

**Carving Out New Specialisms:
Sculptors in England, c.1660 – 1715.**

In Two Volumes

Volume One

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Abstract

This thesis sheds new light on late seventeenth-century sculpture in England through the careers of three sculptors: Edward Pearce, Grinling Gibbons, and Caius Gabriel Cibber. It particularly draws attention to the role sculptors played in establishing sculpture as a newly defined artistic profession in this period, charting the various ways that sculptors drew influence from their European counterparts, including from the structural frameworks in which sculpture was practised in Italy, France, and the Netherlands.

The changes to sculpture in this period encompass new styles and innovations in the practical design process. However, social changes also influenced the profession. Therefore, this thesis synthesises material evidence, in the shape of sculptors' drawings and extant works, with contemporary documentary sources. Such items are fragmentary and widely dispersed but significant use has been made of the building accounts for St. Paul's Cathedral and the Parish Churches, the diaries of John Evelyn and Robert Hooke, and livery company minute books. Drawings are also held in multiple collections. Those held at RIBA, Sir John Soane's Museum, The Victoria and Albert Museum, the London Metropolitan Archives, St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Wren drawings at All Souls College, Oxford constitute the majority of the drawings consulted.

This thesis also considers the relationships that sculptors developed with emergent professional architects, particularly Christopher Wren. As such, it explores the roles that sculptors were entrusted with on many of the most significant building and sculptural projects of the century. It further investigates their wider social positions by considering the roles that sculptors adopted beyond the workshop or the construction site. As such, it evaluates the changing position of the profession in English society in the seventeenth century.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and that I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged as references. It is not the product of any collaborative work with colleagues. Aspects of the discussion found in chapter two has previously been published in the following article:

Davis, Charlotte. ““Grinling Gibbons in Context: The Vitality of English Seventeenth-Century Sculptural Production”, *The Sculpture Journal*, 29:3 (2020): 299 – 312.

Abbreviations

- Colvin, Howard. *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* 4th edition, New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2008. *BDBA*
- Colvin, Howard. Ed. *The History of the Kings Works*. Vol. 5. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1976. *KW*
- Geraghty, Anthony. *The Architectural Drawings of Sir Christopher Wren at All Souls College, Oxford: A Complete Catalogue*. Hampshire: Lund Humphries with the assistance of English Heritage, 2007. *AG*
- The Guildhall Library. *GL*
- Knoop, Douglas and G.P. Jones. *The London Mason in the Seventeenth Century*. London and Manchester: The Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076 and Manchester University Press, 1935. *LM*
- The London Metropolitan Archives. *LMA*
- The National Archives. *TNA*
- The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition. *ODNB*
- Roscoe, Ingrid. Emma Hardy, and M G Sullivan. *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851*. New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Henry Moore Foundation by Yale University Press, 2009. *BDS*
- Whinney, Margaret. *Sculpture in Britain 1530 – 1830*. London: Penguin Group, 1988. *MW*

Introduction

Thomas Broomhall, like many construction workers, moved to London from Shropshire in the 1670s, capitalising on the relaxed rules towards ‘foreigners’ working in London following the Great Fire. For Broomhall, masonry and sculpture were a family tradition; his father had worked as a mason and he would in turn apprentice his sons to himself in the family trade. The formal qualifications of able workmanship, endorsed by the Masons’ Company, were essential to the Broomhall family’s working life and several apprentices were bound to Thomas and traditionally trained in the Broomhall workshop. Indeed, the Masons’ Company was at the very centre of the Broomhalls’ working lives as it also provided successive generations with a professional social network. The majority of the contracts that the Broomhalls are known to have been employed on were sourced from within the network of the guild. The most notable of these contracts found Broomhall amongst the significant workforce that Edward Strong employed over many years at St. Paul’s Cathedral. Indeed, the Broomhalls were almost always subcontracted by more prominent masons who negotiated directly with patrons. The Broomhalls were therefore excluded from significant aspects – such as the design – of the majority of the works that they created.¹

