolk Congress

A pamphlet circulating in the late 1720s, mocked Houghton, and Walpole's perceived decadence in entertaining there, by comparing it to the French king's hunting lodge at Fontainebleau, another setting for lavish entertaining, stating that "the two most eminent persons of our day are now hunting; one of them at Fountainblow and the other in Norfolk".¹⁹³ This pamphlet was to prove highly influential, and to originate the name by which Walpole's sojourns at Houghton were described. The title was, *The Norfolk Congress, or, a Full and True Account of their Hunting, Feasting and Merrymaking*. Thus, Sir Robert's gatherings at his home came to be known as the Norfolk Congress, and it seems likely this stemmed from the popular pamphlet.¹⁹⁴ The Congress is key in the discourse of luxury, largesse and pomp surrounding the First Minister

These meetings, held once in the summer, and once in the winter, appear to have started only shortly before the pamphlet's publication, and Girouard describes them as a time when "the greater part of the government went down to Norfolk during the summer of Christmas recess, and spent a week or more plotting politics in the interval of hunting, feasting and boozing with the local gentry".¹⁹⁵ Lord Hervey (1696-1743), in attendance of one such meeting, wrote to the Prince of Wales that, "in public we drank loyal healths, talked of the time and cultivated popularity: in private we drew plans and cultivated the country".¹⁹⁶ By 1731, the title of congress was so embedded that Ernst Hartmann von Diemar (1682-1754), the envoy to Britain for Hesse-Kassel, wrote to

¹⁹³ *The Norfolk Congress*, anonymous, cited by Hill, 2019. The comparison of Walpole to a monarch, and an absolute one at that, is indicative of public perception.

¹⁹⁴ Jones, 2018, 4.

¹⁹⁵ Girouard, 1979, 231.

¹⁹⁶ Ilchester, 1950, 73-4.

Walpole hoping for “la satisfaction de le trouver cette année au *Congrès de Houghton*”.¹⁹⁷

The Norfolk Congress pamphlet focuses largely on descriptions of excess in terms of foreign food, served at Houghton, as a source and signifier of vice and luxury. Foreign dishes such as Westphalia bacon, Dutch herrings, French truffles, Prussian boar, and Spanish Oglio are referenced, implying Walpole’s complicity with Britain’s enemies abroad.¹⁹⁸ The description of lavish entertainment is the critique itself, with puns such as ‘peece-soup’, and a rare fish, called a Cardinal, which no doubt draws out the comparison between Sir Robert and Cardinal Wolsey, King Henry VIII’s controversial minister. Despite the limited description of the house itself, *The Norfolk Congress* places Houghton centre-stage in its lampoon of Walpole, as the setting and vehicle for indulgence, commenting ironically

*Who is there that doth not rejoice at the Plenty that is within his
Palace? For he hath strewed Plenty over the Face of the Land...*¹⁹⁹

Potentially, Houghton was also the subject of more highbrow critique. There has been suggestion, by twentieth-century scholars, that Walpole was being satirised by Alexander Pope, in his famous *Epistle to Burlington* of 1731. Pope mocks ‘Timon’, a tasteless and profligate noble:

*At Timon's villa let us pass a day,

Where all cry out, "What sums are thrown away!"

So proud, so grand of that stupendous air,

Soft and agreeable come never there.*

¹⁹⁷ University of Cambridge Library, Cholmondeley Correspondence, 1901. Italics emphasis my own. The sentence translates as “the satisfaction of seeing him this year at the Houghton Congress”.

¹⁹⁸ Anon, 1732, 86-88.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 86.

Contemporaries largely assumed the poem was parodying the 1st Duke of Chandos (1673-1744), which Pope was forced to refute publicly, but Chandos was a good friend of the poem's dedicatee, Lord Burlington, and it seems more likely that Pope was either making a synthesis of unpleasant bad taste or attacking someone else.²⁰⁰ That this someone else was Walpole is not beyond the realms of possibility.²⁰¹

Houghton was also a target for reproach by Thomas Pownall (1722-1805), author of the previously mentioned posthumous essay on Robert's conduct. In Horace Walpole's letter to Pownall, he stated that:

*He had made Houghton much too magnificent for the moderate estate
which he left to support it; and as he never, I repeat it with truth,
never got any money but in the South Sea and while he was
Paymaster, his fondness for his paternal seat, and his boundless
generosity were too expensive for his fortune*²⁰²

Walpole entertained a great deal whilst in residence at Houghton. He dined Dukes and Earls, politicians, and lords, and even entertained the Duke of Lorraine (1708-1765), future Holy Roman Emperor.²⁰³ The house, therefore, became a flashpoint for critique and others rebutted Houghton's decadence with what they conceived of as proper *virtus* in their country domains.

1.8 Hall and Response: Stowe Gardens and Houghton

Houghton's importance, and the contemporary visibility of its antiquities, can be emphasised by reference to another country house which contains a direct response to Walpole and his use of classical precedent for political statement. The house in question is Stowe, in Buckinghamshire, the seat of Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham (1675-1749). Cobham was a former ally of Walpole, who broke with him in 1733, when Walpole removed him from his ministry. The quarrel was due to two instances of defiance, voting

²⁰⁰ Mahaffey, 1967, 193-4. Erskine-Hill, 1995, 224. Aubrey, 1983, 325 & 327.

²⁰¹ Jones, 2018, 53.

²⁰² Horace Walpole to Thomas Pownall, Yale Online Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence.

²⁰³ Black, 2001, 73.

against his party leader. Enraged by the dismissal, Cobham, engaged in an ambitious remodelling of the landscape at Stowe, using his new gardens to create a searing critique of corruption in the form of the current ministry. Craske calls it an “oppositionist Elysium”.²⁰⁴ His circle of visitors and allies at Stowe included Lyttleton, the writer of the Persian letters so critical of the Walpole ministry.²⁰⁵ Cobham was to become a leading figure in the ‘patriot’ Whigs, an opposition group to Walpole. This is the first instance we have seen of factionalism within the overarching political party, but not the last. The Whigs were not often a homogenous group, as Coutu has emphasised.

In the Temple of Modern Virtue at Stowe, Cobham displayed ruined classicising busts, truncated at the neck, as a direct reference to Sir Robert – one of the busts was visibly that of Walpole.²⁰⁶ The Temple, with its ruined and, by implication, unworthy images, stood next to the Temple of Ancient Virtue, which displayed intact, full-length statues of Greek worthies.²⁰⁷ At the time, it was well known that Cobham was mocking Walpole’s self-representation as a Roman in the Rysbrack bust, surrounded by his Roman peers, whilst contrasting perceived modern virtue, or lack thereof, with ancient virtues.²⁰⁸ Walpole’s corrupt *romanitas*, symbolised in Roman busts, is used to scorn modern morals, and Cobham aligns himself with the Greeks, and with full-length sculpture, in response.

The Temple of British Worthies, another structure in the gardens, works alongside these two juxtaposed follies, as a whole and new descendant of ancient virtue. It added to the Walpolean critique via portrait busts of contemporary and historical figures, designed to show the true way of British virtue and patriotism.²⁰⁹ The Temple put busts

²⁰⁴ Craske, 2007, 23.

²⁰⁵ Lamb, 1996, 62.

²⁰⁶ Everett, 1994, 47. Lamb, 1996, 62.

²⁰⁷ These are, a general (Epaminondas), a politician (Lycurgus), a poet (Homer) and a philosopher (Socrates).

²⁰⁸ Baker, 2015, 98.

²⁰⁹ The busts here included Shakespeare and Elizabeth I, but also the ardent critic of Walpole, Alexander Pope, and Sir John Barnard, his enemy in the Commons. That they were sculpted by Rysbrack, who had created Walpole’s infamous Houghton bust is another interesting layer of meaning.

of British intellectual giants such as Isaac Newton (1643-1727), Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and John Milton (1608-1674), alongside the heads of figures including Queen Elizabeth I, John Hampden (1595-1643) and Sir John Barnard (1685-1754), who were seen as “upholding English liberties in the active life of public affairs” (Figure 24).²¹⁰ The link between the classical and the contemporary was made by ‘gothic’ sources of liberty, in this case Alfred the Great. Alfred, a codifier of laws and defender against the Vikings, will recur in later chapters as a frequent parallel for Greco-Romans associated with similar virtues.²¹¹ Far from being an accidental arrangement of little importance, Houghton’s Stone Hall was an influential, purposeful and famous display of portraiture in the eighteenth century, which resonated with contemporaries and later generations.

1.9 Conclusions: Houghton

Ultimately, Robert Walpole’s grand plans for the future of his descendants at Houghton were radically altered within two generations. Not only had Walpole failed to purchase enough land to support the house, as an estate, but his son and heir’s marriage produced only one child, who squandered the family fortune, and eventually sold the immense painting collection to Russia.²¹² Houghton eventually passed through the female line to a branch of the family whose primary interests were elsewhere in the country. The transitory nature of the dynastic imaging at Houghton, in fact, makes the whole project even more interesting. Thanks to the lack of remodelling and rearrangement at the house, we have a window onto a very specific legacy, and the moment in history when Britain’s power structure was tied to one man and his identity. If this imaging has been overlooked in general, then the potential implications and resonances of the portrait sculpture at Houghton Hall have been even more side-lined by existing scholarship of Walpole’s life. I have argued that there is a great deal more meaning in the figures chosen and their placement, than has been hitherto acknowledged. This can give us a

²¹⁰ Baker, 2014, 154

²¹¹ Richard Blackmore dedicated a twelve-volume epic poem on Alfred the Great to the new Hanoverian regime. Pratt, 2000, 140.

²¹² Girouard, 1979, 4.

valuable insight into the self-perception and public image of one of the most important figures of the eighteenth century. Guilding's summary is particularly apt: "the message and grandeur of the Stone Hall's Roman sculpture was Houghton's strongest suit, a setting proclaiming the high office and service to Crown and country that made Walpole a princely power in the land".²¹³

Houghton's Stone Hall encapsulates the legacy of this pivotal man. Craske suggests that "it is, perhaps, surprising that a man of Walpole's consequence had no funeral monument. Until, that is, one looks at the setting of his bust in the Stone Hall at Houghton...".²¹⁴ I would agree, although not limiting this statement to Walpole's own portrait. Rysbrack's Sir Robert, surrounded by his illustrious Roman companions, is as fitting and grand a memorial and monument to the extraordinary figure of eighteenth-century politics as any dedicatory mausoleum. We will see the funereal and commemorative quality of the (neo)classical bust in future chapters, both in a personal context (Stourhead and Shugborough) and a dynastic political context (Holkham). For now, Houghton's Whig splendour must be contrasted with its Tory counterpart a generation later, at Kedleston Hall.

²¹³ Guilding, 2014, 86.

²¹⁴ Craske, 2007, 262.

Chapter 2: Kedleston Hall

*I think that history is philosophy, teaching by examples.*²¹⁵

Viscount Bolingbroke, *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, I

Sir Robert Walpole's political allegiance to the Whigs was, one could argue, effectively allegiance to himself as leader. He espoused his Whiggery far more lightly than our next politician, Nathaniel Curzon (1726-1804), wore his Tory credentials. Curzon, as we shall see, was particularly interested in family history and Tory pedigree. As both the scion of an old Tory family with a lengthy history in the county of Derbyshire, and the newly ennobled 1st Baron Scarsdale, Curzon utilised the impressive house he built at Kedleston as a showpiece for his ambitions and his lineage.

I will argue in this chapter that the presentation of Nathaniel's own entrance hall was shaped by his Tory worldview which was, in his lifetime, best articulated by the political philosophy of the arch-Tory, one of Walpole's great nemeses, Henry St John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, encountered in the previous chapter through *The Craftsman*. This chapter draws heavily upon what is, for this chapter's purposes, his most important work, *Letters on the Study and Use of History*. In this treatise from exile, the Viscount puts into words a sense of nostalgia and historical fable stretching from ancient Rome to the eighteenth century, reflections from a party in opposition, faced with decades of resurgent Whigs. Bolingbroke's expression in words of the Tory sentiment in the mid-eighteenth century is paralleled in Kedleston's décor, although he may never have visited the house. This is also the only case study in the thesis which does not focus on at least one ancient portrait bust. The Caesars we will be examining are eighteenth-century plaster and wood casts, painted to look like bronze. Although inextricably linked

²¹⁵ Bolingbroke, *Letters*, II, 12. This saying is often attributed to Thucydides though not to be found in his surviving work. However, the source for this pseudo-Thucydidean quote seems to be from the *Ars Rhetorica*, a series of essays erroneously attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Thus, *the contact with manners then is education; and this Thucydides appears to assert when he says history is philosophy learned from examples. Ars Rhetorica*, XI, 2, 212.

to traditions of Roman portraiture, they are extremely anglicised, in keeping with the Tory approach to history in this period.

2.1 The Tory Problem

Viscount Bolingbroke opines, in his second letter that “servitude [to received opinion] is outward only and abridges in no sort the liberty of private judgment”.²¹⁶ Essentially, conventional wisdom can be superficially agreed with, whilst private views are held dear. But how ‘Tory’ were the private views of the Tories in the mid-eighteenth century, against the backdrop of Whig dominance?

The opposing political factions and their history have already been explored in the introduction. Yet a particular aspect requires further explanation here, because of a twentieth-century interpretation which has transformed the view of eighteenth-century Tories. Lewis Namier’s highly influential work, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George II*, was published in 1929. Prior to Namier’s work, the two-party system (Whig versus Tory) had been the prevailing way of looking at British political history for this period. Namier attempted to demonstrate that most MPs acted as if outside a binary party system, especially the so-called Tories, who bent to the ascendancy of the Hanoverian Whigs. He declared that “there were no proper party organizations about 1760, though party names and cant were current; the names and the cant have since supplied the materials for an imaginary superstructure”.²¹⁷ Namier argued that Toryism was effectively dead in the mid-eighteenth century and could be used “neither to describe a particular set of beliefs, nor to define a recognisable group of beliefs, nor to define a recognisable group within Parliament”.²¹⁸ A detailed exploration of his monumental contribution to British historiography is beyond the scope of this project, but has been covered by historians such as Frank O’Gorman.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Bolingbroke, 1752, 8.

²¹⁷ Namier, 1957, x.

²¹⁸ O’Gorman, 1983, 276.

²¹⁹ See O’Gorman, 1981 & 1983.

If however we regard Toryism in terms of how an MP might *style* himself, and how his lineage, both political and literal (and perhaps also associative), would be reflected in his self-fashioning, rather than how he might vote and the identity of his parliamentary allies, then Toryism appears rather more distinct.²²⁰ I wish to argue in this chapter that Tory self-fashioning in the eighteenth century was as lively and interesting as that of the Whigs. Their engagement with, and interpretation of history and art, took a different angle to that of their rivals, but is no less idiosyncratic and worthy of study. I hope to demonstrate this by using Kedleston, and specifically its Caesar's Hall, which marries 'gothic' native history and pseudo-Roman portraiture to great effect.

With Curzon's own thoughts obscure to us, hidden within the private archives, if recorded at all, I turn primarily to the writings of Lord Bolingbroke. He was effectively the leader of the Tory opposition during the late 1720s and 1730s, and developed a worldview of England, English history, world history and morality which appears to have deeply influenced Curzon. As we have seen, Bolingbroke was at the centre of the opposition to Walpole in the 1730s, attacking the Robinocracy in *The Craftsman* journal and employing classical and historical allusion wherever he could. Bolingbroke fled England for the second time in May 1735, after Walpole tired of their cat-and-mouse game and accused his rival of being a destructive anti-minister in the Commons. Bolingbroke, realising he was a liability to the opposition, settled in France and began writing the *Letters* in November that year.

Alexander Pope had a small, private printing of them in 1737 and *The London Magazine* began to reprint them (unauthorised) in 1749. Their formal publication, in volumes along with other works such as *Study and Reflections upon Exile* did not take place until 1752. Bolingbroke's complete works were not published together until 1754, when David Mallett (1705-1765), the Viscount's friend and a poet, edited a five-volume compendium of his writings. Their full publication and appreciation align almost exactly with the period when Curzon commenced the remodelling of Kedleston.

²²⁰ I say 'his' to acknowledge the prominence of male aristocratic collectors during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the male-line descent of hereditary titles.

Bolingbroke's highly influential worldview could not have escaped the notice of a young, committed Tory. His repeated appeal to classical models must have resonated with Curzon, whose house, as we shall see, is rife with classical reference. Bolingbroke writes history as a particularly Tory cautionary fable. His stories warn on the dangers of Court favourites – barely coded references to Walpole – and factionalism, by which he means the Whigs.²²¹ Bolingbroke's *Letters* draw Roman virtue into contemporary England and its recent past, creating a Romano-English melange which finds its physical incarnation in the Kedleston Caesars.

2.2 Nathaniel Curzon and Robert Adam

Bolingbroke addressed his historical letters to Lord Cornbury (1661-1723), a Tory scion only a few years older than Nathaniel himself. Considering the impact that one might imagine the venerable Sage of Toryism having on the reader, you could argue the Viscount was addressing all young men of his political coterie who picked up the *Letters*, including Nathaniel. Indeed, an idea of family duty and heritage shaped Baron Scarsdale's life. Bolingbroke's injunction to Cornbury that, "you are, my Lord, by your birth, by the nature of our government, and by the talents God has given you, attached for life to the service of your country", would surely have felt like a personal exhortation to the young Tory.²²² Nathaniel was not one of the most politically prominent Tories of his era, but the Curzons were a staunch, hereditary Tory family, with a history of Parliamentary loyalty to the Tory cause and personal involvement with Tory history. Mary Curzon (1585-1645), for instance, the Countess of Dorset (from another branch of the family), was governess to the future James II.²²³ William Bray (1736-1832), in his 1783 *Sketch of a Tour into Derbyshire and Yorkshire*, calls the Curzons "a family of great antiquity, wealth and interest in this county [Derbyshire]" (see Figure 25 for a partial family tree).²²⁴

²²¹ Womersley, 1987, 223.

²²² Bolingbroke, 1752, 86.

²²³ Retford, 2003, 556-7.

²²⁴ Bray, 1783, 111.

Nathaniel's mother, Mary Assheton (1695-1766), was from one of the leading Tory families of Lancashire and had her sons painted by Arthur Devis (1712-1787), the Lancashire painter whose clientele was mostly the upper echelons of the Tory gentry. Mary's Assheton roots were important to the family and their third son was given the Christian name 'Assheton' (1730-1820). He would become a Tory MP and be created first Baron Curzon and then Viscount Curzon. The Lancashire parliamentary seat of Clitheroe was also held by the elder and younger Nathaniels and Assheton at various times. Lady Caroline Colyear (1733-1812), Nathaniel's wife, also painted several times by Devis, was the granddaughter of James II's most influential mistress, the Countess of Dorchester (1657-1717).

Nathaniel was educated at Westminster School, and then at Oxford. He was returned as a Tory MP, first for Clitheroe and then for Derbyshire, a seat his father had previously held. Gilmour's research suggests that "the official parliamentary histories of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries almost invariably describe an MP of the Curzon family as 'an inactive member' who seldom made a speech and often did not vote".²²⁵ Politically speaking, Curzon was a somewhat peripheral member of the Tory elite. Despite being Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords between the 1750s and 1770s, he was notably not a member of the Cocoa Tree 'Board', an extra-parliamentary meeting group, for the most prominent Tories, based at the Cocoa Tree coffee-house in Pall Mall.²²⁶ His role is best summarised by John Singleton Copley's (1738-1815) painting of William Pitt the Elder's (1708-1778) heart attack in the House of Lords (Figure 26). The main players from both parties are depicted and identifiable in the foreground, but Curzon is present, a small figure in the background. Surprisingly, Nathaniel did not undertake the traditional Grand Tour, instead spending only one month in France, Holland and Belgium in 1749, during which he spent only £300 on art, which was almost entirely paintings.²²⁷

²²⁵ Gilmour, 1995, 2. For Westminster and public schools in general, see Clarke, 1959 and Adams, 2015.

²²⁶ Colley, 1977, 77-95.

²²⁷ Guilding, 2014, 108.

His place as the scion of a family of note could be cemented both by his new house and a new title. His father had been a Baronet, a title which his son inherited, but he successfully petitioned for a peerage on his inheritance. Gilmour also notes that Nathaniel and his family did not travel much, and in keeping with those stereotypical ‘country values’, spent much time at their country seat. It was into this that the new Baron poured his energy. In 1759, he commissioned the building of the Italianate Palladian mansion at Kedleston in place of the existing red-brick, Queen Anne house at Kedleston (Figure 27).²²⁸ Gervase Jackson-Stops calls the property “one of the greatest of all English country houses”.²²⁹ The design was begun by Matthew Brettingham the Elder, whom Curzon then replaced with James Paine (1717-1789). In November 1758, Curzon met Robert Adam (1732-1794), who was initially entrusted with some small architectural elements in the gardens but was finally given the commission in 1762 and completed it.²³⁰

Adam is today known as one of the foremost neoclassical architects and designers, with important public buildings across Edinburgh and London; at this time, Adam had only just returned from his studies in Italy in January 1758.²³¹ Adam recorded his meeting with his new patron and was greatly impressed by “a man resolv’d to spare no expence [sic] with £10,000 a year, good temper’d and having taste himself for the Arts and little for Game”.²³² Adam designed all the interiors at Kedleston, in accordance with his patron’s wishes. Scholars of Adam claim that he even devised the arrangement of the picture collection within the rooms, with frames inset in the plaster of the walls.²³³ Those less vested in the architect’s genius, however, credit the Baron with the arrangement and placement of the paintings (as well as general participation in the project as “a cooperative venture”), with him creating an unmoveable, and thus unsaleable, hang for his descendants.²³⁴ Ultimately, the house is the synthesis of a

²²⁸ De Bolla, 2003, 155. He had inherited only the year before.

²²⁹ Jackson-Stops, 1987, 6.

²³⁰ Summerson, 1959, 563-5.

²³¹ Wilton-Ely, 2006, 213.

²³² Cited in Fleming, 1962, 168-9.

²³³ Harris, 2001, 24. Also, Retford, 2003, 552.

²³⁴ De Bolla, 2003, 160.

collaboration between a talented and innovative architect at the start of his career, and a precise patron with specific wishes. It is difficult to pin down exactly who decided what. Yet Curzon, I will argue, was no passive recipient of Adam's designs, and his particularly involved role with the house is articulated by an inscription, on the rear entrance, which reads (Figure 28):

AD MDCCLXV N. BARO DE SCARSDALE AMICIS ET SIBI

In the year 1765, Nathaniel, Baron Scarsdale [built this] for his friends and himself

Articulating the 'users' of a house, for whom it is intended, is markedly unusual for the front of a country house. Inscriptions are often seen on country houses, and at Chatsworth, for example, the house is inscribed with the family motto (*Cavendo Tutus*, 'safety through caution'). Not all such houses had them, however, and even some of the finest did not, such as Holkham Hall. If one considers Roman precedent Curzon's inscription for his building of the house is not unusual. It harks back to the dedicatory inscription on temples, naming a consul, emperor, or donor responsible for the construction. It is the 'amicis et sibi' which stands out. I will argue that in terms of 'for his friends and for himself', the friends honoured and advertised at Kedleston are the Tories to whom he owes his loyalty.²³⁵

2.3 Kedleston Hall

The house Curzon and Adam built is, perhaps, the most heavily classically referenced house of the eighteenth century. The Roman nature of its exterior and interiors is impossible to miss, so heavy is the allusion. Bolingbroke called Roman history "the best body of history that we have, nay the only body of ancient history that deserves to be an object of study", and Curzon and Adam certainly embraced this.²³⁶ Girouard notes that much of the grandeur at Kedleston is in direct competition with the Whig neighbours in

²³⁵ Peter De Bolla argues that the inscription invites the tourist and outsider to become part of the *amicis* and join the amicable group, opening up culture for the many rather than the few (De Bolla, 2003, 217). I disagree and would contend that Curzon was far more selective than socialist in his aspirations.

²³⁶ Bolingbroke, 1752, 71.

Derbyshire, the Dukes of Devonshire at Chatsworth, the ‘Palace of the Peak’, with which Curzon hoped to compete, a contest which will be explored in a later section of this chapter.²³⁷

The eighteenth-century Kedleston comprises a central block and four wings. The centre encompasses two extraordinarily impressive entrances. At the front, a Palladian temple with six Corinthian columns and two matching pilasters supports a pediment topped by allegorical classical female figures. Within the colonnade are placed four roundels copied from the Arch of Constantine and four bronze-effect statues of Muses. The reverse of the house, which bears the *amicis* inscription, has a scaled replica of the Arch of Constantine itself, an exact architectural copy of its front-view, with a curved staircase which winds up to the door on both sides. It leads directly into a rotunda, which Robert Adam modelled on the Pantheon at Rome.²³⁸ See Figure 29 for a plan of the house.

The formal entrance to the house was at first floor level, through a door into the Marble Hall, the space which has received much of the academic scrutiny of Kedleston’s interiors. It is an impressive room, dominated by fluted columns of veined pink alabaster, and inset with niches filled with copies of famous sculptures, such as the Venus de Medici and the Dancing Faun. In his guidebook, Baron Scarsdale names Diocletian’s Palace at Split as the main influence for this hall.²³⁹ Important social visitors and guests of honour would come in via the Marble Hall. Arguably, however, this state entrance was not the ‘main’ route into the hall. The family, along with everyday visitors (including the *amicis*), and tourists, would enter at ground level, via the Caesar’s Hall, directly below the Marble Hall.

2.4 The Caesars at Kedleston

The Caesar’s Hall is a low stone space, into which two rows of stone columns were put in at the time of building. In 1806, noting the subsiding of the floor in the Marble Hall

²³⁷ De Bolla, 2003, 151-217.

²³⁸ Wilton-Ely, 2006, 227.

²³⁹ Ibid., 11.

above, the 2nd Baron Scarsdale (1752-1837) inserted two further rows of six iron columns for support. Visitors enter from an arched bay doorway, between the base of the two staircases outside. The hall is remarkable for its plain stone walls, a feature of ground-level rooms during this period, usually referred to as the ‘rustic’ apartments, as opposed to state rooms, which formed the formal *enfilade* on the first floor. The plainness of the space is furthered by the lack of decoration. There are two fireplaces, above each of which is mounted a medallion. The main decorative element, fireplaces aside, and which gives the room its name, are the nine square niches, built into the room’s walls, into which plaster ‘casts’ of Roman emperors, decorated to look bronze, were inserted (Figures 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38). These were in place by 1769, when the guidebook was published, as it lists ‘busts of the Caesars’ in the ‘rustic storey’.²⁴⁰

That the hall is a liminal space, an entryway or vestibule, is notable to the Bolingbrokeian Tory conception of *romanitas*. As Bolingbroke explained to Cornbury, in his second letter (in the quote which prefaced the introduction), “the citizens of Rome placed the images of their ancestors in the vestibules to their houses; so that, whenever they went in or out, these venerable bustoes met the eye”.²⁴¹

Scholarship, where it acknowledges the Kedleston Caesars, refers to them as casts, made from moulds taken by Matthew Brettingham the Younger (1725-1803) at Rome.²⁴² This is probably because Brettingham supplied the moulds for the full-length sculpture in the Marble Hall. The moulds for the Caesars are assumed to be copies or adaptations of existing ancient busts, but the Kedleston busts are entirely fictional depictions, with no basis in portrait canon. They cannot have been derived from ancient portraits, but were, I would suggest, freshly devised, designed to offer to the purchaser a set of distinctly neoclassical emperors.²⁴³ The implication that these emperors came from

²⁴⁰ Scarsdale, 1769, 4.

²⁴¹ Bolingbroke, 1752, 14.

²⁴² See Kenworthy-Browne, 1983. Brettingham mentions purchasing moulds of thirty Roman heads and thirty Greek heads to make casts of busts in his account book. No further information is given.

²⁴³ They could also have been copies of renaissance Italian versions. Brettingham’s account book notes a number of cast moulds from Italy and does not always specify if they were taken from ancient or more recent models.

Brettingham is uncertain, and only based on receipts for the full-length casts he supplied, as well as five busts in the library, which were found in Kedleston's archives.²⁴⁴

Each of the emperors depicted is a bust-format adult male, with wavy short hair, surmounted by a laurel wreath. Several have subtle facial hair, on which the identifications they carry to this day may have been based. They all wear cuirass armour and a draped cloak. The decoration and neckline of the cuirass varies in each portrait, as does the composition of the drapery, some with two brooches, some with one, and others with no pinning of the cloak at all. Decorative straps are also added on some of the busts for variety. They are each set on a *socle* with square top and base (see Figures 39, 40, 41 for details). They are all the same size, fitting perfectly into the niches, which were presumably carved with the busts in mind. Despite the variations on a theme, the overall effect is one of uniformity. The features bear more in common with neoclassical portrait sculpture than ancient heads, and they resemble the fashionable portraiture of Roubiliac, Rysbrack, the Cheere brothers (John 1709-1787, Henry 1703-1781) and their contemporaries, which often depicted British sitters in classical dress and accessories.

Who they are, and how they fit in to a decorative scheme are problematic questions. The names traditionally given to the Caesars are: Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Nero, Titus, Nerva, Hadrian and Commodus. The ninth bust is also labelled as Hadrian, seemingly for no reason, but this will merit further discussion later. As previously mentioned, there is no discernible relationship to ancient portraits of these figures. Hadrian and Commodus, for instance, in their Roman depictions, are both shown with thick and long beards, and tightly curled hair, rather than almost clean-shaven as shown here. Conformity with the ages outlined in ancient biographies is also lacking. Nero, who died relatively young, is depicted as roughly the same age as Nerva, who was already past middle age when he became emperor. In fact, the bust the National Trust labels as Nero depicts a man older than many of the others. I discussed the names with

²⁴⁴ Kenworthy-Browne, 1983, 44.

the curatorial staff at Kedleston, who have no record for how they came about. The names are simply a matter of tradition and are not listed in the annotated original guide to the house.

Faced with conjecture, how can we make a sensible - and probable - case for the Caesars as having specific meaning? I propose that the Kedleston Caesars, with their fleshy, grim faces, deeply lined and marked by prominent noses, frowns and laughter lines, most closely resemble the contemporary portraiture of sculptors working on the British elite, who frequently wished to be depicted as Roman generals and statesmen. David Wilson observes that “for a male aristocratic sitter, the allusion to an Antique Roman past connoted the sitter’s fitness to hold public office through the bust’s function in endowing him with the appropriate civic virtues”.²⁴⁵ Ayres concurs, feeling that such commissions were “intended to suggest their qualifications for the authority and privileges they enjoyed, in particular their adherence to high moral and civic standards”.²⁴⁶ Or, as Bolingbroke himself noted when discussing ancient history, “we imitate only the particular graces of the original, we imitate them according to the idiom of our own tongue”.²⁴⁷ Thus, in the idiom of an eighteenth-century visual tongue, contemporary English men were often depicted as Caesars, statesmen and generals.

Michael Rysbrack’s classicising portrait busts, crowned with laurel leaves, bear great resemblance to the busts at Kedleston. Consider, for example, Figures 42, 43, 44 and 45 showing Rysbrack busts of contemporary aristocrats. Their laurelled heads, wavy locks, drapery, and Roman armour match many of the features and details seen at Kedleston. Seven of the nine Kedleston Caesars have the studded collars seen in the figures. One of the Caesars bears the same animal epaulette as Viscount Torrington (42) and King William (43), and one the same scales on his armour as Torrington. Rysbrack seems to have favoured the Medusa as the central ornament for his breastplates, whereas at Kedleston there is variation, but the similarities are striking. These elements are part of a range of elements typical of Rysbrack’s portrait busts and appear to have derived from

²⁴⁵ Wilson, 2010, 46.

²⁴⁶ Ayres, 1997, 64.

²⁴⁷ Bolingbroke, 1752, 34.

his extensive study of the engravings in Montfaucon's *L'antiquité expliquée*.²⁴⁸

Furthermore, all nine Caesars have the prominent noses and chins typical of Rysbrack's portraiture. The connection between Kedleston and Rysbrack is noteworthy, as Nathaniel Curzon commissioned Rysbrack to sculpt his father's tomb monument in Kedleston Church (Figure 46). A connection or relationship with the sculptor existed in some form, and the monument was also sculpted to a design by Robert Adam. The crossover between Curzon commission, Adam design and Rysbrack execution suggests a tantalising parallel for the Caesars. If Adam were facilitating a sculptor for a Curzon grandeur piece, he may well have done the same for less conspicuous commissions. Perhaps, for the Caesars, he might called upon the workshop of the master sculptor to provide smaller elements of the scheme.

To prove a direct link between these busts and Rysbrack's canon would not be possible, and his *oeuvre* did not generally include cast making. Whether Rysbrack, Rysbrackian imitator or a more tenuous link, what I would suggest is that there is a visual language of Englishness circulating in the portrait sculpture of the time, which was borrowed for the Kedleston Caesars. That the usually Roman imperial men look like English portraiture is fitting given Nathaniel Curzon's own experience of art. De Bolla points out that his eye was 'educated' in travel around Britain (bar his short trip to northern Europe), unlike many of his peers.²⁴⁹ If, as I have argued, Curzon was an engaged and active participant in devising the decor of this carefully thought out house, then it is unsurprising that he favoured images of classical masculine power which drew on his own encounters with sculpture. This visual language opens broader questions. What made a classically dressed male bust a Roman? What made him an emperor? A combination of attributes and features blurred these lines, creating a new, more equivocal category, which would be recognisable to contemporary viewers. Suitably ambiguous, but for their laurel crowns, the busts could be consuls, generals, or senators, or, equally, Members of Parliament.

²⁴⁸ Wilson, 2010, 47.

²⁴⁹ De Bolla, 2003, 19.

Anglicising the Caesars dovetails into a recognisable Tory agenda which is certainly shown in other rooms open to the public in Nathaniel's time and the present day. Kate Retford has studied the configuration of portraits in the house, which are largely unchanged from Curzon's time, and well-recorded in a variety of tourist literature from the period. She has highlighted the Tory imagery evident in the rooms shown to tourists. Nathaniel Hone's (1718-1784) portrait of Lord and Lady Curzon is hung in the State Dressing Room, amongst Tory figures from recent history who also occupy the walls of the State Bedroom. These include the Duke of Ormond (1610-1688), lieutenant-general of the king's army in Ireland under Charles I, the Earl of St Albans (1605-1684), chief confidant of Queen Henrietta Maria when she was in exile, and a pair of portraits of the Duke and Duchess of York (the Duke was later James II), parents of Queen Mary and Queen Anne. Also depicted are Catherine Howard (d.1650), a leader in the plot to rescue Charles I from the Tower, and the Earl of Arlington (1618-1685), a member of Charles II's inner circle.²⁵⁰ A 1776 copy of the portrait of Mary Curzon, the aforementioned governess of James and Mary, which hung at Knole House, was later added in Nathaniel's lifetime.²⁵¹ Curzon was not a passive recipient of historical Tory portraiture, but rather an active participant in the genre, positioning Hone's promenade portrait of himself and Baroness Scarsdale firmly within a Tory narrative. This was done with subtlety, rather than any outright rejection of the Hanoverians, but with nostalgic commemoration of the Stuart 'golden age'.

2.5 'Gothic' Liberty, Coade Stone and the Saxon Kings

Roman history was not the only era of history to be charged with political significance at this time. 'Gothic', earlier British history was important to the political debate too. Bolingbroke urged his readers, via his address to Cornbury, to learn their history. He declared that "mere sons of earth, if they have experience without any knowledge of the history of the world are but half scholars in the science of mankind".²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Retford, 2003, 555.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 556-7.

²⁵² Bolingbroke, 1752, II, 14.

To further anglicise the Caesars, and perhaps to make the point about native values (in opposition to Hanoverians or even the Prince of Orange), Curzon displayed alongside his Caesars two plaster roundels of the British Anglo-Saxon kings Aethelred and Alfred (Figure 47). The medallions are made from Coade stone, an artificial material pioneered by the Georgian businesswoman, Eleanor Coade (1733-1821). Originally, these monarchs were placed in another hall at Kedleston, the Tetrastyle Hall.²⁵³ In Scarsdale's lifetime, however, they moved to the Caesar's Hall. I suspect this was a personal change, made by the Baron. He altered Adam's scheme in several ways in the years following the project's completion. In one instance, smooth columns were specified by Adam as integral to the design of a room, but ten years later Nathaniel decided he would prefer them fluted.²⁵⁴

But why Alfred and Aethelred? King Alfred, even in Baron Scarsdale's time, had been held up as a model of English heroism and national identity. "Beset throughout his reign with the reality or threat of Viking invasions, Alfred battled fiercely and suffered heroically in leading his people to their eventual victory; at the same time he promoted the causes of religion and learning, and by example of his government upheld truth, justice and the Anglo-Saxon way".²⁵⁵ Crucially, he is credited with setting up the first kingdom of the English, unifying the disparate Saxon states. Simon Keynes has amply demonstrated how a cultural cult of Alfred arose during the Enlightenment era, and he was considered a hero by both Whigs and Tories in the eighteenth century.²⁵⁶ The Tories, plus Whigs in opposition to Walpole during the 1730s, made particular efforts to co-opt him, and they "reincarnated him as the ideal Gothic patriot hero, the 'Founder'".²⁵⁷ Alfred plays an important role at Stourhead, another Tory house to which Chapter Five is dedicated.

²⁵³ The Housekeeper's annotated guidebook notes the medallions in the Tetrastyle Hall along with busts of Marcellus, Ariadne, Faustina the Elder, Brutus and Antinous.

²⁵⁴ De Bolla, 2003, 163.

²⁵⁵ Keynes, 1999, 225.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 225-356.

²⁵⁷ Pratt, 2000, 141.

Alfred's partner is more ambiguous. Traditionally, the Kedleston Aethelred has been listed as 'Aethelred II', the king known to history as 'the Unready'. He lost to the Danes, and was forced to pay them tribute, then fled the country, returning only after his rival's death. The diametrically opposed views of the two kings already existed in Curzon's time, thanks to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which was well-known in the eighteenth century.²⁵⁸ None of the contemporary mentions of the medallion, however, note that Aethelred is the Unready or the second of his name, and the inscription on the medallion simply stated 'Aethelred'. The figure is depicted in armour, and whilst Aethelred the Unready fought (unsuccessfully) against the Vikings, I would suggest that the Aethelred being shown here was instead Aethelred I, at least to Nathaniel, if not to Coade's designers, a short-lived young warrior king, the elder brother of Alfred the Great. His depiction alongside Alfred in a matching pair of medallions would make more sense. The two successful, militaristic kings, linked by blood, fits into Curzon's decorative scheme, playing with ideas of descent, fraternity and associative lineage.

2.6 Bolingbroke's *Letters*

Eulogy for Saxon virtues and the exempla of Roman history fit into the nostalgic Tory worldview articulated by Bolingbroke and referenced throughout this chapter. The Viscount claimed his project was "improving men in virtue and wisdom by the study of history".²⁵⁹ His template on viewing and interpreting history was influential, and to know it and work within it was to honour a particular political slant on European history and contemporary politics. The reinterpretation of the historical past, co-opted by his Whig foes, was important to Bolingbroke, who declared that "naked facts without the causes that produced them and the circumstances that accompanied them, are not sufficient, to characterise actions or counsels".²⁶⁰ In other words, facts could be reinterpreted and redeployed, depending on your stance.

²⁵⁸ See Keynes, 1999 and Magennis, 2015.

²⁵⁹ Bolingbroke, 1752, 43.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 73.

The success of Bolingbroke's Tory history is written large in the very presence of the Caesar's Hall, anglicising and ennobling even emperors of dubious character. As Kramnick says, "the image Bolingbroke preferred shines through the many classical allusions found in his and opposition writings. With theatrical gravity, noble gentlemen stand before the people and win support by virtue of their eloquence and the compelling aesthetic force of their rhetoric".²⁶¹ Anti-Whig, noble Tory sentiment, cleverly cloaked in Bolingbroke's 'outward servitude' reads like a manual for the young Tory gentleman fulminating in opposition.

To conclusively link the Viscount's philosophy with the Baron's décor would be just as difficult and intangible as identifying Rysbrack-ian faces among the Caesars. But there are further tantalising links. Whilst venturing specific identities for the Caesars would, as we have discussed, be almost impossible, Figure 48 juxtaposes Bolingbroke's bust by Rysbrack with a similarly posed Kedleston head. The comparison to Rysbrack-ian portraits is notable in the context of Bolingbroke, given that the Earl of Oxford (1661-1724), a member of the Tory opposition, was Rysbrack's patron. Rysbrack sculpted many of Oxford's friends and allies and other prominent members of the Tory elite. The Earl had been a close ally of Bolingbroke, early in the Viscount's career, although they parted ways late in Queen Anne's reign. Nonetheless, both remained united as staunch critics of Robert Walpole. There is a strong link with the Tories in Rysbrack's work at that time.

2.7 Kedleston and Tourism

This chapter has, thus far, focused on perceptions and representation as pertaining to Scarsdale and his *amicis*. A recurrent theme, however, throughout this thesis, will be the display of antiquity for the public, and nowhere is this discussion so apt as at Kedleston. It was one of the most visited houses of the eighteenth century. Houghton was also one of the 'required' circuit of houses for polite and genteel tourists to visit (along with Chatsworth, Blenheim, and others, as referenced in the introduction) but

²⁶¹ Kramnick, 1997, 6.

country house tourism 'boomed' during the mid to late eighteenth century, and Houghton's entry into the world of visiting and guidebooks came in the time of Walpole's son and grandson.

Conversely, Curzon was placed at exactly the right point in time for the beginning of the trend, his house rebuilt and furnished as the industry grew. The Baron even erected his own nearby coaching inn for guests, described as "built by his Lordship for the accommodation of such strangers as curiosity may lead to view his residence" and published a formal guidebook in 1769.²⁶² The tourist entered, as we have discussed, through the Caesar's Hall. The first sight they had of Kedleston defined the history Nathaniel Curzon was presenting. People came to country houses to see lineage, to admire portraits, to peep behind the curtain at how the upper classes lived. The show the Baron was presenting, from the very outset, was one of Tory virtue.

Whether or not the overt Toryism of Kedleston's décor was commented upon, or even recognised, the house was immensely popular. The traveller, William Bray, states that Kedleston "may properly be called the glory of Derbyshire, eclipsing Chatsworth, the ancient boast of the county".²⁶³ James Plumptre (1770-1832), similarly full of praise for Kedleston, was dismissive of Chatsworth. He felt it was "little worth seeing", since many other houses exceeded it, and it possessed merely "magnificence that it is only to be regarded as a curious specimen of the old taste", likely a clear reference to the more fashionable Kedleston.²⁶⁴ In 1773, Theodosius Forrest (1728-1784), who was unimpressed by Chatsworth, praised Kedleston for a design in which "harmony, elegance and taste" were "happily united".²⁶⁵ This is not to say that Chatsworth did not remain popular with tourists, and to this day is regarded as perhaps the grandest country house in England. Nor was Kedleston universally lauded, with Horace Walpole dubbing it "too expensive", and Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) sniping that it would do very well for a town hall and displayed "more cost than judgement".²⁶⁶ Yet, for a period

²⁶² Stone, 1991, 249. Warner, 1802, 117.

²⁶³ Bray, 1783, 111.

²⁶⁴ Plumptre, 1992, 72.

²⁶⁵ Forrest, 1773, 52.

²⁶⁶ Walpole, 1970, 220. Boswell, 1887, 492.

in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Scarsdale's bold gambit with his new young architect eclipsed the Whig Duke of Devonshire, which was no mean feat.

2.8 Conclusions: Kedleston

Curzon's native fantasy, of anglicised Caesars and Saxon kings in the armour and garb of medieval monarchs, is worthy of note. De Bolla refers to the house as "an aggressively assembled montage, an eclectic borrowing from the sourcebook of history", but even he fails adequately to address the Caesars or their status in between classical Rome, contemporary Italy, and medieval or eighteenth-century England.²⁶⁷ Curzon's perception of England and Englishness was displayed as an instructive meditation on the past to the genteel tourists who flocked to Kedleston. It demonstrates that Toryism is not a simple political affiliation, as it has often been seen, but rather a mindset, a culture shaped in large part by the political thought of Bolingbroke, whose ideas seem so influential in this house.

We move now to Farnborough Hall, the third entrance hall of this section, an intriguing and much smaller case study, without Curzon's or Walpole's grandiose staging or political careers, but with a fine entryway, arrayed with busts.

²⁶⁷ De Bolla, 2003, 152.

Chapter 3: Farnborough Hall

Houghton and Kedleston both make bold statements about the personal importance of their owners. Galleries of Romans in their halls fit with a desire for personal aggrandisement, linking the present glory or dignity of the Walpoles and the Curzons with the illustrious classical past. The phenomenon of classical busts in the entrance hall, however, needs to be understood as a widespread convention, not simply the preserve of a few extremely rich men at the apex of English society. With the next case study, Farnborough Hall, we see that even to a modest country squire, the ancestral gallery of Roman exemplars was a desirable decorative choice. This chapter is a smaller pendant to the two preceding case studies.

The visual language of *romanitas* was not just being absorbed by the upper echelons of the elite. Indeed, the popular *Spectator* paper explained in its inaugural issue, in 1711, that “we have prefixed the term Spectator at the head of our Paper, as a monitor ever before us to point the right path, as the Romans placed the busts of their ancestors in the vestibule of their houses, to incite them to honourable deeds and similar performances”.²⁶⁸ This paper sold around 4,000 copies of each of its 500 issues.²⁶⁹ The ideas that it, and other publications, perpetuated of Rome’s links with contemporary England were circulating incredibly widely, and being absorbed by large swathes of the population. These were still the governing classes, and those adjacent to them, but not always the patriciate.

In the 1740s, when Sir Robert Walpole had recently died, and just before Nathaniel Curzon had begun his renovations at Kedleston, a small collection of busts was being formed in a country house vestibule, perched on the border between Warwickshire and Oxfordshire, by William Holbech (1699-1771). The result would be one of the most beautiful assemblages in an English country house, rich in high-quality portrait heads, and complemented by a decorative scheme that prized them above all else. Farnborough Hall was, for me, an accidental discovery. It is curiously isolated in comparison to the

²⁶⁸ *The Spectator*, 1st March 1711, 4.

²⁶⁹ British Library Online. English Language and Literature Timeline.

other case studies we have seen, and due to the lack of scrutiny (both during the eighteenth century and now) and the lack of archival records, it has not been possible to discern a guiding principle or family influence. The owner's personality and biography seem almost entirely undocumented. Despite this, the quality of its collection and the centrality of the portraits to the house's overall décor makes it an irresistible and invaluable addition to this study. It is a challenge to be met with the study of bust portraiture. What can the busts tell us, without the extensive context around them, which furnished Chapters 1 and 2?

3.1 Farnborough Hall and the Holbechs

Farnborough's basic structure is that of a seventeenth-century house, but one much modified during the eighteenth century. Since then, it has been left largely untouched, and it is now managed by the National Trust. This petite Palladian mansion, in yellow-coloured Ironstone Ashlar (Figure 49) is something of a hidden treasure, a chocolate box country house. Its magnificent collection of classical portrait busts has received little scholarly interest and where it appears - rarely - in the conventional Grand Tour literature, it is mentioned only in passing. Scott calls it "the most surprising and least-known collection" of the early eighteenth century.²⁷⁰ Farnborough's strange omission from the narrative of classical sculpture in England may well be due to the almost total obscurity of the house's owner at this time, William Holbech. He was a country gentleman, who never married, and appears to have kept to his immediate circle of family and friends. There are no surviving records of him as a person, nor of his purchases and collecting. Farnborough's records have an odd lacuna at this time, and as soon as William's nephew and heir inherited in 1771, records were once again preserved for the day-to-day life of the estate. Whether deliberate destruction or inconsistent preservation and record-keeping has caused this gap cannot be determined.

²⁷⁰ Scott, 2003, 82.

In 1684, Ambrose Holbech (1632-1701) acquired the Farnborough Estate from the Raleigh family for £8,700.²⁷¹ The Raleighs had incurred heavy financial losses through supporting the Crown in the Civil War.²⁷² Ambrose, meanwhile, was a newly made man, a lawyer, and the son of a lawyer (also an Ambrose, lived 1596-1662, see the family tree in Figure 50). His father had himself bought the Mollington Estate near Farnborough from another landed, old family, who circumstance compelled to pass their ancestral lands to new money. Ambrose the Younger must have been a very successful lawyer, for he purchased not only Farnborough but the Radstone Estate in Northamptonshire.²⁷³ His monument, in Mollington Church, describes him as “very eminent in the Law”. Ambrose’s purchase is notable, because the Holbech’s association with the land at Farnborough was relatively recent, unlike the long connections of the county and estate of the Walpoles and the Curzons in the previous chapters.

Ambrose’s son, William (c.1668-1717, the Elder, to distinguish him from his own son, also a William, on whom this chapter focuses) married Elizabeth Alington (c.1668-1708) in 1692, her wealthy father’s heir.²⁷⁴ Their marriage brought William a portion of £6,000, which he used to begin work on Farnborough, building a new west wing, among other improvements.²⁷⁵ Elizabeth and William the Elder’s initials and arms appear intertwined in elaborate plasterwork on the ceiling of Farnborough’s staircase. We know little of the elder William, other than that he died in 1717, leaving the younger William as heir.

3.2 William Holbech the Younger

William the Younger was the eldest son, and two brothers who had followed him both died, one, another Ambrose, predeceasing his father in 1712, and a second, Charles, dying in 1723. His only remaining brother, Hugh (d. 1765), took over the Mollington

²⁷¹ Wallace, 1963, 3. Circa £995,000 in 2022, according to the currency converter of the National Archives.

²⁷² Historic England entry on Farnborough Hall

²⁷³ Ince, 2011, 85.

²⁷⁴ Her father’s occupation is not listed in records of their marriage, but he is likely to have been a lawyer or professional connection of the Holbechs.

²⁷⁵ Warwickshire Record Office, CR0457/91/7.

Estate as William focused on Farnborough. Hugh's son, confusingly also called William (1748-1812), would eventually become his uncle's heir. William and Hugh also had four surviving sisters. William's life is obscure: he left no letters or diaries and few references made to him by contemporaries. An early nineteenth-century mention of Holbech places him as a school friend to George Thicknesse (d. 1790) at Winchester School. In his biography of Thicknesse, the writer John Nichols (d. 1826) calls William "a bachelor of large fortune... ..whose memory will be ever revered by all who knew him".²⁷⁶ The same biography records an obituary of William after his death in 1771, which states "...his hospitality was according to the Apostle, without grudging ; his integrity was unshaken; his benevolence was universal; and his piety towards God was sincere".

The only real milestone we have for William's lifetime, after his inheritance in 1717, is a Grand Tour. He is recorded as dining with the writer Joseph Spence (1699-1768) in Florence in 1732, and then several antiquarians in Rome, first Martin Folkes (1690-1754) in 1733 and then Richard Pococke (1704-1765) in 1734.²⁷⁷ This is an unusually late tour, as by this time he would have been approaching forty. From there, scholars (where they consider his biography at all) bizarrely conclude that he must have stayed on in Italy until the early 1740s, purely because that was when work began on the house, which he must have supervised and planned.²⁷⁸ More recently, Marshall has noted a remark by the British ambassador to Venice, that William and Hugh were on their way back to England in 1734.²⁷⁹ Marshall still tries to project a long tour onto William, although he thinks it took place in from the early 1720s until 1734.²⁸⁰ There are no grounds for this, and it is more likely that William and Hugh were simply abroad for several years in the 1730s.

²⁷⁶ Nichols, 1815, 254.

²⁷⁷ Ingamells & Ford, 1997, 507.

²⁷⁸ Scholl, 1995, 33. Also Meir, 1997, 7.

²⁷⁹ Marshall, 2014. National Gallery of Australia Online. Marshall does, however, question whether this painting was ever at Farnborough, as we have no proof beyond hearsay, and no record of it, so this could be a red herring.

²⁸⁰ The confusion over dates for William's tour may also explain why he was not a member of the Society of the Dilettanti. The traditional explanation would have him at Rome during the mid to late 1730s, when the founding members were in the city, which puzzled Jonathan Scott. Scott, 2003, 84.

William may well have been purchasing art in Italy, including sculpture. We have little dating information for the purchase of most of his busts, although we know six were bought after 1746, back in England, as we shall see later. We also have little evidence for the purchase dates of his Italian paintings. He collected landscapes, and their display was to become almost as integral at Farnborough as that of the antiquities. At least one of these, Panini's *Interior of the Pantheon*, signed 1734, was, Marshall believes, commissioned or bought during his tour. In general, however, we cannot be sure of how much art at Farnborough was bought on the tour, despite Jackson-Stops' (baseless) assertion that the bulk of the collection was acquired whilst William was in Italy.²⁸¹

3.3 Renovations and Collecting at Farnborough

Details of the remodelling and rebuilding which took place during the 1740s and 1750s are scant. One receipt survives from 1750, where the craftsman William Perritt of Yorkshire was paid £434, 4 shillings and 4 pence for plasterwork.²⁸² Even the identity of the architect who remodelled the house is not certain, though it was probably Sanderson Miller (1716-1780), a friend of Holbech's, who also designed the new landscape garden.²⁸³ Miller, who lived nearby, frequently visited Farnborough, dining with William, who also visited him at his home, and Miller even brought some of his famous patrons, such as Lord Cobham of Stowe and Lord North (1732-1792), the Prime Minister, to visit Farnborough.²⁸⁴ This perhaps implies some sort of proprietary interest, showing off other examples of his work, and indeed Hawkes cites similar architectural work in the classical style done by Miller at Ambrosden, in Oxfordshire, as evidence that Miller was capable of such an undertaking.²⁸⁵

Whoever was responsible, the work at Farnborough was extensive. William retained the West Front, but pulled down the majority of the house, and rebuilt in the Palladian

²⁸¹ Jackson-Stops, 1978, 4.

²⁸² Saumarez-Smith, 1993, 127.

²⁸³ Scholl, 1995, 33.

²⁸⁴ Hawkes, 2005, 125, 130, 150, 160.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 2005, 72.

style, with a new North Front as the main entrance. At the same time, the garden was redesigned, creating an artificial terrace which stretched three quarters of a mile along the hillside and was studded with classical follies, such as an Ionic Temple, Obelisk, Oval Pavilion, and the Pentagon Temple.²⁸⁶ The crowning glory, however, of William's renovations was the art collection with which he populated the house. The painting collection consisted primarily of the works of Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canal, 1697-1768) and Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691-1765). Marshall notes that Holbech had the wherewithal of a true connoisseur in selecting Canaletto for Venetian landscapes and Panini for Roman.²⁸⁷ Holbech's Paninis, the *Interior of St Peter's, Campidoglio* and *Piazza San Pietro* (as well as, possibly, the *Interior of the Pantheon*, for which see footnote) were joined by four Canalettos, three of which are different views of Piazza San Marco and one of the Church of Santa Maria della Salute.²⁸⁸

Alongside his fine paintings, William Holbech amassed antique sculpture. Despite the popularity of busts among Grand Tourists, their purchase was often supplemented with those of larger statues, stone urns, architectural stonework, and inscriptions.

Unusually, William Holbech only purchased busts. Perhaps this was due to the space constraints of his smaller house or, as we shall explore, due to their flexibility as a form, allowing illusory associations and fictive genealogies. The busts, like the paintings, were to be sold at Christie's in the 1980s, but the National Trust raised funds to buy them.²⁸⁹ Only one of William's sculpted heads, the 'Nubian', to which we turn later, left the collection.

3.4 The Farnborough Antiquities and Scholarship

Despite their importance to the rebuilding of Farnborough and its entire design, these crucial and engaging ancient artworks have left hardly any paper trail, and do not

²⁸⁶ Meir, 1997, 95.

²⁸⁷ Marshall, 2014.

²⁸⁸ Holbech's Italian landscapes were sold in the 1920s and have since been dispersed across museums and private collections around the world. Copies, commissioned at the time of the sale, now hang in their place.

²⁸⁹ Scholl, 1995, 37.

appear in much contemporary or secondary literature. One anonymous travel account from 1746 notes the presence of some white marble busts and one of black marble, but adds no more on the topic.²⁹⁰ Other tourist accounts of Farnborough, scarce though they are, focus on the grounds, such as those of Sophia Newdigate (d. 1774) in 1747 and Richard Pococke, Holbech's acquaintance from Rome, in 1756.²⁹¹ The nineteenth century 'usual suspects' for country house collections do not even mention Farnborough in passing. Dallaway, Michaelis and Waagen, the 'big three' of antiquity spotting, did not visit, nor did they include a brief comment acknowledging antiquities at the house, as they did for other unvisited properties such as Stourhead.

Andreas Scholl feels it is odd that Michaelis, thorough and inquisitive in his approach, did not visit Farnborough, but notes his reliance on recommendations from friends and acquaintances, as well as his use of existing literature to guide his choices.²⁹² I would add to that point that Farnborough's status as the home of a country squire, a gentleman of no historical consequence or connection, would not put it on the level of the grand Ducal and lordly collections, which are the bread and butter of Michaelis' study. Frederick Poulson's early twentieth-century examination of portraits, although picking up smaller collections like Rossie Priory, does not include Farnborough either, and we can perhaps assume that he was unaware of it.

It is Scholl who produced the only scholarly (or otherwise) account of the marbles. The Farnborough antiquities are fortunate to have been included in one of the *Monumenta Artis Romanae* publications in German during the 1990s. Scholl visited in 1992, and 'wrote up' the collection alongside Althorp House, Blenheim Palace, Lyme Park, and Penrice Castle, grouping these smaller assemblages together. Scholl's detailed catalogue examines all the items from a stylistic point of view, comparing with other portraiture examples. In the section where other scholarly literature on the item might appear, all

²⁹⁰ British Museum, Hypomnemata Add. Mss. 6230.

²⁹¹ Cited by Meir, 1997, 95.

²⁹² Scholl, 1992, 32.

the heads bar one (the so-called Nubian) have “unpubliziert” (unpublished) against them. This is truly a collection that has been left out in the cold.

There are thirty-four busts at Farnborough, including four tondos, artificially created life-size portrait medallions ‘sliced’ from portraits.²⁹³ These are referenced for context and sense, but largely excluded from the discussion, as has been the methodology throughout this thesis. The three-dimensional bust format is our focus here. Nineteen heads are of adult males, eleven of adult women and four of male children (pre-pubescent and adolescent). As we have seen in previous case studies, Roman emperors are a common feature of a country house collection, and busts of their wives, children, and wider family complement these ‘core’ imperial men, even if identifications are spurious or tentative. Holbech has a curious mix: a Satyr, two Philosophers, and six Greco-Roman deities (Ceres, Zeus, Aphrodite and three Apollos), join historical figures. This mixing of history and myth seems to have been perfectly acceptable, if unusual, especially as William did not have labels inscribed on his busts. He “...seems to have been happy to collect heads of anonymous officials and matrons as well as emperors and he did not inscribe their plinths with imaginative designations”.²⁹⁴

At Farnborough, two main locations from William Holbech’s time are known for busts. Nineteen sit in niches around the entrance hall and three on the grand staircase. Others were scattered throughout the downstairs. The Nubian sat above the mantel in the Sitting Room and a few heads were arranged around the Library and Dining Room. What went where, outside of the main hall-staircase axis, is difficult to reconstruct. When Andreas Scholl visited, he lists these ‘extras’ as “in front of the basement stairs”.

²⁹³ Five such medallions exist at Farnborough but are counted here as four because one of them is two halves of the same female head. Scholl, 1995, 57 identifies one of the medallions (F31, a Hadrianic man) as belonging with another tondo/sliced head in the National Museum of Oslo. I have included the medallions where, in other cases they might have been excluded, due to their creation from a bust and integration into a bust display.

²⁹⁴ Scott, 2003, 83.

3.5 Ancestral Images, Entrance Halls and Cultural Context

Before moving onto Farnborough's entryway in greater detail, more must be said on the cultural milieu to which Holbech, and his peers, had access. This contextualises the fact that Farnborough's entrance hall, despite not being on the 'level' of Houghton or Kedleston in terms of social cachet and wealth, is packed full of antique busts.

William was a gentleman, educated at an elite school, and of the wealth and means to undertake a tour, moreover one with his brother, a second son, alongside him. Despite this, the Holbechs, provincial lawyers made good, would hardly have merited the grand three-quarter or full-length canvases of the aristocracy. Having real (or fictive) ancestors *painted* would have been too ridiculous and incongruous in the country house. Sculpture provided a more acceptable 'workaround', buying into a well-known historical and cultural vocabulary which was deeply embedded at the time. Holbech's illustrious ancestors are, therefore, the ancient Greeks and Romans with whom the English identified so heavily at the time.

The Roman precedent of busts as ancestors would have been well-known to William and his contemporaries. The curriculum at Winchester, and indeed at other public schools, was heavily reliant on classical poetry and prose, and instances such as those discussed in the introduction, were part of contemporary awareness.²⁹⁵ This awareness filtered into history and historiography being written and published in William's lifetime. As noted at the beginning of the chapter, the immensely influential *Spectator* put the apprehension of Roman *exempla*, framed through a sculptural medium, behind its very name. Numerous other texts circulated (and would have been important pillars of both the gentleman's library and the schoolboy's education) which highlight ancestral images and their centrality to ancient Roman culture. For instance, Daniel Burgess (d. 1747), in his 1729 *A Short Account of the Roman Senate and the Manner of their Proceedings*, wrote of magistrates that "...their houses were adorned with their own images, by which they became noble, and with their ancestors, if they were of noble extract".²⁹⁶ Similarly,

²⁹⁵ Clarke, 1959, 53.

²⁹⁶ Burgess, 1729, 26.

the English translation, from 1740, of *The Manners and Customs of the Romans*, draws attention to the vestibule of the Roman house, where “people waited till the great person was visible” and would view images in wax, marble or metal of the house’s owners.²⁹⁷ Later on, the translator writes that “...when these magistrates caused the images of their ancestors to be carried in procession to certain ceremonies, it was evidence of their nobility: but if only their own was seen, they were distinguished by the name of *novi homines*, new men”.²⁹⁸ William was certainly a new man, but must have been keenly aware of the opportunity offered to him to imitate Roman custom. By aligning his country house display with the ancient past, Holbech creates a visual ‘gloss’ over the intervening centuries of relative anonymity for his family.

3.6 The Hall

The visitor enters Farnborough directly into the entrance hall, a relatively small square footage, but of double height, where most of the busts are arranged (Figures 51, 52, and 53). An elaborate rococo plaster ceiling contrasts with the simplicity of the white walls. Their uniformity is broken up by door casings, the mantel and its overmantel, and niches, which are framed with plaster moulding (see Figure 54 for a plan of the hall). The plain walls draw greater emphasis to the content of the niches: the busts. Each is set within its braided oval and on a plaster plinth shaped like an acanthus scroll, with the exception of the tondos and one Roman lady who sits in a broken pediment above the fireplace.

The hall is small compared to the entranceway of most houses considered in this thesis, half the size of Kedleston’s Caesar’s Hall, although with a higher ceiling, and dwarfed by Houghton’s lavish Stone Hall. Scott notes that the busts in the Hall are almost too high to see properly, set, as they are, above eye level. This might suggest a collection for purely architectural ornament, but Scott feels “the quantity and quality of the marbles

²⁹⁷ de Morsan, 1740, 58. The treatise is written anonymously under the pseudonym ‘Le Fevre de Morsan’ but was edited by Francoise Granet (1692-1741).

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 202.

are too high for this”.²⁹⁹ I disagree with Scott’s assessment of the difficulty. They are certainly too high for close examination, but due to the smaller size of the room, the viewer can see much detail and the angle is not difficult – no visitors, bar perhaps children, would need to crane their neck. The busts are all white marble and are roughly of a common size, all being approximately lifesize. The four tondos (Figures 55 and 56) are an exception to this, of a yellow-buff stone.

All the busts, even those of mythological subjects, such as gods, are portrayed (bar one warrior in a helmet) in a relatively anonymous way, with no special attributes. This means that the ‘set’ could fit together as a group. That massing of a group, with recognisable figures from history then padded out with appropriate extras, may have been a key aim for Holbech. This illusory nature of a group, containing men and women and different age groups, could have stood in lieu of the family gallery and I believe that to the contemporary viewer, there is no ridiculousness in Holbech appropriating the ancients as his forebears. It is not meant to be read literally, but rather as a perfectly acceptable substitute and an appeal to a lineage of learning and culture, when a prestigious one of blood was not available. We have seen something similar already at Houghton, and once again, it plays to Tadmor’s concept of lineage-family, rather than a domestic family, and the thread of associative lineage, which ran through eighteenth-century engagement with admired historical persons. This has echoes in the portrait galleries of Rutland et al, as Moore and Crawley note that major portrait collections, by the eighteenth century, rarely displayed just blood family, and would have embraced close friends and royalty where possible, in their presentation of an impressive family history.³⁰⁰

At least six of the busts must have been bought by ‘mail order’ after William’s return from the Continent, as we find them offered by the dealer, Belisario Amidei (d.1772) to the Earl of Carlisle in 1745.³⁰¹ Henry Howard, the 4th Earl (1694-1758) was one of the great eighteenth-century English collectors. Amidei, one of his several dealers, secured

²⁹⁹ Scott, 2003, 83.

³⁰⁰ Moore & Crawley, 1992, 31.

³⁰¹ Scholl, 1995, 35.

sculpture and other artworks for many wealthy English patrons, including the Earl of Leicester at Holkham Hall. He wrote to Carlisle, offering “first choice” on six busts “recently discovered in the course of my excavations”.³⁰² Carlisle must have rejected the busts, as we have no record of them coming to Castle Howard, or indeed of Carlisle receiving the drawing Amidei offers of the portraits. In fact, all six of can be traced to the Farnborough collection. They are:

1. Lucius Verus wearing a band around the chest, which has engraved upon it Minerva, Hercules and Medusa faced by Neptune;
2. Marcus Aurelius, aged about twenty-five and bearded;
3. Plautilla, wife of Caracalla;
4. Faustina;
5. Commodus as a young man;
6. A bust Amidei describes in Italian as “Busto che rappresenta Bruto di Giulio Cesare”. Castle Howard have translated this as “Brutus, the murderer of Julius Caesar”, but Scholl identifies this head as F33 at Farnborough – an eighteenth-century Julius Caesar, made of composite ancient and modern parts. Whether this bust was sold as Brutus, and later suggested to be Caesar, or Scholl is parsing “Bruto di Giulio Cesare” as “the brute, Julius Caesar”, the bust is known by the National Trust as a Caesar. At the time of writing, in-person examination of the bust to verify either way has not been possible, but Scholl assigns it to the Chiaramonti-Camposanto type of Caesar’s portraits.³⁰³

How Amidei’s offering to a wealthy Earl came to a country squire is not established. The letter to Carlisle does note several missives already sent regarding statuary to which he has “not been so fortunate as to receive an answer”. If Carlisle had rejected these sculptures, then the dealer may have downgraded his aspirations and sought a quick sale to someone with funds with whom he was in direct contact. There may also have

³⁰² Castle Howard Archives, J/12/12/10 for both the Italian original and the translation.

³⁰³ As of May 2022, the bust is not at Farnborough, and has been removed for conservation.

been a well-connected intermediary in Rome who knew Holbech was looking for busts to be shipped to England.

Scholl initially made the link between Amidei's letter and Farnborough through study of the bandolier on the Lucius Verus (Figure 57), eventually finding all six within the collection. The Verus is perhaps the crowning glory of the house's antiquities, a breathtakingly fine sculpture which takes centre stage on the staircase.

3.7 Lucius Verus

Whereas the entranceway makes its impact with sheer numbers (albeit numbers of excellently preserved/restored busts), the staircase leaves three busts to do all the decorative 'talking'. Farnborough's Verus is an arresting piece of sculpture, equal to the best portraits of the emperor in such museums as the Louvre or Hermitage.

Holbech appears to have known that Lucius Verus, over life-size, with its intricate bandolier and excellent preservation, was his star piece. It is the focal decorative point of the staircase (Figures 58 and 59) in a purpose-built shallow niche, surrounded by more intricate plasterwork and under the ornate cupola of a domed skylight. The staircase, with his parents' initials in plaster, was retained from the seventeenth-century house, but the windows on the upper floor were filled in to provide the canvas onto which the emperor and his female companions were set.

Verus is on the central wall, best seen from the bottom of the stairs and the landing. Flanking him, on the left and right-hand staircase walls, are Amidei's Plautilla and Faustina. These are in fact private portraits, and Scholl dates them to the late Severan and early Hadrianic eras respectively. They are, nonetheless, beautiful and well-preserved, fitting companions for Verus. All three portraits are on jutting plaster plinths within their niches, and the entire wall around them is bare and a light yellow, except for white plasterwork, which forms an enormous ornate frame for each of the three, in much the same way as the plaster moulding frames for Holbech's pictures. I would suspect Holbech noted the provenance of his Verus and friends to guests, as previously intended for a famous home. Perhaps, Holbech would have presented it as snatching

them before the Earl could claim them, rather than accepting unwanted offerings to the aristocracy, although this can only be speculated.

The foregrounding of two women alongside Verus may simply be because they were also from the Amidei purchase and considered suitably good quality to accompany the star piece. They are also wives of emperors from around Verus's own lifetime, continuing a loose sense of a family tree. Their inclusion highlights the numbers of women depicted at Farnborough, an acknowledgment of the need for women and children to create a proper dynastic overview, which we saw at Houghton and will see again in Chapter 7 at Petworth. There may also be sentimental reasons, with the women standing in for absent and remembered loved ones, a theme we will explore in the next section, with Shugborough and Stourhead.

3.8 The Borghese Moor and the Earl of Arundel

Whilst the majority of Holbech's busts are Roman, Scholl identifies nine neoclassical or 'mixed' portraits among the collection, one of which is Amidei's Brutus/Caesar. Two of these, however, offer intriguing and tantalising insights into Holbech's passion for Italy and the aims of his collection.

The first of these is the previously discussed *bigio morata* marble head of a young Black man (Figure 60). It was sold at Christie's in 1995 but was present in the collection when Scholl catalogued it.³⁰⁴ This was, before Scholl, the only published work in the Farnborough collection, appearing in Rolf Schneider's *Bunte Barbaren* catalogue of coloured marble sculptures.³⁰⁵ Holbech's bust, referred to by various names, and sold by Christie's under the epithet 'Nubian', is perhaps best described in modern parlance simply as a Black man. Its reference in this chapter by the antiquated term of 'Moor' owes to its origin as a copy of the head of *Borghese Moor*, a full-length sculpture combining ancient and modern marble and plaster parts, created by the sculptor Nicolas Cordier (1567-1612) for Cardinal Scipione Borghese (1577-1605), and now in the Louvre (Figure 61).

³⁰⁴ Christies Auction Catalogue, Antiquities Sale 11th July 1995, Lot 268343.

³⁰⁵ Schneider, 1986, 215.

This copy of Cordier's statue has no provenance, but conceivably could have been purchased after Holbech, who must have toured the major Roman collections, had seen the Borghese statue. The Villa Borghese had a 'Room of the Moor', focused on the sculpture, and the villa was certainly, during Holbech's lifetime, one of the essential stops on the Roman 'circuit' of sites and museums.³⁰⁶ Both the National Trust and Scholl date the bust copy to the seventeenth century, after the original's completion in 1612, and before 1700.³⁰⁷ Holbech's ownership of this piece, alongside his Italian paintings, may demonstrate his fondness for the artistic culture of the great Italian cities of Rome, Florence and Venice.

The unusual and undoubtedly exotic bust commemoration of a Black man, in such rich materials, arguably set Holbech's artistic taste and experience apart from that of other collectors. Only a true connoisseur, who had visited the Borghese collection, on dining at Farnborough, would recognise the context for this striking head. Holbech could also, by displaying a reduced copy of one of Scipione's favourite sculptures, have been evoking the Moor's original owner as a man of art and culture. Scipione was a great patron of the arts in Rome and established the famous Villa Borghese art collection which remains a tourist attraction to this day.

It is, however, Holbech's potential acknowledgement of another seventeenth-century art collector, one of his own countrymen, the Earl of Arundel (1585-1646), which poses an even greater mystery. Figure 62 shows a bust the National Trust calls a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century portrait of a bearded man, perhaps a philosopher, which Scott cautiously refers to as a portrait with "a strong resemblance" to Arundel, and Scholl definitively labels "Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel".³⁰⁸

Scholl, dating the portrait to the 1640s, describes the identification as *offensichtlich*, 'obvious', and notes that this would be one of only two sculpted portraits in existence of the 'Father of Virtu', as Arundel was known in the eighteenth century.³⁰⁹ The only

³⁰⁶ See Paul, 2008 for the Borghese Collection's importance during the Grand Tour.

³⁰⁷ NT Item 831167 and Scholl, 1995, F12.

³⁰⁸ Scott, 2003, 83.

³⁰⁹ Scholl, 1995, 80.

accepted bust of Arundel is that by the French sculptor Dieussart (c.1600-1661) in the Ashmolean (Figure 63). The Earl's image, painted and sculpted, is nevertheless rare given his fame.

The portrait in question is white marble, 58.5cm tall, on an 18cm eighteenth-century socle. It depicts a middle-aged man, head slightly turned to the left, with densely curled short hair and beard, similarly curly brows, drilled eye pupils, and iris incision, and slightly parted lips. The musculature of the neck and the lines on the face are delicately and skilfully rendered, as if caught mid-movement. When Scholl visited in 1992, the 'Arundel' head sat in the Farnborough Dining Room. As previously mentioned, the Hall and Staircase portrait arrangements have not changed, so Arundel may well have been in the Dining Room in Holbech's day, or somewhere else in the house. He now sits atop a shelf in the library, along with other 'homeless' busts, each with a trilby hat perched jauntily on their heads.

Thomas Howard, 14th Earl of Arundel, 2nd or 4th Earl of Surrey (depending on which creation you adhere to), and 1st Earl of Norfolk, was a prominent courtier under both James I and Charles I, and one of the earliest Grand Tourists to the Continent. He and his Countess, Aletheia (1583-1654), undertook several trips to Europe and returned from Italy in 1614, transformed by their experiences. They collected an enormous number of antiquities, many of which now form part of the collection of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Arundel also wrote to one agent of his unrealised desire to have Bernini (1598-1680) create him a portrait sculpture.³¹⁰ He did persuade Dieussart, who was living in Rome, to come to England, and he created the bust, the only confirmed one we have of Arundel, as well as others of English nobility and royalty. The Farnborough bust is probably not by Dieussart's hand, but we know Arundel was seeking portraiture of himself in bust form, so it is far from inconceivable that another artist was persuaded by Arundel's willingness to pour money into his collection. He certainly commissioned numerous painted portraits of himself and his family from Mytens (c.1590-1647), Van Dyck (1599-1641) and Rubens (1577-1640), all prominent and sought-after painters. It is

³¹⁰ Howarth, 1985, 161.

tantalising to imagine that Holbech acquired a portrait head that Arundel had commissioned of himself. This was not beyond the realm of possibility, as William lived close to Easton Neston, the home of the Fermors. This family had purchased a good amount of the Arundel marbles and would go on to donate them to the Ashmolean in Holbech's own lifetime, where they and the Dieussart portrait are today.

We can infer that Holbech was being influenced by his visits to other country houses. For example, nearby Coleshill in Oxfordshire (Figure 64), which is now demolished, but at the time well-visited and one of the most influential country houses in England. Its fine staircase hall, which spotlighted its sculpture, displays them in braid-edged oval niches, identical to those at Farnborough. It is tempting to imagine the young William, visiting the nearby house, borrowing visual vocabulary from the greater gentry and aristocracy.

But can we share Scholl's certainty about the bust which, he claims, is derived from examination of Arundel's painted portraiture? Comparison of Arundel's painted portraits with the bust has traced echoes of the prominent ears and the setting of the features, which bulge out of a slightly sunken, care-worn face, but without records, there is no way to know. Furthermore, why should Farnborough contain a portrait of a man who died two hundred years prior to Farnborough's redesign, with no family collection to William Holbech? Scott suggests that he "wanted to assert his spiritual descent" from the great collector.³¹¹ The remains of the magnificent collection were visible to tourists, not just at Easton Neston, but it was thought, at the Earl of Pembroke's Wilton House in Wiltshire. Stewart has demonstrated that this is apocryphal, but at the time it was widely believed that Pembroke had acquired many of the Arundel marbles as the foundation of his own impressive collection.³¹² Wilton, filled with antiquities, was becoming a tourist destination during Holbech's lifetime.³¹³ Inspired by Arundel's

³¹¹ Scott, 2003, 83.

³¹² Stewart, 2020, 9-10.

³¹³ Wilton was one of the first country houses to have its own 'guide'. *Etchings by Cary Creed with Accompanying Captions, of the Antique Marbles in the Collection of the Earl of Pembroke at Wilton House*, was published in 1730. This was less of a guidebook than a collection of etchings, but still foundational in the genre of country house tourist literature. The first 'real' guides to Wilton were published in the early 1750s, which is still remarkably early in the development of the country house guide.

passion, its fruits showcased in contemporary country houses, Holbech could claim associative lineage with the long-dead Earl in a way that might appear jarring to us, but not to his peers.

As we have seen, and shall see throughout this thesis, historical figures are often placed in dynastic groupings, creating a lineage of association, even when there was no blood relation between the collector and busts. I have already argued that this illusory descent is in play at Farnborough with the Roman ‘ancestors’, and that the language of association, creating the feel of a family portrait gallery, was not, to the eighteenth-century viewer, confined to a logical progression along genealogical lines.

3.9 Conclusions: Farnborough

Ruth Guilding calls Farnborough “modest” in passing.³¹⁴ The size of the house might be modest, but the nature of its busts is not. They are not only beautiful, but wonderfully displayed, and brought to the fore as key parts of the house’s décor. The pseudo-Holbechs of their owner’s Greco-Roman gallery played an enormous part in this Italianate corner of the Warwickshire countryside. Busts fine enough to be offered to the Earl of Carlisle, combined with a neoclassical nod to one of the best-known Roman collections, and evocations of distinguished English collector of the past, provided William Holbech with as much intellectual distinction as the aristocracy, despite his lack of birth.

Two other ‘new’ men, another lawyer’s son and a banker, are the focus of our next section. Later into the thesis we will return to the grand magnate families at Holkham, Petworth and Woburn. These families also mark a return to politics and to the clubbable oligarchy of the Whigs, a generation later than where we left them with the death of Walpole. For the time being, however, we turn to a section on personal commemoration and memorial, focused on two men largely outside of the political arena, although not as seemingly averse to it as Holbech. Firstly, to Shugborough which, similarly to

³¹⁴ Guilding, 2014, 73.

Farnborough, was inspired by international travel, and latterly to Stourhead, another example of an historic estate sold to new money and redeveloped.

Section B:

Commemorating the Dead in the Country House and its Landscape

The classical (or classicising) bust portrait was not confined to entryways, and our next section comprises two case studies which show that portrait sculpture could break free, permeating all corners of the house or, indeed, its associated landscape. Section B also emphasises the deep classicism of eighteenth-century commemoration of the dead, and the role of the bust in this.

This section comprises two case studies, that of Shugborough Hall in Staffordshire and that of Stourhead in Wiltshire. The families who owned the two houses were, respectively, Whigs and Tories, but their political affiliation did not define their lifestyle and connections in the same way as for Walpole and Curzon. The families, the Ansons and the Hoares, were also neither nobles, nor leading politicians (although they were not quite the retiring gentry, out of the political limelight, as Holbech was). The Ansons, a family of lawyers, made their money through the accumulation of land and then the seafaring adventures of one of their members. The Hoares, who started life as goldsmiths, became arguably the most successful bankers in England.

The most striking parallel between Shugborough and Stourhead, and the one on which the following two chapters focus, is the theme of familial loss, as expressed in portrait sculpture. These houses and, notably, their gardens, make use of a select number of busts and heads. In the previous case studies, quality, identity, and theme (imperial men, or a mixed gender 'family tree') are among the considerations we have seen used for the selection and display of portrait busts. The number of busts employed to decorate the entrance halls was also an important component. At Shugborough and Stourhead, we will look to a very small number of instances, primarily of neoclassical portraits, although including some ancient sculpture, which are imbued with a great deal of meaning through their placement and subject matter. Both instances evoke Roman traditions around death and commemoration. Furthermore, they blend the classical

language of the bust with the funerary element prevalent at this time in English sculpture.

As Malcolm Baker has observed, portrait sculpture is usually both proleptic and commemorative, assuming a continued existence beyond the lifetime of the sitter.³¹⁵ In some cases, however, this function of the bust can be particularly pronounced.

Shugborough's portrait commemoration centres around the loss of beloved family members, a brother and sister-in-law, as well as the themes of dynasty and inheritance. The two deaths precipitated a period of intense classical collecting. Stourhead's portraits glorify, and then, in due course mourn beloved children, also addressing inheritance and the continuation of the family line through the visual vocabulary of portrait busts.

Choosing classical fashions or, indeed, classical 'proxies' for the dead at Shugborough and Stourhead was a significant part of the memorialisation, although neither case study describes an actual tomb, that is, a place of burial. Shugborough's central commemorative structure, the Arch of Hadrian, is a memorial-cum-cenotaph, and the Temple of Ceres and Temple on the Terrace at Stourhead are commemorative monuments, straddling the time between the birth, adulthood, and death of its creator's children. Despite this, the primary focus of the chapter is funereal, and the sources used focus on death and remembrance, as I will argue that a mix between commemoration and veneration was fulfilled by these monuments. This chapter, therefore, owes a great deal to Craske's *The Silent Rhetoric of the Body*, which examines English sculpture through the lens of death and commemoration. The tradition of the English funerary monument, and its commonplace visual language, instantly recognisable to the eighteenth-century viewer, is here supplemented with classical models, specifically Roman funerary customs, addressed by, among others, Valerie Hope in *Roman Death*, (2009). Imperial death, and the veneration associated with it, has been explored by Penelope Davies (2000) and Jean-Claude Richard (1966), and is very relevant given the popularity of imperial cultural signifiers during the eighteenth century. Memorial and remembrance were inevitably coloured by literary accounts of the ancient dead, given

³¹⁵ Baker, 2014, 27.

contemporary investment in the idea of Britain as a new Rome.³¹⁶ Craske references this, likening English Church monuments to the Roman roadside tombs, such as the famous Appian Way in Rome, as well as the Roman custom of ancestral images in *atria*, as *imagines*, as discussed in the previous section.³¹⁷ This chapter makes explicit the intense classicism which inspired eighteenth-century sculpted images of the dead, even outside the traditional funerary monument on which Craske focuses.

To assess both case studies, we must consider what the owners and occupants of Shugborough Hall and Stourhead might have thought about the relationship between death and sculpture during the mid to late eighteenth century. As Craske has amply demonstrated, their peers were invested in an English funerary culture, itself derived from classical models, stretching back to the late medieval period. These ranged from full-length tomb effigies, to large, idealised scenes with a cast of characters besides the deceased, and finally, displays of busts (Figures 65, 66 and 67). Eighteenth-century elite or patriciate experiences of commemorating the dead would have also been shaped by a variety of classical influences, primarily passing references in literary sources, translations of which were essential parts of a gentlemanly education and then, in adulthood, a country house library. Material culture would also have played a part, with visitors to Rome on the Grand Tour seeing the famous Appian Way, lined with Roman architectural tombs. The Appian Way's tombs were also the subject of popular prints, such as those of Giovanni Battista Piranesi (Figure 68), the engraver *par excellence* of the mid-eighteenth century, whose works were a staple of the English library. Piranesi's etchings were part fantasy, reconstructing, duplicating and extending the monuments, but are nonetheless indicative of the fascination with this road of tombs. Many tombs on the Appian Way, as well as at Pompeii, which was being excavated during the eighteenth century, display portraits, in relief or the round, limited to the head or three-quarter bust (Figures 69 and 70). This was a particular feature of commemorative practice in relation to late Republican freedmen and women, and Davies highlights how striking these tombs must have been, to Roman viewers, as well as the modern observer,

³¹⁶ Ayres, 1997.

³¹⁷ Craske, 2007, 10.

with the eerie inversion of the usual viewer and viewed, living and dead.³¹⁸ Other well-known Roman tombs included the Mausoleum of Hadrian, which had been preserved for posterity by being repurposed as the Castel Sant Angelo, a papal fortress. The Mausoleum had contained portrait busts of Hadrian and his immediate family, which were kept in the Papal collection.³¹⁹ Both Anson and Hoare, having travelled to Rome, would, no doubt, have seen the major monuments and collections of the time, including the papal museums.

Literary sources provide even more information about death and commemoration in the Roman world, and the authors discussed below were all stalwarts of both the eighteenth-century school system and the traditional country house library. Ovid's *Fasti* describe the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria* festivals, where tombs were visited, given edible offerings, and interacted with.³²⁰ The classically educated elite were aware that tombs and memorials were not simple repositories, and the elegant and intricate nature of some of the English tombs Craske examines indicates visitation to, or spectation of, the eighteenth-century monument was expected. Some of the brief literary snippets about death focus quite heavily on portrait images, perhaps explaining the prominence of the bust and head format in future western European funerary customs. For instance, Book 6 of Polybius' *Histories*, describes an elite funeral, where a mask (*eikon*) of the dead is displayed in public, and then at home in the family shrine.³²¹ Pliny's letters mock his rival, Regulus, who was so affected by his son's death that "he decided to commission as many sculptures and portraits of the boy as could be made".³²² Pliny is certainly more sympathetic to his friend, Fundanus, on the loss of his daughter, and Fundanus' mourning, as well as the deep grief felt by Cicero at the loss of his own daughter, Tullia, will be referenced later in the chapter, when discussing Henry Hoare's daughters.³²³

³¹⁸ Davies, 2000, 122.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 35.

³²⁰ Ovid, *Fasti*, 2 & 5.

³²¹ Polybius, *Histories*, 6.53.

³²² Pliny, *Letters*, 4.2.

³²³ Ibid., 5.16 and Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 252-254.

In summary, the English and Roman traditions of the image of the deceased in sculpture dovetailed neatly into commemorative busts. In Chapter 4 (Shugborough), we will see busts of the deceased in a distinctly classical format, within an ostentatious classical cenotaph. At Stourhead, in Chapter 5, we will see the presentation of idealised Greco-Roman figures to represent dead children, or the hopes around living children, (which would later be thwarted by their deaths), displayed in quasi-religious devotional settings. We will explore the contexts of these busts, before placing them in the framework of the wider collection of sculpture at the respective properties. This is because not all the busts at Shugborough and Stourhead were solely concerned with death, and there are fascinating and under-researched aspects outside of loss and mourning to be explored. Nonetheless, the focus, which grounds this chapter, is grief and commemoration. I hope to demonstrate with these two examples that portrait busts can present some of the most powerful and emotionally charged sculpture of the eighteenth-century country house, and their examination tells us a great deal, not necessarily about the dead, but those left behind to commemorate them.

Chapter 4: Shugborough Hall

Shugborough Hall, in Staffordshire (Figure 71), was the work of a man seeking arcadia in England, Thomas Anson (1695-1773). He was influenced by his extensive travels, and ultimately, by the loss of his beloved brother and sister-in-law, to whom the ‘Arch of Hadrian’, in the park, decorated with their busts, is dedicated. This structure, and indeed all the parkland monuments, are part of a new, grand, and dramatically altered family seat, commissioned and overseen by Anson who, in his old age, turned to decorating his house and garden with busts and statuary. Whereas Houghton, Kedleston and Farnborough retain their sculptural collections, sadly the busts and other antiquities at Shugborough were largely sold to pay off family debts in 1842. Anson would bring together at Shugborough a phenomenal and “highly distinctive” but, as Coltman notes, “long overlooked” (at least by modern scholars) collection of ancient and neoclassical sculpture.³²⁴ Through the surviving sculpture and archival records, such as purchasing papers and the sale catalogues, we can reconstruct Thomas’ collection and speculate on his motivations. In addition, by looking at a select number of busts, we can shed light on the deeply personal, yet strikingly monumental in scale, sculptural mourning around which his period of collecting centres.

4.1 Thomas Anson

To understand Shugborough, and to comprehend the selection and display of portraiture, we need to examine the life and family of the man behind the collection. In 1602, the lawyer, William Anson of Lincoln’s Inn (1628-1688) purchased half the manor of Dunston, in Staffordshire. This was a significant purchase, the family’s first acquisition of land, marking their ascent into the gentry. In 1624, William also bought the manor house at Shugborough, roughly ten miles away from Dunston, on the border of Cannock Chase, and 80 acres of land.³²⁵ Shugborough, also sometimes written as

³²⁴ Coltman, 2004, 42 & Coltman, 2009, 237.

³²⁵ Sambrook, 1990, 7.

Shuckborough or Shuckburrow, was to become the family's seat and the centre of Thomas Anson's ambitions.

Thomas was William's grandson. His father, another William (1656-1720), had married well. His wife, Isabella Carrier (c.1667-1720), was a co-heiress of her father, who had been a wealthy gentleman, and sister-in-law to the 1st Earl of Macclesfield (1666-1732), creating an important political connection for the family.³²⁶ The second William made alterations to the family seat, no doubt necessitated by a brood of ten children. Thomas, and his younger brother George (1697-1762), were the only sons to survive, along with six sisters (see Figure 72 for the family tree). Thomas was also earmarked for a career in the law, until such time as he inherited, and Baker notes the bizarre ritual of his being entered into the Inner Temple, aged thirteen, before he had even gone to university.³²⁷ He studied at Oxford, and was called to the Bar in 1719. His legal career, if he had one, has left no record. He likely never practised, as his father died the following year, in 1720, and Thomas inherited his estate. Shugborough's income, through agriculture, would have amply sustained a gentleman, and Thomas had also sold South Sea Company shares at a good profit. In 1723, Thomas embarked on the traditional Grand Tour. His was later than that of many young men, who went in their teens. Thomas was then twenty-nine, but this practice of later travel for men of the gentry, as we have seen with William Holbech, was not uncommon. While the aristocracy considered Europe a finishing school for their sons, many with self-made wealth, such as the Holbechs of Farnborough and Hoares of Stourhead, tended to travel later. Thomas was abroad for over two years.³²⁸ This is the first of four confirmed trips abroad which Thomas took during his life:

- i. 1723 – 1725 (?): Tour of Italy/Western Europe
- ii. 1734 – Greece/the Levant
- iii. 1740 – 1742 – Egypt/the Levant
- iv. 1748 – Belgium and France

³²⁶ Baker, 2010, 11.

³²⁷ Ibid., 10.

³²⁸ Ibid., 18.

His Western European trips are less remarkable, but to tour Greece, Turkey, Egypt, and Syria, as Thomas did, was highly unusual at the time.³²⁹ Thomas kept a notebook of his 1740 travels through Egypt and the Levant, but frustratingly it is not a travel diary. He merely lists places through which he passed and the dates.³³⁰ Apart from his travels, Thomas Anson was a quiet figure, until the 1740s. He was not politically active before then, and seems, as one friend would comment after his death, to have “preferred the still paths of private life”.³³¹ He was elected to the Royal Society in 1730, but hardly appears in their records thereafter.³³² He does much the same a few years later, as founding member of the Society of Dilettanti and a member of the Divan Club.³³³ The former, part dining club and part antiquarian interest group, would go on to become one of the most respected intellectual groups in England.³³⁴ The latter lasted only two years, and was certainly more raucous, with membership open to those who had travelled to the Ottoman Empire, playing Turkish dress-up at their London dinners.³³⁵ Thomas was then a member of the Egyptian Society, which also had significant crossover of membership with the Divan Club and Dilettanti, but again does not seem to have been particularly active.³³⁶

Thomas’s biography demonstrates an interest in classical art and classical lands, albeit a slightly broader interest than many of his peers. He may have purchased sculpture or other artefacts during his travels, but we have no record of this. He seems to have turned to classical collecting, and the language of classicism, relatively late in life, after the profoundly felt loss of his brother, George, and his cherished sister-in-law, Elizabeth (1725-1760).

³²⁹ Not all of Anson’s trips have been recognised until recently. Andrew Baker has used archival evidence to demonstrate the previously unknown 1730s trip and expand upon the 1740s Egyptian trip. Baker, 2020, 42 (Thomas returning from Smyrna, via Italy). Baker, 2020, 67 (Thomas moving from mainland Greece, to Cyprus, to Aleppo)

³³⁰ Staffordshire Record Office D615/P(5)/2/4.

³³¹ Pennant, 1811, 91.

³³² Baker, 2020, 24.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 36.

³³⁴ See Redford, 2008, for the Dilettanti.

³³⁵ See Finnegan, 2006 for The Divan Club.

³³⁶ Finnegan, 2006, 18.

4.2 George and Elizabeth Anson

Any study of Shugborough in the eighteenth century, or indeed the importance of busts at Shugborough, would be incomplete without mention of Admiral Lord Anson, Thomas's younger brother, and the Admiral's wife, Elizabeth. In fact, Martin Robinson's National Trust guidebook begins with the Admiral, George, stating that, "in order to understand the story of Shugborough, it is best to begin, not at the beginning, but with the career of Admiral Lord Anson, who raised the family to greatness".³³⁷ Unfortunately, Elizabeth is less feted. The current arrangement at the house, by the National Trust, involves enormous floor-to-ceiling posters of the brothers, and packing crates to symbolise their travel and purchasing. Elizabeth is consigned to a single information sheet, stapled to the back of one of these cases. One aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that she was as important as George to Thomas's vision for his house and park, and to emphasise Thomas's loving commemoration of her, and his brother, in bust form.

Thomas, as the eldest surviving Anson son, was earmarked for the life of a country gentleman, so his younger brother George joined the Navy, where he worked his way up the ranks. Like Thomas, whilst he was active in the 1720s and 1730s, it is the 1740s where his story really begins to have an impact on Shugborough, and indeed, on national history. The 'War of Jenkins' Ear', as it is now known colloquially, was an episode in the ongoing naval rivalry between Britain and Spain. This episode, a prolonged one, lasted from 1739 to 1748, and took place mainly in the West Indies. At the height of the conflict, in 1740, George Anson, then a Commodore, led a fleet of eight ships on a mission to disrupt and capture Spanish imperial possessions in the Pacific Ocean. It is worth noting that as George set off, he dropped off Thomas, then on the first leg of his Egyptian journey, on the Spanish mainland.

Despite heavy losses, George had great success, and circumnavigated the globe, also capturing the galleon *Our Lady of Covadonga* which was taking back to Spain the

³³⁷ Martin Robinson, 1989, 7.

annual tribute from Spanish America.³³⁸ He returned home in 1744, an unexpected national hero, and a rich one to boot. Of the Spanish ship's cargo of treasure, worth £800,000, George was given three-eighths as his personal prize money.³³⁹

In the same year as he returned, George was elected an MP in the Hedon borough of Yorkshire, and swiftly promoted into the Board of Admiralty and then even further through the ranks, culminating in First Lord of the Admiralty, in 1751. In the meantime, he continued to win naval battles in the War of the Austrian Succession and Seven Years' War and was made 'Lord Anson' in 1747. He purchased his own estate at Moor Park in Hertfordshire, and in 1748, at the age of fifty-two, made an advantageous marriage to the twenty-two-year-old Lady Elizabeth Yorke, daughter of the 1st Earl of Hardwicke (1690-1764), the Lord Chancellor. Hardwicke was an ally of the Ansons' cousins, the Earls of Macclesfield, and similarly a self-made man from a legal background. Like George, and like the Ansons' grandfather, he bought his own country estate at Wimpole Hall in Cambridgeshire. George's connections with his father-in-law, and allies such as the Duke of Bedford at the Admiralty, put him at the heart of the Whig elite. He, like Thomas, joined the Royal Society, Divan Club, Dilettanti and Egyptian Society.³⁴⁰

The commonly accepted line of thought is that George, enriched by his voyage and still attached to the family seat, contributed greatly to the financing of his brother's refurbishments at Shugborough.³⁴¹ Baker notes the lack of surviving financial evidence for George's contribution, and insists Thomas paid for his first stage of refurbishment from Shugborough's agricultural income.³⁴² Even though there is no paper trail, it makes sense to see George's new wealth playing a role at Shugborough. It was only in the mid-1740s, after his windfall, that Thomas began the first stage of his work on the house. In fact, Cousins goes as far as to state that "the house, its contents and the park

³³⁸ For a comprehensive account of Anson's voyage around the world, see *The Prize of all Oceans*, by Glyndwr Williams, published in 1999.

³³⁹ Sambrook 1990, 8.

³⁴⁰ Finnegan, 2006, 41.

³⁴¹ Sambrook, 1990, 8.

³⁴² Baker, 2020, 123.

and ornaments are very much a memorial to George and his maritime accomplishments".³⁴³ This statement misleadingly erases Thomas' own preferences and designs, but evidence of the importance of George and Elizabeth does run through the Shugborough house and landscape.

Elizabeth, unlike many of the women in this thesis, can be given a voice. The silence of women who lived alongside antiquities in the country house is a recurrent problem, discussed in the introduction. At Houghton and Kedleston, the Walpole and Curzon women have been virtually invisible, and reconstructing the female experience when preservation of archival records has largely focused on male-dominated estate papers is difficult. Women's relationship with antiquities, where we can trace it, survives through letters and diaries, and Elizabeth was a prolific correspondent, witty and educated, her letters peppered with classical allusion and literary references. Lady Anson's letters are the best source for Shugborough between the mid-1740s and her death in 1760, although sadly, antiquities only began to decorate the house in any major way after her death. Her affection for the house is clear, and after one visit she writes to her brother-in-law:

*...you laugh at Eucharistic epistles my dear Mr Anson and if I am not able to write them, it is therefore certainly best not to attempt any: not but that I might endeavour to provide my taste by stringing together both the ancient and modern phrases that express beauty, and enjoyableness in a place and then how much I had enjoyed it (and do still in continual remembrance) by whatever can express ease and happiness in being there...*³⁴⁴

Furthermore, Elizabeth's letters to her sister-in-law, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797) , also help us track the development of Thomas's interior design and work in the parkland, noting, among other things, the elegant chinoiserie of her own dressing room at Shugborough, the progress to the gothic ruin, pigeon house and gardens.³⁴⁵ Her correspondence brings eighteenth-century Shugborough to life, and it is striking that Thomas preserved her letters when so many of his papers seem to have been destroyed.