What is more, it is unlikely that the training received inside the Broomhall workshop included an education in design. The development of sculptural skills would have been limited to the deft imitation of predetermined patterns for the ornamental mouldings found within the masonry that constituted the vast majority of the workshop’s contracts. Only two works have been identified as independent sculptural commissions from the Broomhall workshop. These take the form of simple marble tablets (Fig. 0.1). These finished slabs are entirely devoid of any ornamental workmanship, there is no moulding to the edges and no decoration adorns the text of the reliefs. In these independent works there is no evidence of sculptural skill and there has been no attempt to display any inventive capability. These works identify the Broomhalls as primarily masons, masons with little

¹ *BDS*, 145.

training, or interest, in the sculptural possibilities of their working medium, and who, when working independently, approached decorative stonework with a practical, rather than ornamental, mindset.

As such, the Broomhalls typify the sculptural profession in seventeenth-century England as one in which craft practices and operating networks perpetuated, despite the concurrent emergence of new values in other areas of cultural production that was driven by Renaissance ideals.² And yet, during Thomas Broomhall's working life, and within only a few pages of each other in *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660 – 1851*, an entirely different working life is described.

Francis Bird emerged as *the* premier sculptor in England in the early decades of the eighteenth century.³ Bird's early years were dominated by significant periods of sculptural training. This included extended periods spent abroad where he developed an affinity with the styles of sculpture that were practised in Italy and Flanders, and which were highly desirable to elite British audiences. He further enhanced his credentials with periods of training in the leading London sculptural workshops of the previous century.⁴ By undertaking training in Europe, Bird was introduced to formal structures that differed from those in England – ones in which sculpture was not under the authority of masons – allowing him to develop a highly-specialised sculptural education. These skills foregrounded an exceptional career in London in which Bird practised solely as a sculptor. Moreover, Bird's sculptural output was almost entirely contained to figurative sculptural works, further distinguishing his career from his predecessors in the previous century who often engaged in a broader range of sculptural production.

² I use the term Renaissance throughout this thesis to indicate the values that the sculptors inhabited. I use the term to equate the conditions in seventeenth-century England as an English Renaissance and to indicate the sculptors' behaviours within greater intellectual and social shifts that were then emerging in England.

³ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁴ It is believed that Bird's appointment as the sculptor for the relief on the tympanum of the west end of St. Paul's Cathedral was as a direct result of him having been in the employment of Caius Gabriel Cibber, who is thought to have undertaken the initial designs for the relief and who had previously undertaken a similarly colossal relief for another Wren building at Hampton Court Palace. Margaret Whinney and Oliver Millar, *English Art 1625 – 1714*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1957), 252.

Bird carefully crafted his public image. This revolved around his travels in the cultural and artistic heartland of Italy: indeed, commentators insisted Bird barely remembered how to speak English on his return.⁵ Such a flamboyant display of his continental experiences was a deliberate choice, a choice that allowed Bird to performatively exhibit his cultural capital, during the period that Grand Tourism was becoming an established prerequisite for the cultural education of English gentlemen. Bird's idiosyncratic display of his proximity to Italian culture served two purposes. Firstly, it signified to an English audience that his sculptural works were, in spirit if not in actuality, authentically Italian. Secondly, it elevated Bird's cultural experiences as those of the gentleman rather than those of the workman, and implicitly indicated that he was to be understood as a member of an intellectual, rather than manual, class. Bird's approach to his work only furthered such interpretations. He was not to be found making regular appearances on site with the other workmen. Indeed, while working at St. Paul's Cathedral, he had to be encouraged with payments to attend at the Cathedral.⁶

The social and professional networks in which Bird formed close friendships were entirely removed from the guild structures which had for so long governed sculptural production in the City. His circle was literary, artistic, antiquarian, and aristocratic, and frequented the private club scenes that dominated eighteenth-century London. He was closely associated with an artistic circle centred around the second Earl of Oxford, a renowned bibliophile, which included the leading authors Johnathan Swift and Alexander Pope, and the antiquarian George Vertue. Similar to many of the group's members, Bird collected an esteemed collection of rare books and

⁵ Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England; with some account of the principal artists and incidental notes on other arts collected by the late Mr. George Vertue*, Volume III, Fourth Edition, (Pall Mall: J. Dodsley, 1786), 283.