³⁴³ Cousins, 2015, 34.

³⁴⁴ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(S)/1/3.

³⁴⁵ Bedfordshire Record Office, L30/9/3/13 & 24.

Elizabeth was also politically minded, as one would expect from the daughter of the Lord Chancellor, brought up at the heart of the political establishment. She writes to Thomas frequently of the developments abroad in the Seven Years War, in London within the Court and Parliament, and reminds him that he must exercise his powers as an MP and attend the House of Commons for such things as the Navy Bill.³⁴⁶ She teases Thomas about his fondness for Shugborough, saying in one instance:

*Mr Anson's obliging letter demands the quickest return of thanks: It was doubly acceptable first as it brought intelligence of his health and safe arrival at Shugborough, and neat as it convinced us that the pleasure of finding himself there has not entirely effaced from his mind the poor miserable people he left in London, which are almost wanted to be affronted of so insolently joyful did he appear at leaving us.*³⁴⁷

In 1760, Elizabeth Anson died unexpectedly, at the age of thirty-five. Two years later, George died, also suddenly. His last voyage, the previous year, had been bringing back Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1744-1818) to marry King George III, demonstrating his importance and prominence to the very end.³⁴⁸ We have no record, in writing, of Thomas's grief, for either death, but we do have his architectural and sculptural responses, primarily in the form of busts, two of which were elevated into a grand structure which dominates the Shugborough landscape.

4.3 Commemorating George and Elizabeth: The Arch of Hadrian

In 1763, Marchioness Grey wrote to a friend that she had been at Shugborough and seen "a most beautiful structure that has been long begun but will now I understand... ..be applied to a different purpose from what could be first intended".³⁴⁹ She was referring to a replica, in local sandstone, situated on a hill in the parkland, of the Arch of Hadrian at Athens. This commemorative gateway is thought to have been built on the occasion of a visit by the second-century emperor, Hadrian, to the city in the 130s AD. It had been

³⁴⁶ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(S)/1/3.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Martin Robinson, 1989, 17.

³⁴⁹ Bedfordshire Record Office, L/30/9a/8, 122-3.

engraved by two young architects-cum-artists, James Stuart (1713-1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720-1804), on their trip to Athens, which brought it great fame in England (see Figure 73, for the original, Figure 74 for the engraving and Figure 75 for the Shugborough version).

Before George and Elizabeth's deaths, Thomas had already begun to integrate James Stuart into his existing programme of works on the mansion at Shugborough. Anson had met him around 1756, when he and Revett had recently returned to London from Greece, where they had made numerous architectural drawings of ancient monuments, which they planned to publish. Thomas, George, and Elizabeth Anson were all subscribers to the publication, but *Antiquities of Athens and Other Monuments of Greece* did not appear until the year of George's death. At the time of Stuart's death its volumes remained unfinished, but it was to be hugely influential and play a key role in the passion for Greece during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, which would see Grecian classicism eclipse the passion for Rome. Stuart, working as an architect and designer after his return from Greece, was so influenced by the style that he was nicknamed 'Athenian Stuart'.

Stuart was to reconstruct several Athenian monuments for Thomas Anson in the Shugborough Parkland: the 'Temple of the Winds' (Figure 76, based upon a structure in the Athenian Agora), the 'Lantern of Demosthenes' (Figure 77, a famous circular monument in Athens for the city's 4th century BC Dionysia festival) and the Arch of Hadrian. The Arch had been begun before the deaths of George and Elizabeth, but their passing transformed the plans and gave the structure new meanings. The arch became a grandiose cenotaph, and its development spanned the whole decade. The progress is recorded in a series of letters from Stuart, to which sadly, we do not have Thomas's replies. Stuart updates Thomas regularly, noting in 1764 that "Scheemakers [Peter, the sculptor, 1691-1781] advises that the ornaments which I have designed for the pediment of the arch be cast in lead rather than in brass", and then, five years later, in 1769 Stuart reported that Scheemakers was making progress on the medallion reliefs.³⁵⁰ The

³⁵⁰ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(S)/1/6, letters 9 and 26.

arch and its décor were, therefore, a labour of love and a longstanding project, and bust portraiture stands at its centre.

In the original Grecian arch, the openings in the upper level, or attic, are now empty, and were so in Stuart's time, although they probably originally held sculptures. Into the central archway, Thomas had placed a naval trophy by Scheemakers, with captured armour displayed on a central 'pole' atop a circular plinth, adorned with ships' prows. Both the prows and armour are classicising, rather than contemporary eighteenth-century, evoking a Greco-Roman trophy (Figure 78). In the outer openings were placed two marble sarcophagi, the house-facing end of which is engraved with a name – 'George, Lord Anson' (Figure 79) and for the other, 'Elizabeth, Lady Anson'. On top of these, again facing the house they loved so much, are two busts of the deceased. Presumably these are also by Scheemakers. Continuing the classicising theme, George is without a wig, and bare-chested save for a bandolier and a piece of shoulder drapery. Elizabeth is in classical drapery, with her head covered like a Roman matron (Figure 80). The outdoor busts are in stark contrast to the two busts of the Anson couple within the house (Figures 81 and 82).³⁵¹ Elizabeth's is still draped, as was the eighteenth-century fashion, but her hair is stylishly coiffed in a contemporary arrangement. George wears a wig, and his dress is a shirt, cravat, and coat. The two 'indoor' busts are currently in the 'Bust Parlour', which once contained more portrait heads, but as they were not in the 1842 sale catalogue, which is arranged by room, we cannot know where they originally stood.

Returning to the arch in the park, there is arguably a final depiction of George and Elizabeth. The original ancient arch has no relief sculpture, but this was common on triumphal arches across the Roman empire, and on the spandrels, either side, is a medallion relief. On the left, as you face the arch, underneath George's side, is winged victory, Nike, with a miniature trophy, over a sea monster with a lion's head and fishtail. On the right, under Elizabeth, are Neptune and Minerva handing out naval

³⁵¹ These are currently attributed by the National Trust, to the sculptor Joseph Wilton (1722-1803) though Lees-Milne, 1967, 7, notes an attribution to Louis-Francois Roubiliac which seems unlikely unless the portraits were made whilst George and Elizabeth lived.

discipline (Figure 83). Arguably, with Thomas's regard for both, and his respect for Elizabeth intellectually and as his political correspondent, he has cast George as the god of the seas and Elizabeth as the goddess of wisdom.

The Triumphal Arch, as it is now simply known, dominates the Shugborough landscape and the historic approach to the house. The original Athenian arch was forty-four feet wide, whereas the Shugborough arch is only twenty-three feet wide.³⁵² Yet the Shugborough arch is significantly taller than the Athenian example. You can see the difference in shape in the figures, from wider and squat to tall and more elegant. The height is probably to give the arch greater visibility in the landscape. Thomas used classical architecture to great effect and the centrality of the memorial busts, with their pendant, modern versions inside the house, closer to its owner, is touchingly sentimental. They are, in perpetuity, gazing towards the place where they spent so much time, which Elizabeth wistfully reminisced about ("the good-natured lounging and pleasant sauntering up and down of Shugborough") in her absence, and the place where George was too happy to want to leave.³⁵³ It is also, however, a statement of power and importance, aggrandising the national hero who had raised the family's profile and wealth.

4.4 Commemorating Elizabeth: The Shepherd's Monument

George and Elizabeth's commemoration cannot be finished without a reference to the Shepherd's Monument (Figure 84), which provides another potential relief depiction of Lady Anson. Whilst reliefs are not within the scope of this thesis, I argue that the Shepherd's Monument is a central part of the scheme, along with the busts. The monument is a marble, classical altar scene, set within a rustic arch, itself set in a doric portico. The altar displays a relief version, by Scheemakers, of the famous Nicolas

³⁵² I am grateful to Gemma Robertson, House and Collections Manager at Shugborough for measuring the arch's base. Full measurements have never been taken, but the height goes above the Athenian arch's eighteen feet.

³⁵³ Bedfordshire Record Office, L30/9/3/66. Also, L30/9/3/14, where Elizabeth explains she would have joined Lady Grey sooner, but my Lord is so good to intend escorting me to Bath and I cannot think of persuading him to move when he is so happy here [at Shugborough].

Poussin (1594-1665) painting *Et in Arcadio Ego* (Figure 85) which references how, even in paradise, death can be found. The scene consists of shepherds and a shepherdess at a tomb. The monument has an inscribed tablet under the Poussin scene, which reads O.U.O.S.V.A.V.V with a D and M at either end, on the line below. It has been the subject of numerous conspiracy theories and has been mooted as either a cipher to find the Holy Grail or Admiral Anson's buried treasure. The only source worth citing on this is Eileen Harris's article of 2006, which neatly summarises the conspiracies and focuses instead on the materiality of the monument.³⁵⁴ The cipher remains undeciphered, but the D and M flanking it presumably refer to *Dis Manibus*, 'to the spirits of the departed' a traditional engraving convention on Roman tombstones.³⁵⁵ The funereal connotations are enhanced when we consider Elizabeth further. Frequently, her letters are in French, and she calls Thomas '*mon berger*' or '*mon gentil berger*', shepherd or kind shepherd. One of Elizabeth's prized possessions, as Harris notes, was her drawing by Poussin of his original composition for *et in arcadia ego*, and she is painted holding this in her portrait of circa 1751, by Thomas Hudson (1701-1779) (Figure 86).³⁵⁶ Hudson even painted another portrait of her dressed as a shepherdess (Figure 87). Lees-Milne saw the Shepherd's Monument as dedicated to Elizabeth, extolling her virtues.³⁵⁷

Craske also sees the Shepherd's Monument as a memorial, although he is rather mixed up, thinking Thomas to be Admiral Anson's son. He thinks the monument must be about the death of an un-named first love, whose demise explains why Thomas never married, and calls it "a highly complex expression of the idea of bereavement in privacy".³⁵⁸ Craske dates the structure to the early 1760s. The earliest note we have is a reference to a relief of *Et in Arcadia Ego* at Shugborough, in 1756, in a short poem sent to Thomas by local clergyman and author, Thomas Seward (1708-1790).³⁵⁹ But we have no reference to this structure's location and surrounding, or even if it is the same scene,

³⁵⁴ Harris, 2006, 26-31.

³⁵⁵ The letters between the D and M could be a similarly abbreviated memorial inscription to the deceased, but I would not wish to add to the speculation on their meaning.

³⁵⁶ Harris, 2006, 29.

³⁵⁷ Lees-Milne, 1967, 215.

³⁵⁸ Craske, 2007, 321.

³⁵⁹ Harris, 2006, 28.

so I would suggest Craske is not wrong, and that whilst the relief might have existed, its mounting in an altar and arch, and its mysterious inscription are likely additions to commemorate Elizabeth's death. The next we hear of it is in an anonymous poem of 1767, describing the Shugborough landscape:

*Observe you rising hillock's form,
Whose verdant top the spiry cypress crowns,
And the dim ilex spreads her dusky arms
To shade th'ARCADIAN Shepherdesses tomb
Of PARIAN stone the pile: of modern hands
The work, but emulous of ancient praise.
Let not the Muse inquisitive presume
With rash interpretation to disclose
The mystic cyphers that conceal her name.
Whate'er her country, or however call'd
Peace to her gentle shade...*³⁶⁰

This is clearly the Shepherd's Monument, with its cipher, and it is interesting to see it referred to explicitly as a Shepherdess's tomb. *Et in Arcadio ego* contains a Shepherdess and a tomb, but the tomb is not necessarily that of a Shepherdess. Nor is the Shepherd's Monument itself a space of burial. The tone of the poem, despite disavowing knowledge of the Shepherdess's name and origin, seems to be quite knowing, implying that the identity of this "gentle shade" was known, but was not to be spoken of.

³⁶⁰ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(S)/2/5.

4.5 The 1760s: Collecting and Change at Shugborough

It might seem odd to move from these images of bereavement to a discussion of general portrait collecting at Shugborough, but the two are linked. The childless Admiral left his elder brother his vast fortune, and Thomas, similarly childless and in his mid-sixties, set about spending it. At the same time as Stuart and Thomas were building their classical monuments, Thomas began buying luxury goods by correspondence with contacts abroad. These included orange trees, parmesan cheese and a pair of tame Corsican goats.³⁶¹ Paintings and furniture also formed a part of the shopping spree. Thomas had been working on Shugborough for some time, adding bits and pieces here and there, but the tone of his spending changes in the 1760s, as he inherits a vast fortune.

The goods and fashions on which he spent changed too. In the late 1740s, the décor of the hall seems to have been centred on George Anson's personal achievements.

Elizabeth wrote that a room with paintings, to commemorate her husband's naval career, was underway and "the Action off Cape Finisterre is already up and looks finely... ..the burning of Payta is to be over the Chimney and the actions between the Centurion [George's ship] and the Galleon and the Lyon and the Elizabeth [other ships of the fleet] of each side the door into the room you [her sister-in-law] dined in".³⁶² In addition, there was a strong preference for Chinoiserie. Thomas bought Chinese porcelain, which is still in the collection, and Elizabeth reported to Marchioness Grey that pretty wallpaper of oriental design had been put up in her dressing room at Shugborough.³⁶³ A Chinese House was erected, the first of the ornamental structures at Shugborough, completed around 1748. Oriental aspects probably owe their place to George's famous circumnavigation of the globe. In 1742 and 1743, he had spent several months in Canton (Guangzhou). Whilst his 'own' (perhaps co-authored) account of the expedition, *A Voyage Round the World*, was unremittingly scornful of Chinese bureaucratic systems and the people themselves, the fashion for chinoiserie at the time, and the novelty of George's having been to Canton, was a source of pride and inspiration

³⁶¹ Coltman, 2004, 45-6.

³⁶² Bedfordshire Record Office, L30/9/3/24.

³⁶³ Ibid., L30/9/3/24.

at Shugborough.³⁶⁴ Cousins suggests the Chinese House was a wedding present for George and Elizabeth, which seems likely, and at some stage in the 1750s, it was followed by the construction of a Chinese Pagoda.³⁶⁵

Only after George and Elizabeth's deaths, newly rich and newly bereft, did Thomas look to the visual language of classicism. Something about its austerity, tradition and funereal associations might well have appealed to him. His whole family dynamic had changed. Several letters from the 1760s give regards to Thomas 'and the ladies' at Shugborough, as well as hoping 'they' are in good health.³⁶⁶ Presumably this references unmarried Anson sisters (see the family tree). Anna (d. 1782) and Joanna (1699-1787) both outlived Thomas, and Elizabeth and Isabella may have been alive at this point too, but we have no reference to them after 1720. The spinsters are not mentioned in any earlier correspondence, and it may well be that in Thomas's older age (and their own), after the deaths of George and Elizabeth, they moved into the hall. Thomas still had an heir, of course. His only married sister, Janetta (1690-1771), had produced several children, including George Adams (1731-1789), the eventual heir. But earlier, given Lady Anson's youth, Thomas may well have thought he would be leaving his house to his brother's line, curating a house and landscape that glorified George's singular achievements, for George's descendants. With these plans thwarted, Thomas, the last of his male line, assembled an enormous collection of antiquities, a pseudo-dynasty around him, populating his precious paradise with precisely chosen sculpture.

We know a great deal about his sculpture from a series of letters. The correspondence with, among others, the sculptor Joseph Nollekens and John Dick (1721-1804), an English official in Leghorn (Livorno), allows us to build a picture of how these were selected and bought. The most crucial lesson from these letters is that Thomas was not the uninterested armchair collector, buying whatever can be got for him. John Dick's

³⁶⁴ McDowall, 2017, 19-20.

³⁶⁵ Cousins, 2015, 38.

³⁶⁶ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(A)/2.

letters demonstrate the importance of seeking Thomas's opinion on prospective purchases.

Dick often asks Thomas to comment on what he might like, sometimes from a range of options. In 1766, Dick notes a letter from the dealer Thomas Jenkins (c.1722-1798) offering multiple items, including "a busto or half figure of a dying Hercules", and requests that "if you like it you'd please to honour me with your commands about it".³⁶⁷ Dick also often sends catalogues of collections, such as the Pitti Gaddi and Lefroy sales, for Thomas to select from. Thomas's other main correspondent, the sculptor Joseph Nollekens (then in Rome), similarly seeks Thomas's approval for things, rather than simply sending. Nollekens offers "two very fine heads, something larger than the life to be sould [sic] representing Pompeo Magnus and Clodio Albinus two very good companions of prodigious fine sculpture the price for the two is four hundred crowns" and requests that Thomas reply if he should want them.³⁶⁸ These are both men of taste and knowledge, and their deference to Thomas is noteworthy. He is not a passive participant in the collecting process.

To please his patron John Dick was even willing to bring in expert advice, and he thus wrote, in 1767, to Johann Winckelmann (1717-1768), the revered antiquarian, who was influential both in his lifetime and today.³⁶⁹ The letter, which survives in copy form in the Staffordshire Record Office, thanks Winckelmann for his input over a prospective purchase of a Venus. Dick notes that Winckelmann's detailed description and notes to go with the sculpture only increase the statue's merits and "will instruct" (*instrurira*) those who will view it. Furthermore, in his letter, Winckelmann has apparently addressed "*toutes les objections et les critiques qu'on pourrait faire*" – all the objections and criticisms we might make [of the Venus].³⁷⁰ The 'we' seems to indicate Dick himself, Anson, and the viewers back at Shugborough. It may well be that this Venus was linked

³⁶⁷ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(A)/2, November 1766.

³⁶⁸ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(S)/1/6, letter 3.

³⁶⁹ See Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity*, 2006. See also *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (Potts, 2000) and *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity: History and Aesthetics in the Age of Altertumwissenschaft* (Harloe, 2013) for biography and influence.

³⁷⁰ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(A)/2, September 1767.

to the collection of Cardinal Albani, Winckelmann's employer, hence the venerable scholar's involvement. Nonetheless, Dick seeking expert advice on behalf of his patron, to ensure the quality of the items purchased, is a marked indication of the care with which the Anson marbles were assembled.

The archival letters are peppered with references to busts and heads, most now lost through the 1842 sale. For example, when buying wholesale the collection of a bankrupt merchant in Italy, Antony Lefroy (d.1779), it seems to have arrived without a Julius Caesar, and Anson appears to have complained of this to John Dick, the middleman. Dick replied that "I have been with Mr Lefroy to show him the list which you return'd me of the marbles in order to convince him that the busto of Julius Caesar was included in it", but finds that Lefroy declares it was not his intention to include this particular item, and the sixteen busts were all that he included and these have been shipped.³⁷¹

Dick helped procure neoclassical versions, as well as antiquities. In 1766, he wrote to Anson; "in the mean while [I] take the liberty to enclose a bill of loading for a case marked TA no. 2 containing a scagliola cast of which I beg your acceptance of a very fine busto of Seneca which I have had many years and which perhaps you may have seen in the Palazzo Doni at Florence, there are several casts of it in England which were taken before I added the busto in the form of a herm to the head".³⁷² The Palazzo Doni collection is poorly recorded, so what this bust looked like we do not know, but like much of the Anson collection, this is a tantalising reference, showing the quality Thomas was able to draw upon, through his connections.

Aside from the letters, our evidence for portrait sculpture derives from a poem about Shugborough from 1767 in the Staffordshire Record Office. It has been attributed to Anna Seward (1742-1809), the romantic poet known as the 'Swan of Lichfield', although the attribution seems to be based on very little.³⁷³ Whoever wrote the (lengthy) poem, it is rife with classical references, including multiple references to Elysium and the dead,

³⁷¹ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(A)/2.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, D615/P(A)/2. Italics my own.

³⁷³ Baker, 2020, 157.

such as “peaceful shades” and “ravish’d souls of righteous men”.³⁷⁴ There is also ample reference to antique sculpture. For example, one stanza reads:

Nor to these proud arcades alone confined
The works of ancient art; behold the lawn,
With circling woods surrounded, skirted wide
With many a Term, & many a laurel’d bust,
Poet or Caesar; many a swelling urn,
Etruscan wrought, emboss’d with high relief,
*Of various argument.*³⁷⁵

This would seem to imply that there were busts in the garden about which we do not know more. The ‘proud arcades’ to which the author is referring, to which portraits are not confined, is the greenhouse. This was an Athenian Stuart project, torn down in the nineteenth century, and designed to hold some of the sculpture collection.³⁷⁶ We do not know what went in there, and what was kept in the house.

The author refers to:

...where the stately colonnade extends
It’s pillar’d length: to shade the sculptured forms
Of Demigods or Heroes, & protect
From the cold northern blast each tenderer plant,
*The fragrant progeny of milder climes.*³⁷⁷

And, within this structure, “while we breathe perfume, the ravish’d eye, surveys the miracles of Grecian art”. The author enumerates some gods and muses (Adonis, Jupiter,

³⁷⁴ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(S)/2/5.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Cousins, 2015, 51-2.

³⁷⁷ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(S)/2/5.

Melpomene), giving no idea of the scale of these sculptures, or indeed the source of their names, and finally comes to a historical figure:

But what that Hero form, whose gloomy brow

Contracted, speaks the workings of his soul?

Eager his looks & piercing, but with care

Emaciate his sunk cheek: The Dagger marks

Th'Assertor of Rome's liberties in vain

*Cassius the last of Romans.*³⁷⁸

I suspect this is an error and refers, more correctly, to Brutus, Cassius's co-conspirator against Julius Caesar, as in July 1765, Joseph Nollekens reported he was shipping a bust of Brutus which had cost £25, one of the most expensive prices recorded for a bust in the Anson archival papers.³⁷⁹ We can posit, therefore, that at least one bust was in the greenhouse.

4.6 The Unknown Man – Thomas Anson?

One final bust, which remains in the collection, must be mentioned. Whilst the National Trust still officially calls it an unknown man, there has been recent speculation, primarily by Andrew Baker, that it depicts Thomas.³⁸⁰ Baker's assertion is based primarily on evidence of a death mask having been made from Thomas's body, and comparison to the one portrait we have of him, as a younger man (Figures 88 and 89 for the bust and the painted portrait).³⁸¹ In the current exhibition at Shugborough, focused on the Anson brothers, the bust is given centre-stage in the biographical display on Thomas. There is an exact copy of the bust at Sudbury Hall in Derbyshire (Figure 90). This was the home of the Vernon family, whose daughter Mary (1739-1843) married

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P(S)/1/6 – Letter 1.

³⁸⁰ Baker, 2020, 289.

³⁸¹ Even this attribution is not entirely certain but has generally been accepted and the image is used by the National Trust. That Thomas is depicted in a turban may well be a nod to his eastern travels. The portrait was once thought to be George Anson.

Thomas's nephew and heir, George. Mary was to become the lady of Shugborough and her parents received mourning rings on Thomas's death so, as Baker notes, it would not be the most surprising location to find a bust of Mr Anson.³⁸²

The bust in question depicts an elderly man, careworn, with a long nose, tilted slightly to the right at its tip (as in the painted portrait). His hair is short, lips slightly parted, and details of the eyes are incised. The lack of a wig is presumably one of the reasons Baker thinks it was made from a death mask, as well as the nude shoulders of the bust, but I disagree. The bust fits into a particular aesthetic, exemplified by, among others, the famous busts of Lord Chesterfield and Alexander Pope, by Louis-Francois Roubiliac (Figures 91 and 92). Whoever this man is, like Pope and Chesterfield, he has consciously chosen a veristic, grizzled mode of representation, evocative of the Roman republican era.³⁸³ It is not a death mask, it is a mode of representation. It would be interesting to consider the dating of this bust. Perhaps it was commissioned around the same time as those of George and Elizabeth, now in the Bust Parlour. Lord Anson, bewigged and frock-coated, and Elizabeth, fashionably draped, are frozen in their prime (arguably George, who died at sixty-five has been flatteringly restored to his prime by Wilton), whereas Thomas creeps alone towards old age, depicted as one of his new, growing, gallery of busts. The National Trust would do well to put Thomas back with his beloved family members. Shugborough, and even its owner's own bust, cannot be properly understood when viewed in isolation.

4.7 Conclusions: Shugborough

In August 1842, the contents of the hall were sold in a fourteen-day sale, to assist with the vast debts run up by his great-great nephew, another Thomas, 1st Earl of Lichfield (1795 – 1854).³⁸⁴ Pamela Sambrook has demonstrated how the Earl raised mortgages, as well as running up gaming debts and entertaining too lavishly, to purchase more land

³⁸² Baker, 2020, 290.

³⁸³ A full discussion of this mode of bust is covered in Malcolm Baker's *Fame and Friendship: Pope, Roubiliac and the Portrait Bust* (2014).

³⁸⁴ Staffordshire Record Office, D615/EH/13.

and maintain the lifestyle of an aristocrat among the Whig high society in which he mixed.³⁸⁵ His mother was one of the daughters of Thomas Coke of Holkham, whose house we shall explore in Chapter 6, and there were certainly high standards of spending, on electioneering, shooting and other pursuits in Coke's circle.³⁸⁶ The Earl's debts were too huge to be dealt with purely by the sale, and at his death the mortgage burden was £600,000, and at the close of the nineteenth century, despite the efforts of his successors, still stood at £300,000.³⁸⁷

Three days were devoted to the library, one to the cellar, one to the marbles (the eighth day of the sale) and the rest divided between paintings and furniture. The catalogue of this sale is a major source for the antiquities, demonstrating the sheer number of sculptures Anson possessed (we have no record of Thomas's successors adding significantly to the collection), and the rooms they were in during the nineteenth century. It is likely, however, that the cataloguers were not specialists in antiquities, or perhaps that the family had no existing inventory with names, as a striking number of the sculptures are listed as "Roman lady", "Roman warrior" or other generic titles. The locations are also intriguing, but not necessarily reflections of how they were disposed in Thomas's time. For instance, the library, traditionally used for busts of learned poets, statesmen and philosophers in the country house, contained very different subject matter at Shugborough. Some of the (later, English) usual suspects are present – Shakespeare and Locke, sculpted by Roubiliac, who died in 1762, placing his works squarely in Thomas's lifetime. Homer, Demosthenes and Marc Antony, all also by Roubiliac and transferred to the Entrance Hall by 1842, may well have originally been in the library with their companions. Instead, two Roman ladies and four children (three described as young boys, one just as a child) were present in the library, a more familial and gender/age-diverse arrangement than is usually seen in libraries. We have no way

³⁸⁵ Sambrook, 1990, 328

³⁸⁶ From the catalogue we can see the 1st Earl added to his library busts of the 5th Duke of Bedford and Charles James Fox, both of whom we will return to in future chapters and who were part of this Whig set. Busts of Bedford (who died young) and the charismatic political leader Fox are common in Whig houses during the nineteenth century. Fox was similarly a heavy gambler with enormous debts.

³⁸⁷ Sambrook, 1990, 16.

of knowing whether this was related to the large families of Thomas's successors, who repurposed the existing collection for more sentimental configurations, or whether Thomas was displaying women and children together, either in the library or other rooms.³⁸⁸

The removal of much of Thomas Anson's collection has obscured the importance and richness of Shugborough in the eighteenth century. When the house and park are considered alongside their history (albeit just one particularly successful generation) and with its former contents, what emerges is a fascinating and rich mixture of classicism, chinoiserie and the idyllic English countryside. The traveller Thomas Pennant (1795 – 1854), in his *Journey from Chester to London*, rightly described it as “this Elysium... frequently the house of happiness...”.³⁸⁹ Elysium was, however, also where the virtuous dead went, in classical mythology, and Pennant's summation is doubly appropriate, given the theme of death and commemoration which runs throughout the hall's décor.

Thomas Anson and his paradise have both been long overlooked and are happily now receiving further attention from scholars and tourists alike. This chapter has aimed to supplement the emerging picture of the enigmatic, discerning and worldly Mr Anson, “a mind most uncommonly cultivated”, by focusing on merely one type of object, the bust portrait.³⁹⁰ He accumulated a distinguished roster of Romans (and Greeks) to populate and supplement a family tree which had neither distinguished ancestors, nor, at that stage, many descendants, enhancing his cultivated, classical landscape by filling his house with sculpture. Most strikingly of all, he used the medium of busts for a grandiose and touching memorial to his loved ones. In much the same way, the next chapter will address Henry Hoare of Stourhead's memorialisation of his family members through portrait sculpture.

³⁸⁸ The massing of women and young children, as well as adolescent boys, seen on a smaller scale in Chapter 3, for a pseudo-dynastic theme will recur in a later chapter on Petworth House.

³⁸⁹ Pennant, 1783, 90 & 92.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 91.

Chapter 5: Stourhead

Whilst I have argued that Shugborough is under-examined, and an underrated ‘gem’ of country house collecting and design, the same relative obscurity can scarcely be applied to its partner in this section, Stourhead in Wiltshire. It is one of the most famous country houses in England, (Figure 93), almost entirely because of its grounds which have been an incredibly popular tourist attraction since their inception.

Stourhead’s landscape garden is composed of a twenty-seven-acre valley, around a manmade lake, a short distance from the house. The building itself has usually formed a marginal part in studies of the estate, if mentioned at all. The follies, structures and features around the lake formed a central ‘route’ taken by the many tourists who have visited from the eighteenth century to the present day, although the route is complemented by some outlying structures several miles away, including Alfred’s Tower, to which we will turn later. Just as Anson and his family emphasised Shugborough as ‘elysium’, the Stourhead landscape was praised as a paradise almost from the moment of its creation. The anonymous 1780 poem *A Ride and Walk through Stourhead* begins:

Stourhead I sing. My subject me inspire.

No fabled God or Goddess I invoke

For feeble Aid. Nought but my Theme itself

Can by its Inspiration me conduct

Through an assemblage of such endless Beauties

*As Hoare himself alone could bid arise.*³⁹¹

Stourhead was so influential that it had an international reach. Prince Leopold III Anhalt-Dessau (1740 – 1817), created his own English garden at Worlitz, inspired by Stourhead, and Gustav III of Sweden (1746–1792) sent the landscape architect

³⁹¹ Anon, 1780, 1.

Frederick Magnus Piper (1746–1824) to draw the premier gardens of England, including Stourhead, so they could be recreated in his own landscape.³⁹² Modern scholars have been scarcely less rapturous. Philip Ayres, singled out Stourhead, along with Stowe (see Chapter 1), as the two locations in the country “where the classical spirit infuses the landscape most impressively”.³⁹³ Hyams called it “the one total and authoritative masterwork” of English landscape gardening still in existence.³⁹⁴ To Olin, it is a “masterpiece of garden design” and to Dixon-Hunt “an iconic, even canonical garden of the later eighteenth century in England”.³⁹⁵

The gardens have been studied extensively, and scholars of Stourhead have pored over the meanings of the expansive landscape. Art historians, garden historians, artists and writers over the last fifty years have fought over whether the *Aeneid*, the myth of the Choice of Hercules, or some other hybrid gothic-cum-classical programmatic statement, is being made. Whilst we shall explore the main arguments, in order to understand fully existing scholarship, this chapter does not aim to suggest that these theories are mutually exclusive. It seeks, rather to point out that in the most famous landscape garden in England, portrait sculpture plays a subtle role, and death, memorials and the thwarted succession of a family dynasty are never far from the surface. ‘Magnificent’ Henry Hoare (1705-1785), known thus amongst his family due to his collecting and building activity at Stourhead, used portrait sculpture for the veneration of female virtue and the hopes for the marriages and families of his daughters. After their deaths, their quasi-religious commemoration took on new dimensions. The deaths of his sons are, I will argue, implicit in a further temple to young masculinity.

Before we can assess the portraits of Stourhead, or how they came to be there, it is important to understand the situation of the family on whom it all centres, the Hoares (see Figure 94 for a partial family tree). Their position as ‘new money’ and their relationship to business shapes their narrative as much as the family losses to which we

³⁹² Stobart, 2017, 47-49.

³⁹³ Ayres, 1997, 107.

³⁹⁴ Hyams, 1964, 48.

³⁹⁵ Olin, 1999, 262. Dixon-Hunt, 2006, 328.

will turn. Four men of the Hoare family are here discussed, three briefly, and one in depth. The scene is set by the immensely successful, self-made goldsmith turned banker, Sir Richard Hoare (1648-1719), who built up the Hoare's family money, and his son, Henry Hoare (1677–1725), known to his family as 'Good Henry', who purchased the land at Stourhead and built the house. Much of this chapter is concerned with Henry's own son, Henry 'the Magnificent'. We finish with a postscript on changes made by Henry's heir and grandson, Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758-1838), as these were also motivated by themes of loss and grief, and were fundamental in how we see Stourhead's portrait busts today.

5.1 Hoare's Bank

Hoare's Bank is still in business today, and remains in the hands of the Hoare family, albeit not the branch of Magnificent Henry. It started life as a goldsmithing firm, in a time before the modern concept of banking truly existed. The system of borrowing credit against plate and other valuable assets was, in fact, pioneered by early bankers like Sir Richard Hoare.³⁹⁶ He was the son of a successful horse dealer, and was, as a young man, apprenticed to a goldsmith.³⁹⁷ On his master's death, Richard bought the business from the widow, in 1673, using as capital the dowry from his marriage to Susannah Austen, daughter of another goldsmith.³⁹⁸

It was shrewd alliances and business deals like these, which allowed Richard to rise in society. His goldsmithing business moved to the Sign of the Golden Bottle in Fleet Street and began to attract customers from the aristocracy, who deposited plate in the vaults of the bank against which to borrow, and also commissioned plate from Richard.³⁹⁹

Richard's business acumen and wealth grew, and he expanded into diamond dealing. In the 1680s, he was one of the highest bidders in the market and spent nearly £4,000 on diamonds at the auctions of the East India Company.⁴⁰⁰ Richard's prestige grew

³⁹⁶ Temin & Voth, 2010, 81.

³⁹⁷ Woodbridge, 1970, 11.

³⁹⁸ Hutchings, 2005, 9.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 21.

throughout his life, and he was even asked to lend plate from his vaults for the 1702 coronation of Queen Anne. He was eventually elected as an MP for the City of London in 1710, and again in 1713.⁴⁰¹

Richard was elected as a Tory MP, and his loyalty to the Court and Church as the supreme authorities in England was a key part of his identity. He did not, however, allow political allegiances to compromise business. Thomas Wharton (1648 –1715), who was later elevated to the peerage as the Marquess of Wharton and Malmesbury and acknowledged as one of the most powerful Whig leaders in England, kept an account at the Golden Bottle from 1695 until his death in 1715. Another opposition customer was John Dolben (1662 –1710), who called Richard ‘a damned Tory’ but also said he had the fairest character of anyone in his profession.⁴⁰²

Richard was concerned for the advancement of his family, just as his father, the horse dealer, had been eager to put his son into a more respectable profession. Richard’s many sons were apprenticed to businessmen abroad, in France, the Netherlands or Italy. Yet thirteen of his children died, and at the time of his death, in 1719, only four remained: his daughters, Mary (d.1761) and Jane (b.1690), and two sons, Henry and Benjamin (d.1750).

5.2 Good Henry & The Building of Stourhead

It is Henry to whom the narrative now turns, as the purchaser of Stourhead, who set in motion the creation of the magnificent estate, which was completed by his son. His contribution forms an essential part of the family’s story, but a brief one, as he was not a collector in the same manner as his son and great-grandson. For ease of reference, henceforth, the first and elder Henry, son of Sir Richard, will be referred to by his family moniker, Good Henry, and his son, Magnificent Henry, simply as Henry.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 17, 27.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 28.

Good Henry's family nickname comes from his pious, charitable leanings throughout his life. As a Tory family, the Hoares supported the authority of the Church "as the driving force for moral reform and political stability".⁴⁰³ Throughout his life, Good Henry donated to religious causes and in his will left £2,000 for the foundation of the Henry Hoare Bible Fund. His will also contained donations to the causes he had supported for decades, including Christ's Hospital, St Bartholomew's Hospital, Bridewell, Bethlem Hospital, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Society of the Reformation of Manners and the Corporation of Clergymen's Sons.⁴⁰⁴ The list is stereotypically Tory for its time.

Despite his pious nature, Good Henry was a shrewd businessman. He was Sir Richard's second son, but the elder of the two who survived, and a partner in Hoare's Bank. He and his brother, Benjamin, were among the few private banks to survive the South Sea Bubble (see Chapter 1). The crash was devastating for the nascent banking industry but, unlike many of their peers, the Hoares made a profit of close to £28,000 from it.⁴⁰⁵ They had bought stock early, and sold at the right moment, as well as loaning to other speculators for the bubble, a profitable venture in itself.⁴⁰⁶ The brothers strengthened their father's bank and its connections to the nobility, and their wealth and fortune tipped the family 'balance' so to speak. Whereas Richard was keen for his own sons to be educated in business and commerce abroad, preparing them for a career, Good Henry and Benjamin would raise their own sons as gentlemen. The new money of the Hoares was ready to assimilate with the old money of their clients.

Good Henry married Jane Benson (d.1741), sister of the architect and merchant Sir William Benson (1682 –1754), who was himself a Whig, and looked to establish a comfortable family home for their new family away from Fleet Street. Crucially, the residence would also be the major tool of his social advancement.⁴⁰⁷ Good Henry's purchase of the Stourton estate in 1717 was part of a trend in the early eighteenth

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 47.

⁴⁰⁶ Temin & Voth, 2010, 99.

⁴⁰⁷ His younger brother, Benjamin, also purchased his own country estate.

century, wherein ‘new men’ with self-made fortunes, or of the first generation removed from the self-made fortune, were buying and renovating, or else constructing, country mansions. Good Henry was part of a group which, Saumarez-Smith notes, also included John Morse (d.1739), another London banker, who built Woodperry House in Oxfordshire. John Lade (1662-1740), a prosperous brewer and Director of the South Sea Company who built Cralle Place in Sussex, and Sir Gregory Page (c.1669-1720), who inherited a vast trade fortune from his father and built Wricklemarsh in Blackheath.⁴⁰⁸ Stourton estate cost Good Henry £23,000. Colen Campbell was commissioned, and in 1721, work began on the building. Good Henry was not, however, long to enjoy his new mansion. In 1724, he died, leaving Stourhead, as it was now called (for the ‘head’ of the Stour river) to his eldest son, with remainder for his widow, Jane, to live there until her death.

5.3 Magnificent Henry

‘Henry the Magnificent’ (from this point on referred to simply as ‘Henry’) was educated at Westminster School, before joining the bank as a Partner. He married, first, Anne Masham (d.1727), daughter of Abigail Masham (1670–1734), who as Queen Anne’s favourite and Keeper of the Privy Purse, had brought the Crown’s account to Hoare’s Bank. Ann died in childbirth, and both their children died young, the first in a long line of personal losses which appear to have had a profound effect on Henry. He married next Susan Colt (d. 1743), sole heiress to her father’s East India Company fortune.⁴⁰⁹ Henry also served as a (Tory) MP for Salisbury between 1734 and 1741.

During his tenure in office, Henry found time to undertake a relatively late Grand Tour to the continent (he was in his thirties by then), about which we know frustratingly little. His tour lasted between 1739 and 1741.⁴¹⁰ Henry also began to buy art for his future estate, during his tour. A fine ebony and gilt cabinet, once owned by Pope Sixtus

⁴⁰⁸ Saumarez-Smith, 1993, 75.

⁴⁰⁹ There appears to be some confusion about Susan’s name, with some sources naming her as ‘Sarah’. Her headstone, however, reads ‘Susan’ and this would also explain their daughter being named ‘Susanna’.

⁴¹⁰ Harrison, 2018, 36.

V (1521-1590), described as “one of the most magnificent and elaborate items of furniture in the National Trust’s collections”, and a painting by Anton Mengs (1728-1779) of Octavian and Cleopatra, both of which the nineteenth-century house guidebooks dwell on at length were, perhaps, his star purchases from the Continent.⁴¹¹

His return to England coincided with his mother’s death, and he and Susan, moved into Stourhead with their three remaining children. Two of their children had already died by this point, and Susan was to die only two years later (see Table 1). It was after her death that her widower began to work on the gardens at Stourhead and, as Olin says, “death was never far from his thoughts”.⁴¹²

Date	Bereavement
1727	Death in childbirth of his first wife, Anne
1729	Death of Henry, his first son with Susan, shortly after his birth
1735	Death of his daughter with Anne
1740	Death of one of his sons, Colt
1741	Death of his mother, Jane
1743	Death of his second wife, Susan
1752	Death of his eldest son, Henry
1759	Death of ‘Nanny’, his daughter
1783	Death of ‘Sukey’, his daughter

Table 1: A Summary of Henry Hoare's Close Family Bereavements

5.4 The Landscape of Stourhead

Whilst this chapter aims to widen the scholarly appreciation of Stourhead beyond the debate about its landscape features, it is impossible to fully understand the Hoares, their home, and the portraits, without considering the formation and interpretation of

⁴¹¹<http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/731575>. The 1800 guidebook is the earliest guide to the house and collection, and says very little about sculpture, but dissects the Mengs painting and Papal Cabinet in detail.

⁴¹² Olin, 1999, 261.

the garden. I draw, here, on existing studies, notably Kenneth Woodbridge's *Landscape and Antiquity* (1970), which has become the handbook for Stourhead and the orthodox viewpoint on its interpretation. Much of this discussion takes us away from the direct materiality, particularly in respect of portrait sculpture. Yet, as we return to the chronology of Henry's life, and the losses of his children, understanding the potential influences and the timeline of construction is essential.

To give a brief picture of the garden, see Figures 95, 96 and 97 for the plans taken from Woodbridge, Gloria Shaw Dulcos and Paulson respectively. All show the main features of the landscape.⁴¹³ The lake, around which everything centres, is roughly triangular, and on its banks are dotted a variety of temples, follies, and grottoes, including the Temple of Flora, the Grotto, the Temple of Apollo, and the Pantheon. Many of these were designed by Henry Flitcroft (1697–1769), who was introduced to Henry through his uncle, William Benson. The rough timeline for Flitcroft's structures and all other known man-made features is outlined in Table 2.⁴¹⁴

Feature	Rough date when construction began
Creation of the artificial lake	1744
The Grotto (in stages) and Temple of the Nymph	1744 – 1776
The Temple of Ceres	1745
The Temple on the Terrace	1745?
The Chinese Alcove & Chinese Umbrella	1749?
The Pantheon	1753 – 1754

⁴¹³ It is worth noting that only the main structures related to the arguments of each author are featured. This is an example of the frustrating tendency of Stourhead scholars to ignore and omit buildings and landscape features which do not 'fit' with their thesis.

⁴¹⁴ The table is adapted from the chronology of Dufau, Harrison, Magleby and several others. No complete chronology exists for all features, as scholars such as Dufau and Kenneth Woodbridge have left out the features not considered important to their interpretations of the gardens, and scholars such as Magleby have worked to expand the overwhelmingly classicising reading by focusing on a smaller number of elements such as orientalism at Stourhead. Harrison comes closest to an overall synthesis and his detailed exploration of previous ignored garden features has been invaluable for this study.

The Turkish Tent	1754 – 1768
The Temple of Apollo	1757 – 1765
Palladian Bridge	1762
The Bristol Cross	1765
St Peter's Pump	1766
Gothic Greenhouse	1766 – 1784
The Convent	1770
Alfred's Tower	1770 – 1772
The Hermitage	1771

Table 2: Timeline of Stourhead Garden Structures.

The most famed parts of the garden were arguably, The Pantheon, Temple of the Nymph/Grotto and Temple of Apollo. These do not contain portraiture, but for context, as the main locations focused on by scholars, need some short elaboration. The Temple of the Nymph and the Grotto are two interconnected chambers, in artificially created caves by the lakeside, one with the statue of a male River God, and the other with a copy commissioned by Henry from John Cheere, of the famous sculpture in the Vatican, known as Sleeping Ariadne/Cleopatra, interpreted here as a nymph, and accompanied by an inscription from Alexander Pope's translation of the fifteenth-century Latin poem *Hujus nympha loci*.

The Temple of Apollo is a small round temple, atop a hill, designed by Henry Flitcroft, into which Henry's copy of the Belvedere Apollo, previously freestanding in the gardens, was moved. It is inspired by architectural drawings in the *Ruins of Palmyra Baalbek*, a series of volumes of architectural drawings published during the 1750s. Finally, The Pantheon, also known as the Temple of Hercules, is a reduced-size copy of the Pantheon in Rome. It was also designed by Flitcroft, for which Henry commissioned Rysbrack's *Hercules*, which was joined by a number of other sculptural copies from famous Roman collections, modelled by John Cheere. These included Isis, Saint Susanna, the Farnese Flora, by Rysbrack rather than Cheere, and eventually the ancient Livia-Ceres which originally stood in the Temple of Ceres.

These locations, and some of the others in the table above, are mentioned later, but the presentation together of these three buildings, as the centre of a cohesive programmatic statement, has been the defining issue of Stourhead scholarship. The classical overarching programme scholars ‘see’ at Stourhead in fact ignores several structures which have been demolished, and even some of the ones still standing which are non-classical, such as the Convent and Alfred’s Tower.

Kenneth Woodbridge first began the debate about what Stourhead ‘means’ in the 1970s and, in fact, between the time of Magnificent Henry and his work, the gardens had received little scholarly attention, although frequent touristic raptures. Woodbridge identifies the garden with key parallels and features from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, in a sweeping, programmatic system. To summarise his extensive argument, there are ‘pillars’ of particular importance. Firstly, he cited visual similarities between the famous *Coastal View of Delos with Aeneas*, by Claude Lorrain (1600-1682, painting from 1672 and now in The National Gallery), and the main vista encountered in the garden.⁴¹⁵ Hoare never owned a version of this painting, but was an admirer of Lorrain, and owned several other works by the artist. The second and third pillars draw on two quotations from the *Aeneid*, which we will address later in the chapter.

Woodbridge makes no mention of oriental features or the Temple on the Terrace, which we will turn to later. Woodbridge’s search for an overarching ideology at Stourhead, prompted those that followed to try to see every garden element (that they chose to include) as part of the same overall meaning. Dixon-Hunt cites “the undefended assumption by both literary and art critics that Stourhead is to be grasped ‘as a whole’”, despite the evolutionary nature of a garden”.⁴¹⁶

The first major challenge to Woodbridge was by James Turner, in 1979, who picked apart Woodbridge’s reasoning and cited the lack of Aenean references in travel literature of the time. After all, what would be the point of a programmatic Virgilian statement, if none of your educated, polite visitors perceived it? Turner noted the

⁴¹⁵ Namely the view across the lake with the Pantheon, Temple of Ceres, and arched bridge

⁴¹⁶ Dixon-Hunt, 2006, 330.

chronological progression of Henry Hoare's garden over a period of forty years, and the number of changes and modifications the plans underwent.⁴¹⁷ He concludes with the suggestion that Hoare built a haven of patriotism, peace, and virtue, centred on his contemporary political situation. Malcolm Kelsall's interpretation of the garden in the 1980s, built on Turner's examination of the *Aeneid's* apparent invisibility to tourists, but is more mixed, blending classical, gothic, and Christian iconography.⁴¹⁸ Kelsall drew attention to the Choice of Hercules, a renaissance fable of Hercules' choice between Vice and Virtue. The two were personified as beautiful women, and the inspiration was drawn from the ancient Athenian statesman-cum-philosopher Xenophon's selection of dialogues, entitled *Memorabilia*. Kelsall's insertion of this into the Stourhead narrative then inspired the arguments of Michael Charlesworth, who saw the whole garden as an extended metaphor for this choice.⁴¹⁹ Henry did in fact own a painting of this story, by Poussin, bought from the posthumous sale of the Duke of Chandos (d.1771), and Charlesworth's integration of points of choice and Herculean themes in the gardens has much to recommend it. It does, however, fall into the same trap as its predecessors, in trying to force a dominant theme to the exclusion of other elements. This is a necessarily brief summary of complex, academic arguments over decades, which are ongoing.

The important point from this survey of scholarship is that Woodbridge's Aenean programme has often been accepted as the 'canon' of the house. Writers such as Laurie Olin state it as if incontrovertible fact in their discussion of the garden, despite no confirmation of an Aenean scheme, by Hoare or any of the garden's visitors.⁴²⁰ Other interpretations, such as Charlesworth's Herculean model, are attempts to revise the standard narrative and say something new. As Oliver Cox has put it, "the implicit motivation behind scholarly work on Stourhead has been the desire to discover original meanings – the intentions and intellectual hinterland that inspired Hoare to create, modify and expand the landscape over a forty-year period".⁴²¹ This chapter does not seek

⁴¹⁷ See Turner, 1979.

⁴¹⁸ Kelsall, 183, 133-143.

⁴¹⁹ Charlesworth, 1989 & 2003.

⁴²⁰ "The steep stairs refer to Aeneas's descent into the Underworld". Olin, 1999, 268.

⁴²¹ Cox, 2012, 102.

to ‘resolve’ the Stourhead debate, rather to supplement it, and challenge some of the debate’s omissions. Elements of existing arguments are drawn upon here to support the interpretation of a specific feature, the role of portraiture.

5.5 The Temple of Ceres

The Temple of Ceres is the first point where the visitor encounters portraiture in the garden, both on the usual route of perambulation from the house and when considering the gardens chronologically.⁴²² The sculpted women who populate(d) it have been largely dismissed as decoration, and I hope to rehabilitate their importance as ciphers for Henry’s own family, which at first expressed dynastic hopes and affection, and came to act as a space for the veneration of his deceased daughters, in a manner similar to the deification of Roman empresses.

The building is a tetrastyle Doric temple, constructed between 1744 and 1746, by Henry Flitcroft, predates even the artificial lake. It bears one of the aforementioned inscriptions from the *Aeneid*, and it warns the ‘profane’ to stay away. *Procul, o procul este profani*, from the sixth book, is carved above the door of the Temple of Ceres.⁴²³ In Virgil’s poem it is shouted by the Sibyl, a seer, at spirits of the deceased as the hero descends to the Underworld. This warning to the profane to be gone need not, we might note, necessarily evoke its Aenean context. Rather, it can be the borrowing and repurposing of a classical sentiment. The borrowing of a grand sentiment from classical epic is much the same as modern uses of ‘Trojan Horse’, *carpe diem*, ‘beware Greeks bearing gifts’, and many other borrowings. In fact, the quote appears in translation in George Herbert’s (d.1633) *The Temple* (1633) as part of an inscription above the doors to a Church. It appears in the original Latin, with no Aenean reference, as the inscription above the *Sanctum Sanctorum* in the satirical *Rolliad* of 1784, and was used in passing to dismiss the unsanctified or unworthy in such publications as *The*

⁴²² Scholars have suggested that the garden’s usual route began at this temple, but Magleby has noted that once again this is a result of the erasure of the now lost oriental features, and it was in fact the Turkish Tent which was the ‘recommended gateway’ to the lakeside circuit. Magleby, 2009, 6.

⁴²³ Virgil, *Aeneid*, line 258.

New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal (1822) and *The Contemporary Review* (1899).⁴²⁴ Perhaps the grandest allusion of the quotation is the inscription *Procul Este Profani* above the entrance to the Cortile Delle Statue at the Vatican, the original genesis of the Vatican Museums where masterpieces such as the Laocoon were kept.⁴²⁵ I would suggest this is a more likely allusion than Virgil.

Woodbridge's third pillar is a letter he uncovered in the Stourhead archives, where Magnificent Henry writes to his son-in-law, Lord Bruce, referring to a new passage put in to aid the ingress and egress of his Grotto, which would "make it easier of access *facilis descensus Averno*".⁴²⁶ The Latin is taken from line 126 of *Aeneid* Book 6, and translates as "easy is the descent to Avernus (Hell)". I would argue that instead of directly evoking the descent to Hell, Hoare's letter to Bruce represents a similar borrowing of phrases in correspondence between classically learned men. Overall, the circuit of the lakeside path was, to Woodbridge, an allegory of the hero's journey from Troy to Latium, but he overlooks the degree to which such phrases had become divorced from their original Virgilian context.⁴²⁷

Flitcroft's temple, either the genesis of an Aenean programme or, as I will suggest, something more personal, is now called the Temple of Flora, but its original name came from a magnificent full-length statue of Livia, wife of Augustus, as Ceres (Figure 98). This had, until recently, been attributed to the collection of Dr Richard Mead (1673–1754), an early English collector. New research, however, suggests Henry bought it in Rome in 1740, from the sale of the recently deceased Cardinal Ottoboni (1667–1740).⁴²⁸ Livia, the first Roman empress, like many empresses who followed her, was depicted in the guise of various goddesses throughout her lifetime and after her death. Her

⁴²⁴ Examples from Eighteenth-Century Collections Online.

⁴²⁵ Paul 2021, 8.

⁴²⁶ Woodbridge, 1970, 35. This is where Woodbridge's argument becomes most muddled, because his fourth pillar, that the Grotto, with its statue of a reclining river deity could represent Tiber contradicts the allusion to book six. If Tiber and nymphs who appear later in the book are represented in the Grotto and its adjoining Temple of the Nymph mirrored Aeneas' descent into the Underworld, then different parts of Virgil's epic are being mixed together in an unintelligible way.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 35. The main Aenean argument is set out between pages 31 and 37.

⁴²⁸ Harrison, 2015, 8. Harrison utilises a travel account explicitly naming Ottoboni as the statue's source. The date of the Ottoboni sale also coincides with Hoare's time in Rome.

depiction as Ceres, goddess of the harvest and fertility, is well-documented and appears in full-length sculptures, found as far afield as Libya, and includes famous pieces in the Louvre (the Ceres Borghese) and Prado museums. Ceres as a parallel for the empress was common, along with the similarly matronly Vesta and Juno.⁴²⁹ Ceres was, however, Livia's "most politically innocuous and consequently most widespread divine evocation", and Hoare and his contemporaries would likely have seen coins, gems and sculptures making that parallel, as well as absorbing the Augustan exultation as Ceres from such texts as Ovid's *Fasti*.⁴³⁰ The identification is confirmed by her attributes, primarily the ears of wheat held in one hand, but also the *patera*, or libation dish, often seen in coin and statuary depictions of Livia-Ceres.⁴³¹ She is also draped as a goddess, rather than a contemporary Roman lady, and whilst she has the features of Livia, the crown she wears, despite not being Ceres' most customary wheat wreath, is also regularly seen in goddess-empress sculpture.⁴³²

In 1744, Flitcroft wrote several letters during the design process for the temple, which are preserved in the Stourhead archive. In one, he describes the scheme for the entablature, which he has enclosed, "showing how the triglyphs and metopes should be proportioned".⁴³³ Hoare was clearly a client deeply interested in the design details of his commissions (indeed, Harrison has demonstrated how the motifs of the moulding on the temple echo the *patera* in Ceres' hand – Figures 99 and 100).⁴³⁴ It is the prized statue, around which the whole structure is built, and would be surrounded with, and complemented by, carefully chosen decorative elements and sculpted companions. It is also worth noting that the other motif on the frieze is a *bucranium* (Figure 101). This ox's skull was a common motif in classical temple decoration, not necessarily evoking death. For instance, it appears on the Temple of Titus and Vespasian in Rome (Figure 102), one of the famous monuments of the Roman Forum, which eighteenth-century

⁴²⁹ Bartman, 1999, 93.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 93-4.

⁴³¹ Who made that identification is unknown, but the earliest reference to the statue as Livia-Ceres is the anonymous 1749 poem *Stourton Gardens*.

⁴³² She is identified as Livia, and certainly this is a strong possibility, but she may be a Julio-Claudian princess, such as Antonia Minor.

⁴³³ Flitcroft to Hoare, 7th September 1744, Wiltshire Record Office, Stourhead Papers, 383.907.

⁴³⁴ Harrison, 2018, 86.

travellers, including Henry Hoare, would have seen. Bucrania appeared on numerous other temples and monuments in Rome and Italy and these structures and decorations were illustrated in popular seventeenth and eighteenth-century books of engravings, such as Desgodetz's (1653-1728) *Les Edifices Antiques de Rome*.

With this precise and ornate decoration in mind, we turn to the two busts in the temple. Livia-Ceres was accompanied, in niches, on the walls either side her, by modern versions of ancient busts, with white marble heads and polychrome drapery. These busts have been called Faustina the Elder and Younger (Figures 103 and 104).⁴³⁵ The Faustinas were two dynastic women, daughters, wives, mothers, mothers-in-law of emperors, key figures in the adoptive dynasty of the Antonines during the second century AD. Susan Gordon first identified them as copies of portraits in the Capitoline Museum, and this identification has since been used by John Harrison.⁴³⁶ They have been regarded by Gordon as simply suitable companions for Livia, as all three empresses had been identified with Ceres in the Roman imperial cult. Harrison follows Gordon but considers them to be tacit representations of Henry's two wives, Anne and Susan.

Whilst it is heartening to see the two portraits receive any scholarly attention, on closer examination, however, the major flaw in this theory is the identification with the Elder Faustina. The bust which Gordon and Harrison propose is the elder Faustina looks nothing like the Capitoline head (Figure 105) to which it is ascribed. Neither of the Stourhead busts bear the conical knot of hair at the back of the head with which Faustina the Elder is usually depicted (as demonstrated which compares the hairstyles. It may be, that with the niche placement of the Stourhead women, above eye-level, Gordon and others have not studied the sides and reverse. Having examined these, I believe that both the women at Stourhead resemble the hairstyle (and youthful complexion) of Faustina the Younger in the Capitoline and elsewhere.

⁴³⁵ This placement is known from contemporary drawings and accounts. All three statues have since been moved.

⁴³⁶ Gordon, 1999, 113.

Faustina the Elder has only three portrait ‘types’ as identified by Max Wegner, running across her lifetime and posthumous commemoration.⁴³⁷ All three are characterised by the conical hair atop her head, though its height and formation, as well as her elaborate fringe, vary across the types. None of these are comparable to the Stourhead heads. In particular, the one identified as Faustina Major has a low, loose knot of hair at the back of the head, just above the base of the skull. This has no parallel in the empress’s portrait types. It would seem impossible that the sculptor who made them was copying from a head, a cast, or an etching of the elder of the two women, unless taking serious artistic licence. This level of change does not seem probable, given the detailed resemblance to the portrait typology of Faustina Minor, with minor amends, as below.

The younger Faustina has nine or ten portrait types. She, like her mother, was analysed by Wegner’s seminal study, but the typology was adjusted and improved by Fittschen in his book *Die Bildnistypen der Faustina minor und die Fecunditas Augustae* (1982).

Fittschen identified nine types, and a tenth has recently been proposed.⁴³⁸ On analysis of the typology, NT 562907 most closely resembles Type VII of Faustina’s portraiture, a well-evidenced type with twenty-two extant examples.⁴³⁹ This type has a thick ‘sweep’ of Faustina’s hair covering her ears and the side of her neck, gathered in a low bun of overlapping strands, as seen at Stourhead.⁴⁴⁰ The Stourhead bun is a little higher, and flatter to the back of the head than many of the Type VII heads, leaning towards the wider and more defined hair knot of Type VIII (see Figure 106). The variance is, I would suggest, due to a sculptor copying and taking some liberties, although as Niederhuber notes, the two types are successive and closely related.⁴⁴¹

The other portrait NT 562908 should be Type I, as this is the only type where Faustina’s ears are bare. It is also the most youthful type, thought to depict the empress in her mid-teens, which accords with the Stourhead depiction. The sculptor of the Stourhead

⁴³⁷ Wegner, M, *Die Herrscherbildnisse in antoninischer Zeit*, 1939. This was the volume which began the seminal *Das römische Herrscherbild* series.

⁴³⁸ See Beckmann, 2021 and Niederhuber, 2022.

⁴³⁹ Fittschen, 1982, 55-57.

⁴⁴⁰ My analysis draws on the detailed reexamination of Faustina’s portrait typology and its examples by Niederhuber, 2022, 30-46.

⁴⁴¹ Niederhuber, 2022, 42.

bust has taken some more liberty here than with the previous bust, and the youthful face with pert features is combined with a hairline most resembling Type V where the flattened hair-loops, so prominent in Type I, are minimised (see Figure 107). It is important to note that whilst this modern typology, drawing on ancient stages of Faustina's portraiture helps us to identify her, a lack of slavish imitation of the types does not rule out the heads being those of Faustina. Even in the Roman period, variation of the type by workshop and province of origin is evident. Furthermore, the trend of lock-counting, as discussed in the introduction, and other very precise typological indicators, is a twentieth-century art-historical way of analysing Roman portraiture. Eighteenth-century workshops would be producing numerous recognisable heads for a voracious market, drawing on etchings of extant busts in the famous collections of Rome. The two Stourhead Faustinas are recognisable in their extensive reference to these, and numerous all'antica Faustinas in collections and auction catalogues blur the boundaries of typology between her recognised ancient portrait types.⁴⁴²

If both women are the younger of the two Faustinas, then the significance of their placement in the Temple of Ceres changes dramatically. Rather than suggest, as Harrison does, that the busts act as visual substitutes for Henry's deceased wives, I wish to suggest they are in fact tacit representations of his two daughters, Susanna (1732-1783) and Anne (1737-1759). For ease of reference, and to avoid confusion with Henry's wives, the younger Anne will be referred to as 'Nanny' henceforth, and similarly, Susanna as 'Sukey'. These were Henry's nicknames for them (see Figures 108 and 109 for their portraits, painted when both were in their twenties). The Faustinas are not necessarily supposed to resemble the girls closely, but Henry's paintings of the girls, kept at Stourhead, accord with the youthful empresses.⁴⁴³

When Flitcroft first built the temple, in the 1740s, both girls would have been very young. Sukey was a teenager, and Nanny only nine years old when it was finished.

⁴⁴² See, for instance, Lot 110 at a Christie's Sale in January 2014: <https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-5763937>. Formerly in the collection of the Duke of Roxburghe, this recognisable Faustina, much like one of the Stourhead busts, exposes the empress's ears and smooths out the distinctive hair loops.

⁴⁴³ Hutchings, 2005, 68.

Their brother was still alive at this point, and the two girls, although dear to their father, were not yet a major part of his (increasingly fraught) hopes for succession at Stourhead. But the date of the construction is not necessarily busts' purchase or placement in the temple.⁴⁴⁴ In 1756, when Jonas Hanway (1712–1786), the merchant, philanthropist and traveller visited, writing of his Wiltshire tour for *The London Chronicle*, he either omitted to mention the empresses, or they were not yet in place:

Perhaps I should have mentioned the Temple of Ceres, which is on the side of the Water nearest to the Village. This Building has a Portico supported by Columns. Here is the Figure of the Goddess, with her proper Emblems, standing in Front as you open the Door.

*On each Side are two commodious Seats, which are made in Imitation of the Pulvinaria, or little Beds which were placed near the Altar at the Time of Sacrifice, on which the Pagans were wont to lay the Images of their Gods in their Temples.*⁴⁴⁵

Hanway's description of the sculpted seats gives a level of detail to his account, and surely, if the busts had been in place, then he would have mentioned them in passing. We can speculate, therefore, that it was after 1756 that Henry installed the Faustinas in his temple. By this time the girls were his sole surviving children, and being without a wife, he took a particular interest in their marriages.⁴⁴⁶ Sukey married first Lord Dungarvan (1729-1759), the son of the Earl of Cork (1707–1762) in 1753. Dungarvan's early death was a blessing in disguise, as Lord and Lady Cork (1710-1758) had allowed him to marry Sukey for the Hoare money, and the parents had, through a series of poor borrowing choices on the Corks' part, infuriated Henry. An extraordinary document in the Stourhead archives demonstrates the problems of the marriage, Henry's anger over the behaviour of Lord and Lady Cork, and the potential damage to his own reputation and that of his daughter. It is a bound volume, authored by Margaret, Lady Cork,

⁴⁴⁴ The National Trust suggests purchase of Alexander, Marcus Aurelius and the Faustinas in the 1740s, but this is not verified.

⁴⁴⁵ Hanway, 1757, 578.

⁴⁴⁶ Harrison, 2018, 52.

setting out her case against the Hoares. Henry has annotated in red with his own corrections.

Lady Cork, claims that “she [Sukey] was by birth far inferior to the ladies of those noble houses from whom both my Lord and his son were descended” and complains that “we have not met with a suitable return of gratitude from her family for all the kindness we have shown to Lady Dungarvan”.⁴⁴⁷ As the marriage broke down, and Lord and Lady Cork’s spending, both in England and Italy, went outside the bounds of a financial trust which Hoare’s Bank arranged for them, Lady Cork’s narrative turns more personal. Of Sukey, Margaret Cork claims “she appears either not to know or to forget that she was adopted into the Cork family”, and that “the failure has been entirely on the side of Mr Hoare and his daughter”. Henry’s annotations, on what he calls “a dark affair” are factual refutations of Lady Cork’s claims of poor behaviour, unanswered letters and mismanaged finances, but the angry tone is likely as much prompted by the disrespect to Sukey as that to himself. Lady Cork’s narrative even notes that Sukey was, for some of this period, living at Stourhead, and both generations of Hoare ignored the Corks from there.

Sukey’s second marriage, in 1761, was to Thomas Brudenell-Bruce, 1st Earl of Aylesbury (1729 –1814), and the Bruces’ relationship with Stourhead was close, with a great deal of correspondence between the two houses. Henry referred to Lord Bruce as “my bosom friend”, and he wrote to Sukey about his joy of finishing new aspects of the gardens in time for the Bruces’ visits with their children.⁴⁴⁸ Sukey’s death in 1783 was the last of the series of bereavements in Henry’s life and is reported to have taken away much of his remaining joy as an old man.⁴⁴⁹

Nanny’s marriage took place before her sister was widowed, but during the Dungarvan marriage which, as we have seen, was unhappy and produced only one girl. Henry was, therefore, concerned for the succession of his estate once again. He engineered for

⁴⁴⁷ Wiltshire Record Office, Stourhead Papers, 383.909.

⁴⁴⁸ Woobridge, 1970, 55, 67.

⁴⁴⁹ Hutchings, 2005, 82.

Nanny to marry her first cousin, Richard (1735–1787), son of his brother Benjamin. Happily, it seems, they were quite attached to one another, and married in 1756.⁴⁵⁰ Nanny died in 1759, aged just twenty-two, after giving birth to Richard Colt Hoare, Henry’s eventual heir.⁴⁵¹ Although the succession was secured, Henry was heartbroken by the loss. There is far less evidence for his relationship with Nanny, due to her shorter life, and the lack of a tumultuous marriage to deal with, but both girls were clearly dear to their father. Henry’s funerary monument in Stourton Church (Figure 110), bearing in mind Craske’s view of the tomb as a “form of public communication”, lists all his offspring, even those who died very young, but has a particularly touching and surprisingly lengthy description (no other children receive any character information) of Nanny:⁴⁵²

*And having given birth to two sons... ..Expired on the 5th of May 1759,
leaving a lively image of many amiable virtues impressed on the hearts
of all who had the happiness of knowing her gentle and engaging
character.*

We cannot be sure at what point Henry installed his Faustinas. In 1767 a report for *The London Magazine, or, Gentleman’s Monthly Intelligencer*, discusses the Temple of Ceres, noting the *pulvinaria* accompanying Livia-Ceres, but not the busts.⁴⁵³ This is a shorter account and they may have been omitted, but the question remains as to exactly what stage of the lives of his two dear daughters provided the context for Henry’s installation of the empresses.

Despite the issue of who might have been alive, dead, married, or unmarried, the dynastic implications were clear. Faustina the Younger was daughter of Antoninus Pius and Faustina the Elder, and for the perpetuation of the Antonine dynasty, she married Pius’ successor, Marcus Aurelius. Of her own (numerous) children, one daughter,

⁴⁵⁰ Woodbridge, 1970, 40-1.

⁴⁵¹ Another son, born in 1757, had died shortly after his birth.

⁴⁵² Craske, 2007, ix.

⁴⁵³ *A Description of Stourton in Wiltshire, the Seat of Mr. Hoare*, 1767, 36, from British Periodicals Online.

Lucilla, married Aurelius' co-emperor, Lucius Verus, and her son, Commodus, became emperor. Faustina was, therefore, a key mechanism for the passing of power and the creation of family legitimacy in Antonine Rome, as well as the fertile mother of around fifteen children. Henry was deeply attached to Nanny and Sukey, but also deeply attached to the idea that they might perpetuate the dynasty he hoped to build at Stourhead. During the 1750s or 60s, the placement of two versions of Faustina, lovely, young women, resembling one another, in his temple to Ceres, the goddess of fertility and motherhood, cannot be thoughtless. Davies' work on imperial commemoration has also noted that the depiction of empresses in commemorative contexts nearly always reinforced messages of dynastic regeneration and family descent, with imperial women as signifiers of fertility and succession, even when they had not had children.⁴⁵⁴

After Nanny's death and eventually Sukey's, the temple served as a memento to the longest-lived of the Hoare children. Ceres, who in myth famously mourned the loss of her daughter Persephone, who had been kidnapped by Hades, also rounds out this picture of familial grief. The Livia/Ceres can potentially be read as analogous for the girls' mother, Susan, who died when they were very young, but her pairing with the empresses was relatively short-lived. Within a few years, the Temple of Ceres had been unofficially renamed the Temple of Flora, and Livia/Ceres had been moved to the new Pantheon, and a copy of the Farnese Flora replaced it.⁴⁵⁵ Henry's prized Grand Tour original was an obvious item to move to the new and impressive Pantheon, to sit alongside Rysbrack's Hercules and several other copies of famous sculptures. I would argue, however, that replacing her with the Flora, something of a placeholder, and retaining the Faustinas above their *pulvinaria* seats, only adds to the busts' pre-eminence in the space. That the substitution was done after Nanny's death (as shown by Ceres' 1767 mention in *The London Magazine*) is, I believe, an important point. Flora, although associated with fertility like Ceres, carries more explicit associations of youth

⁴⁵⁴ Davies, 2000, 119.

⁴⁵⁵ The authorship of this Flora is uncertain, but Rysbrack also created a copy of the Farnese Flora for the Pantheon. This one was presumably a 'lesser' copy as visitors do not comment on its provenance and it has been sold/lost.

and springtime, thus capturing the forever-youthful Nanny, and commemorating both Henry's beloved daughters as young women.

Something striking is the relative anonymity of the busts in visitor accounts. Although Stourhead was extensively written about by contemporaries, the empresses seem to have made little impact and appear in very few visitor accounts. In fact, the only one I have found is that of Count Carlo Gastone Della Torre di Rezzonico (1742–1796), visitor to Stourhead in 1787, who writes of the Faustinas that:

*Nelle due nicchie laterali sono due busti d'Imperatrici Romane che per nulla sono degne d'essere in quel tempio.*⁴⁵⁶

This translates as “in the two sides niches there are two busts of Roman empresses, who are by no means worthy of being in this temple”. Whether he meant the workmanship or something about their historical character (Roman historians were not always kind to Faustina the Younger), his dismissal of them is the most attention they seem to have drawn.⁴⁵⁷ That Henry, who even had Rysbrack rework the facial features of his Hercules from the Pantheon based on criticism from Horace Walpole, did not replace them with something more eye-catching, valuable, or finely crafted, may imply that they were not intended for the tourist. They were, rather, a sentimental purchase for Henry's own personal enjoyment of his garden, as well as key signifiers of the landed dynasty he hoped to found (upon which our next example expands). Eventually they became commemorations of two beloved daughters, perhaps a place to visit, close to home, in lieu of their graves.

Despite the lack of named, explicit commemoration of Nanny and Sukey in this particular location (although arguably, the viewer can ‘read’ them in it, having experienced Stourton church and seen Henry's monument), this tacit reflection of them

⁴⁵⁶ Rezzonico, 1787, cited in Harrison, 2018, 315.

⁴⁵⁷ Faustina's reputation during the renaissance and Enlightenment was heavily defined by her description in the *Historia Augusta*, a third-century compilation of imperial biographies. *Lucius Verus* 10 accuses her of conspiring in Verus' murder, as well as having an affair with him which he exposed to his wife, Faustina's daughter, Lucilla. *Marcus Aurelius* 26 claims that throughout her life she had a reputation for lewdness.

echoes what we have already seen at Kedleston. Something similar will be seen in other, later case studies, such as Petworth, where classical or neoclassical portrait busts become non-specific proxies, implying the presence of, or allusion to, family members and social bonds. In the context of funerary monuments (an apt, linked category of sculpture for the commemoration of Henry's daughters) Craske has shown how a "neo-Roman" trend for classicising tomb imagery developed a visual vocabulary, where veneration based on Roman ancestral and imperial worship, to represent contemporary values and figures, was commonplace.⁴⁵⁸ The tomb-like aspect of the Temple of Ceres should factor in the inscription above the doorway, the *Procul, o procul este profani*, which Woodbridge used so prominently in his Aenean reading. Despite these being the words of the Sibyl, as we have discussed, Latin quotations were, and are, frequently used out of context, and without the specific associations of the text to which they are attached. The meaning of the quotation, that the profane or unworthy must stay away, touchingly guards the entrance to the earliest instance of familial commemoration in Henry's garden, and referring back to the Vatican example, symbolically keeps the profane away from the most treasured and important sculptures both in the papal cortile and Henry's own temple.

Craske cites Pusey House, and the tradition of the garden temple, often "a temple to love and death combined", in an intriguing parallel to our Temple of Ceres.⁴⁵⁹ In 1759, on the death of William Brotherton, his will stipulated the construction of a 'Temple of Female Virtue' at Pusey House in Berkshire, the ancestral home of his wife, Elizabeth (d. 1757). Brotherton's wife and her sister were granted life annuity to the estates of their father, with them only devolving to his nephew by marriage, after both their deaths. William Brotherton, therefore, elected to live at Pusey, with his wife and sister-in-law, having no estate of his own, so it was already a female-centric family. The temple is an extraordinary structure, its interior (Figure 111) centred on a full-length effigy of Mrs Brotherton, a lapdog at her feet identifying her with the virtue of

⁴⁵⁸ Craske, 2007, 77.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 322.

Constancy/Fidelity, sculpted by Joseph Wilton (1722-1803).⁴⁶⁰ In niches around the temple's edge are idealised busts depicting the other female virtues: Modesty, Prudence, Temperance, and Truth. Not only does Brotherton's temple subvert the typical masculine hierarchy, placing his wife at the centre of a religious commemoration, but it is strikingly similar to Stourhead. Arguably, Craske might have used Henry Hoare's Temple of Ceres as his parallel to Brotherton's temple and, in fact, Anson's altar to Elizabeth Anson, if the Faustinas could be taken at more than face value.⁴⁶¹

5.6 The Temple on the Terrace

Young women dominate the Temple of Ceres, but masculine youth is the subject matter of the Temple on the Terrace (also known as 'The Venetian Seat'). This was an open, ionic temple in miniature. Harrison, working with drawings by Piper, has found that two roundels, on either side of the door, contained busts of the young Marcus Aurelius and Alexander the Great (Figures 112, 113, 114, 115).⁴⁶² The Temple was pulled down by Richard Colt Hoare, and the portraits, as well as a copy of the Borghese Vase that stood with them, were moved to the Temple of Ceres. Colt Hoare explained that his motivation for removing this structure, along with the Turkish Tent and Chinese Temple, was "to render the design of these gardens as chaste and correct as possible".⁴⁶³ Why this building, despite its classical nature, should not fit with Colt Hoare's designs we will explore later on.

The Temple on the Terrace is another setting for portrait sculpture in the garden, but it is curiously ignored, likely due to its nineteenth-century demolition. As we have previously seen, those edifices which do not 'fit' programmatic readings of the garden are often ignored or seen as lesser elements. Despite its classical design, the Temple on the Terrace is mentioned only by Harrison (who has little to say of it), and Nijhus who in passing suggests it was constructed in 1744.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 325.

⁴⁶¹ Craske, in fact, explicitly aligns the Shepherd's Monument with the Pusey temple.

⁴⁶² Harrison, 2018, 100.

⁴⁶³ Hoare, 1822, 66.

⁴⁶⁴ Nijhus, 2015, 179.

The structure is not mentioned in traveller accounts until the 1750s, and then, as with the Temple of Ceres, receives little discussion compared to the more famous garden structures. There is, however, a letter from Flitcroft in the Stourhead archive from 1744, where he encloses “a cornice at large for your Venetian Seat” and goes on to discuss the price and execution of this work.⁴⁶⁵ The temple was, therefore, clearly already in the process of being designed at this early stage of Henry’s transformation of the garden, simultaneously with the Temple of Ceres. This makes its omission from most scholarly work even more odd.

From Flitcroft’s letter we can discern that The Temple on the Terrace was first named The Venetian Seat, and it functioned as a covered seating area. Henry had travelled through Venice on his Grand Tour.⁴⁶⁶ The ‘Venetian-ness’ of it, with a central rounded arch and two squared-off openings with ionic columns either side, can be seen in a comparison between F.M. Piper’s 1779 drawing of the structure and Serlio’s 1537 woodcut of the front of a Venetian palace (Figures 116 and 117). Harrison has suggested that the copy of the Borghese Vase being installed there is what elevated it to temple status. I do not necessarily disagree but would suggest the informal renaming (in much the same unofficial way as the Temple of Ceres), may also be prompted by a change in the building’s purpose, to a commemorative function, as explored below.⁴⁶⁷

The contemporaneity of the Temple on the Terrace and that of Ceres/Flora strengthens my interpretation, which is that the temples functioned in similar ways with a familial element of portrait display. Not only are the buildings contemporary to one another, but so are the busts they housed. It is likely that Marcus, Alexander and the Faustinas were purchased together. There are no records of their entry into the collection, but the National Trust speculates that the four were purchased as a group in the 1740s.⁴⁶⁸ They are similar white marble heads, adapted from famous Greco-Roman portraiture, on

⁴⁶⁵ Flitcroft to Hoare, August 18th 1744. Stourhead Archives, 383.907.

⁴⁶⁶ Indeed, Magleby suggests it was here, in the trading capital, of the world, with oriental influences and an influx of Ottoman goods, that his interest in Turkish architecture, for the Turkish Tent structure, may have first been sparked. Magleby, 2009, 18.

⁴⁶⁷ Harrison, 2018, 101.

⁴⁶⁸ National Trust Collections Online, Object 562906.

polychrome marble draped busts.⁴⁶⁹ If the Faustinas are potential parallels for Sukey and Nanny, I believe we can read Henry's deceased sons into the Temple on the Terrace, and the structure as a whole as a monument to male-line succession and loss, themes which dictated the fortunes of Stourhead for two generations.

Henry's long list of bereavements (Table 2) clustered around the period of garden design. In 1740, his first child with second wife Susan, a son named Colt, died aged seven. Then, in 1752, Henry (III), his surviving heir, died whilst on his Grand Tour in Naples. Henry wrote to his brother, Richard, in 1753:

*I have been taught by our Holy Religion, by former Visitations, Tryals
[sic] and Afflictions to submit myself before the Throne of God who
(unworthy as I am of the least of His Divine favours) still supports me
under a Grief I never expected, or wish'd to have survived; but His will
be done, His Mercys are infinite, His Judgments like the great Deep.*⁴⁷⁰

Henry, with his classical education, would surely have been aware of the grammar school favourite Quintilian, who in his sixth book of oratory advice, mourns that "I lost the child of whom I had such expectations and in whom I rested the sole hope of my old age".⁴⁷¹ This was the second loss of a son, after the loss of his wife earlier on, and Henry, widowed and pinning his hopes on his sons, may well have identified with this sentiment.

We cannot pinpoint whether the Temple on the Terrace was erected between the two deaths, or after the second death. That little Colt died at seven years of age is reflected in the choice of the young Marcus Aurelius, a sentimental sweet depiction of the young teenager Colt could have become. Alexander, older but still youthful, denotes more

⁴⁶⁹ In fact, the Alexander resembles the Uffizi's *Dying Alexander*, and my theory is that one of the Faustinas also resembles an Uffizi portrait of the empress. So, of the four, two portraits (Marcus and one Faustina) are taken from Capitoline models, and two from the Uffizi.

⁴⁷⁰ 14/3/1752, cited in Woodbridge, 1970, 37.

⁴⁷¹ Quintilian, *Instit. Orat.* 6.1. Clarke has demonstrated that from the time of its discovery, in the fifteenth century, *Institutio Oratoria* was considered the foremost authority on ancient education, and was a regular in grammar school and university curriculums from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Clarke, 1959, 3, 22, 38, 71, 100, 168.

marital, physical strength and may refer to Henry III, who died at twenty-one. Equally, Marcus, with his incipient moustache, could be read as Henry III, with Alexander intended to signify what he might have become, i.e., the pinnacle of manhood. Henry was building the profile of his dynasty at Stourhead, and the pairing of the Temple of Ceres, a monument to a goddess of fertility, and the Temple on the Terrace celebrating young masculinity, shows the two different ‘hopes’, the male and female lines, of his family’s ascendancy.

Returning to Henry’s monument in Stourton Church, the recording of each of his children for posterity, even the short-lived ones, shows both a concern with lineage and succession, and a sentimental attachment to his offspring. My argument, for the Temple on the Terrace and the Temple of Ceres, is that commemoration of these children is not limited to the church, and they also found a place in Henry’s garden. The link between church and garden can also be drawn out further. Jean-Claude Richard’s work on imperial tombs, noting the dual sepulchral and religious uses of imperial mausolea, such as those of Hadrian and Augustus, or the Flavian family temple erected by Domitian, is relevant here.⁴⁷² Henry’s own tomb holds his body but commemorates his children. His temples also commemorate his children, without having a sepulchral aspect, though whether they came to act as cenotaphs is up for debate.⁴⁷³ The eighteenth-century reading of Roman literature, and their experience of the Roman and Italian landscapes, would have made them highly aware of how religious devotion relating to the dead was not reserved for strictly religious spaces.

Finally, the church would, in fact, be explicitly linked to the garden. St Peter’s Church is on the way to the garden entrance and would have formed part of the ‘route’ (churches are often included in tourist accounts from country house visiting). Harrison’s excellent

⁴⁷² Richard, 1966, 127-142.

⁴⁷³ The Oxford English Dictionary defines a cenotaph as “a commemorative monument dedicated to a person or group of people buried elsewhere”. The question, in this case, is whether that dedication must be explicitly articulated or not. Oxford English Dictionary Online.

compilation of manuscript visitor accounts includes eleven, from between 1765 and 1820, citing the church as part of their perusal of Stourhead.⁴⁷⁴

5.7 Other Portraits

There are other portrait busts and heads at Stourhead which do not implicitly centre on death and succession but do demonstrate Henry's engagement with the form. From his frequent collaborator, Michael Rysbrack, he commissioned busts of John Milton, one as a youth, the other as an old man. Another pair of linked busts is the Zingara (Gypsy) and Vestal Virgin, who have been paired together in inventories since the eighteenth century.⁴⁷⁵ Despite being largely ignored in scholarship, the tightly draped, chaste, religious Roman (Figure 118) and loosely dressed, freer (and perhaps more mystical) gypsy (Figure 119) perfectly demonstrate the virtue/vice dichotomy which Charlesworth and his supporters have projected onto the garden through the Choice of Hercules. Sometimes a reading of the house only adds to the experience and interpretation of the garden. Henry seems to have been aware of the connotations of portraiture, and how busts could work together for a message, which only supports the previous examples regarding commemoration and his children.

Finally, it is worth noting that the young women and men in their temples are not the only portraits with their own buildings within the landscape. The Saxon king, Alfred the Great, has a portrait bust in the house, and an over-lifesize portrait sculpture with its own structure, Alfred's Tower, in the landscape. Alfred, the much-admired hero, defender of "truth, justice and the Anglo-Saxon way", has already been discussed in Chapter 2.⁴⁷⁶ In 1762, Henry wrote to Sukey that he was reading Voltaire's (1694 – 1778) *Character of Alfred the Great*, in, *L'Histoire Generale*, and of his admiration for the king.⁴⁷⁷ Then, in 1764, Henry paid Rysbrack, his sculptor of choice, £100 for "a fine

⁴⁷⁴ Harrison, 2018, 310-340. Not all the accounts have the church viewed before the gardens, however.

⁴⁷⁵ These busts are possibly by the Rome-based Irish sculptor, Christopher Hewetson (1737 – 1798). The Vestal is a copy of the Farnese Vestal Virgin, and the Zingara a copy of the Borghese statue known as an Egyptian Woman or Gypsy.

⁴⁷⁶ Keynes, 1999, 225.

⁴⁷⁷ Savernake Archive – quoted in Woodbridge, 1970, 53.

marble bust” of Alfred (Figures 120 and 121) modelled on one Rysbrack had made thirty years earlier for Queen Caroline.⁴⁷⁸ The physiognomic depiction of the king matches a long tradition of portraits and engravings of Alfred, including those of Michael Burgers, and Henry also commissioned a painted portrait of the king, from Samuel Woodforde, based on the Rysbrack head. Queen Caroline’s library, for which Rysbrack’s bust was commissioned, is itself an interesting use of portrait sculpture for dynastic purposes, “the largest royal commission for sculpture in the first half of the eighteenth century”.⁴⁷⁹ The commission was never fully realised and displayed due to Caroline’s unexpected death in 1737 but models, documents and the completed busts show that Caroline intended a ‘family tree’ linking the Hanoverians to the English monarchy, beginning with Alfred and ending with herself and her husband. Caroline’s planned display is associative lineage at its finest, expressed through the medium of bust sculpture.

Henry’s own use of Alfred is not necessarily far from that of the Queen. As we have seen, he was keen to found a dynasty at Stourhead, despite the new money of the family and the lack of any ancient connection to the land. By incorporating Alfred, he was linking himself to Saxon Stourton, as the rumoured spot of Alfred’s great rally against the Danes in 878, Egbert’s Stone, was Kingsettle Hill, not far from the house.⁴⁸⁰ It was on this hill that Henry built the counterpart for his Rysbrack Alfred, making the bust within the house a pendant for the impressive structure on the edges of his landscape. Alfred’s Tower, which Henry insisted “would crown or top all [his garden schemes]” was constructed between 1770 and 1772 to a design by Flitcroft and is a forty-nine-foot triangular red-brick tower with a spiral staircase at its centre, leading to a viewing platform at the top (Figure 122).⁴⁸¹ An over-lifesize statue of the king in armour (Figure 123) stands above the doorway, and the inscription accompanying it reads;

ALFRED THE GREAT

AD 879 on this Summit

⁴⁷⁸ Keynes, 1994, 321.

⁴⁷⁹ Marschner, 2015, 27.

⁴⁸⁰ Keynes, 1994, 321. Kenworthy-Browne, 1980, 79.

⁴⁸¹ Savernake Archive, cited in Woodbridge, 1970, 53.

Erected his Standard
Against Danish Invaders
To him We owe The Origin of Juries
The Establishment of a Militia
The Creation of a Naval Force
ALFRED The Light of a Benighted Age
Was a Philosopher and a Christian
The Father of his People
The Founder of the English
MONARCHY and LIBERTY

The visitor to Stourhead could encounter Alfred ‘face-to-face’ in the house, and in monumental form in the landscape. Alfred was appropriately noble and had the ambiguity, as we saw in Chapter 2, of being extensively claimed by the Tories, but also by the Whigs. Henry tied his new house to ancient traditions by using not just architecture, but portrait sculpture. He may not have been certain of the dynasty going forward from him, after his death, but he successfully asserted a fictitious link back into the past, grounding the Hoares in their estate.

5.8 Richard Colt Hoare

By the time of his death in 1785, Henry’s famous landscape and enviable art collection had made Stourhead into a touristic landmark. It was, however, soon to be reinterpreted by his grandson, and the same themes of loss and dynasty would play out against the rich backdrop once again. Magnificent Henry’s touching commemoration of his children, as we have seen, is a story of family tragedy. All his children predeceased him, and Henry’s profound concerns with dynasty and attachment to his surviving daughters, as evidenced in the previous sections, drove him to override the expected order of succession. His eventual heir was his grandson, Richard Colt Hoare (1758-1838, and henceforth referred to as Colt), Nanny’s son. Colt was not material to the formation of the portraits at Stourhead, but his additions, and, mostly, subtractions from the collection, are noteworthy. Nanny’s first son had been short-lived, and she died not long

after giving birth to Colt. Colt was educated at private schools, though notably not any of the most famed, attending Samuel Glasse's school in Greenford, near London and then heading straight into the family business, learning the ropes for an expected partnership.

Nanny's husband, Richard, who had since remarried, and who was also Henry's nephew, had been assumed as Henry's heir, presumably in a tacit agreement. He was then bypassed by Henry in favour of Colt, then only twenty. Henry summoned his former son-in-law to Stourhead to advise him of the decision. This was a shock for the family, and in fact, Richard's brother Henry wrote a document of eight quarto sheets, which survives in the Stourhead archives, detailing the fateful visit and his brother's (shocked) response.⁴⁸² Henry announced he would leave everything to Colt, on the proviso that he forfeited an active role in Hoare's Bank, which added further sting to the change in inheritance.

Next, Sukey, Henry's other daughter, died in 1783, and Henry, deep in mourning, decided that Colt should be married to Frances Bruce (1765–1836), Sukey's daughter. Colt declined, determined to marry Hester Lyttleton (d.1785), which Henry eventually accepted, and the couple were married that year. Henry then retired to a smaller house near Clapham once Colt had married, and the newlyweds took possession of Stourhead. In 1785, Henry died, and before the year was out Hester had also died in bearing their second child, losing the baby also. Much in the same way as Magnificent Henry had found himself a widower, with three surviving children and without intention to remarry, shortly after his inheritance, so Colt found himself a widower, with one young son (Henry 1784–1836), who would eventually predecease his father, no role in the family business, and a vast estate.

He never remarried, and in 1786 he departed for Europe for six years. Colt did not return home until the French Revolutionary Wars made mainland Europe dangerous for English tourists. His young son remained at Stourhead, but he showed no desire to remarry and with no role in the family business, Hutchings notes there was "no

⁴⁸² Wiltshire Record Office, Stourhead Papers, 383/912.

compulsion” for him to come back.⁴⁸³ He settled for a time in Rome, in 1786, and wrote to his younger half-brother, Hugh (1762-1841), that he visited some form of antiquities in the city each morning.⁴⁸⁴ Colt wrote a series of travelogues from his time in Europe, *Reflections Abroad*, which Woodbridge has admirably distilled, complemented by archival notes and diaries, into a narrative of his travels. Colt was certainly invested in the classical past, but also deeply impacted by his own grief. Furthermore, his relationship with his son, another Henry, soured as the boy grew older (perhaps unsurprisingly, given Colt’s absence in his childhood). This may have influenced his removal of the Temple on the Terrace which he demolished. By moving Alexander the Great, Marcus Aurelius and their accompanying vase to the Temple of Ceres, he thus collated all of Henry’s mourning and familial representation into one space. Whether this movement and grouping neutralised or sharpened and collated the associations of children, loss and dynasty is uncertain, and unrecorded. Eventually, Colt was predeceased by young Henry, who died in his forties, after a dissolute and disappointing life, separated from his wife and with vast debts.⁴⁸⁵ Their only child was a daughter, and it was to Colt’s half-brother, Hugh, that the estate was left.

Succession might, however, be recorded in another form. In 1800, after his return, Colt constructed a new library, and as part of this, moved his grandfather’s pair of busts of the old and young Milton into purpose-built niches either side of the door (Figures 124 and 125). This is one of his few traceable reinterpretations of portraiture in the collection. Each bust sits above an engraved wooden plaque, with a lengthy quote from Milton’s own work. The young Milton is accompanied by an extract from Sonnet VII, which begins:

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,

Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!

My hasting days flie on with full career...

⁴⁸³ Hutchings, 2005, 93.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 89.

⁴⁸⁵ Woodbridge, 1970, 267.

The older Milton is accompanied by an extract from Sonnet XIX, beginning

Cyriac, this three-year day,

These eyes, tho' clear

To outward view of blemish or of spot,

*Bereft of Sight, their seeing have forgot...*⁴⁸⁶

The revised prominence given to the same author, in youth and old age, through existing portraits from Magnificent Henry's collection, strengthens the link between grandfather and grandson. Whilst Colt was in his forties when the change was made and could not be identified as the youthful Milton in any simplistic or direct way, the two 'bookends' of Stourhead's prosperity and success, Henry and Colt, the old man and the young twenty-five-year-old to whom the estate had been passed, are perhaps implied by the pairing of the Miltons.

5.9 Conclusions: Stourhead

Two generations of unrealised dynastic ambition temper the grand fairy-tale of the Hoares' rise from bankers to landed gentry, and this deeply affected both Henry and Colt. The Temple of Ceres remains as a remarkable monument, starting life as an expression of affection and hope, and ending up as something of a cenotaph. Stourhead is far more than Aenean or Herculean readings of different buildings around a lake. Its house and landscape are deeply personal, as were those of Shugborough. Anson's Shepherd's Monument warned that *et in arcadia ego*: death, grief and loss lurk in paradise. This was true of both the Staffordshire and Wiltshire idylls created respectively by Thomas Anson and Henry Hoare. Adding portrait sculpture to the discussion of these houses and rehabilitating what is traditionally seen as a decorative element, only enhances our understanding.

⁴⁸⁶ Kenworthy-Browne, 1980, 72.

Portrait busts were a natural medium for commemorative associations, given contemporary tomb culture, and their insertion into classical structures, be they arch or temple, evoked Greco-Roman practices around death and the religious veneration of the (often imperial) dead in the ancient world. Colt's alterations to his grandfather's landscape and collection also prefigure the next section of case studies, which focus on two generations at two houses, Holkham Hall and Petworth House, where two of the most important Whig families in England used portraiture for political and personal ends.

Section C: Whig Splendour

Each of the groupings in this thesis has a theme, and we have seen in previous sections the amassed dynasty or legion of the entrance hall, and the personal commemoration of lost loved ones. The next pairing of case studies returns us to the political sphere, and its theme is the (self-)aggrandization of the Whig party, and Whig values, in the homes of their leading magnates.

We have encountered the Whigs before, in Robert Walpole, their early leader, and in Thomas and George Anson's membership of parliament. I would argue, however, that neither Walpole nor the Ansons defined themselves by their political affiliation in the same way as the Wyndhams and Cokes, to whom this thesis now turns. Both families, over two generations which span the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were dominant forces in Whig politics, but also Whig social circles. Their country houses, symbols of two of the richest noble families in England, made extensive use of portrait busts for the promotion of Whig values and their own personal legacies.

The Cokes, Earls of Leicester at Holkham Hall, are here represented by Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester of the fifth creation (1697-1759), and his great-nephew and heir, another Thomas Coke (1754-1842), confusingly also 1st Earl of Leicester, this time of the seventh creation.⁴⁸⁷ For ease of reference, the elder Thomas is referred to throughout the Holkham chapter as Thomas or Lord Lovell (his title before being raised to the earldom), whilst the younger is referred to as Coke, due to his legacy as 'Coke of Norfolk', the great agricultural reformer. The Wyndhams are the Earls of Egremont, based at Petworth House in West Sussex. Their two generations are Charles, 2nd Earl of Egremont (1710-1763), and his son, George, 3rd Earl of Egremont (1751-1837). George and Coke were contemporaries and certainly at least acquaintances, both friends with the Whig's talismanic and charismatic leader, Charles James Fox (1749-1806). Fox, mentioned previously in passing, now becomes extremely important to this thesis.

⁴⁸⁷ The title fell into abeyance after the death of the first Thomas and was recreated for Coke.

This pairing of grand Whig houses is an interesting lens through which to consider busts and heads in the country house. In both instances, the collections contain significant numbers of classical works, including numerous portraits. These collections remain in situ and have not dispersed by sale. Furthermore, whilst the previous case studies explored have largely been focused on a single generation, the work of one man (albeit supported by agents, family members and servants who are often invisible to us), these two-generation country house assemblages are from great-uncle to great nephew and father to son respectively. This allows us to map growth, change and reinterpretation of portrait material. In both cases, the first generation does the bulk of the 'assembly' and purchasing, which is subsequently rearranged and augmented by their successors.

Chapter 6: Holkham Hall

Lei'ster with Gods of Pagan Rome

Brought Chaster Architecture home

The Sister Arts with him to dwell

*Transported to his Norfolk Cell*⁴⁸⁸

The quotation above is taken from a poem, written by Matthew Brettingham the Younger (1725–1803). Brettingham wrote it for one of his clients, the Earl of Thomond (1784–1836), and we will return to the poem in the Petworth chapter. Despite the poem's focus on the relationship between Brettingham, Thomond, and Thomond's brother, the Earl of Egremont, it contains a lengthy digression on Thomas Coke, his sojourn in Rome, and his construction of Holkham. Brettingham had a personal stake here, reminding his client, Thomond, of his involvement (and that of his father) in Holkham, which was then already one of the most famous houses in England. The sections of this chapter which focus on the first generation at Holkham each utilise lines from Brettingham's paeon of praise for one of the most remarkable art collectors and patrons of the mid-eighteenth century.

The Coke family are found settled in Norfolk at the start of the sixteenth century, as tenants of the Townshend family of Raynham. During the sixteenth century, Edward Coke (1552–1634) “was the undoubted founder of Coke greatness” and became Speaker of the House of Commons under Elizabeth I (1533–1603), and then Lord Chief Justice under James I (1566–1625). Edward was a vehement Protestant, with a hatred of Papists, and was the Justice who sentenced the Gunpowder plotters.⁴⁸⁹ It was Edward's fourth son who acquired the land at Holkham through marriage to an heiress, and a sixteenth-century family home stood there before Thomas Coke (Lovell) inherited in 1707 (a partial family tree forms Figure 126).⁴⁹⁰ After Edward, the family produced no

⁴⁸⁸ West Sussex Record Office, PHA675.