⁶ The Building Accounts for St. Paul's Cathedral June 1719 – December 1722 records that Bird was paid a guinea "For his own attendance in paying his Day Workmen". Published in *The Wren Society*, Vol. XV, (1938), 226. The payment of a guinea also seems significant. Distinctions in payments in pounds and guineas has a long history that persisted into the twentieth century. An anonymous American observer highlighted the longstanding hierarchy in British payments by explaining that payment in pounds indicated payment for "mechanical labour", but when he was paid "an extra shilling to every pound . . . This means that I am not supposed to have performed any labor [sic.] at all, but to have created a work of art". "Guineas and Pounds, More than the Mere Shilling Difference Between "Them", *Kingston Daily Freeman*, 122, 11 March 1910, 1.

manuscripts.⁷ Bird also displayed his antiquarian interests as a subscriber to John Dart's *Westmonasterium* which, with over one hundred and forty engravings of the monuments in Westminster Abbey, promoted both historic and contemporary London sculpture, including a substantial and prominent number of examples by Bird himself.⁸

However, such efforts reinforce the degree to which Bird was invested in promoting sculpture as an intellectual and honourable artform, rather than merely promoting his own achievements. His greatest effort in this area is found in his promotion of early attempts to academise British art. He was notably the only sculptor to hold a position as a founding director of Sir Godfrey Kneller's Academy of Painting, through which he cemented his position as a foremost figure in the formalised introduction of Renaissance art theory to British art practice.⁹

Over the course of Broomhall's career the sculptural profession in London had experienced a seismic revolution that fundamentally changed the way that sculpture was practised, and the artistic identities of those that practised it, as typified by Bird. Sculpture increasingly emerged as a distinct profession, one which distanced itself from any craft heritage, and which was no longer under the control of the traditional guild structures that had for so long managed London's professional world. Instead, sculpture was becoming increasingly aligned with the fine arts, and, through the actions of those such as Francis Bird, was being provided a place in discourses that sought to increase the quality and dignity of the fine arts in Britain.¹⁰

Such ideological changes regarding what sculpture was, and where its place ought to be, also generated practical changes in the way that sculpture was practised and

⁷ The significance of some of the rare manuscripts collected by Francis Bird is the focus of Iain Campbell's current research, which was presented on 7 April, 2022 at the CRAFTVALUE conference "Artisans and Architects 1660 – 1760", Trinity College, Dublin.

⁸ Seven of Bird's monuments in Westminster Abbey were featured: Thomas Shadwell, Dr. Richard Busby, Dr. Robert South, Brigadier-General Robert Killigrew, Admiral Henry Priestman, Vice-Admiral John Baker, and Dr. Thomas Sprat. Tellingly, all of these sculptures were afforded full-page engravings dedicated to the display of a single sculpture. John Dart, *Westmonasterium, or the History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St Peter's Westminster*, (Covent Garden: James Cole, 1723), Volume 1, 77, 92, 95, 143, Volume 2, 102, 108, 109.

⁹ Matthew Craske, 'Francis Bird', *ODNB*, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb,2444>, accessed 10 May 2022.

¹⁰ MW, 143 – 144.

taught. More formalised routes of training were beginning to emerge that placed a new-found significance on skills that were not to be found in the workshop. Drawing skills, in particular, became an essential tool in training this new kind of sculptor. As a means of learning and understanding both the newest fashions and the archetypal forms of continental European art, these skills also fundamentally influenced the sculptures that they produced. Meanwhile, drawing increasingly became a trusted method of communicating artistic designs, one which had the added benefit of conveying the authors' invention and education. These sculptors no longer looked to master-masons for employment, and in seeking new patrons they invested in self-advertisement, utilising the rapidly expanding print market in order to cultivate an image which appealed to an increasingly artistically literate clientele.