⁴⁸⁹ Lees-Milne, 1986, 203.

⁴⁹⁰ Mortlock, 2007, 53.

further famous scions until Thomas. This period of obscurity helps explain Thomas's eagerness to align himself with Justice Coke, which we will explore later on.

Thomas was to tear down the old house, building in its place one of the most famous Palladian mansions in England (Figure 127), with the advice and assistance of his friends, the Earl of Burlington and William Kent. We have encountered Kent already at Holkham's near neighbour, Houghton (Chapter 1). Similarly, Thomas's master builder, Matthew Brettingham the Elder, we have also already met, at Kedleston. Inside the house, through the agency of Matthew Brettingham the Younger, and his own six-year Grand Tour, Thomas amassed an impressive number of ancient marbles, which "holds the first place among English private collections and is rich in fine specimens".⁴⁹¹ Elizabeth Angelicoussis, who has been the collection's primary scholar claims it is remarkable for "...its sheer size, its exceptional quality and its superior conservation of the marbles".⁴⁹² What has not, however, formed part of the study of Holkham, is a consideration of its material culture as political, seen across two generations, encompassing Whig values and busts as expressions of both allegiance and aspiration.

6.1 Thomas Coke and the Grand Tour

By Burlington and Nature Led

Kent – to Congenial Science bred

By Roman Arts Refin'd

*The Painter with the Planter join'd.*⁴⁹³

Thomas's life has been chronicled by David Mortlock, former librarian of Holkham, through extensive archival research. 'Tommy' as he was known, was the son of wealthy Norfolk gentry, Edward Coke (1678- 1707) and Cary Newton (1678/80-1707), both

⁴⁹¹ Poulsen, 1929, 13.

⁴⁹² Angelicoussis, 2001, 17.

⁴⁹³ West Sussex Record Office, PHA675.

patrons of the stage and book collectors.⁴⁹⁴ Both sides of the family were Whigs in Parliament. His parents died young, and young Thomas was only fifteen when he embarked on his Grand Tour in 1712. It was during an extended period of around seven years abroad that he first purchased antiquities, buying a togate man under the name ‘Lucius Antoninus’ (brother of Mark Antony) and a statue of Diana in Rome. He also bought books, paintings, manuscripts, and musical instruments, developing what Kenworthy-Browne calls “an astonishingly precocious taste for works of art”.⁴⁹⁵ He purchased and commissioned works by leading Italian painters which sometimes included his own face, inserted as one of the characters. In Sebastiano Conca’s (1680–1764) *Vision of Aeneas in the Elysian Fields* Thomas has been painted in as Orpheus.⁴⁹⁶ Kenworthy-Browne suggests that Thomas also appears as a side character in commissions from Chiari (1574–1625) and Procaccini (1654–1727).⁴⁹⁷

His commissions were of classical subjects, including *Perseus and Andromeda*, *Numa Pompilius delivering the laws to Rome*, *Tarquin and Lucretia* and *the Continnence of Scipio*. Curzi suggests these are a set of ‘*exempla virtutis*’, commissioned in 1714, tellingly the same year as the Whig ascent to power under the Hanoverian regime.⁴⁹⁸ Thomas was, as mentioned previously, from a Whig family, and as we shall see below, actively supported the party throughout his life. Depictions of wise and ‘good’ figures, such as Numa and Scipio, and seminal moments such as Tarquin’s rape of Lucretia (leading to the overthrow of corrupt Roman kings), were appropriate symbols of progress towards liberty. Thomas also met Burlington and Kent in Rome. In fact, Brettingham noted in a footnote from his poem to Thomond that Thomas gave £100 per year to Kent for his studies whilst he was living in Rome in the 1710s.⁴⁹⁹

On his return home, Thomas married the wealthy heiress, Lady Margaret Tufton (1700–1775), whose later widowhood at Holkham forms an important interlude for the

⁴⁹⁴ Edward and Cary both had their own bookplates, preserved at Holkham and in the Bodleian Library.

⁴⁹⁵ Kenworthy-Browne, 1983, 39.

⁴⁹⁶ Holkham Blog Post, ‘Thomas Coke, the Grand Tour and his Library’.

⁴⁹⁷ Kenworthy-Browne, 1983, 39.

⁴⁹⁸ Curzi, 2019, 122.

⁴⁹⁹ West Sussex Record Office, PHA675.

collection. Margaret was one of the co-heirs of her father, the Earl of Thanet. Thomas spent over £3,000 on wedding presents for her, showing an early flair for the lavish spending he was to exhibit throughout his life.⁵⁰⁰ Thomas lost out in the South Sea Bubble which, along with his expensive tastes, delayed his plans to rebuild his country seat. Thomas was elected an MP for Norfolk in 1722, holding the seat until 1728, when he was ennobled and moved into the House of Lords. Throughout his career, he was a supporter of the Whigs and an ally of his neighbour, Robert Walpole. During the 1730s he corresponded with Walpole whilst canvassing for his candidates in Norfolk, declaring that “I would never appear wanting in anything where your [Walpole’s] interest was concerned”.⁵⁰¹

This letter was written in 1732, the same year that Thomas’s friend, Burlington, then a taste-maker and architectural trend-setter, and his protégé, William Kent, began to draw up plans for the new Holkham Hall. We have already encountered Burlington in Chapter 1, as the dedicatee of Pope’s *Epistle to Burlington*, which may or may not have mocked Walpole. Horace Walpole called Burlington the “Apollo of the Arts” and Kent was his “Proper Priest”, his frequent collaborator and designer.⁵⁰² Work to their plans was begun several years afterwards (perhaps as Thomas’s finances had not yet recovered from the Bubble) overseen by the local architect Matthew Brettingham. There has been much discussion of who designed Holkham and ‘called the shots’. The Burlington-Kent-Brettingham trifecta has puzzled scholarship for years, to the detriment of recognising Thomas’s own contribution. It would be beyond the remit of this chapter to consider it in any detail, but Christine Hiskey has demonstrated with Thomas’s letters that drawings and ideas by both Brettingham and Kent were shown to Burlington for his suggestions and endorsement.⁵⁰³ That Kent died a decade before Thomas himself surely limits Kent’s influence on the earlier stages of the project.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁰ Mortlock, 2007, 11.

⁵⁰¹ Cambridge University Library, Cholmondeley Correspondence, 2263.

⁵⁰² Walpole, 1762, 383.

⁵⁰³ Hiskey, 1997, 143-148.

⁵⁰⁴ Murdoch, 2006, 207.

Brettingham, whom Thomas affectionately referred to as ‘Bret’, and his son have, as noted, already been encountered at Kedleston and will, in fact, be seen again in Chapter 7. Brettingham the Younger’s influence on the antiquities, and his editing of the plans and sections of Holkham, allowed him to assert a significant role for himself and his father. Juggling the contribution and significance of these men has, however, often obscured the agency of Thomas himself, on whom this chapter focuses.⁵⁰⁵

The building of Holkham Hall cost £90,000, an immense amount at the time, which was, fortunately for Thomas, raised from income on his profitable estates, not loans or sales.⁵⁰⁶ The day books for the house’s construction show not just the classical influences but the expensive materials. Workmen’s’ tasks include: ‘unloading black marble’, ‘unloading columns’, ‘setting columns’, ‘polishing columns’, ‘polishing column bases’, ‘unloading alabaster from ship at Wells’, ‘unloading wagons of alabaster’, ‘working columns’, and ‘unpacking and setting capitals’.⁵⁰⁷ The house’s interiors were rife with details drawn from engravings of classical sites. For instance, the centrepiece of Holkham, the Marble Hall, draws heavily on the Temple of Fortuna Virilis, as illustrated in Desgodetz’s *Les Edifices Antiques de Rome* (1682) and its recessed, coffered panels from the dome of the Pantheon, again via Desgodetz.⁵⁰⁸

6.2 Building to Glorify the Coke Lineage

A gracious landlord and a Peer

In dignity and honour clear

Whose hospitable mansion show’d

*The Bounteous spirit of its Lord.*⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁵ Hiskey, 1997, 147.

⁵⁰⁶ Stobart and Rothery, 2016, 3 & Habbakuk, 1986, 284.

⁵⁰⁷ The National Archives, C107/67.

⁵⁰⁸ Ayres, 1997, 129. Desgodetz’s work is in Holkham’s library, purchased on Thomas’s Grand Tour, along with a wealth of other architectural books.

⁵⁰⁹ West Sussex Record Office, PHA675.

Apart from Chief Justice Edward Coke, the Coke family had little illustrious lineage upon which to draw. Thomas was the first significant Coke since Edward, and enhancing his own reputation and that of the family was key. Advantageously married and well-connected, he was inducted into the Most Honourable Order of the Bath by George I in 1725, and in 1726 was appointed one of the eight Sergeants-at-Arms in Ordinary for the King's Presence Chamber.⁵¹⁰ He was then ennobled as Baron Lovell of Minster (his Oxfordshire estate) in 1728, on the ascension of George II. Thomas's rise might be attributed to the new Hanoverian regime's need to surround themselves with allies in the face of Jacobitism. Thomas was a safe pair of (Hanoverian-supporting) hands in Norfolk, and willing to report to Walpole in 1732 that "several gentlemen" during the Norwich election "cry'd no Hannover succession K. James the 3rd for ever and K. James health was also drunk by several at Hempton Fair".⁵¹¹

Despite his close association with his ally and neighbour, Walpole's fall from power does not seem to have affected his prospects and Thomas was granted the title of Earl of Leicester in 1744, cementing his place among the elite. A large part of the Holkham project was, therefore, the aggrandisement of an established family who had risen to new heights. From the very moment a visitor entered the estate at Holkham they could witness the new status. The entrance to the Park's long driveway was a triumphal arch (now a holiday cottage), of one large bay and two small ones, designed by Kent and executed by Brettingham. It created a long, grand vista with the obelisk, also a Kent-Brettingham combination. Despite the lack of a formal inscription, Hill argues that the arch was to glorify Thomas himself, and the illustrious Justice Edward.⁵¹² Arches and captured obelisks were both certainly visual markers of triumph, glory and military success in Roman history and the landscape of eighteenth-century Rome, although the martial implications of this commemoration are complicated by a lack of distinguished military men among the Cokes. The arch and obelisk are early structures within the Holkham landscape, dating to the mid to late 1730s. They set out Thomas's plans for

⁵¹⁰ Mortlock, 2007, 113-116.

⁵¹¹ Cambridge University Library, Cholmondeley Correspondence, 2196.

⁵¹² Hill, 2012, 35.

dynastic splendour, looking both backwards and forwards. We shall explore Thomas's tomb in more detail later in the chapter, but it is worth noting (Figure 128) that Thomas was buried directly across from Edward in Tittleshall, in a tomb consciously mirroring Edward's own, with its pediment, columns and raised sarcophagus (see Figures 129 and 130).

Thomas next turned to painted portraiture for his commemoration of lineage. As an ally of Robert Walpole, he chose Walpole's favoured portraitist, Jonathan Richardson the Elder (1667–1745) for his own portrait, and another of Margaret, holding their baby son Edward (1719–1753).⁵¹³ Later, in 1758, he invited the Italian artist Andrea Casali (1705–1784) to visit Holkham, in order to paint a series of pictures.⁵¹⁴ Casali painted full-lengths of Thomas and Margaret (Figures 131 and 132), with Thomas's prized statue of Diana in the background of his portrait. He also painted their son, Edward. The other portraits were of ancestors: Thomas's grandfather, his great-grandparents, his great-great grandparents and his great-great-great grandmother, Bridget (c.1562–1598), the wife of Chief Justice Coke.⁵¹⁵ The desire to paint the past and invent a desirable gallery of your ancestors was understandable. Portrait galleries were key attractions for the country house tourist and enviable accoutrements for the aristocracy (see Chapter 3).

Thomas had built a new house but needed to tie it into a broader conception of dynasty, even if visual fictions about his ancestor's appearance and their connection to a house they had never lived in, were necessary. Edward's portrait (Figure 133) where he gestures at Holkham, seen in the background, suggests Holkham's future direction. It is worth noting by whom these Casali paintings are meant to be seen. Even within Thomas's own lifetime, Holkham was a tourist attraction. Casali's paintings were, from their inception, hung in the Strangers Wing of Holkham, which is the guest accommodation.⁵¹⁶ The Strangers Wing was a key part of the household tour, whereas

⁵¹³ Moore & Crawley, 1992, 108.

⁵¹⁴ Holkham Blog Post, 'Family Fortunes'.

⁵¹⁵ Moore & Crawley, 1992, 115.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

the family apartments were not. When we turn to Coke, the great-nephew of Thomas, I will argue that he was primarily interested in display for his Whig compatriots, attendees at his frequent shooting parties and famous sheep-shearings. Yet he and Thomas both had one eye on the touristic visitor.

Arguably, Thomas commemorated more than his actual lineage. His use of the classical bust format throughout the house, as we will see, elided the Coke family with the classical past, creating a space where the family's *imagines* (spiritually affiliated to Thomas and family if not by blood) could be displayed. His appeal to the concept of associative lineage played out alongside that of actual blood lineage.

We will see, as we have already done, the way in which family images could be supplemented with or placed alongside the classical bust. This does not appear to have caused a problem for the viewer, as the imagined family tree is not to be read literally. Consider, for instance, Queen Caroline's library, as discussed in Chapter 5. Descent by association seems to have been far more acceptable than it would be to the modern, literal-minded viewer. We will explore in the next chapter how Petworth House achieves something similar.

6.3 The Holkham Antiquities

Nature to Lei'ster did impart

With Genius Probity of Heart

Greatness of Manners, with a Soul

*The Arts Obedient to control.*⁵¹⁷

Despite the wealth of portraits at Holkham, they are only one part of the extensive collection Thomas Coke amassed. As noted, he purchased paintings, books, and musical instruments on his own tour, before enthusiastically patronising the arts on his return to England. We know he purchased some antiquities on his own tour, but many were

⁵¹⁷ West Sussex Record Office, PHA675.

purchased decades later by the younger Brettingham, who kept an account book when he was in Rome, listing thirteen statues and twenty-one busts sent to Holkham.⁵¹⁸ Once the construction of his new seat had begun, it appears that Coke turned to his master builder's son, then living in Rome, to help him decorate it appropriately. Casts and originals from Rome furnished the Marble Hall (Figure 134), a statement entranceway with an alabaster colonnade and a partially domed ceiling, modelled on the Pantheon in Rome. A purpose-built Statue Gallery (Figure 135), in the mode of a traditional English 'Long Gallery' for paintings, with numerous niches, was built to house the collection. It has an octagonal tribune room at one end (Figure 136), also with niches, imitating the famous Uffizi museum's *tribuna* in Florence. Aside from the dedicated sculptural spaces, Thomas distributed antiquities throughout his house. They perched on mantels, in special broken pediments above doorways, in niches, on plinths and library shelves across various rooms. The sheer number of antiquities and their widespread distribution is remarkable.

Literature on the collection abounded from its very inception. In the portrait section below, we will utilise Brettingham's account of the house and the first tourist guidebook (the latter drawing heavily on the former), both from the 1770s, as well as manuscript inventories from the Holkham Archive. The house's collection was also featured in *The Norfolk Tour* of 1795, which covered the principal towns and country seats of the county, and further editions of the guidebook were published in the early nineteenth century. The 'big three' of Dallaway, Michaelis and Waagen all visited and discussed the collection. In the 1920s the Danish art historian Frederick Poulsen included Holkham in his study. Poulsen was highly selective in his case studies, and generally scathing about the collections he analysed, but notably impressed by the Holkham busts and heads. He excluded all neoclassical or 'suspect' heads (i.e., potential fakes). His study is certainly of its time and contains such observations as "...the expression of the Holkham head [of a Hadrianic woman] suggests a woman of rank but without intelligence".⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁸ Kenworthy-Browne, 1983, 42.

⁵¹⁹ Poulsen, 1929, 87.

In the twenty-first century, the major work has been that of Elizabeth Angelicoussis, and her extremely important catalogue and analysis of 2001 in the *Monumenta Artis Romanae* series, which we have already seen at Farnborough and will see again at Petworth and Woburn. Angelicoussis, much like the scholars of Stourhead, tries to read a unifying programmatic theme into the collection, aligning it (primarily the Marble Hall) with Virgil's *Georgics*, in what Vout describes as "less spectacle than Sudoku".⁵²⁰ Whilst her account of the collection is over-schematic, her thorough survey remains, nonetheless, the most useful text for analysing the collection. Scholars of the 2010s, such as Guilding and Vout, comment upon Holkham's antiquities as one of the best-known instances in the country.

Leicester, attributed with refinement and genius in the design of his home has not, until lately, been allowed by scholarship to 'own' his antiquities purchasing. As Angelicoussis protests, "...Brettingham has in the past been accorded sole responsibility for the purchase of the second lot of marbles... [which]unjustly denigrates Coke's original lot of significant marbles and paints quite an inaccurate picture of the involvement of the owner... ...Consideration of Lord Leicester's active participation in the entire conception of the estate makes it very unlikely indeed that he would have left the most important element of the interior design of the house in the hands of another".⁵²¹ Thomas was so invested in his house that it would be bizarre to claim he would not have cared what marbles the younger Brettingham brought him. One aspect in which this care and consideration best comes through is the portrait busts at Holkham.

6.4 Portrait Busts at Holkham

Of Noble Form, of Princely Mind

*By Learning and by Taste Refin'd.*⁵²²

⁵²⁰ Vout, 2018, 168.

⁵²¹ Angelicoussis, 2001, 31.

⁵²² West Sussex Record Office, PHA675.

For the purposes of this study, I am interested in busts of historical figures or non-specific images of conceivable historical persons, such as the Vestal and Consul at Holkham. Modern copies of Greeks and Romans are counted but noted as such. I have, as noted in the introduction, excluded heads of deities, for instance the Dionysus and Aphrodite busts. The list is compiled from Angelicoussis, with reference to Michaelis and Poulsen and cross-checked against both the *Plans, Elevations and Sections of Holkham*, by Brettingham, and the earliest Holkham guidebook, which was published just after Lady Margaret's death.⁵²³ The table below categorises the busts, of which there are thirty-five.⁵²⁴ Those in italics are eighteenth-century copies or versions, but the catalogue does not distinguish them from their ancient counterparts. Those underlined are the heads referenced only by Brettingham, for which we have no further evidence.

There may also have been some overlap with, and movement from, Thanet House in London, acquired as part of Margaret's dowry in 1718. Several busts are noted there in 1760 which have no parallel with the Holkham collection, such as a head of Julius Caesar and a bust of Palladio, the Italian architect and scholar to whom Holkham's design owes so much.⁵²⁵ A black marble bust (identity unknown) is also listed, and there are none in this material/colour combination in the Holkham papers.⁵²⁶ There may have been items at Thanet House which never made their way to Holkham, as well as some that did.

Further manuscript inventories from the Holkham Archive, and Tessa Murdoch's studies of these, also illuminate (and frustrate) analysis of the busts. Murdoch transcribes, for instance, an inventory of 1760 which notes two plaster busts above the doors of Lord Leicester's former dressing room.⁵²⁷ These may be elsewhere in the collection when other inventories were taken as they are the only reference to the

⁵²³ Martins, 2009, 155.

⁵²⁴ The Lysias and the Plato are confusing. There is, in Angelicoussis's catalogue, a Plato once identified as Lysias, but both Brettingham and the guidebook note both busts as distinct from one another and present in the Portico Vestibule.

⁵²⁵ Murdoch, 2006, 229.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 236.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 222.

dressing room busts. Their lack of noted identity is unfortunate. To know which busts the Earl might have liked in his own dressing room, a relatively personal and quasi-private space, in a house where busts are largely in public areas, would be extremely interesting.

	Greeks	Republican Romans	Imperial (adult) men	Imperial women	Imperial youths
1	Carneades	Sulla	Hadrian	Faustina the Elder	Marcus Aurelius
2	Lysias	Lucius Lentulus	Lucius Verus	Julia Mamaea	Geta
3	Metrodorus	‘Consul’	Marcus Aurelius	Julia Titi	Geta
4	<i>Homer</i>	<i>Lucius Junius Brutus</i>	Gallienus	Salonina	Philip the Younger
5	<i>Alexander the Great</i>	<i>Cicero</i>	Saloninus	<i>Faustina the Younger</i>	<i>Marcus Aurelius</i>
6	<i>Plato</i>		<i>Maecenas</i>	<i>Faustina the Younger</i>	
7	<u><i>Carneades</i></u>		<i>Caracalla</i>	<i>Vestal Virgin</i>	
8	<u><i>Pythagoras</i></u>		<i>Seneca</i>		
9	<u><i>Zeno</i></u>		<u><i>Seneca</i></u>		

Table 3: The Holkham Busts

Perhaps the main organising principle of the Holkham busts in Thomas’s time was that of thematic pairings. Angelicoussis has been a keen observer of these, which may have prompted Vout’s reference to ‘sudoku’.⁵²⁸ Nonetheless, the idea of pairing is evident at Holkham. Brettingham even refers to busts in pairs, noting a head of Brutus the Elder

⁵²⁸ Angelicoussis, 2001, 51-2. In another publication (2001, 32-33) Angelicoussis also notes pairing of the full-length sculptures, such as a draped and chaste Isis statue juxtaposed with a semi-nude Venus, and Septimius Severus (start of the Severan dynasty) placed alongside Julia Mamaea, reputed to have ruled through her son, who was the last of the Severans.

in the Statue Gallery and across from it “its companion”, Seneca.⁵²⁹ Similar language is used for the paintings. Two pictures by Guido Reni (1575–1642), a Cupid and an Evangelist, are also referred to as “companions”.⁵³⁰ One might argue that their companionship could be similar size/colour or, in the case of the pictures, the shared artist. But themes do emerge, and the use of ‘companion’ by Brettingham is telling. He was reissuing his father’s text at this point and surely the builder of, and antiquity buyer for, Holkham, would have a good sense of Thomas’s intent. With the Reni paintings, the juxtaposition of paganism with Christianity makes them a good pair. With the Brutus and the Seneca, their thematic harmony is through similarity rather than difference. Brutus the Elder challenged the corrupt kings of Rome and heralded in the republic, even willing to kill his own sons in the pursuit of liberty for Rome.⁵³¹ Tacitus writes that Seneca allegedly, played a part in the conspiracy against the corrupt emperor Nero, his former pupil. Regardless of his guilt, or lack of it, the emperor believed he had been betrayed, and Nero ordered Seneca to commit suicide.⁵³² Both were historical figures known to the eighteenth-century through school texts, and appropriate heroes as defenders of liberty, especially to the Whigs with their pride in the Glorious Revolution. There are other pairs throughout the house which suggest similar thematic groupings (see Table 4).

Pairings were known in the eighteenth century through the work of Plutarch, whose *Parallel Lives* was extremely popular at the time.⁵³³ Plutarch’s pairs took two Greek and Roman men and put their biographies side-by-side, drawing out links and shared themes. For instance, Caesar was paired with Alexander, or the Roman dictator Sulla was paired with the ambitious Spartan general Lysander, and the reforming Spartan kings Agis and Cleomenes were paired with the agrarian reformers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. An awareness of this can surely be read into Thomas’s matches. I do not suggest that the buying of busts was done through any programmatic search for ideal

⁵²⁹ Brettingham, 1761, 3.

⁵³⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁵³¹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.5 & 2.3.

⁵³² Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.60–64.

⁵³³ See Mossman, J and Beck, M, 2013, 592–597, and Walling Howard, 1970 for Plutarch’s importance at the time.

companions but rather, that in selecting what went where, Thomas used his own scholarly knowledge to create themes upon which his visiting peers might pick up. He (or his wife) even added Thomas to the scheme of couples. The Steward's Lodge, in Lady Margaret's interregnum, had a cast of the Earl's own bust with that of Maecenas, the famous patron of the arts of the Augustan era. The parallels between the two men and their artistic endeavours are not hard to construct.

Pairing and Location	Suggested Theme(s)
Brutus the Elder and Seneca the Younger (the Statue Gallery)	Liberty and sacrifice
Faustina the Elder and Philip the Younger (Gallery Tribune)	Wife of an emperor and mother of two empresses (the female line) and the hoped-for (but ultimately failed) male-line succession of an imperial prince
Lysias and Plato (Vestibule)	Greek knowledge – the arts of rhetoric and philosophy paired
Cicero and Seneca (Vestibule)	Liberty and sacrifice.
Young Marcus Aurelius and young Geta (Dining Room)	Imperial heirs, youthful masculinity. Imperial succession (Marcus) and failed imperial succession (Geta)
Homer and Alexander the Great	Chronicler of legendary heroes and legendary hero, inspiration to greatness ⁵³⁴
Faustina the Younger and a Vestal Virgin (State Apartment Antechamber)	Vice versus virtue, fertility versus sterility. Sensuality versus chastity
Julia Mamaea and Julia Titi	Linked by their name. A mother of an emperor and the daughter of another.

⁵³⁴ Aristotle tutored his young charge, Alexander, using the works of Homer. Plutarch, *Alexander*, 26 references the conqueror's respect for the author.

Marcus Aurelius and Caracalla	A good heir versus a bad heir, also linked by the name Antoninus ⁵³⁵
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Table 4: Bust Pairs at Holkham Hall

It is worth making an observation about identity here. As with most eighteenth-century collections, there are some wishful attributions amongst the portraits, Holkham's aforementioned Metrodorus, for instance. There is some irony in the fact that scholarship has since dubbed Metrodorus 'Thucydides', arguably a more prestigious identity than the philosopher. Leicester also 'baptised' his anonymous heads, declaring a Salonina from an unidentified Roman woman and claiming his ownership of Philip and Gallienus through portraits of young military men, in the same way he declares he has a Sulla.⁵³⁶ The assertion of military figures might have something to do with the lack of military heroes in the Coke family. The young (military) heir Philip, and the short-lived third-century emperor Gallienus, suggest a martial dynasty for a house in which youthful masculinity was only represented in Thomas's drunk and dissolute son, Edward. Not all the pairings, however, 'make sense' in a neat way. Why is Salonina, Gallienus's empress, paired with Lucius Lentulus, the opponent of Caesar? And, below, for instance, we see Faustina in a quartet with philosophers. The three men make sense – but why the empress? Sometimes, similar sizes and patinas of heads must have played a part in the arrangement of sculpture, but this does not detract from thematic instances.

Faustina's pairings and inclusion in the decorative scheme is particularly interesting. The duo of Faustina and the Vestal Virgin, on the mantel in the Antechamber for the State Apartment when Brettingham was writing, refers us back to Stourhead's Zingara and Vestal and the juxtaposition of virtue and vice.⁵³⁷ This 'cookie cutter' of idealised female types is a recurrent theme in sculptural displays. Women are often displayed as signifiers of specific virtues and vices. The beautiful Faustina, with her reputation for

⁵³⁵ Angelicoussis, 2001, 55.

⁵³⁶ Angelicoussis, 2001, 42.

⁵³⁷ Brettingham, 1761, 8. See Chapter 5 for the negative perceptions of Faustina in Roman histories.

profligacy in some of the literature, and the tightly draped Vestal, are diametrically opposed. The pairing might, however, not be so negative towards the empress. Angelicoussis suggests their pairing is that of sterility versus fecundity, although I would argue that sterility is a negative connotation and ancient Rome saw the childlessness of the Vestals as a positive attribute.⁵³⁸ Faustina was also known for her numerous children with Marcus Aurelius. In the context of Holkham, and the lack of surviving heirs at this time (see 6.5), the pairing is particularly noteworthy.

The younger Faustina seems to have been a person of particular interest at Holkham. There are two heads of her, one paired with the vestal in the State Apartment and one in the Drawing Room. Brettingham has her in a curious quartet of Pythagoras, Zeno and Carneades above the doors of the room.⁵³⁹ Her presence as the only woman is intriguing, let alone among three Greek philosophers, although we should note that she was the wife of a Stoic philosopher-emperor, and she might be a cipher for him in this context. Furthermore, the State Bedchamber's fireplace had a chimney piece with "...statutory marbles thermes with heads of the younger Empress Faustina" (Figure 137).⁵⁴⁰ Is her presence in the bedchamber titillating, as both a famously fertile and infamously transgressive woman? Is she a particular favourite of Thomas and/or Margaret? Her status as the daughter, wife and mother of emperors and a key player in dynastic Roman politics, could make her a tempting cipher for eighteenth-century aristocratic women, although the historical censure of her might well outweigh this. Was she even known as Faustina beyond Leicester and Brettingham?

A 1765 inventory of the house mentions some unspecified busts, but not the younger Faustina. Two Vestal Virgins appear, one in the library, another in the Strangers Wing. Are these both Vestals? Or is one Faustina? Or is the Cybele with which one of the Vestals is paired Faustina by another name? Identities might have been changing over time. Some busts seem 'correctly' named (as per their original eighteenth-century designation, rather than any modern identification), such as Seneca, Brutus,

⁵³⁸ Angelicoussis, 2001, 52.

⁵³⁹ Brettingham, 1761, 3.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 8.

Metrodorus and Sulla, but others are generically called a “a philosopher” or an “emperor” or referred to simply as a bust.⁵⁴¹ The confused inventory, so close in date to the catalogue and Brettingham’s work, seems to imply not a plethora of new heads and busts and un-named ones, but rather that not everyone looking at or working with the Holkham collection was aware of the identities in question. Regardless of whether Faustina’s presence was widely acknowledged, her fertility and her production of a living heir are especially interesting and relevant in the context of Thomas and Margaret’s thwarted hopes for succession.

6.5 Edward, Viscount Coke, and Lady Margaret’s Widowhood

Thomas’ main focus was to create a glorious legacy at Holkham, for the dynasty he hoped to found. His marriage produced, however, several stillbirths and short-lived children, with only one child surviving into adulthood: Edward, Viscount Coke (1719–1753). Edward undertook two Grand Tours, one in 1738, and then again in 1742 in the company of Horace Walpole and the notoriously badly-behaved Sir Francis Dashwood (1708–1781).⁵⁴² We do not know if he purchased any antiquities for his father, but Dashwood would have been an apt friend for Edward on the second tour, as the young Viscount gained quite a reputation as a rake. Thomas supported his son to stand as an MP for Norfolk in 1741, and he represented Norfolk and then Harwich until his death.

In 1747, he married Mary (1727–1811), daughter of the Duke of Argyll (d.1743), but the marriage was doomed from the start and was eventually to become a society scandal.⁵⁴³ The couple refused to live together, and when Edward was convinced to return to Mary, his wife would not have him. Mary was then taken to Holkham and effectively held in genteel imprisonment. The Duchess of Argyll (d.1767) became alarmed when her daughter did not write, and her visits were denied.⁵⁴⁴ The families entered bitter

⁵⁴¹ Holkham Archive, H/Inv 3.

⁵⁴² Mortlock, 2007, 215–16. See *Sir Francis Dashwood of West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire, as a Collector of Ancient and Modern Sculpture* (Knox, 2008) for Dashwood’s biography, Grand Tour, and his own engagement with classical art.

⁵⁴³ Martins, 2009, 11.

⁵⁴⁴ Lees-Milne, 1986, 220.

litigation and whilst Mary was not granted a divorce, they lived apart until Edward's early death in 1753. There were no children from the marriage. Edward's loss deeply affected his father who became "...embittered, lonely and despairing old man".⁵⁴⁵

Ambitions of dynasty had been frustrated, and for all the gallery of illustrious (pseudo) ancestors, whether Casali canvases or antique heads, there was no one to directly inherit. The estate would pass to Thomas's nephew, son of his sister Ann, and the earldom would fall into abeyance. Thomas died six years after Edward, in 1759.

Although no loans had been raised to build Holkham, Thomas still left behind substantial debts of £30,616, and his great project remained unfinished, with the interiors of Holkham incomplete at his death.⁵⁴⁶

Into this gap comes one of several remarkable women who appear in this thesis, but whose intentions and actions are frustratingly just out of reach. Margaret, Dowager Countess of Leicester, having been predeceased by her husband and son, was to spend the remaining six years of her life completing Thomas's work on their house.⁵⁴⁷ On Thomas's death, his will stated that she inherited the house "to be used occupied held and enjoyed . . . during her life".⁵⁴⁸ What she felt about the antiquities and how she might have arranged them is not recorded. Despite frequent praise of her husband as "a man of taste amounting to genius" from modern scholars (although even he is eclipsed by Burlington, as discussed in section 6.2), there is little recognition of Margaret's contribution.⁵⁴⁹ It is to Margaret that Brettingham Junior dedicates his second edition of his father's *Plans, Elevations and Sections of Holkham Hall*, in 1773. He claims that "your ladyship, by adding the finishing touches to the Great Work of Holkham has brought it to the degree of splendour in which it now appears, the delight of the present age...".⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 218.

⁵⁴⁶ Habbakuk, 1986, 289.

⁵⁴⁷ Brettingham, 1773, v. She is attributed, by Brettingham, with finishing the chapel, Strangers Wing, stables, State Bedchamber, Vestibule, Steward's Office and parts of the lawns.

⁵⁴⁸ Boyington, 2014, 1.

⁵⁴⁹ Mortlock, 2007, 130.

⁵⁵⁰ Brettingham, 1773, 1.

Margaret appears not to have purchased much artwork (bar some pictures for the chapel), but primarily bought furniture, hangings and frames “at her own expense” for rooms across the house, according to an inventory sent to her eventual heir.⁵⁵¹ It was also in her tenure that the full-length casts of antique sculptures went up in The Marble Hall, although Boyington notes that this was probably to a pre-approved scheme by her husband.⁵⁵² Holkham’s form, architectural interiors and art collections appear to have been Thomas’s preoccupation, but tables, chairs, beds and the bulk of the ‘non-artistic’ (yet essential) contents of the rooms were the work of his widow. Margaret asked that all her papers be burned on her death so the remarkable woman who completed the project is virtually unknown to us.⁵⁵³

Margaret’s period of widowhood is relevant to this chapter in two respects. Firstly, Lady Leicester commissioned a portrait bust of her husband (Figure 138) from Louis-Francois Roubiliac, to sit on his monument at Tittleshall Church. It would eventually be joined by her own bust (Figure 139), and a lengthy inscription commemorating Thomas, Margaret herself, and even Edward. With a mother’s affection, Margaret claims Edward ‘distinguish’d himself’ in two parliaments ‘by a ready conception, strong memory and most piercing judgement’. The inscription also glosses over his scandalous marriage, noting simply he married Mary and had no issue. Margaret’s motivations are described as ‘preserving inviolable the most perfect impressions of conjugal and parental affection’. Margaret, with her affection and her sense of duty towards the house and Thomas’s plans, also commissioned a copy of his bust from Tittleshall to sit in Holkham’s Marble Hall, at the centre of his creation.⁵⁵⁴ The ledge is above the door to Saloon (see Figure 140), leading the guest out from the Marble Hall and onto the next part of the house. Brettingham’s account notes that it held a head of Juno at one time.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵¹ Holkham Archive, H/Inv 1.

⁵⁵² Boyington, 2014, 7. Boyington does highlight, however, that Lady Margaret deviated from her husband and Kent’s plans for a marble balustrade in this room, instead choosing an iron railing, perhaps a sign of her own preferences.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 13. I am also grateful to Lucy Purvis, Holkham Archivist, for the insight into the difficulty of researching Margaret and the status of her papers.

⁵⁵⁴ Martins, 2009, 17. Martins believes the ledge on which Margaret placed this was originally intended for a head of Zeus, but I am more inclined to Brettingham’s view.

⁵⁵⁵ Brettingham, 1761, 2.

Thomas, in this location, is surveying his most impressive room as well as its occupants. Replacing the queen of the gods with Holkham's lord is a statement of his importance and rank.⁵⁵⁶

Furthermore, the bust in the Hall is, on one level, a funereal one. It bridges the gap between the traditional Church funerary effigy and the growing fashion for busts within houses. As Craske notes, "...one way to understand the eighteenth-century monument with its neatly arrayed busts or images, is as a guardian of the vault. A monument reminded those who might forget, or disturb, the coffins below that the remains were the physical vestiges of those who had once been vivid flesh and would, at the resurrection, become flesh once more".⁵⁵⁷ Whilst this might not hold for most busts in country house locations, the fact that this bust derives directly from a tomb monument in Tittleshall, a direct copy, creates a particularly strong connotation of memorialisation and veneration. Margaret might not have had the end of days in mind when putting her husband's memorial bust in the Hall, but it certainly sent a message to his successors that those who might forget Thomas's intentions and 'disturb' his programme of work for Holkham would be dishonouring his memory.⁵⁵⁸

It still stands on the ledge Margaret selected, but the Hall also now contains a bust of Thomas by Francis Chantrey (1781–1841), commissioned by the Earl's successor and great-nephew, Coke of Norfolk. Coke, by contrast, chose to have his great-uncle and predecessor (as well as himself, in a paired set of busts) depicted in classical drapery (Figures 141 and 142), pinned at the shoulder, and without a wig. Margaret's own bust by Roubilliac joined that of Thomas on their tomb, and a cast of her portrait was also placed in the house. We have no record of where it was displayed, and its presence is attested purely by its modern survival in the collection, but the classically draped

⁵⁵⁶ Or indeed the king if we follow Martins' suggestion.

⁵⁵⁷ Craske, 2007, 209.

⁵⁵⁸ Martins curiously calls the Tittleshall/Marble Hall portrait a "fine classical bust" of Thomas, whereas it actually depicts him in eighteenth-century wig and ceremonial robes (not classical drapery) with the garter star on his chest.

Countess as a counterpart in the pairing system of the Holkham busts is certainly plausible.

The second significant aspect of Margaret's widowhood relates to the succession and occupancy of the house. Lady Leicester's continued occupancy of Holkham ensured that her nephew by marriage, Wenman Roberts (ca.1717–1776), could not take up his inheritance while she lived. She was determined to outlive him, and the relationship seems to have been fractious, perhaps caused by her own bitterness and disappointment and his studious avoidance of her.⁵⁵⁹ Wenman only survived her by a year, dying in 1776. By effectively 'keeping out' Wenman for as long as she could, Margaret preserved her husband's vision of Holkham, and it was her great-nephew, Thomas Coke, who received the house, and to whom we now turn.

6.6 Coke of Norfolk and Politics

The second Thomas will be referred to as 'Coke', to distinguish him from his great-uncle. He was also often referred to as 'Coke of Norfolk' in his lifetime. He did not become Earl of Leicester until after his retirement from politics in 1832, and thus spent most of his life simply as 'Mr Coke'. He was born in 1754 to Wenman and Elizabeth Roberts of Longford Hall, Derbyshire. Wenman was the son of Thomas's (Lovell/Leicester) sister Ann (c.1694–1758), and her husband Major Philip Roberts (d.1776). In 1750, on Edward Viscount Coke's death, Wenman was appointed heir to his uncle, and gave up the surname 'Roberts' and became 'Wenman Coke'. He took the deceased Edward's seat in Parliament, at Harwich, but flitted in and out, losing a seat in the 1760s which he had contested in Norfolk, reverting to a seat in Derbyshire, and finally being returned for Norfolk in 1774.⁵⁶⁰ Wenman voted with the Rockingham Whigs and the Newcastle faction, but does not seem to have been particularly active, or to have spoken in the House of Commons. His Norfolk seat was successfully contested by his son, Coke, in 1776.

⁵⁵⁹ Martins, 2009, 11.

⁵⁶⁰ History of Parliament Online, Entry for Wenman Coke.

Coke, although only twenty-two when he was first elected, and bar a six-year period out of office, held a Norfolk seat until his retirement. He had been educated at Eton, after which his great-aunt, Lady Margaret, had offered Coke £500 towards his travel costs if he avoided university (she considered the institutions hotbeds of vice) and instead undertook the travel which had so deeply shaped his great-uncle.⁵⁶¹ The art and history of Italy does not seem to have affected Coke in the same way, though he had an eventful tour, spending 1722 at the University of Turin, making a name for himself as *le bel Anglais*. Whilst in Turin he even attended the wedding of the ‘Young Pretender’ (1720–1788), Charles Edward Stuart to Princess Louise of Stolberg (1752–1824). He then travelled to Rome with them, and even met the Pope, a strange move for a man of Whig pedigree. He left no journal or records from his tour, through which we might glimpse his motivations.

Coke’s life has been chronicled in detail by Susanna Wade Martins, and many of his achievements, in agricultural reform and his prodigious enthusiasm for game shooting, are beyond the scope of this chapter. His agricultural ventures did, however, include the annual ‘Sheep Shearings’, a three-day event which attracted aristocrats and royalty, and showed off the house and its contents in lavish feasts after a day of viewing agricultural improvements and new livestock breeds (as well as some actual shearing).⁵⁶² They were first reported in 1798 and continued until 1821.⁵⁶³ He also held numerous parties, including a centenary for the Glorious Revolution. The guest list was exclusively Whigs and supporters – including the Prince of Wales, future George IV (1762–1830). At this event, in the Marble Hall, over the bust of his great-uncle (as erected by Lady Margaret), an enormous banner proclaimed, “liberty and our cause”.⁵⁶⁴

He was married twice, first to Jane Dutton (1753-1800), with whom he had three daughters, who themselves married into other Whig families, one of which was the

⁵⁶¹ Martins, 2009, 14.

⁵⁶² Norfolk Record Office, MC 3243/73/1, a song in praise of Coke for the 1804 election makes repeated reference to his agricultural interests through the medium of Ceres, showing that even the farming aspect of Coke’s estate was inextricable from classical allusion.

⁵⁶³ Martins, 2009, 118.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

Ansons of Shugborough. In 1822, at the age of sixty-six, with his nephew poised to inherit, Coke arranged for his political ally and friend, Lord Abermarle (1772–1849) to send his eighteen-year-old daughter, Lady Anne Keppel (1803–1844) to visit Holkham. Anne was to meet William as a potential wife. Despite the age difference, and Anne being Coke’s own goddaughter, Coke decided to marry his nephew’s prospective bride.⁵⁶⁵ Their first son was born later that year, and they had another three sons. Their last child, a daughter, was born when Coke was seventy-five. His life however, as a very wealthy country squire, despite his unconventionally late procurement of an heir, has little bearing on portrait busts at Holkham. In contrast, his active role in the House of Commons does relate to the antiquities and neoclassical sculpture of his home.

Contemporary election literature clearly demonstrates that Coke was often associated with his estate and its classical allusions, both by his allies and detractors. For instance, a satire of 1806 was entitled *Proclamation by 'Thomas William [Coke], Perpetual Dictator*.⁵⁶⁶ The connotations of the word ‘dictator’ would surely call to mind Julius Caesar, especially as Caesar’s formal title during the 40s BC was *Dictator perpetuo*, dictator in perpetuity.⁵⁶⁷ The proclamation is explicitly casting Coke as Caesar. Furthermore, the same satire has Coke quoting Juvenal; *sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas* (as I wish it, thus it will be done, let my will replace reason).⁵⁶⁸ Juvenal was, at this point in his satire, lampooning a controlling woman who orders about her husband, which adds further sting to his aligning this with Coke. He is painted as an illegitimate source of authority (i.e., a woman) to be lampooned. The casual Latin thrown into the pamphlet demonstrates the extent to which Coke was seen in classical terms, aligned with his classical house and his classical collection.

Similarly, another satire, 'The H[o]lk[ha]m Tragedy' is set in ‘the Statue Gallery’, and has the ‘Dictator’ (Coke) cry; “...have all my slaves rebelled?/ What spirit foul has whisper’d in their ear/The long-forgotten name of liberty”.⁵⁶⁹ The stinging insult here is

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 177.

⁵⁶⁶ Norfolk Record Office, MC 3243/73/3.

⁵⁶⁷ Weinstock, 1971, 273, 281, 409.

⁵⁶⁸ Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.1.223.

⁵⁶⁹ Norfolk Record Office, MC 3243/73/10.

the use of liberty, the concept the Whigs claimed to value so much themselves. Furthermore, rather than putting the Dictator in his Marble Hall (the lavish reception room which forms the centre of the house), his study, or any other room, the satirist chooses the Statue Gallery as Coke's symbolic throne room, the seat and representation of his power. An 1818 guide states that "to the Statue Gallery, its vestibule, and its tribune, it is impossible to do justice by any slight sketch. To appreciate their value they must be seen; when even those who cannot comprehend will admire".⁵⁷⁰ The Statue Gallery is the recognisable manifestation of Holkham and Coke himself, and the appropriate place to situate Coke's supposed machinations in the satire.

Counter-balancing the negativity of Coke-as-Caesar, an 1832 poem, written on the occasion of his retirement from politics by an anonymous 'Philo', explicitly bills itself as panegyric, and makes extensive use of classical devices, as per these two extracts:

*So be it mine to touch the sounding string,
The Friend, the Patriot, and the Man to sing
Wake then my Muse the gen'rous trump of fame,
And let her clarion laud the Patriot's name*

*Such worth as this should like the sunbeams blaze,
And sculptur'd marbles speak to sing his praise;
Fame raise him pillars in each land and clime,
And poets praise him in song sublime;
The deathless laurel round his temples twine,
And his immortal wreath untarnish'd shine.⁵⁷¹*

⁵⁷⁰ Cromwell, 1818, 190.

⁵⁷¹ Norfolk Record Office, GTN 3/9/6.

His ‘sculptur’d marbles’ did not simply speak to sing his praise, I will argue, but rather articulated his commitment to the Whig values and allegiances by which his career had been driven.

6.7 Portrait Busts, Whig Imagery and the Foxites

Coke seems to have been content to live amongst, and occasionally to move, Thomas’s antiquities and other artworks. His additions to the collection are not numerous, and tend towards sporting interests, such as a Chantrey relief of woodcocks, a gift from the sculptor after a day of shooting at Holkham. He adapted some of the rooms of the house, for instance, turning an anteroom into an extension of the library and a dressing room into a manuscript room.⁵⁷² As part of the ‘reshuffle’ he did move portraits around the house, but consistently respected his predecessor’s pairings. For example, the Marcus Aurelius and Caracalla pairing moved into the Family Wing but stayed together.⁵⁷³ Much like Robert Walpole in the early eighteenth century, Coke has been perceived as too rough, with his agricultural and sporting interests, to have been heavily involved in artistic schemes of decoration. But, as we will see, he was keenly aware of how sculpture could be mobilised for the Whigs. Financial priorities limited his additions to the sculpture collection. Coke, agricultural innovator, lavish entertainer at Holkham and famed for election largesse, was in heavy debt. Despite high income, he had accumulated debts of £173,000 by 1822, and seems to have employed what Habbakuk describes as “persistent overspending, not spectacular in any particular year but adding up to a substantial amount”.⁵⁷⁴

Against this financial backdrop, Coke prioritised some particularly significant Whiggish art, including portraiture. Much of this relates to his good friend, the Whig firebrand, Charles James Fox. Coke met Fox at a dinner party held by Lord Rockingham (1730–1782) shortly after his election in 1776, and until Fox’s death in 1806, they were close friends and allies. As previously noted, the Whigs were not always a homogenous

⁵⁷² Hiskey, 1997, 148.

⁵⁷³ Angelicoussis, 2001, 75.

⁵⁷⁴ Habbakuk, 1986, 293.

grouping, dividing into cliques and rival clusters, whether in or out of power. One of the most powerful and enduring was the Foxites, of which Coke was a member. These were the followers of Fox, who Leonard and Garnett rightly call “one of the most loveable figures in British political history”, though that should perhaps be rephrased to “one of the most loveable rogues”.⁵⁷⁵

Several excellent biographies of this important politician already exist, and his extraordinary life is outside the scope of this case study.⁵⁷⁶ But, in short, he was a brilliant precocious classicist and orator, as well as a grandson of the Duke of Richmond (1672–1723), Charles II’s illegitimate son. From the age of nineteen until his death he was at the centre of politics and, despite spending most of his career in opposition, rather than in power, was a hugely influential leader for the Whigs. Fox’s career was defined by his rivalry with the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger (1759–1806), his passionate opposition to George III, who he viewed as a tyrant, and his outspoken support for the abolition of slavery, and the French Revolution. Fox was a larger-than-life character, whose colourful life (gambling, mistresses, and general loose living) was as bold and brash as his continued defence of liberty within Parliament. Whilst Coke and Fox shared their passions for liberty and the American Revolution, Martins notes, wryly, that “it may well be that Coke’s friendship was cultivated by the penniless Fox because Holkham was known for the quality of its shooting and the excellence of its library, rather than for appreciation of Coke’s political abilities”, and the Holkham Game Books show Fox frequently shooting there.⁵⁷⁷ To this should be added Coke’s financial resources. Coke was, despite his aforementioned debts, fairly solvent. His debts might have hampered expenditure on major projects, such as the Hall itself, but there was more than enough, especially compared to the impecunious Fox, to help his friends. In 1793 he was one of the group trying to raise money to clear Fox’s debts.

Coke was loyal to Fox throughout his political life. As a young man, within two months of entering Parliament he was offered a peerage to lure him over to the supporters of

⁵⁷⁵ Leonard & Garnett, 2019, xii.