Such dramatic shifts in sculpture did not happen overnight, and Bird was not the first sculptor in England to divert from the established career path exemplified by the Broomhalls. This thesis reveals the profound shifts that were happening in the sculptural profession towards the end of the seventeenth century, directly preceding Bird's heyday, and identifies key individuals who provided the necessary underpinnings for a new sculptural career, such as Bird's, to be possible in the early decades of the eighteenth century.

Sculpture in Seventeenth-Century England

From funerary monuments to fireplaces, sculpture contributed to a richly-ornamented mode of decoration that permeated every aspect of late seventeenth-century decoration and display. Sculpture appeared in a broad range of settings and materials, and sculptors were expected to be capable of moving easily between monumental stone architectural ornament, intricate decorative wooden interiors, and freestanding figurative statuary. While only the final of these types of sculpture provided the maker with the distinction of a particular designation, as a statuary, it is not the case that there was a definitive hierarchy for the different modes of sculpture in seventeenth-century England.¹¹ The term sculptor is virtually absent in the

¹¹ Unlike in Italy, where such designations had been cemented for some time. See Peter M. Lukehart, "Carving Out Live: The Role of Sculptors in the Early History of the Accademia di San Luca", in

period.¹² Sculptors were designated as carvers or statuary depending on the type of work they were undertaking at any particular instance and these do not correspond to differences in charges, indicating that these terms were used descriptively rather than to denote any specific hierarchy in the sculptural profession.¹³

Indeed, sculpture was far from an afterthought in its other locations; sculptural ornament on the exterior of buildings and in their decorative interiors, including staircases and chimneys, were significant aspects that were conceived to compliment the dignity of those they housed.¹⁴ Purpose and place, therefore, were important aspects of sculptural invention. Sculpture, in common with all other modes of decoration – from fabric to painting – was conceived as a means of enrichment. As such, it was suffused with opportunities for viewers to interpret the significance of that being ornamented.¹⁵ This visual language had immense range and scope and applied equally to foliated swags on the façade of a building and mythological statues in a garden, each enriched their environment and its inhabitants.

Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe, ed. Nicholas Penny and Eike D. Schmidt (New Haven and London: National Gallery of Art, Washington by Yale University Press) 2008, 201.

¹² A Google Ngram search displays an occurrence far below 1% throughout the period. Indeed, between 1675 and 1683 it returns no appearances of the word.

https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=sculptor&year_start=1650&year_end=1700&corpus=26&smoothing=3, accessed 22 November 2022. See also Nigel Llewellyn, “A Taxonomy for the Invisible: Categories for English Funeral Monuments”, in *Court, Country, City: British Art and Architecture, 1660-1735*, ed. Mark Hallett, Nigel Llewellyn, and Martin Myrone (New Haven and London: The Yale Centre for British Art and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2016), 503 – 504.

¹³ Indeed, the lack of a specific term to denote an intellectual or artistic proficiency in sculpture may in part explain why some sculptors were keen to identify themselves as architects, a role that was understood in the period to be practised by those with particular, and similar, skills. See chapter three for a thorough discussion.

¹⁴ Christine Stevenson has previously noted Henry Wotton’s description of the “due conformity between the ‘dignity of the Master’ and the appearance of his house” in the period. Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, (London, 1624), quoted in Christine Stevenson, *The City and the King. Architecture and Politics in Restoration London*, (New Haven and London: The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British art and Yale University Press, 2013), 67 – 69. See also Clare McManus, “The Cultures of the British Isles”, in *The Seventeenth Century*, ed. Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 184.

¹⁵ Anya Lucas described the decoration of Livery Halls as not primarily “‘aesthetic statements’ but collages of ‘heraldry and emblematics’ that served ‘political motives’”. Anya Lucas, “‘Costly without, Richlier Inlaid’: London’s Post-Fire Livery Halls”, *The Georgian Group Journal*, XXVI, (2018): 1; See also Christine Stevenson, “Occasional Architecture in Seventeenth – Century London”, *Architectural History*, vol. 49, (2006): 35 – 74; Laura Weigert, “‘Theatricality’ in Tapestries and Mystery Plays and its Afterlife in Painting”, in *Theatricality in Early Modern Art and Architecture*, ed. Caroline van Eck and Stijn Bussels (Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 24 – 35; Caroline van Eck, *Classical Rhetoric and the Visual Arts in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). 3 – 12.

There is a wittiness in the use of materials in the sculpture of late-seventeenth-century England. One often masqueraded as another, with a range of creators utilising ingenuity as a means of delighting an audience.¹⁶ Different settings were deemed appropriate spaces for the employment of tradition and invention, further highlighting that purpose, location, and meaning were inextricably linked, and deeply considered, aspects of artistic creation. It is therefore not incongruous that increasingly lively and theatrical sculptures, such as John Bushnell's monument to Viscount Mordaunt (Fig. 0.2), which enhanced an already contrapposto stance with voluminous folds of cloth that swirl in dramatic and deeply-cut diagonals around the body in an exemplification of contemporary European sculptural trends, appeared at the same time as deeply traditional – and even archaic – static forms of statuary, which continued to be used to represent historical figures and to highlight ties with the past.¹⁷ Traditional and modern elements also appear in architectural sculpture, and were even occasionally integrated into the same façades.¹⁸ England was, in the late-seventeenth century, reconciling its past with its present, particularly the Interregnum and subsequent return to a monarchy that directly prefaced the period. Similarly, it was at the forefront of scientific discovery even as superstitions and witch-hunts persisted.¹⁹ The diversity in sculptural styles is representative of a society conscious of the larger social transitions that were being experienced.

Formally, there is little to unify such a vibrant and diverse range of sculptural modes. However, across all areas of sculpture, the period witnessed an increasing

¹⁶ See Tim Batchelor, "Illusion and Deception", in *British Baroque, Power and Illusion*, ed. Tabitha Barber (London: Tate Publishing, 2020), 63 – 76; Judith Hook, *The Baroque Age in England*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 36.

¹⁷ As George Vertue observed of the figure, "[t]is done with abundance of Spirits". George Vertue, "Autobiography", *The Walpole Society*, Vol. 18, (1929 – 1930): 58. Katharine Esdaile, by comparison, draws attention to William Stanton's tomb of Richard and Isabel Shirburne, which displays the continuation of the much older sculptural form with recumbent effigies. This work highlights that there was also a passion for continuity in funerary monuments, particularly when situated in close proximity to the tombs of older generations. Katharine Esdaile, "A Seventeenth-Century Model of an English Monument", *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 319, (1929): 196.

¹⁸ This was particularly the case when the historic fabric of the building was deemed to be of great importance, such as at the Guildhall. Anya Lucas and Henry Russell, *The Livery Halls of The City of London*, (London and New York: Merrell, 2018), 13 – 15, 234, 253; Elizabeth Chew, "'A Mockery of the Surveyor's Style?': Alternatives to Inigo Jones in Seventeenth-Century Elite British Architecture", in *Articulating British Classicism, New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*, ed. Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), 57 – 96.