⁵⁷⁶ See for instance Mitchell, 1992, and Leonard & Garnett, 2019.

⁵⁷⁷ Martins, 2009, 41.

(the Tory) Lord North, but he refused it, declaring loyalty to Fox.⁵⁷⁸ Multiple letters from Fox to Coke survive, written during the 1780s, requesting he comes to London from Holkham to support Fox's bills in Parliament.⁵⁷⁹ In 1784, his loyalty to Fox even cost him his seat as an MP. At this election, Fox's great rival, Pitt, returned a landslide victory. Fox, who had just finished a disastrous coalition in power with his former enemy Lord North, had lost the trust of the people. Coupled with the Crown's willingness to bribe boroughs (George III loathed Fox as much as Fox loathed him), the counties returned only one Foxite candidate. Coke "was one of a group who had suffered as a result of Fox's miscalculations and who came to be known as Fox's martyrs".⁵⁸⁰ The popular name was a play on *Foxe's Martyrs*, a sixteenth-century work by John Foxe on the martyrdom of the Protestant faithful at the hands of the Catholics. The allusion is doubly clever given the Catholic associations of the Jacobites, the staunch (mostly Tory) opponents of the early Whigs and of the Hanoverian succession. The frontispiece (Figure 143) of a satirical pamphlet styles the loss very much in Roman terms, calling the Foxites 'Senators', and placing busts of Fox and his friends on an inscribed, classical tomb monument. The monument is inscribed *His saltem accumulem donis et fungar [inani] munere*, a quotation from *Aeneid* Book VI, where the 'future' loss of Marcellus is mourned.⁵⁸¹ Marcellus, the heir of his uncle, Augustus, died young and his loss represents the dashing of future hopes and apparent certainty. It translates as "let me at least bestow [on him] these last offerings and discharge a vain and unavailing duty".⁵⁸² This quotation, from Aeneas's visit to the underworld, became a commonplace on grave inscriptions, and further lampoons the 'death' of the martyrs and their membership of Parliament. It would be another six years before Coke regained his seat.⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 43.

⁵⁸¹ It is, theoretically, a future loss, at the time of Aeneas, anticipated in the Underworld scene. At the time Virgil was writing, however, Marcellus was already dead.

⁵⁸² Stone, 2013, 260.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 44.

Despite the loss and Fox's own death in 1806, his faithful supporters remained loyal. The 6th Duke of Bedford (1766–1839) and Sir Henry Bunbury (1778–1860) both named a child after him – Charles James Fox Russell (b.1807) and Charles James Fox Bunbury (b.1809) respectively. At Holkham, Fox is commemorated in a commission by John Opie (1761–1807), a full-length painted portrait of 1804. It was initially hung in the Saloon, in a pair with Coke's own portrait by Gainsborough. Another Whig friend, Lord Crewe (1742–1829), left a portrait by Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) of Fox to Coke in his will during the 1820s.⁵⁸⁴ Fox's painted portrait was commonplace in Foxite houses. Coke was, however, also one of the many Whig grandees who owned a copy of the famous bust of Fox by Joseph Nollekens (Figure 144). It was in sculpture, rather than painting, that a true posthumous 'cult' to Fox grew up in Whig country houses. We shall see this famous bust again in the Chapter 7, at Petworth, as well as in Chapter 8, at Woburn Abbey. It was also a key element in many Whig houses, notably including the mausoleum to Lord Rockingham, in the gardens of Wentworth Woodhouse. Commissioned in 1783 by his heir, Rockingham's image was accompanied by busts of Fox, and their political associates. The original bust on which all of these images were based was commissioned by a Foxite, Earl Fitzwilliam (1748-1833). He eventually ceded it to none other than Catherine the Great of Russia, who was charmed by Fox's persuading Pitt (in one of his famously eloquent speeches) not to interfere in the Russo-Turkish war of 1777-1778. She placed it between busts of the orators Demosthenes and Cicero.⁵⁸⁵ Catherine would order a further eleven busts of Fox, and commissions from the Whigs flooded in during Fox's lifetime and after his death.⁵⁸⁶ The Whigs used mutual reference points to rally around. The Glorious Revolution and the Hanoverian Succession/Jacobite Uprising formed such touchstones in art and symbolism during the eighteenth century. Penny has argued that, in the early nineteenth century, as time moved forward and no such Whiggish victories emerged to replace the earlier ones, Fox acted as a uniting cultic figure. Until the Reform Act of 1832 (the occasion of Coke's

⁵⁸⁴ Holkham Blog Post 'Collecting Charles James Fox'.

⁵⁸⁵ Penny, 1976, 95

⁵⁸⁶ MacLeod, 2018, 74.

retirement), he provided another Whig “common reference point” for “the coherence of the party”.⁵⁸⁷

At Woburn, Nollekens’ Fox was placed with his compatriots in a specially constructed temple, as we shall explore. At Holkham he was, once again, not alone. Coke also appears to have commissioned three other busts by Nollekens. His neighbour and electoral partner, William Windham, of Felbrigg Hall (1750–1810, Figure 145), fellow Whig politician the Marquess of Hastings (1754–1826, Figure 146), and the 5th Duke of Bedford (1765–1802, Figure 147).⁵⁸⁸ All the busts are similarly draped in classical attire. We will return to this Nollekens bust of Bedford in the chapter on Woburn Abbey, but he also has resonance here as another ostentatiously mourned figure with a sculptural following.⁵⁸⁹ The young Francis, 5th Duke, was a Whig luminary and close friend of Fox who died unexpectedly at a young age in 1802, just four years before Fox. His passing was mourned by the Whigs and is reflected in their art collections.⁵⁹⁰ An electoral song from 1802, called *Britannia’s Triumph*, written in praise of Coke, includes a verse on the Duke of Bedford.

Recounting these Virtues his noble Compeer

Comes fresh to my mind and enforces a tear –

‘Tis Bedford’s late Duke, who so greatly display’d

The character living, I here have portray’d

O generous Britons! Be grateful and true,

*Preserve his lov’d memory ever in view.*⁵⁹¹

Coke’s classicised companions play into established visual systems of Whiggery. Francis, Duke of Bedford, is an instantly recognisable signifier, linking Coke to his peers in the

⁵⁸⁷ Penny, 1976, 105.

⁵⁸⁸ Guilding, 2014, 11.

⁵⁸⁹ His bust by Nollekens appears in a cast at Shugborough during the nineteenth century too.

⁵⁹⁰ We also saw a copy of this bust at Shugborough, added to the collection by Thomas Anson’s descendants, themselves linked by marriage to Coke of Holkham.

⁵⁹¹ Norfolk Record Office, MC 3243/72/2.

same way that the ubiquitous head of Fox does. The other busts are tied to broader Whig networks too. Coke's bust of William Windham is also present at Windham's own house, Felbrigg, in two forms: one by Nollekens in Windham's tomb monument in the church, and another copy by Sebastian Gahagan (1779–1838) within the house. Windham's closeness to Coke is demonstrated by their long career of standing together at elections.⁵⁹² Similarly, the bust of Hastings is a copy of one commissioned from Nollekens by the Prince Regent, a close friend and ally of Hastings, who had many of his circle sculpted in bust format for Carlton House. Visually, the Whig insider visiting Holkham could make these connections with their social circle and its patronage of Nollekens.⁵⁹³ The busts represent the four pillars of Coke's own Whiggery: the Norfolk Whigs, the Prince's Whig cadre, the Foxites and the hereditary close-knit upper echelons of the Whig establishment. There was also a steady stream of tourists to whom the Whig supremacy might be portrayed, and the house seems to have been well-visited during Coke's lifetime. One guidebook notes that "Holkham House is open for general inspection on Tuesdays only except to Foreigners and Artists", and that those wishing to view at another time must apply to Coke himself "who has never refused his permission".⁵⁹⁴ The Whig aggrandisement had, therefore, 'internal' audiences (social intimates) and 'external' ones (tourists).

Coke's classical busts are not entirely his own device (although one supposes he could have asked Nollekens for contemporary dress), being driven by existing models, but he cleverly spread them round the house, integrating them with his great-uncle's ancient portraits (Fox, for instance, was in the Saloon with emperors), a system obscured by their grouping in the Vestibule in the present day. As we will see with Petworth and Woburn, it was a favourite pastime of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Whig grandees to integrate their friends and family with ancient busts. Previous case

⁵⁹² Norfolk election literature often considers them as a unit. See, for example, Norfolk Record Office, GTN 5/9/6 a speech by the opposition of 1807 which treats them as one and calls them "utterly unfit to represent the country of Norfolk".

⁵⁹³ Coke also had a Chantry head of Napoleon displayed near Fox (himself an early admirer of Bonaparte). The Whig enthusiasm (or ambivalence) for Napoleon will be addressed further in Chapter 8.

⁵⁹⁴ Cromwell, 1818, 194.

studies have either made ancient persons the stand-in for a modern figure (e.g., Stourhead), had a wholly ancient gallery to be read as ancestral (e.g., Farnborough) or created bespoke new ‘ancients’ who strongly evoke eighteenth-century society (e.g. Kedleston). Where the old and the new are mixed, their elision has not, until now, been seamless. The way in which the Whig set across the turn of the century unconcernedly merge the ancient and the modern, commissioning new busts to set off their antiquities, is almost entirely new. It has its antecedent in Rysbrack’s Robert Walpole at Houghton, mirroring his imperial companions, although even there the anachronism of the Garter Star peeps through.

At the end of his career, retiring with the Reform Act and soon to be ennobled with his great-uncle’s lapsed title, Coke chose one more particularly Whiggish commission. Chantrey created him a relief of the signing of Magna Carta (Figure 148) for the Marble Hall.⁵⁹⁵ Magna Carta was considered a great exemplar of liberty, and thanks to the heavy involvement of the medieval aristocracy, it was enthusiastically co-opted by the oligarchical Whigs.⁵⁹⁶ Coke, in his Magna Carta scene, added to his collection of Whig portraiture with some small relief depictions of his political allies and friends. Earl Grey (1764–1845), Coke himself, Coke’s son Thomas (1822–1909), and other close friends, most of them regular visitors to Holkham, are the knights.⁵⁹⁷ King William IV (1765–1837) might be read into King John’s face. As Mitchell has put it, the Whig sense of being personally linked to a glorious past was “overpowering”.⁵⁹⁸ Nowhere is this so pronounced as in Coke’s addition to, and redisplay of, his country house.

6.8 Conclusions: Holkham

Holkham remains crammed with antiquities to this day. Of its numerous portrait busts, any single one could furnish a study of its own. A chapter could, for instance, be devoted

⁵⁹⁵ Magna Carta is relevant here, due to the portrait heads within it, but was also accompanied by reliefs of the trial of Socrates and the death of Germanicus, drawing upon appropriate moments from the classical past relating to the Whig theme of liberty. Guilding, 2014, 137.

⁵⁹⁶ Ayres, 1997, 3.

⁵⁹⁷ The relief is explicitly medieval in its formation, but Moore (1992, 149) calls it *William IV Signing the Reform Bill*.

⁵⁹⁸ Mitchell, 2005, 149.

to the Holkham Thucydides in isolation. Scholars have waxed lyrical about this piece, ruminating on “so powerful and defiant... the expression of the proudly erect head...the mouth with the haughtily crisped upper lip”, as Poulsen gushingly describes it.⁵⁹⁹ There is, however, something to be gained from seeing the standout pieces within their wider context, as part of a whole collection.

For all that, complex Virgilian readings of Thomas’s statues seem to overreach the collection’s material reality, Angelicoussis has it correctly when she states that “[at Holkham] as never again in England, has there been such concerted thought and effort applied to the arrangement of classical antiquities, so as to provide a singular insight into the mind of one of the most fascinating and original individuals of the eighteenth century”.⁶⁰⁰ My addition to her argument is not just to emphasise the primacy of busts, but also that of Coke. Whilst not a connoisseur in the same vein as his great-uncle, Coke’s contribution was to emphasise the connection between ancient and modern, eliding the Whigs with their glorious past, bringing together the living and the dead in service of political ends.⁶⁰¹

A similar two-generation study of a refined collector and an heir ‘re-tuning’ the collection to the early nineteenth century, can also be seen at our next case study, Petworth in West Sussex, another of the pre-eminent Whig houses in England.

⁵⁹⁹ Poulsen, 1929, 27. He claims it is the “earliest individual portrait in Greek art”. See also Michaelis, 1882, *The Holkham Thucydides*. The Holkham head, originally called Metrodorus is widely recognised/cited as a particularly fine portrait. The quality of much of the Holkham collection is extremely high.

⁶⁰⁰ Angelicoussis, 2001, 78.

⁶⁰¹ Mitchell, 2005, 28-9.

Chapter 7: Petworth House

In 1834, the celebrated English landscape artist, John Constable (1776–1837), wrote to his friend and fellow painter, Charles Leslie the Elder (1794–1859), declaring his envy for Leslie’s stay at Petworth House, in West Sussex (Figure 149). He declared, “how I long to be again in that house of art where you are now”.⁶⁰² Today, the house is best known for its collection of Old Masters and its links to Constable, J.M.W Turner (1775–1851), and various other famous nineteenth-century painters, who were frequent visitors to ‘the house of art’ in the time of the 3rd Earl of Egremont (1751–1837). The large collection of art at Petworth, which Constable would have seen during his stays, was not, however, limited to painted works. Petworth’s collection of antique sculpture is extensive, but has received less study, despite being one of the most important such assemblages of the eighteenth century.⁶⁰³ In fact, Christopher Rowell, introducing the National Trust guidebook to Petworth, suggests that Petworth has the Trust’s finest collection of sculpture.⁶⁰⁴ Furthermore, the large quantity of antiquities presents a vivid picture of its collector, the 2nd Earl of Egremont (1710–1763), the father of Constable’s patron, and the reinvention of an established eighteenth-century family. In parallel to the situation at Holkham, the collection was then changed and re-arranged by his heir, the 3rd Earl. The generational evolution of the house allows us to analyse the relationship of the 3rd Earl with the collection, as well as the changes to the display and meaning of ancient sculpture at Petworth across a period of over seventy years.

7.1 The Earls of Egremont

Understanding the collection at Petworth requires an explanation of the quite complex history of the property, the ownership changes it went through due to inheritance, and the Wyndham family, who were to become the collectors at Petworth.⁶⁰⁵ A house is first recorded on the current site in 1150, when the Manor of Petworth was granted to

⁶⁰² C.R. Leslie’s *Life of Constable*, cited by Rowell, 1997, 4.

⁶⁰³ Scott, 2003, 123.

⁶⁰⁴ Rowell, 1997, 4.

⁶⁰⁵ The Wyndhams are related to the Windhams of Felbrigg, referenced in Chapter 6 as Whig allies of Coke of Norfolk.

Jocelyn de Louvain (c.1121–1180), by his sister, Henry I's (c.1068–1135) widow, Queen Adeliza (c.1103–1151). The gift was on the occasion of his marriage to Agnes de Percy (d.1203), heiress of the Percy family, who would own the house for the next several centuries.⁶⁰⁶ The family developed and added to the estate and property over time and, eventually, a Tudor manor house was built which stood until the seventeenth century. The transformation of that house and its gardens was initiated by another heiress marrying outside the family. Elizabeth Percy (1667-1722), granddaughter and sole heiress of the 11th Earl of Northumberland (1644-1670), married the 6th Duke of Somerset (1662-1748), known by his peers as the 'Proud Duke', in 1682, bringing the Percy fortune and lands to him.⁶⁰⁷ He built a new stately home at Petworth, to be the family seat of what was now one of the richest families in England. This was part of a new generation of Whig powerhouses being built or rebuilt at this time, which included Cliveden for the Duke of Buckingham (1628–1687), and Chatsworth for the Duke of Devonshire (1640–1707). Of these Whig magnates, the Duke of Somerset was perhaps “the most absurdly arrogant member of the peerage”, famed for cutting the inheritance of one daughter who dared fall asleep in his presence, and reminding his second wife, Charlotte (1693-1773), that her predecessor, Elizabeth Percy, had been far more well-bred than she.⁶⁰⁸

Although the Duke and Duchess had several daughters, there was only one surviving son, Algernon (1684-1749), who was in perpetual poor health, and their only grandson through him died prematurely. Nor did the Proud Duke's second marriage, after Elizabeth's death, produce any male heirs. Not anticipating any further issue from his male heir, the Proud Duke planned, in his own lifetime, for the division of his property and titles when his son died.⁶⁰⁹ The complex Seymour family tree, explaining these connections, is outlined in Figure 150. Algernon, the 7th Duke of Somerset, did not long

⁶⁰⁶ The agency of two female figures in this story of inheritance/gift of property is key, especially when linked to the Earls of Egremont later on. Jocelyn took the Percy name on his marriage.

⁶⁰⁷ Rowell, 2012, 6.

⁶⁰⁸ Saumarez-Smith, 1997, 20.

⁶⁰⁹ Anticipating the division of his titles and estates, without a direct male heir for his son, the 6th Duke of Somerset split the inheritance of the Percy-Seymour estates in a legal entailment to which his son was obliged to keep.

outlive his father, and the dynastic planning that had taken place ensured that, whilst the title of Duke of Somerset passed to a distant cousin, the ‘bulk’ of the Proud Duke’s property and wealth was split between two of his grandchildren. The extensive Northumberland estates, the principal Percy lands, were given to another Elizabeth (1716-1776), Algernon’s only surviving child. Her husband, Hugh Smythson (c.1714–1786) took on the Percy name as part of this agreement. Hugh and Elizabeth were to become the first Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, patrons of the arts and collectors of antiquities. Their sculptures were displayed at Syon House in London, designed by Robert Adam. Interestingly, when looking at the family awareness of lineage, their nineteenth-century descendants commissioned a family tree of painted roundels, stretching from Charlemagne (747-814, claimed as a Percy forerunner) to Jocelyn and Agnes, (Figure 151, at Syon House) then the Proud Duke and his first Duchess, Hugh and Elizabeth and into the nineteenth century (Figure 152, at Syon House). This memorialisation of the family tree was, I will argue, paralleled at Petworth in a more subtle, sculptural fashion.

Whilst Elizabeth Percy received most of the large Percy-Somerset inheritance, the Sussex lands, and the subsidiary title of Earl of Egremont passed to Charles Wyndham, who became 2nd Earl of Egremont (Algernon had been the 1st Earl). This ‘portion’ contained Petworth itself. Wyndham was the 7th Duke’s nephew, and a favoured grandson of the Proud Duke. Charles, despite his immense wealth and his high-ranking governmental positions, is something of a neglected figure in the history of eighteenth-century politics. The prevailing view of him has been determined by Horace Walpole’s assessment that he was:

*A composition of pride, ill-nature, avarice and strict good breeding,
with such infirmity in his frame that he could not speak truth on the
most trivial occasion. He has humour and did not want sense: but he*

*had neither knowledge of business, nor the smallest share of parliamentary abilities.*⁶¹⁰

This dismissal, by Walpole, and indeed modern historians, discounts the fact that in 1757 Earl Temple (1711-1779) declared him “destined to be another Pitt”, whom he then succeeded in 1762 as Secretary of State for the Southern Department (essentially this post was a forerunner of Foreign Secretary).⁶¹¹ He was part of a powerful triumvirate with his brother-in-law, George Grenville (1712–1770), and Lord Halifax (1716-1771), which was only ended by Egremont’s death in 1763.⁶¹² He was a capable politician, who survived changing sides in the ideological Whig-Tory feud, but only held the title of 2nd Earl of Egremont for thirteen years, from 1750 to his death. Nonetheless, he instituted a remarkable change at Petworth and is an early example of eighteenth-century collecting and the fashion for portrait bust antiquities.

Charles was born the son of Lady Catherine Seymour (1693-1731), the Proud Duke’s daughter, and Sir William Wyndham, Baronet of Orchard Wyndham, in Somerset. William was a distinguished Tory politician, first elected as an MP in 1710, who then became Master of the Queen’s Buckhounds, before serving as Secretary of War and Chancellor of the Exchequer under Queen Anne.⁶¹³ He became more of a controversial figure under the Hanoverians, enduring a spell in prison for support of the Jacobite Rising in 1715. Throughout his career, William was an acolyte of the “arch-Tory”, Lord Bolingbroke (see Chapter 2), and became leader of the Tory opposition in Parliament when Bolingbroke fled to France.⁶¹⁴ He was involved in two failed attempts to bring the Pretender to England, in 1715 and 1716, though on Bolingbroke’s advice he appears to have cooled his (visible) Jacobite support thereafter.⁶¹⁵ He suffered ignominy from his Jacobite compatriots for voluntarily surrendering to the government forces during the first uprising, as he believed his father-in-law could secure a pardon.⁶¹⁶ The Proud Duke

⁶¹⁰ Walpole, 2015, 272.

⁶¹¹ Rowell, 2012, 50.

⁶¹² Ibid., 53.

⁶¹³ Jackson-Stops, 1973, 5. Wyndham, 1950, 41.

⁶¹⁴ Craske, 2007, 10.

⁶¹⁵ History of Parliament Online, William Wyndham.

⁶¹⁶ Wyndham, 1950, 57.

had assumed a tacit pardon was in order, and was appalled by the subsequent arrest of his son-in-law. He instructed his servants to shoot all the ‘rubbish’ of his association with Court, which included his insignia as Master of the Horse, in the courtyard of St James’s Palace.⁶¹⁷ The incident was, therefore, a rather famous one, and Sir William had not covered himself in glory by the reckoning of either side. Nonetheless, Alexander Pope, the Tory writer and intellectual, wrote on Wyndham’s death that “if I see any man merry within a week of this death, I will affirm him no true patriot”.⁶¹⁸ Swift, another Tory writer, thought so fondly of Wyndham that he modelled Guldahm, a “true patriot” of “senatorial dignity” within the Lilliput Senate of *Gulliver’s Travels*, on Wyndham.⁶¹⁹

Whilst Sir William played no part in collecting at Petworth, as it was still a Seymour possession at this stage, it is important to consider his career in depth. The staunch Toryism explains the lengths his son was to go to, in order to reinvent himself as Whig. Charles, William’s eldest son, was educated at Westminster and Oxford, and undertook a Grand Tour between 1728 and 1730. Bolingbroke appears to have been a pivotal avuncular figure to Charles, offering advice and hospitality in France throughout his youth.⁶²⁰

Yet early evidence suggests Charles was turning from Tory to Whig well before he was in line for his grandfather’s estates. In 1730, Charles was on the Grand Tour and travelled for a time through northern Italy with George Lyttleton (1709–1773), the son of a prominent Whig politician and a future Whig and Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. George and Charles had been contemporaries at Christ Church, Oxford, and Lyttleton wrote to his father of Charles:

*Mr Windham [sic] came with me all the way and I assure you is a very good Whig as well as a very pretty Gentleman. How far his Father’s authority may force him to change his sentiments when he comes to England I cannot tell.*⁶²¹

⁶¹⁷ Rowell, 2012, 49.

⁶¹⁸ Jackson-Stops, 1973, 6.

⁶¹⁹ Wyndham, 1950, 98.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 109.

⁶²¹ Boulton & McLoughlin, 2012, 71.

Charles was first elected an MP in 1735, for Bridgwater in Somerset, and voted with the Tories, though Hugh Wyndham, a descendant writing several centuries later, describes him as “a rather tepid recruit”, with Whig leanings.⁶²² After the death of his father, however, in 1740, and then Robert Walpole’s fall from power in 1742, Wyndham switched allegiances and began to vote with the Whig administration. Wyndham’s new loyalty was such that Horace Walpole records in 1744:

*... yesterday the King sent a message to both Houses to acquaint us that he has certain information of the Young Pretender being in France, and of the designed invasion from thence, in concert with the disaffected here. Immediately the Duke of Marlborough, who most handsomely and seasonably was come to town on purpose, moved for an address to assure the King of standing by him with lives and fortunes. Lord Hartington, seconded by Sir Charles Windham [sic] the convert son of Sir William, moved the same in our House.*⁶²³

This was a significant about-face for the son of a Jacobite, and may have been because he had expectations of his grandfather’s inheritance arrangement, knowing his uncle, the 7th Duke, had no male heirs. Clay notes that it is unlikely that the Duke of Somerset would have allowed his daughter to marry a relatively minor country squire such as Sir William, especially given his politics, had he known she would be an heiress to his estate.⁶²⁴ He had not expected the failure of the male line, and once this became apparent, he may have already, within his lifetime, begun moulding his grandson, Charles, rectifying the Jacobite stain on the family, having lost his only grandson from the 7th Duke in 1744. By 1747, Charles’ changed politics necessitated a new parliamentary seat, and he became MP for Taunton.⁶²⁵ Three years later, he married Alicia Carpenter (1726-1794), daughter of Whig MP Lieutenant Colonel George Carpenter.⁶²⁶ This was an extremely advantageous marriage, in ideological terms.

⁶²² Ibid., 93.

⁶²³ Yale Online Library of Walpole’s Correspondence.

⁶²⁴ Clay, 1968, 506.

⁶²⁵ Previously he had been MP for Appleby. History of Parliament Online, Charles Wyndham.

⁶²⁶ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online, George Carpenter.

Baron Carpenter had been raised to the peerage for his role in the 1715 uprising, during which he was one of the senior commanders of the Whig/Hanoverian forces against the Jacobites.⁶²⁷ It was this same uprising which had proved so ignominious for Charles' father.⁶²⁸ In the year of his marriage, Charles also inherited the Earldom of Egremont on the death of his uncle. This was a chance to re-invent himself, with politics, marriage and property coming together to present a new identity as a Whig peer, joining his grandfather's hereditary associates.

Charles wasted no time ingratiating himself at the highest level. On his accession to the Earldom, he struck up a friendship and correspondence with the Duke of Newcastle (1693–1768), which was to pay dividends and last for several decades. In 1749, the Duke wrote to congratulate Charles on his new title and stated that “[I] live upon the hope of the most intimate friendship with you”.⁶²⁹ This intimacy brought a great reward five years later. Newcastle, who became the (Whig) Prime Minister, in March 1754, had by December brought the Earl into his inner circle, writing to him:

*I have the great satisfaction to acquaint your lordship that the King is pleased, in the most gracious manner to approve my humble proposal of summoning your lordship to the Privy Council. I flatter myself that this is the beginning of a close connection between your lordship and the King's servants...*⁶³⁰

Egremont's reply is contained within the same bundle of letters and assures Newcastle of his concern to assist in what “may best contribute to the Ease of His Majesty's reign, the welfare of His family and the publick good”. The son of a Tory rogue had gone from a political nobody to a Privy Councillor in less than a decade. Such a sharp about-face and elevation of status required a country seat to match, and Petworth would play a crucial

⁶²⁷ History of Parliament Online, George Carpenter. Carpenter was ennobled as Lord Tyrconnell, and the same correspondent who spoke affectionately of Robert Walpole's steadiness to his friends in Chapter 1.

⁶²⁸ Alicia's Whig/Court credentials continued to be an asset, and she was made a Lady of the Bedchamber for Queen Charlotte in 1761.

⁶²⁹ National Archives, PRO 30/47/28.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

role in the evolution of his new image. A plan from the Petworth archives, dated 1752, shows that by this time he had already engaged Capability Brown to remodel the grounds.⁶³¹ The additions made to Petworth Park include fashionable 'Pleasure Grounds', a serpentine lake, and an Orangery. With regards to the house itself, Egremont, whilst retaining the external architectural works of the Proud Duke, began to update and re-furnish the property, and engaged the architect Matthew Brettingham (Senior), who had, at the time, recently made his name at Holkham.

7.2 Description of Petworth

Petworth's external character remains largely unchanged from the early eighteenth century, when the Proud Duke, inspired by the Palace of Versailles, employed a French architect, potentially Daniel Marot (1661-1752), to remodel the existing house for him.⁶³² The house is a three hundred and twenty-two feet long rectangle, in the baroque architectural style, and comprises three storeys in local ashlar and Portland Stone, with twenty-one windows and a variety of cornices, pilasters and ornamental panels decorating the north and south sides.⁶³³ Onto the north side, the 6th Duke had an open loggia built, which Charles Wyndham was to have glazed and fully integrated into his house as a purpose-built sculpture gallery. Horace Walpole wrote of his visit to Petworth in August 1749 (before the 2nd Earl's works commenced), that:

*We were charmed with the magnificence of the park at Petworth, which is Percy to the backbone; but the house and garden did not please our antiquarian spirit. The house is entirely new-fronted in the style of the Tuilleries, and furnished exactly like Hampton Court. There is one room gloriously flounced all round whole-length pictures with much the finest carving of Gibbins that ever eyes beheld...*⁶³⁴

⁶³¹ Jackson-Stops, 1973, 49.

⁶³² Historic England entry on Petworth.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ Yale Library of Horace Walpole's Correspondence Online.

Petworth is, however, absent from many popular travel accounts of the period. This is probably due to the 2nd Earl's death in 1763. Country house travel was in its infancy before the 1760s, and many popular, printed travelogues were written after this date. The long intervening years before the Earl's son, twelve years old at his father's death, re-opened the house and reached majority, were arguably the peak years of eighteenth-century travel writing. It is also possible that, rather than being a 'public-facing' house, to which tourists were encouraged, like Kedleston Hall, Petworth remained a symbol and spectacle for extended family, peers and high society.⁶³⁵

7.3 The 2nd Earl of Egremont as Collector

Matthew Brettingham the Elder's primary engagement at Petworth was to enclose and remodel the external arcade, in order to form a new sculpture gallery (see Figures 153 and 154 for how it looks today). To furnish this, Brettingham Junior was commissioned, on the basis of his collecting work for Holkham and the recommendation of his father. Brettingham took charge of much of the purchasing of antique sculpture for Lord Egremont between 1755 and 1763.⁶³⁶ It seems that 1755 was the advent of Egremont's classical plans, and marks his first purchase of antiquities: a bust of Isis at the sale of the London collector, Dr Mead.⁶³⁷ Despite the five-year interval between his inheritance and the start of his collecting, Egremont was already versed in the classical culture of eighteenth-century England, and had been elected a member of the Society of Dilettanti in 1742.⁶³⁸ It is in the collaboration with the Brettinghams that we see Egremont's primary influence, Thomas, Earl of Leicester. Thomas, whose collection we have just examined in the preceding chapter, was to become a good friend of Egremont, following his political about-face, and thus Charles made the choice to work with his architect.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁵ Despite this, we know Petworth did receive tourists, and the Oak Staircase entrance, rather than the grand Marble Hall, has been a tourist entrance since 1734 and remains the visitor entrance today.

⁶³⁶ Rowell, 2012, 53.

⁶³⁷ Scott, 2003, 124.

⁶³⁸ Fraser, 1874, 8.

⁶³⁹ Guilding, 2014, 98. Egremont also stayed at Holkham in 1757, and would have seen Leicester and Brettingham's works there.

Leicester, who had joined the Dilettanti the year before in 1741, offered perhaps the perfect model on which to base Egremont's antiquarian additions for Petworth. He was an undisputed Whig luminary, showing off his taste, erudition and money by the integration of large amounts of high-quality sculpture shipped from Rome to adorn his country house.

At the time of Charles' inheritance of both Petworth and his title, he had no useful connections with the Hanoverian court or government, and "had a particular need to stamp his new country seat with the visible symbols of his altered status, as a recruit to the Whig party's Roman world".⁶⁴⁰ We know the relationship between Holkham and Petworth also went the other way, with Thomas purchasing plaster casts of two Petworth busts then known as Faustina and Ptolemy.⁶⁴¹ Joining the Whig elite as an adult, Charles Wyndham needed to style himself in the manner of his peers, and "set the seal upon his political ascendancy".⁶⁴² Perhaps, he also needed to prove himself the equal of his cousin, Elizabeth, and her fine new house at Syon, with its impressive classical sculptures.

Between 1755 and his death in 1763, Egremont engaged in a flurry of antiquities buying, through Brettingham Junior and the artist-dealer Gavin Hamilton (1723–1798) at Rome. Egremont also used the agency and restoration of the sculptor Bartolomeo Cavaceppi, "the most celebrated restorer of the eighteenth century" in Rome, who was famous for making additions to change the identity of a sculptural fragment to what his patrons wanted.⁶⁴³ Several archival documents reference his input, for instance a note, of a bust "which Cavaceppi says is a Marcello", or an instance where Cavaceppi "says the *sacerdote* [statue of a priest] in particular is very fine". He was to have 100 crowns in 1760 for restoring sculptures, including a bust of Faustina the Younger.⁶⁴⁴ Sculpture was purchased from noble families in Italy, sometimes through

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 99. For discussion of why the Whigs felt particularly connected to *Romanitas*, see previous chapters.

⁶⁴¹ Kenworthy-Browne, 1983, 46.

⁶⁴² Ibid., 99.

⁶⁴³ Ramage, 2002, 64.

⁶⁴⁴ West Sussex Record Office, PHA 10988.

Cavaceppi or Carlo Albacini (1714–1813) from locations including the Barberini family’s palace, as well as those of the Cordelli and the Verospi families. The Egremont marbles are, therefore, linked to some of the leading agents, dealers, artists, and collectors of eighteenth-century Italy.

The Egremont collection has, I believe, several other distinctions which make it worthy of further study and exploration. Firstly, like Holkham, it remains largely intact at Petworth House, with minimal sales. Whilst Gustav Waagen, in 1855, noted the house had a considerable amount of antiquities, he declared that “being of no high order and chiefly restored works of the Roman time, I omit further mention [of them]”.⁶⁴⁵ Modern scholarship has, however, come to disagree with Waagen’s dismissal and Vermeule calls the Petworth collection one of “the finest such assemblages under one country house roof”.⁶⁴⁶ Furthermore, the sculpture was acquired relatively early on in the ‘heyday’ period of English antiquities collecting that took place in the second half of the eighteenth century. Hamilton, in fact, wrote to the Earl of Upper Ossory (1745–1818) in 1769 that “the statues that I used to buy for Lord Egremont for four or five hundred crowns now sell for a thousand at least”.⁶⁴⁷ Egremont was buying just as the fashion was taking off, and thus acquired a greater number of finer pieces than many later collectors who were ‘priced out’ as demand rose. Petworth’s fine collection of sculpture has been catalogued by Joachim Raeder, as part of the *Monumenta Artis Romanae* series.⁶⁴⁸

In addition, the collection has two distinct periods of formation and interpretation during the long eighteenth century: the 2nd Earl’s purchasing, and his son’s additions and re-display of the collection. We see, therefore, as at Holkham, changing attitudes to family sculpture galleries and the fashion of the antique, across a period of over seventy years. Finally, the collection is extremely interesting for its high numbers of portrait busts and the diversity of subjects represented, which will require further analysis later on.

⁶⁴⁵ Waagen, 1855, 32.

⁶⁴⁶ Vermeule, 1977, 2.

⁶⁴⁷ Bignamini & Hornsby, 2009, 9.

⁶⁴⁸ Raeder, 2000.

The 2nd Earl's interest in, and interaction with, his antique sculpture has, however, been in doubt since 1800, when James Dallaway, in his *Anecdotes of the Arts in England*, insisted that on Wyndham's death in 1763, "the cases containing the statues were not unpacked", and that some had not even been shipped from Italy.⁶⁴⁹ This assertion, although entirely baseless, was repeated by Michaelis in 1882, and has proved highly influential, being cited by scholars such as Vermeule, Kenworthy-Browne and Scott, as well as Charles's own descendant, Hugh Wyndham.⁶⁵⁰ In fact, Scott's assessment of the Earl's interest in his antiquities is particularly damning:

*It seems that the owner, who was a lavish spender, had taken a decision to copy Leicester's example at Holkham, and had given a free hand to Brettingham to form a collection on his behalf and to house it appropriately, but had not taken much personal interest in the process.*⁶⁵¹

There is a certain irony in the fact that Thomas, Earl of Leicester, is dismissed in studies of his own house as led by Burlington, Kent and the Brettings, and then held up in other instances as a model of tasteful autonomy on whom others relied. Archival material vindicates not only Thomas, but also Charles.

Papers from the Egremont collection show that the attention to what was bought, and from where, was meticulous. The decision-making process, far from being left to agents, seems to have been coordinated from Petworth. Detailed records were kept by the Earl's stewards. In the case of portraits or representations of deities, identification of the subject is also noted. Nor does the agency of Brettingham Junior (who in fact was in London for much of the time Egremont was collecting and worked closely with Gavin Hamilton in Rome to make purchases) mean that there was free rein given to the dealers, with little concern from the Earl. The archives show copies of Hamilton's letters were placed in the marble accounts and papers of the house, and Hamilton was clearly given direction, possibly by the Earl, on the quality and type of marbles he should be

⁶⁴⁹ Dallaway, 1800, 319.

⁶⁵⁰ Michaelis, 1882, 596. Vermeule, 1977, 2. Kenworthy-Browne, 1977, 9. Scott, 2003, 126. Wyndham, 1950, 169.

⁶⁵¹ Scott, 2003, 126.

purchasing. In June 1762, a year before the 2nd Earl's death, he wrote of a visit to Palazzo Gianetti near Rome, where he had hoped to purchase antiquities, "but to my great mortification out of 50 antiquities I have not been able to pick out one thing that could merit a place in His Lordship's collection".⁶⁵² This suggests the exacting standards of the Earl and his expectations of Hamilton.

Had anything been 'worthy', then doubtless Hamilton would have purchased or put it forward to the Earl. A princely collection carried 'kudos' as a provenance for the antiquities. Provenance is clearly important for the Petworth marbles, and numerous references are made throughout inventories and notes in the archives to where pieces have been sourced. A document listing the sculptures by room, with their valuations, has a provenance for each statue. A head of Galba is listed as from 'Dr Mead', coming from the 1755 sale of Dr Mead's collection. Similarly, the Palazzo Barberini, Palazzo Farnese and Palazzo Verospi are noted for many items, a prestigious origin in the homes of Italy's leading noble families.⁶⁵³ Figures 155 and 156 are two of the archival lists which demonstrate this notation of provenance. Even when the sculpture is a cast, the location of the original is noted. Egremont's interest in his sculptures' pedigrees further illuminates the importance of the Petworth marbles to their owner.

7.4 Portrait Busts at Petworth

Having given an overview of the Petworth antiquities, I now wish to focus on the portrait busts. The collection of busts at Petworth is best known in the scholarly record through the aforementioned monograph by Raeder, and in English, through the work Dallaway and Michaelis, whose cataloguing has recurred throughout the preceding chapters. Comparing these two accounts, as well as the National Trust's online catalogue of their portraits, presents a confusing picture. Michaelis does corroborate his own list with Dallaway's earlier work but cannot find several busts described by

⁶⁵² West Sussex Record Office, PHA10993.

⁶⁵³ West Sussex Record Office, PHA11001.

Dallaway.⁶⁵⁴ Yet several of Dallaway's busts, which are not in the list by Michaelis, can be linked to items in the National Trust collection of Petworth, so it seems reasonable to use Dallaway's extra figures. Despite this, Dallaway himself appears to have been confused at points, and often did not create his own notes first-hand. For example, he describes the same statue at Petworth twice, as two separate pieces in the collection, once as Ceres, and once as Agrippina.⁶⁵⁵ Due to the remarkable survival of the collection without sales, the National Trust's inventory supersedes both these accounts, and I have used it in tandem with an account by Margaret Wyndham (1879-1965), daughter of the 2nd Baron Leconfield (1830-1901), published in 1915, upon which Raeder also drew for his catalogue.

Whilst a far later source, Margaret's comprehensive listing matches sculptures up with Dallaway and Michaelis, noting absences and items they were unable to see. Margaret, who died unmarried and spent most of her life serving as Lady of the Bedchamber for Queen Mary (1867-1953), composed an extraordinarily thorough and technical catalogue of her father's collection, which was by this time in the hands of her brother, the 3rd Baron Leconfield (1872-1952). He receives a (likely undeserved) authorial credit in modern library listings of her work. The account is surprisingly detached, scholarly and dispassionate for someone who grew up in the house, with no references to family history bar acknowledgment of her great-great-grandfather and grandfather's collecting activities. A typical description is this, of a bust of Aelius Verus:

The whole is good work but sketchy; the flesh surfaces are smooth and contrast well with the rough treatment of the hair. The character of the man is shown more by the moulding of the muscles than by the treatment of the features. The irises are indicated plastically, the eyebrows are a slight roughness in the marble. The individual hairs are

⁶⁵⁴ Vermeule confirms that at the time of Michaelis's visit, some of these busts were being kept in London. Vermeule, 1977, 10. Several omissions also seem to be a result of Michaelis's own scholarly superiority – i.e., he cannot find a bust of Didia Clara mentioned by Dallaway because he lists it as Julia Pia, and does not appear to have countenanced that his predecessor in cataloguing would have thought of it as Clara.

⁶⁵⁵ Wyndham, 1915, xviii.

*incised here and there on the curls of the beard and give the impression of soft hair.*⁶⁵⁶

Despite the lack of anecdotes or references to her immediate family, Margaret's thorough work and first-hand knowledge of the collection nonetheless allow a more secure assessment of the collection. The numbers, derived from Wyndham and the National Trust, checked against Michaelis, Dallaway and Raeder, immediately demonstrate one remarkable thing about the busts: just how many there are of historical/quasi-historical figures, and ordinary citizens, rather than deities and mythical heroes. Whilst the collection does contain several mythical heroes and gods, such as the celebrated 'Leconfield Aphrodite' head, the numbers are vastly skewed towards emperors, empresses, statesmen, athletes, matrons, and children.

This breaks down into a surprising division by gender, as can be seen in Table 5.⁶⁵⁷

Category	Numbers
Adult males	15 (plus six plaster casts of famous Greeks)
Youths (post-puberty but not bearded, and showing no visible indication of age)	8
Pre-pubescent boys	10
Women and girls (no pre-pubescent females in the collection)	20

Table 5: The Petworth Portrait Busts by Gender and Age.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 57.

⁶⁵⁷ My full list is that of Margaret Wyndham, plus one bust of a woman in Dallaway's account with flowers in her hair which Wyndham cannot find in the collection and which may have been sold. Bar this item, all portraits are identifiable at Petworth today. I have counted only bust or head format sculptures. For example, two seated male figures, given heads which did not belong to them, of Gallienus and Demosthenes, have not been counted in the data. Three of these busts, one man and two women, blur the lines between mythical heroes and historical heroes, and could be regarded either way.

Such division of numbers is rare in country house collections. Usually, we see imperial adult males disproportionately represented, at the expense of female and child busts, due to the preferences of the collectors for imperial figures and statesmen.

The gender and age dynamic of the Petworth busts leads me to further challenge Scott's insistence that Egremont was an unconcerned collector, in contrast to a more engaged patron, such as Leicester.⁶⁵⁸ Had Brettingham and Hamilton merely shipped what they could find, and what was to English country house taste, we would not see this diversity. I want to argue that the spread of age groups and the pre-eminence of women reflects Egremont's own family and his aspirations for how it was to be seen.

Women, in the Earl's family, were undoubtedly the ones from whom the fortune came. Elizabeth Percy, in marrying the Proud Duke, had brought Petworth to him. Her daughter, Catherine, who married William Wyndham, was the one whose blood ensured Charles' own inheritance. His cousin, another Elizabeth, had taken the bulk of the Percy land and estates. The transfer of portions of the Somerset inheritance via the female line was by no means inevitable. Despite the fact that, due to random biological chance, as Stone has demonstrated, families were not likely to be able to pass estates from father to son for more than one hundred years at a time, female inheritance or inheritance through the nearest and most direct female line, was not necessarily the usual outcome.⁶⁵⁹ After 1700, about a fifth of all transfers of seats were done outside the usual father-son model, tracing back to grandfathers and finding an appropriate heir that way. Often an estate might pass to a quite distant male relative (as the Somerset title had) rather than a daughter or heiress, due to family settlements or personal preference.⁶⁶⁰ That two women were the means through which Hugh Smythson and Charles Wyndham became peers and wealthy landowners is noteworthy. Further back, it was the Percy heiress who brought Petworth to Jocelyn of Louvain. Inheritance of a Whig pedigree through the female line need not be material, and Alicia, Wyndham's own wife, had brought credibility to counter his Jacobite origins by her own father's good

⁶⁵⁸ Scott, 2003, 209.

⁶⁵⁹ Stone, 1986, 269.

⁶⁶⁰ Clay, 1968, 511. Stone, 1986, 282.

reputations. Thus, descent through the female line and the importance of women in aristocratic dynasty and identity was key to the Wyndham-cum-Somerset-cum-Percy situation in which Egremont found himself. The women in Petworth's busts straddle the line between associative lineage and actual blood lineage, poised as proxies for real, historical women and general signifiers of a female-line inheritance.

Egremont's brother, Percy Wyndham, also benefited from female-line inheritance, becoming Earl of Thomond through his aunt. Another of the Proud Duke's daughters, Lady Elizabeth Seymour (1685–1734), had married the Irish peer Henry O'Brien, Earl of Thomond (1688-1741), and the marriage had no issue. After the premature death of a cousin meant to succeed the Earl, Percy, second son of William Wyndham and Catherine Seymour, inherited the titles and lands of his uncle by marriage. Charles and Percy appear to have been close, collaborating in Parliament (Percy was an MP) and Percy took guardianship of the young 3rd Earl of Egremont on his brother's death.⁶⁶¹ The two also shared patronage of Matthew Brettingham the Younger, and the Petworth archives contain Brettingham's twenty-eight-page poem, cited in Chapter 6. The poem is dedicated to Percy and his house, Shortgrove, which the younger Brettingham was employed to renovate. Their shared architectural and aesthetic tastes and the good relationship between Wyndhams and two generations of Brettinghams is encapsulated in the line:

Friend, our simple fathers, and their spouses

*Lov'd avenues and moated houses.*⁶⁶²

The 2nd Earl of Egremont, therefore, had a great deal of reason to celebrate female-line inheritance and a large family tree with many connections through aunts, uncles and adopted heirs. The connections of the Seymours, Percys and Wyndhams form a complex dynastic web, which is, I argue, reflected in the portrait sculpture of the house. Many of the women depicted in bust format at Petworth are nameless, listed as girls or matrons.

⁶⁶¹ History of Parliament Online, Percy Wyndham O'Brien.

⁶⁶² West Sussex Record Office, PHA675.

Yet some were, or still are, known by important imperial dynastic names: Faustina the Elder, wife of one emperor and mother of an empress, Sabina, wife of Hadrian, and great-niece of the emperor Trajan, and Julia Pia (Domna), wife of emperor Severus and mother of two emperors, as well as aunt to a further two (short-lived) emperors.

Archival papers refer to busts and statuary known then by the names of Lucilla, daughter, sister and wife of three emperors, as well as Agrippina the Elder, mother of the emperor Caligula, and lastly the younger Agrippina who would marry Emperor Claudius and herself be mother of Emperor Nero.⁶⁶³

Furthermore, adult women, passing lineage, titles and inheritance to their children, is not the only reading of female busts at Petworth. There are many adolescent women, and whilst the girls depicted at Petworth are not infants, the obvious youth of some of the busts can be read as evoking daughters, rather than mothers. So, with the adult males, adult females, youths and children, a familial unit is being formed – an extended one perhaps – of mothers and fathers, sons (both adolescent and infant) and daughters. Perhaps even, given the abundance of the busts, we might see different lines of the same family – daughters and sons and then their sons and daughters – being tacitly represented (see Figures 157, 158, 159 and 160 for a selection of the Petworth children). Notably, at Syon, Elizabeth and Hugh Percy also displayed a small selection of classical infant heads (see Figure 161). As we have already seen, both branches of this family were interested in the display of their impressive pedigree. The allusion to dynastic continuity through the presence of young children is a compelling nod to this.

Egremont and his agents appear to have been consciously selecting the female subjects, at the very least. In 1760, he paid 160 crowns for four busts from Lord Dartmouth.⁶⁶⁴ Of these, one was a male bust (Brutus the Elder) but three were dynastic Roman women, Agrippina Major, as discussed above, Julia Maesa (a dynastic schemer on behalf of her male relations during the Severan dynasty) and Faustina the Elder (see Chapter 5 for both Faustinas). The 2nd Baron of Dartmouth (1672-1750) was a fellow patron of

⁶⁶³ West Sussex Record Office, PHA 10988.

⁶⁶⁴ West Sussex Record Office, PHA 10995 & PHA 10989.

Brettingham the Younger, who had originally sold him the Faustina, Julia and Brutus.⁶⁶⁵ That Egremont bought these from Dartmouth, seven years after Dartmouth had them from Brettingham, suggests that he had specific purchases in mind and Brettingham was able to inform him where he might find them.⁶⁶⁶ Buying from Dartmouth was also beneficial as a social link. He was the stepbrother and close friend of the Prime Minister, Lord North (another of Brettingham's clients), and although himself not particularly involved in politics until the latter years of Egremont's life, he was a link into the hereditary Whig political set, and a fellow member of the Society of Dilettanti.

Choosing specific busts from an available selection is also a possibility in the case of the Lyde Browne (d. 1787) collection, from which the 2nd Earl purchased ten busts. Lyde Browne was a rich banker, whose sculpture collection was based at Warren House, in Wimbledon, and was later bought up, wholesale, by Catherine the Great of Russia, forming the basis of the Hermitage in St Petersburg's collection of antiquities. The first catalogue of the Lyde Browne collection, issued in the 1760s, notes that thirty busts have left the collection, and ten of them can be found in Egremont's collection at Petworth.⁶⁶⁷ Egremont's purchase was, we can see from the Petworth archives, not done without consideration. Among the 2nd Earl's papers is a paper entitled "list of Mr Browne's collection", which lists all his antiquities, with descriptions, assessments of quality and valuations.⁶⁶⁸ For example, a Crispina is listed as "dirty, spotted and ordinary workmanship", whereas an over-lifesize bust of Juno, which Egremont went on to acquire is "clean and well-preserved, the character of the sculpture good".⁶⁶⁹ A portrait of Julia Pia is "exquisite" with "capital" character and workmanship. That this list has been prepared for the Earl does not suggest an uninterested collector, nor an agent acting without the supervision of his patron. Someone was looking very closely at

⁶⁶⁵ Kenworthy-Browne, 1983, 42, 80 & 82. Also, Raeder, 2000, 176.

⁶⁶⁶ West Sussex Record Office, PHA 10989.

⁶⁶⁷ Neverov, 1984, 39.

⁶⁶⁸ West Sussex Record Office, PHA 11004.

⁶⁶⁹ Raeder does not provide a provenance for no.4 in his catalogue, a colossal goddess bust, of the Hera Farnese type, but this seems likely to be the Juno listed and marked as purchased. Raeder, 2000, 44-47.

what was available for purchase. Raeder identifies eight of the Lyde Browne busts Egremont purchased, and a possible ninth. These comprise three busts of women, five of men, of whom four are listed as Antonine emperors, and one child in the 'stacked' *toga contabulata*, who may have been purchased under the title of Young Caracalla.⁶⁷⁰

It seems that the desire for busts and heads of women and children even outweighed the desire for named individuals. Most collectors prized named busts, inscribing names on socles and matching faces to coin portraits. Whilst country house collections are often full of 'unknown figures' and private citizens of the Greek, Hellenistic and Roman worlds, this is usually because optimistic naming as a historical figure has been debunked by modern portrait studies. Yet in the eighteenth century, Egremont was perfectly willing to have unknowns, particularly women and children, in his collection. 'Incognito', usually always for women and children, appears again and again in purchase lists and inventories, for busts which elsewhere might have been labelled as young Caesars or obscure empresses.⁶⁷¹

Egremont, far from being a disengaged collector, was logging not only provenances, but also the quality of what he bought, and very specifically that of the classical busts. An inventory of the portraits in the archival papers has a column devoted to 'character' of the bust.⁶⁷² They are rated, between 'capital', 'good', 'bad' 'indifferent' and even 'rejected' in the case of a bust of an unknown man. Whilst the Sabina (one of the Lyde Browne women) is 'capital', a Hadrian is 'good', Geta is 'indifferent' and Julia Mamaea 'bad'. Julia has 'rejected' next to her name too, but neither she nor the unknown man appear to have left the collection. As the list discusses placement, it seems they were rejected from prominent display in public rooms (the good ones are listed as in the Gallery or Beauty Room for instance), which might provide a window into the choices of display being made. The list itself is, frustratingly, undated, but is kept with the 2nd Earl's

⁶⁷⁰ Raeder, 2000, 140, 144, 147, 149, 155, 179, 186, 201, 215.

⁶⁷¹ West Sussex Record Office, PHA 11000, PHA 11001, PHA 11003.

⁶⁷² West Sussex Record Office, PHA 11003.

papers so would seem to date to his lifetime. Its focus on display, however, could put to rest the myth of the 2nd Earl not unpacking his marbles, as perpetuated by Dallaway.

My argument hinges on choices being made, by the 2nd Earl, whether directly or through his agents and staff. We have no receipt, letter or inventory stating that Charles Wyndham wanted specifically female heads, and those of children, in a balance with his more traditional male busts. The evidence, however, of careful monitoring of the collecting process and the quality, provenance and character of the portraits being bought, indicate a plan in place, whether formally set out or otherwise. The unusual balance in the Petworth collection, in terms of gender and age, must be attributed to something, and as Egremont did not reject and send back these marbles, I suspect these were pleasing to his conception of how his gallery should look, and what his house should contain.

Charles Wyndham, 2nd Earl of Egremont, died on August 10th, 1763. He had been in poor health for several years beforehand. In 1761, Lord Hardwicke (Elizabeth Anson's father) wrote to him, as a friend and colleague, pleading "for God's sake take care of your health on account of the public as well as your friends. This is not a time in which your service can be spared".⁶⁷³ Hardwicke's urging shows the importance of this rather overlooked politician, who rose from the son of a Jacobite to holding one of the most important ministerial positions in government. His classical collections would have to wait years until the twelve-year-old heir took up residence and began his own patronage of the arts.

7.5 The 3rd Earl of Egremont

The second phase of Petworth's classical display was brought about by George Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont who, born into Whig society, had no need for the dramatic role-reversal and self-fashioning of his father's career. George was part of the same 'set' as Coke of Norfolk, and he met the Whig luminary Charles James Fox at the age of six, at Pampellone's School. Their friendship lasted their whole lives, despite

⁶⁷³ National Archives, PRO 30/47/28.

George's lack of interest in a political career. George frequently lent Fox sums of money, for his debts and, like Coke, made gambling-related loans to the pre-eminent Whig lady of the time, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806).⁶⁷⁴ George's friendship with Fox is also demonstrated by the appearance of that ubiquitous Nollekens bust, which graced all Whig houses of consequence and which we have seen at Holkham and will see again at Woburn Abbey. This was paired, however, with another bust, that of Fox's political rival, the Tory, William Pitt the Younger.⁶⁷⁵ Such ambiguity shows that George wore his heritage and affiliations lightly.

George Wyndham was certainly odd for a man of his wealth and pedigree. After being educated at Westminster, and Oxford, he undertook two Grand Tours.⁶⁷⁶ Yet, whilst most young men of his standing would then move into political life, George remained uninterested. He did not involve himself in politics, nor was he a courtier like his father and grandfather.⁶⁷⁷ He was a confirmed member of the Whig party, but only acted for them in purchasing the 'pocket borough' of Midhurst so that his younger brothers, Charles (1760–1828) and Percy (1757– 1833), could become MPs there.⁶⁷⁸ He repeatedly refused the honour of being granted the Garter, and seems to have preferred life as a country squire at Petworth, with his illegitimate children, agricultural improvements and patronage of the arts to occupy him. These illegitimate children are another unusual facet to the Earl. Wyndham lived for many years with Elizabeth Ilive, a woman of uncertain origins, perhaps the daughter of a schoolteacher, who was his de-facto wife for decades, and mother of his children, before he married her in 1801.⁶⁷⁹

Elizabeth and George eventually separated, in 1803, but she is a fascinating character, worthy of note here. Women's engagement with the classics was constrained by male dominance of the classical education system. Yet Elizabeth appears to have received

⁶⁷⁴ Wyndham, 1950, 219.

⁶⁷⁵ Guilding, 2014, 124.

⁶⁷⁶ Haines, Lawson & McCann, 2017, 13.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁷⁸ Pocket boroughs were boroughs 'in the pocket' of the owner of the land, where they had the majority of the tenantry of the borough was in houses and land owned by someone such as Wyndham.

⁶⁷⁹ Wyndham, 1950, 223.

education and delighted in learning. She was, we know, a patron of William Blake and other artists in her own right. At Petworth, she conducted agricultural and scientific experiments.⁶⁸⁰ A recent biography stresses her many intellectual pursuits, but has found no evidence of her involvement with Petworth's sculpted art. I suspect, however, that her interest and clearly enquiring mind would have led to at least a passing involvement. Like Margaret, the Dowager Countess of Leicester, at Holkham, I strongly believe that Elizabeth is a woman erased from the narrative of classicism by her social origins and the male dominance of classical education. Her influence is a lost aspect to be much regretted.

Illegitimate children were far from uncommon among George's peers, but most aristocrats were keen to secure legitimate succession of their title. Habbakuk notes that Egremont settling his estates on his and Elizabeth's illegitimate son George (1787–1869), who could never inherit as Earl, was extraordinary for his time.⁶⁸¹ These traits of spurning court and not caring for legitimate succession, demonstrate the slightly maverick nature of Egremont's character, which appears to have influenced his collecting and aesthetics. He was a prolific purchaser of art, and by the time of his death in 1837, he had acquired over one hundred and seventy modern (contemporary) paintings, and twenty-one pieces of modern sculpture.⁶⁸²

The 3rd Earl is best known for his patronage of modern, British artists, both painters and sculptors. He was one of the founders of the British Institution for Promoting the Arts in the United Kingdom, along with important collectors and writers, such as Thomas Hope (1769–1831) and Richard Payne Knight (1751–1824).⁶⁸³ Petworth became a retreat for artists, prominent among these J.M.W Turner, who painted a number of watercolours at Petworth House, and of the Earl's agricultural improvements to Petworth Park, and his property investment sites in Brighton and Chichester.⁶⁸⁴ At a time when other wealthy collectors of neoclassical sculpture, such as the Dukes of

⁶⁸⁰ See Haines, Lawson, and McCann, 2017.

⁶⁸¹ Habbakuk, 1994, 34.

⁶⁸² McEvansoneya, 2001, 351.

⁶⁸³ Guilding, 2014, 260.

⁶⁸⁴ Guilding, 2014, 133 and Howkins, 1992.

Bedford and Devonshire, were making their most valued purchases in Rome, from sculptors such as Antonio Canova (1757–1822), Egremont intended only to support artists working in England.⁶⁸⁵ He commissioned John Flaxman (1755–1826), for example, to sculpt *Pastoral Apollo*, in 1813, and *St Michael Overcoming Satan* in 1819.⁶⁸⁶ He purchased full-length marbles from the best British sculptors, including multiple works by John Edward Carew (c.1782–1 December 1868) and Charles Rossi (1762–1839), and pieces by Richard Westmacott (1775–1856) and Francis Chantrey. So concerned was he, on the death of Joseph Nollekens, in 1823, that he had no full-length sculptures by the artist, that he purchased a plaster model of his *Seated Venus* at the posthumous studio sale and instructed Rossi to remake it in marble with some alterations to Nollekens' design.⁶⁸⁷

Whilst more known for his neoclassical sculptures and patronage of contemporary painters, the 3rd Earl did engage with his father's collection of ancient sculpture. He was a friend and correspondent of Charles Townley (1737–1805), perhaps the most distinguished collector of antiquities of his day, and Townley's archives at the British Museum include a catalogue of his thoughts on the Egremont marbles and a plan of the gallery.⁶⁸⁸ The 3rd Earl purchased some further antiquities, such as Apollo and a Satyr at the 1801 sale of Lord Bessborough's (1704–1793) collection.⁶⁸⁹ He offered some marbles for sale to Townley in 1778, interestingly including many of his father's female busts, but Michaelis notes that all bar one of those offered for sale remain in the collection.⁶⁹⁰ Egremont's primary contribution, however, was to remodel and move around the existing displays.

⁶⁸⁵ Kenworthy-Browne, 1977, 10.

⁶⁸⁶ Rowell, 1993, 11.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁸⁸ Coltman, 2009, 258, referencing Townley Archive: TY1/22/1.

⁶⁸⁹ Coltman, 2009, 234. Vermeule, 1977, 2.

⁶⁹⁰ Michaelis, 1882, 596.

7.6 The New Gallery

The 3rd Earl's main use of antique sculpture was as part of his enlarged sculpture gallery. He extended the space and added skylights, for extra lighting, to the North Gallery which Brettingham the Elder had enclosed for his father.⁶⁹¹ Lady Holland (1771–1845), Whig hostess par excellence, wrote in 1824, that the gallery has been “enlarged considerably, so as to be capable of holding much sculpture”.⁶⁹² The 3rd Earl paired neoclassical and classical sculptures together, against a dense backdrop of eighteenth and nineteenth-century paintings, in a way which is relatively unique for a country house setting. This is significant at a time when the major private galleries being built for sculpture – those of the Dukes of Devonshire and Bedford – were for sculpture only, and had largely unadorned, plain, walls with an emphasis on purity of viewing.⁶⁹³ The 3rd Earl, bucking the trend here as in many areas of his life, and more at home at Petworth than in town, brought his father's old masters from London to hang on the walls and put them alongside newer pictures by Turner, Thomas Phillips (1770–1845), Henry Fuesli (1741–1825) and others.⁶⁹⁴ Some of these pictures were of Petworth and its residents – for instance, some of Phillips' fourteen portraits of Egremont were hung here, along with two William Blake (1757–1827) paintings commissioned by Elizabeth Ilive. The Gallery was clearly a space for showing off, and Egremont enjoyed holding large dinners here, for visitors, friends and local tenants, the latter an unusual type of guest for men of his station at the time.⁶⁹⁵ Yet the most striking part of the Gallery is the aforementioned juxtaposition of ancient and modern sculpture, which permeated the entire space. In 1832, Egremont wrote to his good friend, the sculptor Richard Westmacott, that:

I think it could be of great use to our sculptors to see themselves and show others their works side by side with the ancients, for the purpose both of deriving

⁶⁹¹ Rowell, 1997, 6.

⁶⁹² Lady Holland's diary for December 1824, cited by Kenworthy-Browne, 1977, 10.

⁶⁹³ Rowell, 1993, 12.

⁶⁹⁴ Whilst Egremont house in London displayed the 2nd Earl's impressive collection of Old Master paintings, Petworth was primarily for his sculpture, showing once again the importance of his dynastic arrangements as they dominated the décor of the all-important family seat.

⁶⁹⁵ Rowell, 1997, 34.

*instruction and improvement, and of inspiring confidence to themselves and to those thought to be their employers...*⁶⁹⁶

This had already been achieved at Petworth in the 1820s, with the Earl buying and commissioning contemporary sculpture to display alongside his antiquities. The combination of the pure white neoclassical marbles being made for Petworth and their ancient counterparts is not a thoughtless arrangement. Subject matter and size blends to create harmony, with the top half of the walls devoted to pictures on a rail, and niches, plinths and pedestals arranged to ensure no sculpture went above the invisible dividing line – the tops of the doors are the highest a sculpture reaches. The National Trust has restored the Gallery to the 3rd Earl's arrangement as far as possible, and we see the clustering of female, male and child sculptures and busts in the family groupings his father may also have used. The original corridor, which Brettingham made for the 2nd Earl, is still primarily given over to antiquities. The extension of the Gallery has more neoclassical sculpture, and the antiquities which encroach upon the space are mostly portrait busts (see Figure 162 for the layout of the Gallery). Neoclassical sculptures are arranged carefully too. *St Michael Overcoming Satan*, which took Richard Flaxman twelve years to complete, is positioned down the central vista, drawing the eye of the viewer on entry. Carew's *Venus, Vulcan and Cupid*, along with the other sculptural groups in this section of the gallery, are all sculpted and positioned so their heads turn to look directly at St Michael, observing the spectacle (see Figure 163).

Attention to placement is demonstrated by a short poem the 3rd Earl wrote about Venus scared by a nymph. In it, the goddess, "stark naked as goddesses always should be" is horrified by the appearance of an "impudent nymph" who is as naked as she is. Venus begs for concealment, away from the "vile slut" whose beauty might jeopardise her reputation as the fairest.⁶⁹⁷ Venus concludes with the lines:

Now to speak in plain English and without any raillery

⁶⁹⁶ August 26th, 1832, letter from the Thomas J. Watson Library at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Cited in McEvansoneya, 2001, 352.

⁶⁹⁷ West Sussex Record Office, PHA 11023

Be so good as to hang me in another part of the Gallery

She is, these lines reveal, one of Egremont's sculptures, rather than a generic goddess in an unspecified location.⁶⁹⁸ She could be Carew's Venus hiding behind the shoulder of her husband, Vulcan, accompanied by Cupid, who is also referenced in the poem. Her posture, peeking out from behind Vulcan's shoulder, could fit Egremont's playful verses, as she regards either Westmacott's nymph or an antique sculpture of an unknown goddess, sometimes called a nymph.⁶⁹⁹ The poem, apart from evidencing Egremont's interest in his sculpture, also shows the thought that went into their arrangements.

7.7 The Carved Room and the 3rd Earl's Unconventional Family

Whilst the Gallery was the 3rd Earl's preeminent setting for antiquities, his redevelopment of the Carved Room is also key to his redeployment of Petworth's artworks. The Carved Room was decorated by the famed Anglo-Dutch carver and sculptor, Grinling Gibbons (1648–1721), for the Proud Duke, in the 1690s, and is the room "gloriously flounced all round whole-length pictures with much the finest carving of Gibbons that ever eyes beheld" in the quotation from Horace Walpole's visit to Petworth referenced earlier. It was also the first room in the house shown to visitors during the eighteenth century.⁷⁰⁰ The 3rd Earl, who also used the room for dining with visitors, doubled the space in size, removing a partition wall with the next-door room. He also brought in seventeenth-century carvings from elsewhere in the house to add to the existing woodwork and commissioned a contemporary carver to add further woodwork in Gibbons' style. The room was hung with several watercolours of Petworth and its park by his friend J.M.W. Turner, commissioned for the space.⁷⁰¹

As we have seen, his father, the 2nd Earl, had used portrait sculpture to represent dynasty and family links. Here, the 3rd Earl brought portrait sculpture and painted portraiture together to reflect his own family life and his lineage. The Proud Duke had

⁶⁹⁸ In part because he has no painted Venuses.

⁶⁹⁹ She might also be Rossi's copy of Nollekens' *Seated Venus*.

⁷⁰⁰ Rowell, 1997, 8.

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

hung the existing painted portraits of himself and the Duchess of Somerset on the walls, along with portraits of his own grandparents. The 3rd Earl retained his great-grandparents (the Proud Duke and his Percy Duchess) as centrepieces amidst the riot of elaborate carving, but now paired them with, and facing, his Jacobite grandfather, William, and his wife, Lady Catherine Seymour, demonstrating the progression of Somerset to Wyndham, as well as his own disregard for political niceties.⁷⁰² Whilst the 2nd Earl, climbing the political ladder, would perhaps not have dared dedicate a full-length portrait of his embarrassing father, the 3rd Earl, shying away from politics and public life, had no need to mask Tory origins. In Guilding's neat phrase "numerous antique busts collected by the 2nd Earl were interpolated into this dynastic thicket to extend his family's title backwards by a cast drawn from over a thousand years".⁷⁰³ These busts were four Roman nameless Roman women, whom he placed alongside new painted pictures of his mother, the Dowager Countess, Alicia, and his three sisters. He also added four busts of Roman emperors and two of Roman boys. Some of these antiquities, I would argue, are proxies for real people in the Earl's life.

Clearly, the 3rd Earl thought in terms of bust portraits for his own era, commissioning busts of himself and his children, including his son, Henry (1790–1860), his daughter Charlotte (1795–1870) and his granddaughter Harriet (d.1902, see, for instance, Figure 164). Harriet, Charlotte's young daughter (Figure 165) is depicted in her bust by Carew in a sentimental chubby-cheeked way, and despite her contemporary hairstyle of ringlets, she looks very much like the classical children of the collection. She is even depicted with ivy around the base of her bust, matching the ivy fillet on the Roman bust of a boy at Petworth (Figure 166).

Henry and Charlotte were two of George's children with Elizabeth Ilive, and whilst not legitimate at their birth, were acknowledged and given the surname 'Wyndham'.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰² Egremont, a hereditary Whig and social Whig, nonetheless, does not appear to have been precious about his mixed Tory origins. There is a bust of Bolingbroke, of whom William Wyndham was a disciple, at Petworth, which presumably had belonged to the family since the 2nd Earl's youth. The 3rd Earl displayed it prominently in his new and expanded Gallery.

⁷⁰³ Guilding, 2014, 131.

⁷⁰⁴ Haines, Lawson & McCann, 2017, 19.

There were, however, other women and children in George's life. Eliza Fox, known as Mrs Crole (d.1840), a former mistress of the Prince of Wales, also had a longstanding liaison with Egremont. In wills and annuities towards the end of his life, the Earl acknowledged two boys, Charles (d.1850) and William (d.1865), as his sons by Eliza, and Eliza's daughter by Egremont, Mary (1792-1842) was raised at Petworth alongside his children by Ilive.⁷⁰⁵ He was also said to be the father of a son and daughter by Lady Melbourne (d.1818), who were raised as her husband's own.⁷⁰⁶ The Whig set of which Egremont was a part was very liberal for their day, in terms of marriage.⁷⁰⁷ Egremont's arrangement with Ilive for two decades shows this, and his friend, the Duchess of Devonshire, encapsulates the Whig attitude best, as she had a son by Earl Grey, and her husband co-habited with both the Duchess herself and his mistress. Egremont's lack of faithfulness to his main mistress, who would later become his wife is, therefore, not entirely surprising, although their eventual separation was rumoured to be due to the strain of his infidelities.⁷⁰⁸ The proliferation of female busts being moved around and added to the Carved Room displays would likely not have been a straightforward and direct acknowledgement of the plurality of women in George's life, but could informally signify his other liaisons. Furthermore, the two young boys who came with the Roman women (one of whom is the ivy-filleted boy) could be seen as proxies for the two boys he fathered with Eliza Fox, for whom he made financial provision. Ilive herself, although portrayed in several painted depictions, such as Romney's large canvas of her and the Wyndham children and a half-length portrait by Phillips, never received a bust. The Roman women in the Carved Room (Figures 167, 168, 169, 170) can be read, I believe, as including Elizabeth in their ranks, perhaps with Eliza Fox, Lady Melbourne and Egremont's first cherished mistress, from his Grand Tour, Catherine-Rosalie Duthé (1748–1830), making up the other three heads.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., 2017, 28.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., 2017, 14.

⁷⁰⁷ Mitchell, 2005, 48.

⁷⁰⁸ Haines, Lawson & McCann, 2017, 74.

7.8 Conclusions: Petworth

Constable's praise for the "house of art" is traditionally attributed to his appreciation for the paintings in the collection at Petworth, as well as for the circle of painters and sculptors often visiting and working there. Yet I would argue that Constable would have been no less impressed by the marbles around the house, including the forest of busts in many of the rooms. The importance of the sculptures to the story of the house, specifically of the two generations discussed here, has not been fully addressed. They deserve more scholarly notice, not only because, as Vermeule believes, the Petworth marbles are "scientifically and aesthetically superior to the typical cargoes shipped from Rome in the eighteenth century", but because they were interwoven into the family narrative to great effect and appear to have been thought-out purchases in considered arrangements.⁷⁰⁹ Vermeule makes particular reference to the "splendid" portraits, as no less important than the full-length figural statues. These portraits are well integrated with neoclassical busts and painted portraiture. A beautiful unsigned and undated drawing of portrait busts among the antiquity papers of the Petworth archives (Figure 171), gives us a tantalising glimpse into their viewing and appreciation.

Charles Wyndham's classical collection was pivotal to his move from a Tory, albeit relatively well-connected, to a member of the ruling Whig elite and Hanoverian court. The proportion of women and children in his portrait sculpture is unusual for the English country house, and is, I believe, attributable to his family situation and female-line inheritance. Whilst George Wyndham eschewed the court and the political roles so important for his parents, his reinterpretation of the Petworth portrait busts to represent his own concepts of family and lineage is just as important. The women in the collection came to represent not only the women of the Wyndham past, but the women of his own life. In two generations, the same private collection, with few additions and losses, can mean different things and be displayed to create different parallels with contemporary life. Nowhere is this so evident as at Petworth.

⁷⁰⁹ Vermeule, 1977, 5.

Petworth and Holkham, despite their many similarities, were very different. Holkham seems to have been primarily focused on the public, be that tourists, attendees of Coke's Sheep Shearings, or guests at lavish country house parties. Petworth, by no means isolated from external viewers, is more family-focused and opened its doors to a select artistic coterie. Whilst Charles and Thomas were perhaps more similar, in the second generation we find that George Wyndham was a very different man from Coke of Norfolk. He disliked politics, and whilst sociable, does not seem to have been the clubbable Whig that Coke was. He preferred artists visiting him rather than shooting parties. He did not care about legitimising his children and giving them his title. Yet, like Coke of Norfolk before him, George was shaped by his predecessor's collecting and display. My final case study, however, explores the nineteenth-century classical gallery in an instance where the first generation to turn to antiquities was that early nineteenth century Foxite set. The Sculpture Gallery at Woburn Abbey is, I will argue, the apotheosis of the Whig trends we have seen perfected and performed over the two generations at both Holkham and Petworth.

Section D: Apotheosis

*...the heyday of dilettantism in England, the last century, especially the latter half... [when] in an unintermitting stream the ancient marbles of Rome poured into the palaces of the aristocracy of Britain.*⁷¹⁰

This was how Adolf Michaelis, writing in 1882, described the eighteenth-century collecting of ancient sculpture by the English. Michaelis' seminal work, referred to throughout this thesis, has been formative in modern scholarly discussions of private collections. Country house collections have traditionally been regarded as a trend which began in the seventeenth century, reached its zenith in the eighteenth, and tailed off in the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century collections, admittedly far fewer in number than their predecessors, suffer from the suspicion of diminishing connoisseurship. Michaelis not only praises the eighteenth century and the 'heyday' therein, but laments an "abatement of zeal", in private collectors during and after the Napoleonic wars.⁷¹¹ Collectors were, apparently, less exacting and enthused, but the idea of the private collector also itself took some battering in nineteenth century thought. In 1816, James Barry declared private collectors to be "filled with the vanity, self-importance and rarity of their own acquisitions".⁷¹² Visits to public museums, like the nascent British Museum, came to replace the polite tourism, 'doing the rounds' of well-known houses to see their antiquities. Against this backdrop, one of the most distinguished and fascinating collections explored in this thesis was being formed. Between 1800 and the 1830s, the 6th Duke of Bedford formed The Sculpture Gallery at Woburn Abbey, in Bedfordshire. In this remarkable assemblage, and particularly its Temple of Liberty, we see the culmination and apotheosis of the trends previously explored. Unlike Holkham and Petworth, Woburn had no early or mid-eighteenth-century era of collecting to draw upon. It is entirely new for its time and entirely extraordinary.

⁷¹⁰ Michaelis, 1882, 2.

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 3.

⁷¹² *The Quarterly Review*, 1816, 533. Cited in Redford, 2008, 181.

Chapter 8: Woburn Abbey

Between 1789 and 1790, the architect Henry Holland (1745–1806) built a magnificent orangery at Woburn Abbey (Figure 172) for one of his patrons, Francis Russell, the 5th Duke of Bedford. On Francis' death, without issue (see 6.7), his brother John, 6th Duke of Bedford, would go on to fill this space with one of the finest and most wide-ranging collections of classical and neoclassical sculpture in England, through agents abroad, his son, Lord William Russell (1790-1846), and his own visits to Italy.

Sculpture from the collection has since been sold, such as Canova's *Three Graces*; lost, such as two busts of Brutus the Elder and Younger, or redistributed around Woburn Abbey. The process of collecting and the pre-eminence of the collection have been overlooked by scholarship, apart from the important contribution of Elizabeth Angelicoussis. Woburn's vast archives are, however, still in the process of being catalogued, and further research has since revealed new papers on the purchase, arrangement, and publication of the 6th Duke's collection.

Furthermore, the Woburn Sculpture Gallery is uniquely placed, being the collection of one of the greatest Whig grandees in England, to demonstrate the extensive links between ancient Greece and Rome and early nineteenth-century England. As one of the last great, private collections of Grand Tour antiquities, the Gallery tells us not only about nineteenth-century views of the past, but crucially for this thesis, uses the cachet of portrait images to create a theme, and a peculiarly Russell way of looking at the contemporary world.

8.1 The Woburn Antiquities in Scholarship

The collection at Woburn is under-researched in general, and histories of the house and family are relatively scarce. *Woburn and the Russells* (1980), by Georgiana Blakiston, as well as *Lord William Russell and his Wife* (1973), have been invaluable for this chapter, as has Keir Davidson's *Humphry Repton and the Russell Family*, (2018). None of these

works, however, deal with the antiquities at Woburn, although Blakiston's biography covers William's time in Rome.

Nevertheless, of the houses studied in this thesis, despite Woburn's lack of material it is definitely not the least published collection and has several dedicated works.

Throughout this chapter, reference is made to *Outline Engravings And Descriptions Of The Woburn Abbey Marbles*, published by the 6th Duke. A catalogue by A.H. Smith followed in 1900, which largely copied the description in *Outlines*. Woburn also features in two of the "big three": Dallaway wrote before the Woburn collection was formed, but Waagen's 1857 publication and that of Michaelis in 1882 both list the Woburn collection in detail. In keeping with the nineteenth-century attitude to such sculpture, their primary focus is style, authenticity and potted histories of the subjects depicted. Waagen also focused only on statues, making simply mention of "a considerable number of busts".⁷¹³ Michaelis' observations are more useful, albeit still with a focus on noting small areas of restoration on individual pieces.

Angelicoussis's, *The Woburn Abbey Collection of Classical Antiquities*, is meticulous and thorough, although primarily concerned with stylistic analysis of the individual pieces and can be supplemented by more recent discoveries in the Estate Archive. In terms of other modern scholarship, Kenworthy-Browne's 1989 article, *The Temple of Liberty at Woburn Abbey*, is one of a very few studies of the Sculpture Gallery. Woburn has, otherwise, received passing mention in many Grand Tour books. Jonathan Scott called it "the most attractive of all the assemblages of antiquities put together in the nineteenth century", yet, in true Scott fashion, dismissing multiple collectors discussed in this thesis, cited the Duke of Bedford's "marked lack of interest" in his acquisitions. I will demonstrate that this was certainly not the case.⁷¹⁴ Similarly, Ruth Guilding, whose eloquent summary of the collection concludes this chapter, also seems to feel that "...the vast collection of antique sculpture at Woburn Abbey was assembled almost as an

⁷¹³ Waagen, 1857, 467-474. Anonitus Pius, Hadrian and Trajan are named in passing as good busts from the collection, and he does refer to the neoclassical heads in the Temple of Liberty.

⁷¹⁴ Scott, 2003, 251, 257.

afterthought”.⁷¹⁵ There seems to be a tension between admitting the quality of the sculpture at the Abbey and the singularity of the Whiggery it was used for, as we shall see, and on the other side, dismissing its assemblage as a collection and the interest or expertise of its collector. This is, I suspect, due to the lack of available material on the 6th Duke of Bedford and his passion for his art collection. By using unpublished materials, I hope to demonstrate that the truth is far from what Scott and Guilding allege.

8.2 Woburn and the Russells

Woburn Abbey, in Bedfordshire, was originally a Cistercian monastery, and the land was given to John Russell, 1st Earl of Bedford (c.1485–1555), in the will of Henry VIII, to whom he had been a courtier. Whilst the family owned the land, and a house was built on the site, Chenies Manor, nearly forty miles away, remained the main Russell country seat until the late seventeenth century, when William, 1st Duke of Bedford (1616–1700), after his elevation from the Earldom, moved to build a new, grander residence at Woburn Abbey (Figure 173).

Whilst the Abbey was enlarged and remodelled, by architects such as Henry Flitcroft and William Chambers (1723-1796), during the eighteenth century, and the collection of paintings, porcelain, and furnishings grew, the purchasing of antiquities began relatively late for the Russells, compared to many of their peers. The first recorded classical items at Woburn are those purchased by the Marquess of Tavistock (1739–1767), son of the 4th Duke, who brought a few mutilated statues back to Woburn in the mid-eighteenth century. The Marquess predeceased his father, and his son, Francis Russell, succeeded his grandfather as the 5th Duke in 1771. He reached his majority in 1786, at which time he began remodelling the Abbey, and seems to have begun considering antiquities for his collection a little later.

The work Francis had done on the Abbey was mostly commissioned from Henry Holland, who had just finished building Carlton House for the Prince Regent. Part of

⁷¹⁵ Guilding, 2014, 269.

Holland's instruction for Woburn was to build the Orangery, which was to become the Sculpture Gallery.⁷¹⁶ This was built between 1789 and 1790, on the site of a previous greenhouse. It measured 138 feet in length, 25 feet across, and the building's internal height was 22 feet and 7 inches. The Abbey itself was constructed of wings around a central square courtyard, and the wider 42-acre area of pleasure gardens and ancillary buildings followed a similar format. The Abbey building sat at the base of a rectangle (Figure 174), with two longer wings down the side, the right hand one comprising the Gallery, and a riding school and tennis court at the end. The gaps between the buildings were filled by a covered walkway. The existence of this corridor, since demolished, incorporated the Gallery fully into the house, which is difficult to imagine now.

Francis' motivations and preferences are hard to gauge, and whether he acquired works whilst abroad is not known, as he ordered that his personal papers be destroyed upon his death.⁷¹⁷ We do know that Francis acquired several antique statues from Lord Cawdor's (1753–1821) sale in 1800, through the agency of Charles Heathcote Tatham (1772–1842). The 6th Duke was to send a copy of his antiquities catalogue of 1822 (which we shall turn to in due course) to Tatham, who responded, reminiscing on his role in buying the enormous Lante Vase for Francis (Figure 175). In time, it would become a star of the Gallery and is one of the few pieces still in situ. It was reputed to be from Hadrian's villa at Tivoli.⁷¹⁸ After 1800, Francis began to move the sculpture he already owned, which previously had been housed in Bedford House, the family's London residence, to Woburn.⁷¹⁹ More and more sculpture began to integrate with plants in the space. A scale copy of the Apollo Belvedere, "supposed to be the best copy that has been made", as one contemporary wrote, was moved from Bedford House in London, and two Venuses by Laurent Delvaux (1696-1778) joined it soon after.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁶ Blakiston, 1980, 156. Jeffrey Wyatville, who worked on Devonshire's gallery would later take on the commission for the 6th Duke of Bedford.

⁷¹⁷ Blakiston, 1972, 149. Woburn Abbey's Archives will launch a major cataloguing project of what remains from the 5th Duke's papers, during the next five years, as these have never been catalogued.

⁷¹⁸ Angelicoussis, 1992, 103. Cawdor purchased it from Jenkins at Rome and the 5th Duke purchased it from Cawdor's 1800 sale via Tatham. WAC-6DART-94.

⁷¹⁹ Yarrington, 2017, Frick Collection Lecture.

⁷²⁰ Woburn Abbey Collection, 6DART-1- an anonymous dissertation on the Lante Vase

Francis had not married, and his heir was his brother. Only a year younger than Francis, John was generally considered shy and unobtrusive. His sole interest before succeeding to the title in 1802 seems to have been politics, but the greater means which came with the Dukedom encouraged him to branch out, and he became known for interest in botany, horticulture, agriculture, and the collecting of sculpture.⁷²¹

John's work on the Orangery/Greenhouse, soon to become his Sculpture Gallery, can be divided into two main phases. The first, before 1810, is dominated by the completion of his brother's Temple of Liberty and was primarily about neoclassical sculpture and commissions, and their utilisation for Whig history. The second phase, in the 1810s and 1820s, focused on active collecting in Europe, and most of the portraits belong to the second phase. The second phase is perhaps best summed up by George Hayter's (1792-1871) caricature of the Duke with his figurine of a Satyr (Figure 176). This statuette was conveniently unearthed for him by Queen Caroline of Naples' (1752-1814) men while on his visit to Pompeii in the early 1810s. It became a treasured piece, kept close at hand in his library. The drawing encapsulates the covetous, devotional nature of his relationship to the antiquities he possessed. Angelicoussis speculates, in fact, that this visit to the Europe with the Duchess (Georgiana, 1781-1853), between 1813 and 1815, sparked this new interest in sculpture, as he began to collect in earnest during this trip, having completed his fraternal obligation as part of phase one.⁷²²

John commissioned enlargements and modifications to his Gallery from Jeffrey Wyatville (1766-1840) after Holland's death in 1806. These included The Temple of the Graces, at one end of the Gallery, which was built to house Canova's *Three Graces*. This lifesize sculpture (Figure 177), sold to the Victoria and Albert Museum in the early twenty-first century, was one of John's earliest important pieces. Canova himself wrote to John, whilst working on the group, stating that:

As regards the group of the Graces, I am determined to subject myself entirely to your wishes... ...I intend and wish to work affectionately in

⁷²¹ Blakiston, 1980, 178.

⁷²² Angelicoussis, 1992, 20.

*your interests and in your favour:I feel too much zeal and duty towards you from my being engaged to serve you to trouble myself with such details [when payment will be received].*⁷²³

To match the temples at each end, and create further symmetry, Wyatville also introduced the eight antique columns which partition the space, in two rows of four across the middle, either side of the central bay which contained the Lante Vase and a large Roman mosaic set into the floor (Figure 178). The collection was already clearly a source of pride to the Duke, and its enlargement important to him. He was in Rome in the early 1810s, buying sculpture, and setting up the links with agents abroad which were to serve him well for the next twenty years. In 1816, when thirty-six packages from Italy, including his sculptures, were captured by Elbese pirates, the Duke was willing to pay an unspecified, but no doubt hefty, ransom for their return.⁷²⁴

8.3 The Temple of Liberty and the Foxites

*This temple proved to me that the powerful family of the Russells had long participated in the principles of the Whigs.*⁷²⁵

Gustav Waagen's comment demonstrates him as the ideal visitor in some senses, succinctly articulating the purpose of the most striking part of Woburn's Sculpture Gallery. In 1802, shortly after John's succession, Henry Holland wrote to Charles Townley, the renowned collector and connoisseur of classical sculpture, on the Duke's behalf, stating that John, "having a much higher opinion of your judgment than that of any other person", wished to know Townley's thoughts on his brother's designs for a Temple of Liberty. Primarily, Bedford was concerned as to whether he could reasonably substitute a seated full-length statue of his elder brother by Canova for the statue of Charles Fox proposed by the 5th Duke. This statue of Francis never came to pass due to Canova's death, but Holland also enquired as to Townley's thoughts for the Gallery and

⁷²³ Woburn Abbey Collection, 6D-ART-5.

⁷²⁴ Woburn Abbey Collection, 6DART-18.

⁷²⁵ Waagen, 1857, 473.

Temple's arrangement more generally, stating that "the present Duke is exceedingly anxious to fulfil his brother's intentions".⁷²⁶

The Duke's concern for Francis' legacy was such that he also had a statue erected of his brother, by Richard Westmacott, in London's Russell Square, the heart of the Bedford's' holdings in the city, which still stands there today. An unused draft for an inscription, in the Estate Archive, details what Whig sentiments and classical aggrandising might have been inscribed into the bronze panels of the base. The 5th Duke is described as:

The bright example of that generous kind,

Whose godlike impulse was to serve mankind,

Bequests to unborn ages shall remain,

*And hark! – That virtue had not lived in vain.*⁷²⁷

Although he is dressed in contemporary clothing, Francis' cloak is nonetheless draped like an imperial *paludamentum*, and is surrounded by the accoutrements of agriculture, such as a scythe and sheep, referencing his passion for, and involvement with, management of his country estates. The draft inscription also praises the agricultural advancements Francis worked on during his lifetime, whilst, in addition, citing his "temperate wisdom" and status as a true patriot. It is hard, in the context of classical learning and appreciation at this time, not to see the parallels between Francis and a Republican Roman such as Cato or the Gracchi, with their agricultural policies and commitments, and their staunch belief in honour and the "principles severely just" ascribed to Francis.

Francis also had an artistic legacy to complete, and what he had devised with Holland, John would now continue. The result, The Temple of Liberty (Figure 179), is the most singular commemoration of the Whig party in eighteenth -and nineteenth- century art, arguably eclipsing better known monuments to the political affiliation, such as Lord

⁷²⁶ Townley MSS – TY7/963, 1802.

⁷²⁷ Woburn Abbey Collection, 6D-JM30.

Cobham's Temple of British Worthies at Stowe. It centres on Charles James Fox.

Francis had been an ardent Foxite. Indeed, an anonymous essay in the Bedford Estate Archive calls Fox "the most distinguished and the most illustrious Champion of Civil Liberty that ever adorned any age or country".⁷²⁸

He was a great friend of the Russells, which is unsurprising given that they were one of the oldest and richest Whig families in England. Whiggery was a crucial part of their identity as a family. The 5th Duke remarked in a letter that he was a Whig because he had been born one, and simply could not be anything else.⁷²⁹ Fox and the Russells were not just political allies, but close friends, and the 5th Duke was "devoted to Fox".⁷³⁰ Their social circle was much the same, held together by the lynchpin of Lady Holland's salon at Holland House in London. Whilst Fox did not die until 1806, in 1802 John had already inherited Francis' plans for a lifetime memorial to the great man.

The 5th Duke's commission from Henry Holland dates to 1801. It was based on the temple of Ilissus at Athens, illustrated in *Antiquities of Athens* (see section 4.3) which the Duke possessed in his library. The Temple of Liberty comprised a portico of four antique composite columns, topped by a pediment sculpted by Flaxman depicting the personified Peace and Plenty flanking and supporting the figure of Liberty. In 1804, under the 6th Duke, the interior temple was still being constructed. The ceiling was coffered and gilded, the walls veneered in marble, and the floor laid with geometric patterns of coloured marble.

A Latin inscription below the pediment, reads in translation:

This building, dedicated to sacred liberty, and to a man who loved his country's welfare the most, was begun by Francis, Duke of Bedford. John Russell completed his brother's will, after his death, in the year 1803

⁷²⁸ Woburn Abbey Collection 6DART-1.

⁷²⁹ Russell, 1915, 156.

⁷³⁰ Kelly, 2015, 33.

Inside lay, once again, this thesis's old friend, the Nollekens bust of Fox. Kenworthy-Browne has suggested that, as Woburn's temple was under construction from 1800, and Fox was intended to feature from the start, even whilst alive. Fox himself may well have chosen the six friends who were displayed with him in this space.⁷³¹ The novelist, Elizabeth Hervey (d.1820), a friend of the Duke's son, Lord John (1792–1878), visited in 1804 and described it thus:

*At the end of the Greenhouse there is a small temple sacred to friendship... ..the bust of Mr Fox placed opposite the door is the most striking object and on each side are ranged the following heads: Mr Gray [sic] to the right of Fox and Gen[eral] Fitzpatrick [1748-1813] to the left. The others are Lord Lauderdale [1759-1839] and Mr Hare [1747-1804], Lord Holland [1773-1840] and Lord Rob[ert] Spencer [1747-1831], all those I know are very like their busts.*⁷³²

Mrs Hervey omits a matching bust of the 5th Duke from the Temple. In fact, Fox and Francis are the only togate busts from the set. All the men were Whig Parliamentarians, and close allies of Fox who, as the poet Jeremiah Wiffen (1792–1836) puts it “advocated on every occasion the great principles of civil and religious liberty”.⁷³³ All the busts were sculpted by Nollekens. A receipt for the Fox bust (Figure 180) in the Estate Archive shows that it was purchased in 1802, along with three busts by Nollekens of the 5th Duke, for the total cost of £420.⁷³⁴ The other busts followed later. That Fox and his associates should be found in an actual temple, modelled on the ancient religious sites, and purpose-built for Whig commemoration, is extremely striking, and this style of commemoration of living and active figures was singular.⁷³⁵

The link between the Russells and their political friends was given another dimension by the 6th Duke's decision to place Whig luminaries alongside the heads known as

⁷³¹ Kenworthy-Browne, 1989, 30.

⁷³² Staffordshire Record Office D6584/C/101 (Longleat) and C/102 (Woburn).

⁷³³ Wiffen, 1835, 6.

⁷³⁴ Woburn Abbey Collection, 6DART-139-2.

⁷³⁵ Kenworthy Browne, 1989, 28.

Brutus the Elder and Brutus the Younger.⁷³⁶ These were copies of famous heads in the Capitoline Museum in Rome, and how they came into the collection is not known. Modern Brutuses are recorded by Michaelis at a number of houses, but it is possible that these were bought or commissioned as a pair for the Temple of Liberty. In a plan of the Gallery, from Smith's 1900 catalogue of the collection, the Brutuses flank the entrance to the temple's inner chamber, within the portico, defenders of liberty, with their modern 'descendants' housed inside, in the temple's vaulted *cella*, guarded by their ancient exemplars. Both Brutuses carried specific historical connotations. The elder Brutus, of the 6th Century BC, had expelled the Tarquin kings of Rome, and his descendant, Marcus Junius Brutus, of the 1st Century BC, coordinated the assassination of Julius Caesar. Both figures acted against tyranny and unfair power afforded to the monarchy, or a would-be monarch. They were ideal ancient counterparts to the Whigs, fundamentally opposed as they were to unrestrained power for Church and Crown.

Plutarch's *Life of Brutus* would have been widely read at this time, as part of the popular *Parallel Lives* biographies.⁷³⁷ The *Life of Brutus* made the dynastic link between Marcus Junius and the elder Brutus. Plutarch claims that at the time preceding Caesar's assassination, those in favour of his removal would daub messages on the statues of the elder Brutus, lamenting the absence of the ancestor, and exhorting the descendant to action.⁷³⁸ This concept of a dynastic obligation towards liberty and the overthrow of tyranny is neatly evoked by the parallel placement of the Brutuses with the Whigs. Not only does their physical presence draw to mind Plutarch's story, but their combination with Fox and his Whig cohorts puts the Foxites within this tradition, making them inheritors of this right to act, and a heroic legacy, via associative lineage. The appeal to Republican values shows the blending of antiquity with the contemporary and the strong English link with Rome. There is nothing subtle about the parallel being

⁷³⁶ These were probably added shortly before their appearance in an 1820 description of the Gallery- Kenworthy Brown, 1989, 32.

⁷³⁷In fact, one of the descriptions of the Abbey collection, by Parry, notes identification of a bust as Lycurgus based on physiognomic details taken from Plutarch's *Lives*. Parry, 1831, 259.

⁷³⁸ Plutarch, *Brutus*, 1.6 & 9.6. For the reception of Plutarch, see Jacobs, 2018 and Mossman, 2013.

drawn here. Eighteenth-century collectors had placed contemporary busts next to ancient ones.⁷³⁹ A defined space, however, dedicated to liberty, with (in)famous figures of the Roman Republic so closely linked to Whig contemporaries, is the artistic equivalent of a written sign declaring the Whigs defenders of liberty and liberty as a classical institution.

The two Brutuses also add a strong French connection to the Temple of Liberty. The Whigs had, historically, been Francophiles, and their relationship to Napoleon will merit further discussion later in this chapter. Before Bonaparte, however, they were apologists for the Revolution, awkwardly navigating their delight at the overthrow of absolute monarchy with their consternation at the Terror and the execution of many Whig friends, such as the Duke of Orléans (1747–1793).⁷⁴⁰ Both Brutuses were popular revolutionary symbols and exemplars of liberty in France, as Baxter has demonstrated. Pre-Revolution, Voltaire wrote two dramas, *Brutus*, and *La Mort de Cesar*, which were performed, read and revised extensively during the revolutionary period.⁷⁴¹ At least eight towns were renamed ‘Brutus’ at this time too, and the Grand Prix of 1793 tasked entrants with painting the death of Brutus.⁷⁴² The distinction between Brutuses, Marcus or Lucius, was not always articulated, and in fact both figures were used. Therefore, not only did the Brutuses function as a Whig advertisement for liberty and moral rectitude, but a statement of urbane Francophilia and revolutionary sympathies. This was particularly appropriate in a setting which proclaimed loyalty to and friendship with Fox. As a supporter of the French Revolution, Fox, the biggest Francophile among the Francophiles, had quarrelled and split from other Whigs, taking only his ‘core’ supporters, including the Russells, with him.⁷⁴³

⁷³⁹ Baker, 2014, 43. The Earl of Huntingdon had his bust and that of his close friend, Dr Antonio Cocchi placed with those of Pythagoras and Epicurus. Baker, 2014, 141-144: the busts at Wilton House, for example that of the 8th Earl of Pembroke and Mary, wife of the 9th Earl, move in tandem with those of Homer, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Newton and Bacon during alterations to the house, as seen in successive guidebooks.

⁷⁴⁰ Mitchell, 2005, 86.

⁷⁴¹ Baxter, 2006, 55-56.

⁷⁴² Baxter, 2006, 51, 64.

⁷⁴³ Sachs, 2009, 56.

The overall effect of the Temple of Liberty, and the Bedford mindset, blending history and politics, is best expressed in the 1835 publication of *Verses written in the portico of the Temple of Liberty at Woburn Abbey, on placing before it the statues of Locke and Erskine*. These were composed by the poet Jeremiah Wiffen. In stanza XVII, Wiffen praises Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the tyrant-slayers of Athens, and Alcaeus, the Mytilene poet who exhorted liberty to his fellow citizens under tyranny.⁷⁴⁴ Both examples are appropriate for a party which sought to limit royal prerogative and increase the power of the Commons.