¹⁹ J. A. Sharpe, "The Economic and Social Context", in *The Seventeenth Century*, ed. Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 177.

engagement with contemporary continental European fashions as well as ancient classical prototypes. English engagement with European art was on the increase at this time for a number of reasons, not least the extended periods that royalists had spent in Europe during the Interregnum. By the 1660s, sculptors from Europe, alive to different sculptural norms, were also arriving in England in increasing numbers.²⁰ Simultaneously, prints and books circulated in ever-increasing numbers, bringing totemic works, the newest fashions, and foundational texts from Europe to a wider English audience than ever before. By the end of the century, a relaxation of laws had also allowed for an increase in the importing of sculpture, and other artworks, and a burgeoning auction scene further spurred the growth of an English art market and an increasingly artistically-engaged society.²¹

Institutionally, sculpture did not benefit from the oversight of a specific guild dedicated to its practice. Sculpture in stone had, since the dissolution of the Marblers' Company at the end of the sixteenth century, been ostensibly under the control of the Masons' Company.²² It was representatives from that company that adjudicated on disputes regarding pay and quality that arose for sculptors in the City.²³ As Judith Hook has noted, the guilds exerted pervasive control over their members:

Since the guilds exercised a close supervision over the artist's work, which was subjected to a very large number of rules and controls, there was no room for what we might call 'artistic temperament', for the assertion of individuality or for any eccentric, wayward genius.²⁴

The governance of the guild also extended to career progression, overseeing apprenticeships and conferring progression through the ranks from apprentice all the way to master. The guild was conceived to oversee masons, and sculpture – as a late addition to the guild – struggled to make an impression on the institution that governed it. For sculptors without a masonic heritage, and whose careers were not tethered to masonry, the guild offered very little.

²⁰ MW, 93 – 94.

²¹ See Whinney and Millar, *English Art*, 1.

²² LM, 22.

²³ John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530 – 1830*, fifth edition, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970), 155.

²⁴ Hook, *The Baroque Age in England*, 53.

Similarly, sculpture in wood was the preserve of the Joiners, however the company was – similar to the Masons – predominantly involved in construction and wooden panelling, areas of woodworking that the sculptors included in this thesis had virtually no involvement.²⁵

Moreover, the most established sculptors – and all of the sculptors that constitute the focus of this thesis - operated workshops that worked across these materials. Their careers did not cohere with the institutional framework that they inherited. As such, while sculptors of the period still found it beneficial to have a guild association, which provided the right to work in the city, they were becoming increasingly unlikely to join the companies of the masons, carpenters, or joiners.²⁶ Moreover, by the late seventeenth century, particularly following the Great Fire, the Masons' Company, among others that had traditionally overseen construction in the City, were facing a new crisis over their control of work in the City. As the need for workers outstripped supply, the rules that insisted upon guild membership for city workers were temporarily relaxed.²⁷ It is in this climate, when larger concerns than those of sculptors loomed for the guild, that my thesis is centred.

Another area that was starting to erode the traditional control of the guilds was Christopher Wren's appointment to the post of Surveyor General, and his subsequent introduction of an "architectural education without parallel in Restoration England" at the Office of Works.²⁸ In defining the role of the architect according to Renaissance models, as a learned and essentially academic pursuit, Wren subverted some of the authority that guild-trained master-craftsmen had previously enjoyed as architects in all but name. Architecture was gaining widespread credence as an

²⁵ The bye-laws of the Carpenters from the seventeenth century specifically reference joists and rafters but make no mention of carved sculptures, indicating that they did not have control of this aspect. While the Joiners had nominal control over carving, in practice they had no involvement with the sculptors discussed in this thesis. See Robert Blackham, *The Soul of the City London's Livery Companies*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd.), 219. Carpenters' bye-laws reproduced in Edward Basil Jupp, *An Historical Account of the Company of Carpenters of the City of London*, (London: William Pickering, 1848), 145 – 153.

²⁶ Indeed, while all three sculptors featured in this thesis were members of a guild, none were members of the Masons' Company.

²⁷ A major point of contention in the Masons' Company throughout the period. See *LM*, 12 – 18.

²⁸ Anthony Geraghty, "Introducing Thomas Laine: Draughtsman to Sir Christopher Wren", *Architectural History*, 42, (1999): 240.

educated – and gentlemanly – pursuit, one which was conceptual rather than manual, and therefore outside of the governance of the traditional guilds which had no authority over such novel professional delineations. For sculptors, the arrival of newly professionalised architects provided both benefits and challenges. They had to learn to negotiate their work with people who had increased oversight of all aspects of design and decoration, including sculptural ornament and even monuments; however, working with architects also provided sculptors with insights into new working practices and a model for a professional identity that was not bound by guild structures.

By contrast, and unlike sculptors arriving in England who largely chose not to associate themselves with the companies that they shared the same materials with, foreign painters still found benefits in associating with the Painter-Stainers' Company.²⁹

By contrast, and unlike sculptors arriving in England who largely chose not to associate themselves with the Masons' Company, foreign painters still found benefits in associating with the Painter-Stainers' Company.³⁸ Moreover, by the turn of the eighteenth century the Painters' Hall had itself emerged as a space for inspiration and competition amongst painters, as “the Hall in Little Trinity Lane became home to a showcase of paintings by some of the most highly regarded foreign painters working in England”.³⁹ Painting, similar to architecture, had been inspired by Renaissance paradigms of art training. As early as 1656, members of the Painter-Stainers' Company had made an unsuccessful request for space in their Hall to be used for life drawing classes.⁴⁰ The guild resisted offering schooling in their arts, but demand only increased and Peter Lely, the leading painter of his age, is believed to have provided such a space at his home before his death in 1680.⁴¹

²⁹ Richard Johns, ‘Framing Robert Aggas: The Painter-Stainers’ Company and the “English School of Painters”’, *Art History*, 31: 3, (2008): 328.

³⁸ Richard Johns, ‘Framing Robert Aggas: The Painter-Stainers’ Company and the “English School of Painters”’, *Art History*, 31: 3, (2008): 328.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 333.

⁴⁰ Alan Borg, *The History of the Worshipful Company of Painters Otherwise Painter-Stainers* (Huddersfield: Jeremy Mills, 2005), 63.

⁴¹ Esther van der Hoorn and Morgan Wylder, *A Historical and Technical Investigation of Sir Peter Lely’s Cimon and Efigenia from the Collection at Doddington Hall, Art and the Country House*,

Interest in establishing a formal academy of art gained traction through the period, although it was not achieved until 1711, with the creation of the Kneller Academy of Painting and Drawing, where Bird was the sole sculptor to be made a founding director.⁴² Indeed, the early history of art academies in London is dominated by the efforts of painters. This is reflected in the name of Kneller's academy, which referred specifically to being a school for painting.⁴³

The late seventeenth century is remembered for producing works in which painting, sculpture, and architecture were highly integrated. It is, therefore, remarkable not only that there was no formal and united institution for the arts, but that the institutional structures were so actively segregated. Sculpture, lacking even a dedicated institutional space in which the art could be improved, and young sculptors nourished, was particularly disadvantaged.⁴⁴

I describe the sculptors in this thesis with the anachronistic term 'sculptor' throughout. While the term was not in common usage in England at this time the modes of working that they employed were novel in England, and most closely cohere with the artistic identity that is connotated by the word. I use 'sculptor' in order to acknowledge their contributions to the emergent sculptural profession, to which this thesis draws attention.

<https://courtauld.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Cimon-and-Efigenia-Wylder-van-der-Hoorn-Research-Forum-website.pdf>, 7, accessed 10 May 2022.

⁴² George Vertue, "Autobiography", *The Walpole Society*, Vol. 18, (1929-30): 2; William Whitley, *Artists and their Friends in England 1700 – 1799*, Vol.1, (New York and London: Benjamin Blom, 1928), 8.

⁴³ When recording the events Vertue stated that "most other eminent painters in London & other Artists joynd in it this establishment of the Academy". It is notable that, for Vertue, the painters were "eminent" while the other artists are very much ancillary. George Vertue, "Autobiography", *The Walpole Society*, Vol. 18, (1929-30): 2. Peter Lely and Godfrey Kneller have already been mentioned. As the century progressed the painters James Thornhill and William Hogarth were involved at academies at St. Martin's Lane and Joshua Reynolds famously served as the first president of the Royal Academy. Whitley, *Artists and their Friends*, 13, 17, 27.