There is an almost seamless move in the verses from ancient models of liberty to more recent Russell heroics. He eulogises William Russell (b.1639, not to be confused with John's son, William), the heir of the 4th Earl. He was executed for his supposed involvement in the Rye House Plot of 1683, against the King and Duke of York, and only pardoned posthumously after the Glorious Revolution.⁷⁴⁵ During the nineteenth century, artists such as Robert Anderson (1842–1885) and Mather Brown (1761–1831) created dramatic paintings of his last days in the Tower of London, and Hayter painted an enormous courtroom scene of Lord William nobly defending himself on the stand, commissioned by the 6th Duke. The image of this William was talismanic at Woburn. His pardon is, to this day, displayed inside the house, and images linked to him or referencing him were commonplace. Wiffen observes that:

the fall of one member of the House of Russell in their cause [described as conscience and civic freedom] *served only to attach others to the same career of self-devoted patriotism.*⁷⁴⁶

In stanza XV, Wiffen personifies Conscience, who he says observed the funeral of William “with a stern stile, her Russell’s bier, in mingled pride and transport hailed”. Conscience is put at ease, however, as “she knew his lineage would aspire, the lessons which he taught, to teach, and from her cherished altars reach, the imperishable fire”.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid., 17.

⁷⁴⁵ Blakiston, 1980, 70-71.

⁷⁴⁶ Wiffen, 1835, 5.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., 16.

After his (extremely thorough) survey of Whig history, Wiffen finishes by moving onto the Temple of Liberty itself, where “still eloquence seems hovering round the sculptured form of Fox”, ending with an exhortation to Fox and his compatriots:

Illustrious Patriarchs! From you,

What happier age its date begins!

Hope’s progeny have ye raised anew,

*Purged from old slavery’s venal sins.*⁷⁴⁸

Wiffen’s verses are a programmatic statement on the Whig use of history, and the appropriateness for contemporaries of bringing ancient examples to bear on present-day politics. The Athenian tyrannicides, Lord William, and then Charles James Fox, are placed in a progression akin to descent, returning us once again to associative lineage. There is an element of emotional inheritance, carrying the torch for the last generation of freedom fighters.

This projection of Whig values onto ‘proto-Whigs’ was not uncommon. Whig aristocrats commissioned and displayed works of art which directly linked to moments of aristocratic triumph over tyranny, such as Magna Carta (see 6.7).⁷⁴⁹ Furthermore, Charles James Fox himself was frequently compared, by his allies, to Brutus, who saw Pitt the Younger, his rival, as a quasi-Augustus.⁷⁵⁰ Fox wrote his own histories, with a Whig ideology, and a fragment of these, *History of the Early Part of the Reign of James II*, was published posthumously by Lord Holland in 1808.

Wiffen’s poem, and the cult-like memorialisation, also bear testament to the importance of Fox himself to his intimates. As Linda Kelly says, “few public figures have ever been mourned as much as Fox. Adored by his followers, he was a symbol of free speech and the defence of civil liberties to thousands who had never known him”.⁷⁵¹ A lifesize togate

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁴⁹ Mitchell, 2005, 22, 149.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., 28. E.g., Parr, 1809, 224 – Fox as equal to Quintilian’s assessment of Brutus’ writings. Also, Parr, 1809, 681-2.

⁷⁵¹ Kelly, 2015, 47.

statue by Richard Westmacott stands in Bloomsbury Square, the heart of London Whig territory.⁷⁵² Nicholas Penny has noted that Woburn (alongside Holland House) was one of the great gathering places of the party elite, so it seems appropriate that the most overtly devotional dedication of Fox's image should take place at Woburn.⁷⁵³

The temple is, today, bare of its original sculpture and used as the backdrop for wedding ceremonies. The portico is used for speeches and photographs, and the interior *cella* is now permanently locked and contains trestle tables for catering. Without the busts which inhabited it, even with the inscription remaining, the building entirely loses its meaning. We are used to seeing ancient temples, such as the Parthenon, without their cult statues. We know Athena stood in the Parthenon, or that Zeus stood at Olympia. What we lose, when the cult icons of the Temple of Liberty are removed, is the sense that Fox and his friends (and thereby the Whigs themselves) are the gods, the great defenders. Liberty can still be discerned from the pediment, but in dispersal, the viewer becomes unaware that Bedford was not commemorating the abstract concept, but rather a particular type of liberty and its defenders.

8.4 Lord(s) William Russell

In the few studies of Woburn's antiquities, Lord George William Russell, son of the 6th Duke, is scarcely mentioned. Angelicoussis notes his involvement, and her half-page is the most credit William (as he was known by the family) has been given for his role in the collection. The crucial part William played in the buying of Woburn's classical sculpture deserves greater exploration and sheds further light on the Russell family's approach to politics and history.

William, the second of three sons born to the 6th Duke and his first wife (d.1801, confusingly both wives are called Georgiana – see Figure 181 for the Russell family tree) entered the military, as did many second sons of aristocrats, and enjoyed a successful career in his twenties, serving in the Peninsular Wars, eventually as aide-de-camp to

⁷⁵² Penny, 1976, 94 & 100.

⁷⁵³ Ibid., 99.

the Duke of Wellington (1769–1852) . Despite holding a Whig seat as an MP for Bedford for some years, his life after leaving the military was largely peripatetic and on the European mainland. His beautiful socialite wife, Elizabeth ‘Bessy’ Rawdon (1793–1874), whom he married in 1817, had grown up on the Continent, particularly in Vienna, and her delicate constitution, necessitating warmer climes, as well as her preference for European society, seems to have kept them away from England for years at a time. William and Bessy also quarrelled with John’s second Duchess, causing a further rift, and the Duke’s letters to William often contain reproaches about “harsh and unjust expressions... ..which hurt me to the quick”.⁷⁵⁴ Bessy’s Tory politics, despite an impeccable Whig pedigree as the niece of the Marquess of Hastings, also distanced her from the Whig Russells. There was concern that Bessy was influencing William’s own politics. Responding to such rumours from his other sons, John wrote to William in 1821:

*I trust and flatter myself that every son of mine will act steadily, uniformly, and invariably on the old Whig principles and never lose sight of the solid rights of the people, the solid rights on which our Liberties and Government rest...*⁷⁵⁵

William does not appear to have taken on his wife’s Tory leanings, but it was certainly enough to cause friction in the family, and he complained that “in England you all treat Bessy as if she were an ordinary person. But on the Continent, she is treated like the most distinguished person in Europe, and in fact she is”.⁷⁵⁶ William and Bessy thus never returned to England for long, and he undertook a variety of diplomatic postings, including Minister Plenipotentiary to Wurttemberg, and British Ambassador to

⁷⁵⁴ Russell, 1915, 94. Also, see *ibid.*, 20, where Lord Holland writes to assure Lord William his father’s health is not due to the Duchess who is an attentive wife. Also, *ibid.*, 27, where the Duchess herself writes to Lord William lamenting “the total change in Lady William’s opinion of me and her affection for me”, and Russell, 1915, 32–33.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, xvii.

Germany, moving his young family around the continent before his early death in 1846.⁷⁵⁷

During the 1820s, however, despite the agonised tone of many of the letters, with reproaches, interferences and pleas for calm, an extensive correspondence between John and his second son indicates that, during William's travels, he purchased numerous antiquities for his father. The Duke set a budget, and made suggestions to his son.⁷⁵⁸ Lord William's diary from one trip to Rome in 1821 details how he spent thirteen days, with an antiquarian, touring the sites of Rome. His raptures are typical of Grand Tour travel accounts from young men invested in their classical learning. He marvels at "the forum, where the world was lost and won, and given away, where Cicero spoke and Caesar died".⁷⁵⁹ During his sightseeing, he intermittently mentions purchases for his father, not only in Rome, but in northern Italy, and France. One striking document in the Woburn Archive is his handwritten "Observations on Ancient Portrait Busts", only recently discovered at the time of writing, by volunteers cataloguing contemporary papers.

William's notes, dated 1824, cover some standard (at the time) art-historical narrative, such as:

The forehead should be low.

The ancients adopted the tripartite division of the human face – the forehead 1/3 – the nose 1/3 – the lower part 1/3 – when the forehead was too high the Greek women wore a diadem or fillet.... Busts were made with great spirit and character towards the end of the Republic and beginning of the Empire. But sculpture began to decline about the time of Nero and Claudius, owing to the jealousy of those tyrants.

⁷⁵⁷ Lord and Lady William's marriage was not always happy it seems, but Blakiston, 1972, has written a full account of their relationship with one another and the Russells, and their travels in Europe, including information about their eldest son, Hastings, who was to become the 9th Duke of Bedford (when his cousin died without issue). These fascinating Europhiles are inextricably linked to Woburn's antiquities but have received little credit or consideration.

⁷⁵⁸ Angelicoussis, 1992, 28-30.

⁷⁵⁹ Woburn Abbey Collection GWR-1822-23 Diary.

*It revived under Trajan and was brought to great perfection under
Hadrian.*⁷⁶⁰

His list is also concerned with how to spot and procure the best busts, and this runs counter to the established view of William's (and the Duke's) purchasing. Angelicoussis notes that "Lord William's primary concern with portraits seems to have been a desire to collect those of certain historical personalities, without regard to the antiquity or contemporaneity of the works", and she observes the melange of illustrious figures, both ancient and modern, which seem to be the defining thrust of the Woburn collection.⁷⁶¹ I would argue, however, that this is a deliberate mixing of the old and the new, and that the Russells were keen to have the best of ancient and nineteenth-century sculpture, whilst also recognising the necessity of supplementing antiquities with newer pieces.⁷⁶² The Duke wrote of the combination in 1822:

*My Gallery (faute de mieux) is a medley of modern and ancient works
but I see no more objection to this, than a Gallery of paintings, which
we constantly see, consisting of works of Masters of the old schools, and
modern Pictures. I should like to have two sculpture Galleries, one for
antiques, and one for modern Sculpture, but I must content myself with
what I have got... ..these are not times to think of expensive
buildings...*⁷⁶³

The Duke also seems to have cautioned his son on buying important, authentic pieces. In 1823 he had instructed William, should he have issues buying 'originals', to refer to his agents, consulting either Mr Irvine (1757-1831) or Mr Millingen (1774-1845) for

⁷⁶⁰ Woburn Abbey Collection, 7D-JM17.

⁷⁶¹ Angelicoussis, 1992, 34.

⁷⁶² See section 7.3 for Gavin Hamilton's comment on the availability of pieces for earlier versus later collectors.

⁷⁶³ Russell, 1915, 7. The suggestion of separating the ancient and the modern is an interesting one, never acted upon, perhaps due to the financial constraints the Duke mentions. Perhaps John also came to realise the strength of keeping the two eras together, which, for some of the instances we have discussed, and will see, adds to the layers of family history and Whig beliefs so prominently displayed at Woburn.

assistance in this.⁷⁶⁴ Despite this, authenticity does not seem to have exclusively meant ancient works, but if modern or restored, they should bear a good provenance. An 1856 series of notes on the Gallery records illustrious origins for several sculptures, which had been purchased from a noble collection, such as the Palazzo Rondanini, or were gifts from close friends, such as the sculptor Westmacott.⁷⁶⁵

The Duke had written in 1821, pleading to William:

*Let me entreat of you to be particular as to the history and authenticity of any works you may purchase for me, noting such in your memoranda, without trusting too much to a frail memory.*⁷⁶⁶

History could here mean the proof of antiquity/authenticity, but also through the hands of which worthy collectors and noble families the sculptures had passed. Lord William's duties also extended to spotting a fake, and his notes contain such asides as, "great pains were bestowed on the ears [of ancient heads], so that modern restorations are very inferior".⁷⁶⁷ He also writes of how the hair and drilling of the eyes should be, for different eras of portraiture. His diligent attitude to collecting for his father is reflected throughout their correspondence, and the Duke repeatedly praises his son's choices.

There was another William Russell, however, in contact with both the younger Lord William and the 6th Duke. Francis and John's third brother, and only other sibling, was also Lord William, and is henceforth referred to as Uncle William to avoid confusion. Uncle William (1767-1840) was, as we might expect, a Whig MP, but appears to have done little else of note, bar taking up collecting on his brother's behalf in the mid-1820s and being murdered by his butler in 1840.⁷⁶⁸ During his European travels, there was a short-lived flurry of letters between him and the young William in 1824 about busts

⁷⁶⁴ Russell, 1915, 10. Irvine will reoccur in this chapter, but there is no other reference to Millingen. Presumably, Bedford means James Millingen (1774-1845) the Dutch-English numismatist or his son Julius Michael Millingen (1800-1878).

⁷⁶⁵ Woburn Abbey Collection RS1-7.

⁷⁶⁶ Cited in Blakiston, 1972, 79.

⁷⁶⁷ Woburn Abbey Collection, 7D-JM17.

⁷⁶⁸ One of the few scandalous footnotes in Russell history, for which the Butler was hanged that same year.

which provides (shaky) provenances or at least dates of entry for several of the Woburn portraits.

Several copies of the Grimani Pseudo-Vitellius (Figure 182 for the Grimani and Woburn heads), now known as a later Roman work, entered the collections of the wealthy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One such head is still at Woburn, and our only evidence for its history is Uncle William's observation that "...there is a Bust of Vitellius – which I have ventured sending to treat for. They are very rare – and this though not antique – most probably of the sixteenth century is very fine sculpture". He shows similar interest in noble provenance for sculptures, by noting that this head comes from the 'Casa Nicolini' which counts in its favour. This could be referring to the Niccolini, a family of Tuscan marquesses. A head known as Carneades also seems to have come from Uncle William, who said he was "confident it will be considered very fine", despite some damage to the head.⁷⁶⁹

Uncle William's letters provide a lively window onto the market for antique portraiture, with comings and goings of rival dealers and buyers and what was considered:

*Bartholdy has 2 busts he says better than the Tiberius and cheaper – they are certainly fine – one a Geta – Thorw [Bertel Thorvaldsen 1770-1844, sculptor and friend of the Russells] pressed me to offer 50 for I would not venture the more especially as I rather think you bought one so called last year – this is I should have no doubt an authentick Portrait - both from the medals, and from a striking family resemblance to Caraculla [sic] – you know they are scarce – Kinnd. [Lord Kinnaird] has just got home a Nero – far superior he says to either of the above two – all of them have been so worked up – that whatever their beauty, there remains but little of the antique in any of them.*⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁹ Russell, 1915, 31.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., 38. Kinnaird formed the Rossie Priory collection. See Introduction.

There is a certain satisfaction in being able to join the dots like this, finding rough dates and the family members responsible for certain additions to the collection. The effort and speculation going into the collecting process adds an entirely new dimension to a row of marble busts which sometimes look so similar as to fool the viewer that they were bought together. The activities of both Williams, buying pieces for the Duke (who would undoubtedly pay) for a collection they would never possess (although young William stood some chance until his elder brother produced a son in 1809) in a house they had grown up in but was not their own, also sheds further light on that Russell mindset covered earlier. These antiquities were for a sense of family glory, to complement the monument to Whig values and to adorn their ancestral seat in a way which might outdo their peers and rivals. There is an element of selflessness in this, albeit one tempered by the wealth and privilege afforded to these younger sons, despite their lack of dynastic inheritance. Both Williams knew they were contributing to the construction of a family legacy, and that to that end they needed to find and purchase the best pieces.

8.5 Whose Faces? Part 1: Authenticity and Identification

The Duke's concern with antiquity, pedigree and authenticity did not just extend to his son and brother's purchases. A series of unpublished letters survive in the archive from James Irvine, an artist and art dealer resident in Rome, and perhaps the agent the Duke used the most. They paint a picture of cautious purchasing, totally at odds with the usual view of the Grand Tour. We are more accustomed, when researching this period, to tales like the one of Charles Townley's Discobolos, where an eager collector is duped or disappointed.⁷⁷¹ But Irvine took a different approach, or was at least aware

⁷⁷¹ In this episode, the ever-unscrupulous dealer Thomas Jenkins tried to convince the collector that the statue of a discus-thrower he proposed to sell had been found whole and was all an original. On its arrival in London, Townley was outraged by the obvious falsehood. Townley also lambasted the poor quality of restored heads on a relief Gavin Hamilton had sent him, and the ignorance of Cavaceppi who both dealers used for restoration. See Jones, 1990, 130 and 140 as well as Coltman, 2009, 95 for Townley's back and forth with his dealers on acceptable levels of restoration and their attempts to disguise this.

that his patron would not countenance inferior works.⁷⁷² In one letter, Irvine reports that a planned purchase of a head from the Italian Pietro Camuccini (1761-1833) cannot go ahead, because:

*He has a bust of what he calls a young Trajan, though it appears to me to have also a resemblance to Caligula but being in a niche I could not see it well. It was formerly in the Aldobrandini Villa at Frascati.*⁷⁷³

On another occasion he writes of a bust that:

*I found that although the projecting eyebrow resembled that of M. Agrippa, yet the nose and mouth were so different from his that I would not venture to send it to Your Grace under that name.*⁷⁷⁴

Irvine did, however, send the head of the young emperor Commodus (Figure 183) to the Duke and appears to have made every effort to verify the piece's identity. He writes too that he encloses with the bust, plaster casts of medallions of Commodus for comparison. Furthermore, as a certificate of authenticity, he includes a letter from the scholar Alessandro Visconti (1757-1853), an author and brother of the distinguished Ennio Quirino Visconti (1751-1818), who was, over the course of his career, Papal Prefect of Antiquities and Curator of the Capitoline and Vatican Museums.⁷⁷⁵ In essence, it serves as a certificate of authenticity. The Doctor writes:

I enjoyed looking at your antique head depicting Commodus, son of Marcus Aurelius, at that age which is not far removed from youthful, the eyes, the hair, the beard, and a particular defect at the top of the head, from which physiognomists believed that his madness derived; everything marks him out as the son of the excellent Aurelius: good sculpture was still prevalent at that time and the chiselling itself

⁷⁷² In NMR 4/13/8 – Bundle 5, No. 81, the Duke's Steward notes a cast of a portrait of the poet Virgil which the Duke had ordered and not liked on receipt. It was sent back, despite being made to order, and a cast of a head of Dionysus sent in its place.

⁷⁷³ Woburn Abbey Collection 6DART-20.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ See Gallo, 1991, for the Visconti family.

*justifies this view. Finally, the Medals show us this likeness, whilst some are found which present him to us without a laurel wreath and with little beard, overall similar to this one.*⁷⁷⁶

Visconti, as a scholar, lends credibility to Irvine's sale of the head under this name. He even touches on the topics of physiognomy and phrenology, both popular theories in this era, citing the features of the face or shape of the skull as evidence of personality traits and hereditary foibles.⁷⁷⁷ Scott notes the desire of learned owners to "demonstrate from each imperial wrinkle the accuracy of the historians' pen portraits".⁷⁷⁸ Often, identification of portraits by and for Grand Tour collectors is assumed to have been wishful thinking for the most part, with ludicrous identities tied to private (or restored) portraits for the sake of acquiring desirable historical figures. Rarely do we see, or have record of, such pains taken to assure the buyer of the veracity of their purchase, with an art 'consultant' called in.

8.6 Whose Faces? Part 2: Choosing Appropriate Portraits

The unusual prioritisation of authenticity and antiquity is intriguing, and the Duke and his agents' impressive approach to due diligence must have limited the pool of portraits in Rome from which to buy. A further limitation would come once a portrait had been identified, and someone like Irvine was happy with the name attached to it. Was it a personage fit for this Whig sculptural paradise? If the subject was not a desirable name for the Gallery, then were they worth buying?

Sometimes the lure of a famous person, or of a neat pairing, was enough to overcome reservations or John's usual care and concern for the authentic. Take for instance, a head of Cicero. Angelicoussis notes that this is of doubtful antiquity and came from Antonio d'Este (1754-1837).⁷⁷⁹ Republican heads were comparatively rarer than their

⁷⁷⁶ Woburn Abbey Collection 6DART-14 (translated from the Italian by the Estate Archive).

⁷⁷⁷ See Hartley, 2001, on the importance of physiognomy during the nineteenth century. Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, published between 1789 and 1798, was the leading text at the time.

⁷⁷⁸ Scott, 2003, 97.

⁷⁷⁹ Angelicoussis, 1992, 68 & 112.

imperial counterparts, and there is some suggestion that this head was prised from a tomb relief and then had the back reworked to sell on as a head in the round.⁷⁸⁰ There is no date for it, but we know it came from Lord William's sojourn in Rome. The Cicero is, at least, based on what contemporaries saw as an established portrait type, and many grizzled Republicans, such as Caesar, Cicero, Cato and Brutus, were happily accepted into private collections during this time, which have since been re-identified as private individuals. Bedford's Cicero was paired with a bust of the orator's wife, Terentia (Figure 184). She has no established portrait type or extant heads acknowledged by twenty-first century scholars, so the pairing of the portrait with that of Cicero is probably what prompted this attribution. Either someone knew Bedford had a Cicero, and offered him an appropriate companion, or William, Irvine, or another of Bedford's agents, was actively searching for a Terentia to 'complete' the Cicero (see 6.4 for a discussion of bust pairings on a wider scale at Holkham).

This would certainly have been desirable, as during the eighteenth century a trend for pendant portraits had emerged. These were portraits of couples, some full or half-length, some in miniature, which were similarly formatted and designed to be displayed together, as an alternative to a double marital portrait.⁷⁸¹ Reynolds and Allan Ramsay (1713-1784) both painted pendant portraits for the Duke and Duchess of Leinster (1722-1773 and 1731-1814), for instance, and Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807) had painted matching canvases for the Duke and Duchess of Gordon (1743-1827 and 1748-1812, the parents of the 6th Duke's second wife).⁷⁸² At Woburn, the 5th and 6th Dukes had lived alongside Reynolds' matching lifesize canvases of their parents, the Marquess and Marchioness (1739-1768) of Tavistock, which were considered so important as family portraits that gilded plaster frames were constructed for them on opposite walls of the Breakfast Room, where they still hang today (Figures 185 and 186). In painted portraiture, background, dress, and accessories were used to emphasise feminine and masculine virtues, and a predisposition to public or private (domestic) life, which

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid., 68.

⁷⁸¹ Retford, 2006, 19.

⁷⁸² Ibid., 35, 38 & 39.

obviously could not be done with a sculpted head.⁷⁸³ The eighteenth or nineteenth-century viewer would, however, be used to such a format, and have come to expect either this or a double portrait for contemporary married couples. Sculptural portraits were, therefore, often arranged like this within country houses, and this included contemporary and ancient couples. The fashion was such that there was a double herm of a Roman man and woman on display at Ince Blundell in Yorkshire, which a modern restorer had pieced together from two separate heads.⁷⁸⁴

Recarving is also evident at Woburn, and Angelicoussis observes that a head of the young Nero in the Woburn catalogues was recarved into the image of the emperor from an existing infant head.⁷⁸⁵ Only part of the head is ancient, the rest added and smoothed in with cement. Similarly, a Republican head has been reworked, and was sold to the Duke by Camuccini under the name of ‘young Trajan’.⁷⁸⁶ These portraits are functioning as historical documents of known figures. They are as close to hand to remind the erudite viewer of their classical history as a copy of Suetonius or Pliny. The desire for named figures was not incompatible with, but necessarily sat in tension with, John’s concerns for authentic heads, which were not always available.

It is this historical sense of the memento which explains the presence of the Visconti-approved Commodus and the little Nero studied by Angelicoussis. Both were generally recognised to be ‘bad’ emperors from the textual sources, but even the possession of dangerous and undesirable figures could tell a beneficial, moralising story. Indeed, the 6th Duke wrote of his picture collection, that:

*the long array of figures upon canvass in a gallery, the portraiture of many generations, has always its impressive, often its beneficial influences— it awakens moral reflection; it conveys historical instruction.*⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸³ Retford, 2006, 36.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., 70.

⁷⁸⁵ Angelicoussis, 1992, 57.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid., 1992, 59.

⁷⁸⁷ Russell, 1834, viii.

A similar sentiment could be applied to the antiquities, recalling the epigraphs of Bolingbroke and Northall that prefaced this thesis. Milano argues that “the portrait bust represented not only a specific person... ..but rather an idea of a particular person – an image that any viewer who wished to do so could identify with”.⁷⁸⁸

The moralising aspect of the young Nero, pre-madness, vice, and excesses, was given another dimension by its integration with and juxtaposition against, a growing nineteenth-century fashion for sculpture of a family’s children. Painted portraits of heirs and marriageable daughters had abounded for centuries, and indeed lined the walls of the Abbey. But increasingly, the wealthy turned to a three-dimensional form. The Duke had eleven children with his second wife, many born after he started collecting antiquities. His offspring were depicted in sweet, sentimental busts and pencil portraits by such artists as Edwin Landseer, displayed around the Abbey.⁷⁸⁹ Similar childlike innocence in marble was seen in Chapter 7, with the 3rd Earl of Egremont’s bust of Harriet, his granddaughter. The young Nero head almost looks like one of one of the Bedford brood, as if it belongs among the ranks of the young Russells. And the growing family was certainly commemorated within the Sculpture Gallery. We know that, flanking the Temple of the Graces was Lady Georgiana (d.1867) as a child by Thorvaldsen, and Lady Louisa (1812-1905) as a child, caressing a dove, by Chantrey (see Figures 187, 188 and 189 for the Woburn Nero, Georgiana and Louisa).⁷⁹⁰ The girls are made attendants to the Graces, stationed outside the inner *cella*, in the same sort of compelling ancient-modern mix as the Brutuses and the Foxites. They are, in fact, direct parallels, as the two persons guarding the door to the inner space. The two pairs, one of grizzled Republicans and the other innocent young girls, are a stark contrast and indicate the differing focus of the two temples.⁷⁹¹

⁷⁸⁸ Milano, 2017, 84.

⁷⁸⁹ Sentimentality around children is also demonstrated by two *cineraria*, Roman funerary urns to daughters from their fathers. The *cinerarium* of Calpurnia Felicitata and that of Valeria Valeriana are both inscribed with tablets where fathers commemorate their “most devoted [*pietissimus*] daughter”. Valeria’s, which lays out that she lived eleven years, nine months and twenty-three days is particularly touching.

⁷⁹⁰ Parry, 1831, 248.

⁷⁹¹ Two bas reliefs by Chantrey, depicting ancient feminine virtue (a wife and her child, with the husband going off to war, and a wife mourning her soldier husband) flanked the outer door to the

With Nero, any viewer could incorporate this head into their own visual experiences of children and images of childhood.⁷⁹² One description of the Sculpture Gallery's Nero marvels at:

*How improbable it would seem, if unsupported by history, yet the characteristic trait is not un instructive, that this monster of cruelty, during his youth, openly exhibited no ferocious inclinations.*⁷⁹³

Moral reflection need not, however, be unambiguous. The Nero has a clear message. It does not imply admiration or reverence on Bedford's part, more curiosity and erudition. Other busts, such as Julius Caesar, could be admired for their insight into the face (and by extension, the mind) of a tactical genius, whilst also acknowledging the dictatorial politics which went so against Bedford's Whig values. As Ayres notes, "powerful emperors, even bad ones, have a cachet all their own, their presence is undeniably flattering to owners".⁷⁹⁴

In a similar manner to his Caesar, Bedford included a lifesize head of Napoleon amongst the imperial figures in his Sculpture Gallery. It articulates the complicated relationship the Whigs had with Bonaparte. At Woburn, this bust comes at the start of a grouping of imperial and mythological heads within the Gallery. It is similarly presented to its Roman counterparts, on a truncated column of white marble, and the description in a catalogue of 1823 is identical to those of the classical portrait busts, bar the word 'antique' missing for Napoleon.⁷⁹⁵ Napoleon was not only added to the imperial roster textually, but his physical placement assimilated him with the classical busts. He was mixed among the tableau of famous faces which lined the walls of the Gallery. His inclusion has ramifications for how we see Bedford's emperors, and how we see Napoleon in this context. Bonaparte becomes a piece of documentary history, a cautionary tale like Caesar, Commodus, and Nero, into whom the viewer can read the

temple. Yarrington, 2017, Frick Collection Lecture. The spheres of masculinity and femininity are each, therefore, assigned a temple.

⁷⁹² Milano, 2015, 84.

⁷⁹³ Parry, 1831, 258.

⁷⁹⁴ Ayres, 2009, 134.

⁷⁹⁵ Woburn Abbey Collection, HMC 143, 71.

foibles of man and the highs and lows of power. Yet his imperial designs for France are also given credence by their implicit comparison with Rome. The Roman emperors are given contemporary relevance and a present-day 'successor', tying the nineteenth century to Ancient Rome. Bedford was not alone in his comparison, as parallels between Bonaparte and Julius Caesar had been drawn for years. The French emperor's own iconography, for instance, had him depicted in portraits wearing a laurel wreath. Fundamentally, "Napoleon's halt to the bickerings of the corrupt French Directory, his imposition of efficient laws and administration on France, his expansion of the French Empire, and his overturning of the old regime across much of the Continent invited the drawing of parallels between himself and Caesar as did his conscious imitation of an imperial order wherein he held first the office of Consul and then of Emperor".⁷⁹⁶

There is more than imperial assimilation at work here, however, as Bedford was not alone in his Napoleonic display. Many Whig aristocrats had ambiguous sculptures on this theme. Napoleon was tentatively viewed as a figure to right wrongs, and realise French potential, and came to be one of the Whigs' main French (anti)heroes, even as he waged war on England. At Chatsworth, the 6th Duke of Devonshire (1790-1858) had a bust of the emperor himself, by Canova, a bust of 'Madame Mere' (Napoleon's mother, Letizia, 1750-1836), and a statue of Madame Mere, also by Canova, in the manner of the Capitoline Museum's famous seated statue of Agrippina, onto which was inscribed the Greek word for "most unfortunate mother", a direct quotation from Thetis in Homer's *Iliad*.⁷⁹⁷ He then commissioned a matching sculpture of Napoleon's sister, Pauline, Princess Borghese (1780-1825) from Thomas Campbell (1790-1858) in the same seated format as Madame Mere, holding a small picture of her brother. Pauline and Letizia flank the emperor, (Figure 190) each gazing upon their family's focal point. Pauline both contemplates his bust, standing in for the 'real' Napoleon, and the tondo-cameo of her brother she holds in her hand. The devotional, shrine-like setting of the Bonaparte

⁷⁹⁶ Turner, 1986, 589-90.

⁷⁹⁷ Yarrington, 2009, 43.

family group is a similar staging to Woburn's temples with their 'attendants', both Brutuses and Ducal daughters.

Apart from the two Dukes, Lord Holland (Fox's nephew) had a colossal bust of Bonaparte, engraved with his own translation of a verse from Homer's *Odyssey*, referencing Napoleon's exile:

*The hero is not dead but breathes the air
In lands beyond the deep:
Some island sea-begirded, where
Harsh men the prisoner keep.*

The relationship that Lord and Lady Holland had with the emperor was particularly odd, even amongst the Whig set. After the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, they had visited Paris and been presented to Napoleon (along with Fox, and his mistress and eventual wife, Mrs Armistead, 1750-1842).⁷⁹⁸ This clearly made quite an impression, and a decade later they tried to go to Spain as sort of unofficial envoys at the height of the Peninsula Wars, taking the teenage Lord John Russell with them, and only turning back when perilously close to the battlefield.⁷⁹⁹ Even during his imprisonment, to which the bust makes reference, Lady Holland sent care packages and letters to Napoleon.⁸⁰⁰ Bonaparte, in turn, left her a gold snuffbox in his will, given to him by the Pope. The 5th Earl of Carlisle (1748-1825) authored a seven-verse poem in the weekly *John Bull* magazine, urging her to throw it in the Thames. Lord Byron (1788-1824), then in Italy, published a poem defending Lady Holland and calling Carlisle a bore.

The Hollands' abortive Spanish trip seems also to have left its mark on the young John Russell. The 6th Duke, in his diaries from a visit to Europe in 1815, mentions that Lord John, the same son who had accompanied the Hollands to Spain, left the party at Florence, to "pay a visit to the Emperor Napoleon in his little Island of Elba".⁸⁰¹ With this fascination and often overt acceptance, it is easy to see how, throughout the

⁷⁹⁸ Kelly, 2015, 39.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid., 84.

⁸⁰⁰ Mitchell, 2005, 90.

⁸⁰¹ Woburn Abbey Collection 6DART-154, p.9.

Napoleonic Wars, and after Waterloo, the Whigs were regarded with suspicion by their countrymen, as they tried to advocate Napoleon as the only man to see France's potential, whilst maintaining a patriotic commitment to the war.⁸⁰² In 1819, Richard Whatley (1787-1863) wrote a satirical essay, entitled *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte*, a parody philosophical treatise.⁸⁰³ One of his arguments, in trying to prove Napoleon Bonaparte was not 'real', but merely a fabrication of the press, was the bizarre paradox of Whigs liking Napoleon. He writes that:

*Another circumstance which throws additional suspicion on these tales is, that the whig-party, as they are called—the warm advocates for liberty, and opposers of the encroachments of monarchical power—have for some time past strenuously espoused the cause and vindicated the character of Buonaparte, who is represented by all as having been, if not a tyrant, at least an absolute despot.*⁸⁰⁴

Napoleon was, therefore, a controversial and emotive figure in British society, and inextricably linked with the Whigs, despite their lack of unity on the subject. His inclusion in the Sculpture Gallery is no accident and articulates the Whig ambivalence. It makes no direct statement of Bonapartist loyalty, but the inclusion speaks volumes implicitly. Whatever John's personal feelings, Napoleon is part of the Whig visual vocabulary. It is both an additional advertisement of the Whig values so evident within the building, and another meditation on the failings of men in power – the uncomfortable veneration of a man, who is like those 'bad' emperors of antiquity, a tragic figure with potential gone awry.

⁸⁰² It is worth noting that when referring here to 'the Whigs and Napoleon', I am using terminology of the time wherein the entire party were tarred with the same brush. Some Whigs had, however, split with Fox and the Foxites on this issue and allied with Pitt and the Tories in the interests of patriotism and protection from Napoleonic invasion.

⁸⁰³ Bainbridge, 1995, 4.

⁸⁰⁴ Whatley, 1819, 27.

8.7 Pride and Publication

The catalogue of the Woburn Sculpture Gallery was first published in 1822, before the collection was even complete and the same year John wrote to young William that:

*If it should please God to prolong my life for a few years more, I hope I may by fresh requisitions of marbles, ancient and modern, lay the foundation of a second volume of my outlines and descriptions.*⁸⁰⁵

This second volume never materialised, but the initial catalogue would be reissued and updated at least twice during the following twenty years. The book was made up of descriptions by Reverend Dr Philip Hunt (1772–1838). John's list of to whom he should send the catalogue manuscript has been meticulously preserved, and with this document were kept a bundle of all the letters of thanks and praise which he received in response. Fellow Whig nobles, such as Lord Grey and Lord Bessborough, sculptors such as Francis Chantrey, and organisations such as the Society of Antiquaries and the British Museum, wrote to express their thanks.⁸⁰⁶ Lord Aberdeen (1784-1860) wrote to the Duke that; "the book, like the collection, affords a splendid proof of Your Grace's taste and munificence".⁸⁰⁷ John wrote to (young) William in 1823, peeved that of all the recipients, 'Lieven' was the only one who had yet not written to thank him.⁸⁰⁸

This was not an idle distribution, but rather a concerted PR campaign, where the magnificence and learning of the venerable House of Russell was afforded maximum exposure. There are illegible crossings out on the list of proposed recipients which, if decipherable, might demonstrate the rise and fall of those in the Whig inner circle at this time. The book continued to be a source of pride, and John's son, the 7th Duke (1788–1861) in fact gave it as a gift to the royal couple. A letter from Prince Albert (1819-1861), received two years after the 6th Duke's death and referencing the prince's

⁸⁰⁵ Russell, 1915, 12.

⁸⁰⁶ Woburn Abbey Collection 6DART-66, 52, & 41.

⁸⁰⁷ Woburn Abbey Collection, 6DART-29.

⁸⁰⁸ Russell, 1915, 20. Presumably this refers to Prince von Lieven, 1774-1839, then the Russian ambassador in London.

brief stay at the Abbey that same year, along with Queen Victoria (1819-1901), must have been a particular coup. It read:

My Dear Duke,

Your kind present gave me great pleasure and I thank you sincerely for it. It will always bring back the recollection of our pleasant stay at Woburn Abbey.

*I beg that you would have the kindness of writing your name on the title page of this interesting book which would still more enhance its value to me.*⁸⁰⁹

8.8 Woburn and Chatsworth

I have argued throughout this chapter for the importance of Woburn's sculptures and for the previously unacknowledged effort which went into their purchase, display and publication. Woburn did not, however, exist in a vacuum, and its relationship with contemporary collections should be recognised, particularly those of two of Bedford's fellow Whig grandees and acquaintances, the 6th Duke of Devonshire and 3rd Earl of Egremont, the latter of whom was discussed in Chapter 7. The three do not appear to have been close friends by any stretch, but they were correspondents and certainly moved in the same political circles in London.⁸¹⁰ They also patronised many of the same British sculptors, including Chantrey, Nollekens, Westmacott and Flaxman. Petworth, Woburn, and the 6th Duke of Devonshire's Sculpture Gallery at Chatsworth were arguably the three important aristocratic sculptural collections of this period. All three were prominent Whig families. This is not to say they were the only collections. Petworth, Woburn and Chatsworth were, however, the best examples of a contemporary

⁸⁰⁹ Woburn Abbey Collection 7D-JM49.

⁸¹⁰ See, for example, Chatsworth Archive, CS/6, 435. This is a letter from Bedford to Devonshire introducing John's friend, the sculptor Richard Westmacott, wherein Bedford says "I am confident that you will be pleased with his works".

aristocratic identity with a strong political element being articulated through ancient (or consciously classicising) works of art.

The patronage of neoclassical sculptors is key to understanding the three galleries. The 'heyday' of ancient marbles, spoken of by Adolf Michaelis, had passed by this point, and fewer large collections of antiquities were being formed in the nineteenth century.

Where they were formed, as at Woburn, they were supplemented by neoclassical works, by Canova and his contemporaries, as well as by British sculptors. As we have seen, at Petworth, the 3rd Earl of Egremont felt antiquities and Italian sculpture should be used to encourage British artists, and indeed Bedford seems to have felt something similar, writing to Lord William that:

*I must now encourage our Artists in preference to Foreigners. We have some rising ones of great merit. Canova's visit to England has done wonders. I doubt whether he has produced many things superior to Westmacott's Psyche, which is now in my possession.*⁸¹¹

I have not considered Chatsworth amongst the case studies in this thesis, despite the contemporaneity and parallels with Woburn and Petworth, because the Duke of Devonshire's antiquities buying was limited, and he noted in his guidebook to his house that:

*My Gallery was intended for modern sculpture, and I have almost entirely abstained from mixing it with any fragments of antiquity, it was in vain to hope for time or opportunities of collecting really fine ancient marbles.*⁸¹²

He certainly did buy antiquities, and whilst his account books and diaries from his trips to Rome are devoted primarily to his neoclassical pieces, they make passing references to some ancient fragments and "pretty things" purchased from Iganizio Vescovali (1790–1850).⁸¹³ However, his 1844 guide to Chatsworth mentions them very little, noting only

⁸¹¹ Russell, 1915, 13.

⁸¹² Cavendish, 1844, 86-7

⁸¹³ Chatsworth Archives, 6th Duke of Devonshire's Letters, 1823, January 2nd & February 7th.

that some busts in the corridors “appear to be ancient” and that a small Roman bust of a faun was a great favourite of his mother.⁸¹⁴ He preferred neoclassical works, aping the style and subject matter of Greece and Rome, but commissioned from modern sculptors in luminous, clean white marble. His Gallery, which is still largely intact at Chatsworth today, certainly looks tidier and more uniform than those at Woburn and Petworth with their mix of ancient and modern statuary. The only busts in the space are those of Devonshire himself and Canova, his close friend and favoured sculptor, overlooking the Gallery that the Duke’s vision, deep pockets, and Canova’s talent, brought together.

I have already discussed Devonshire’s Napoleonic family ‘shrine’ assembled with pieces by Canova. In fact, Yarrington has said of the Chatsworth collection that “the pulse of the sculpture gallery was triggered by the artistry of Canova”.⁸¹⁵ Woburn stands in contrast to this, but it still has that pulse, that defining thrust, even if it has been obscured by the dispersal of sculpture at sale or around the Abbey site. I would argue that the pulse of this gallery was the premature death of Francis Russell and the peculiar historical moment that was the Foxites, a brotherhood of cosmopolitan Whig oligarchs, bound together by friendship, Francophilia, a passion for the classics and their charismatic leader. The Woburn Sculpture Gallery is perhaps best summed up by Guilding who states that, “what had begun as a straightforward polemical ‘temple’ apotheosizing Fox, Bedford, and their political cronies instead developed into a great gallery of antique and neoclassical exemplars bookended by a pair of dynastic classical temples. All three were interdependent, standing for past, present, and future, the antiquities providing a moral and historical context for the modern works, and the Whig portrait busts acting as heroic foils for Antonio Canova’s *Three Graces* and sculptures of their handmaidens, the 6th Duke’s two young daughters”.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹⁴ Cavendish, 1844, 6-7.

⁸¹⁵ Yarrington, 2009, 45. Cavendish, 1844, 87. Aside from his Napoleonic collection of Canovas, the Duke owned Sleeping Endymion, Hebe, and Laura by the artist.

⁸¹⁶ Guilding, 2014, 141. Guilding’s reference to the handmaidens to the Graces, but not the male attendants to the Whigs (of whom she may not be aware) is noteworthy. Louisa and Georgiana’s juxtaposition with the Brutuses is surely key for their role.

8.9 Conclusions: Woburn

Despite the dismissal of nineteenth-century collectors by modern scholars, Woburn Abbey demonstrates an attentive and personal approach to the collection and arrangement of ancient portraiture. To appreciate the nineteenth-century aristocrat's deployment of portrait sculpture properly, we must, as with their eighteenth-century peers, note the political nature of contemporary portraits, and their ability to act as signifiers.⁸¹⁷ This is coupled with the enduring relevance of ancient portraiture to the educated, political classes. Seen in this light, the Sculpture Gallery at Woburn contains many strands of peculiarly 'Russell' narratives. It is not simply an accumulation of what classical sculpture was available, with gaps plugged by contemporary marbles. It was as strong a statement of Russell identity and intent as the hallways of portraits within the main Abbey building.

Whilst the collecting of antiquities at Woburn essentially stopped with the 6th Duke, and the Gallery has since been disassembled and the collection partially sold off, John did succeed in making something admirable and worthy of emulation. Far from representing a declining interest in antiquities, Bedford's collecting and display shows an integration of classical Rome with contemporary art and politics. The meanings of this assemblage of sculpture depended on display as a whole. The copies of the Brutuses, for example, lose a large part of their meaning and cachet without Fox and his friends, and the Foxites need to be displayed as a group to achieve the effect of a pantheon of liberty, revered in their temple. Trajan sits across from Caesar, and Marcus Aurelius from Napoleon, inviting moral reflection on the vices of man and the differing responses to power. The concern for identification shown again and again by the Duke is important. Not only should an owner display learning and erudition by not being duped by misidentifications, but the spectator needs a 'real' head to appreciate fully the historical characters they depict. Husbands and wives, such as Cicero and Terentia and Hadrian and Sabina are displayed together, alongside images of the family and their

⁸¹⁷ Milano, 2015, 9.

friends, firmly tying the legacy of the ancient world - in particular, that of Rome – to the Bedford lineage.

Talking Heads: Conclusion

This thesis began with two epigraphs, one from Viscount Bolingbroke (1752), on the Ancient Roman moral appreciation of ancestral busts, and the other from John Northall (1766), on the moral benefit the eighteenth-century viewer could attain through contemplation of the same faces. Throughout the chapters this, and similar evocations of moral rectitude, recur insistently. The impulse to manifest the superiority of one's political views, social capital, or personal relationships was repeatedly articulated using the classical bust during the period analysed. Variation on the bust theme brought neoclassical versions and copies, as well as classically themed contemporary portraiture into the fold. The imitation of, or borrowing from, classical busts by their neoclassical counterparts contributed to the elision of past and present and the claiming of an associative, spiritual lineage from Greece and Rome. This phenomenon took place not just in the eight case studies explored, but in the houses mentioned for comparison, such as Chatsworth, Syon and Stowe. The way in which busts were utilised developed and changed over time, and the roughly chronological sequence of the chapters has followed the bust from the English version of the *atrium*, in Section A, into the garden and broader landscape for Section B, culminating in a dense distribution of busts across the rooms of the house in Section C. Section D restored the bust to its delineated location, a century after the country house *atria*, but this time, in the purpose-built galleries of the early nineteenth century. As the nineteenth century progressed, the classical bust fell out of favour, the country house examples beginning their slow decline from centrality to relegation on windowsills and narrow ledges, where they are often seen today.

Whilst commonalities exist between many of the chapters and, indeed, this led to their grouping in pairs or trios, the enormous variety of busts selected, and their use have demonstrated the versatility of classical imagery and bust sculpture as a country house artefact. The Grand Tour market and the energetic patronage of contemporary sculptors gave the collectors considered in this thesis a choice of themes, messages, and faces – an 'ecology of signs', to quote Csikszentmihalyi and Halton's phrase, cited in the introduction. This study has added a layer to country house histories, demonstrating the

need for holistic approaches which take into account all aspects of a decorative scheme. Through eight very different case studies, themes of political belonging and conversion, personal loss and aspiration, and associative reverence for the past have emerged, demonstrating the versatility of the classical portrait bust as a site of meaning. These chapters have emphasized the integrity of the bust to decorative schemes around which dedicated spaces centred, often deploying uncatalogued or unpublished archival material, to bring these schemes to light. The cenotaph aspect of the gardens at Stourhead and Shugborough depends on their busts. The articulation of the fraternal, oligarchical Whig bonds in Woburn's Temple of Liberty depends on its busts. Robert Walpole's confident, bombastic staging in the Stone Hall is entirely underpinned by his draped, and garter-starred portrait and those of his classical companions; without them, the room loses its reflections on virtue, vice, and the transfer of power.

This study also brings together threads of classical reception and the study of eighteenth-century art, politics, and society. Important work on the bust by historians of eighteenth-century art, such as Malcolm Baker, Joan Coutu and Ronit Milano must be married with the reception studies of Carrie Vout and Vicky Coltman, and the sociological studies of the country house from pioneers such as Mark Girouard. What houses are used for should also be reconciled with their interiors. Arguably, the choice of interiors and setting was determined by purpose and function, and a viewing that is sensitive to such considerations enriches the study of houses and their owners. This is a profoundly interdisciplinary project, and the writing of this thesis has given me an appreciation of how much interdisciplinary ways of looking at objects can enhance their study. For instance, in July 2022, I presented a paper on my Holkham research at a conference organized by the AHRC-funded Eighteenth-Century Political Participation Project. Coke of Norfolk (Chapter 6) was a recurrent figure throughout the conference, being one of the most influential Members of Parliament of his era. The novel cross-pollination of ideas gained from blending the classical material culture of his house, and the classical references to him from contemporaries, with the expertise on electoral songs, polling, treating, and process of other presenters at the conference, was striking.

Classical material culture has a role to play if we want to appreciate the country house as a political space.

Further work of this kind could also be conducted on other houses. Several rich collections, including Castle Howard, Blenheim Palace, Ince Blundell and Newby Hall, were considered for inclusion in this thesis. The availability of archival papers and the coherence with other case studies were deciding factors in choices of inclusion and exclusion, as well as the preservation of a collection *in situ*. In some cases, such as Felbrigg Hall, in Norfolk, a study of the portraits there could build towards a regional study, tracking political signifiers in the houses of electoral mainstays. Felbrigg's status as a Whig stronghold, home of Coke of Norfolk's close ally, William Windham, places it alongside Holkham, Houghton and the seats of other Norfolk political dynasties, such as the Townsends at Raynham. This would furnish a particularly rich potential project. Groups of houses associated by friendship and marriage could also be explored. The Ansons of Shugborough were, for instance, linked closely to Wimpole Hall and Wrest Park. The families of these estates collected sculpture and engaged extensively with classical culture. Wimpole, certainly, contains intriguing and unidentified portrait heads, on which no scholarship yet exists.⁸¹⁸ Can circles of family, acquaintance and allegiance be examined through bust culture? And what of more traditional family circles? At Petworth, the interplay between painted portraits of George Wyndham's forebears and Roman women and children, whom I theorized as potential proxies, is an interesting thread, which could be picked up via inventories and other records to reconstruct the 'hang' of other houses. Further work could also be to explore more archival papers and touristic accounts for responses to portrait sculpture, in an anthology cutting across case studies.

Once the bust is accepted as a rich and interesting type of object, to be contemplated and interacted with, to be rehabilitated from its relegation on windowsills and along corridors, it becomes an informative item – a talking head. As the anonymous poet of the

⁸¹⁸ See Taylor, 2014, for the unidentified emperors at Wimpole Hall.

Holkham Panegyric said of Coke of Norfolk, “sculptur’d marbles speak to sing his praise”.⁸¹⁹ Across eight chapters, the portrait bust has sung -and spoken- loudly, and while this thesis has teased out some notable threads, there are many more to be followed.

⁸¹⁹ Norfolk Record Office, GTN 3/9/6.

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