⁴⁴ Dedicated sculptural institutions, such as the Sculptors' Institute and the Royal Society of Sculptors only emerged in the nineteenth century. See Ann Compton, "Continuity and Change: The Foundation of the Sculptors' Institute and the Royal Society of Sculptors", in *Sculpting Art History, Essays in Memory of Benedict Read*, ed. Katharine Eustace, Mark Stoker, and Joanna Barnes (London: PMSA Publishing, 2018), 157 – 159.

The formation of a historiography

By the early decades of the eighteenth century there was an increasing interest in charting the history of English art.⁴⁵ This initially arose from antiquarian pursuits and Vertue, in particular, collated a wealth of information regarding artists of the seventeenth century while they were still in living memory. By the mid-century such works were being published.⁴⁶ Contemporaneously, the foundation of the Royal Academy further codified British art, providing institutional oversight over what constituted ‘good’ art. In the eighteenth century, ‘good’ was overwhelmingly synonymous with classical.⁴⁷ Classical models also permeated the value placed upon an individual’s artistic judgements, which were increasingly viewed as having a moral element, according to contemporary interpretations of Plato.⁴⁸ Over the course of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, and in tandem with the increasing identification of English art as expressing the values – and defining the character – of the country, histories of English art, focussed on the biographies of key characters through the ages, only increased in popularity.

Sculpture of the seventeenth century was increasingly employed in such debates in order to display the progress that had been made over the course of the eighteenth century. The freedom with which classical references were employed in the seventeenth century, or even absence of classical norms, were thus negatively judged in relation to the archly-classical tone of many eighteenth-century works.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Described by Ernst Gombrich as “[t]he very concern of the eighteenth century with the enlightenment, the creation of conditions favouring culture, also led to an increasing interest in the cultural conditions of the past.” Ernst Gombrich, *Ideals and Idols, Essays on Values in History and in Art*, (Oxford: Phaidon, 1979), 27.

⁴⁶ Horace Walpole’s collation of Vertue’s notes into the *Anecdotes of Painting* foregrounds the widespread establishment of an English canon of artists.

⁴⁷ “All members of the aristocracy and many professional men now appear on their tombs in Roman dress, and often, whether it is appropriate or not, in Roman armour. And further, their houses were adorned with busts in the antique manner and with reliefs copied from engravings of those on the Arch of Constantine or other famous monuments of ancient Rome; and their gardens were peopled, to a far greater degree than in the previous century, with the gods of Antiquity”. MW, 143 – 144.

⁴⁸ See the Earl of Shaftsbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, Vol. 1, fifth edition, (London: John Darby, 1732), 336 – 338.

⁴⁹ As Sarah Burnage has previously noted, increasingly negative associations were made towards seventeenth-century sculptors, who, rather than following classical examples, “were only to ‘servilely’ copy French artists and ‘generally with inferior execution’”, as she outlined with comments by John Gould from *The Dictionary of British Painters, Sculptors and Engravers*, (1910). She further notes that the one sculptor who generally avoided such criticism was Grinling Gibbons. A thorough consideration of the exceptional historiography of Gibbons can be found in the introduction

Therefore, while the sculptors that constitute the focus of my thesis are all included in the foundational texts of English art that appeared within a few decades of their death, their inclusion largely served to reinforce the narrative of British art reaching its apex with neo-classicism. For example, Caius Gabriel Cibber's garden statuary was infused with the style and themes of classical statuary, and were on this basis considered by later judges to be "in good taste".⁵⁰

However, as the century progressed, even this basis of merit began to be eschewed. Joshua Reynolds, speaking in his capacity as the president of the Royal Academy, in a discourse that was widely published at the time, castigated the sculptors of the seventeenth century:

The sculptors of the last age, from not attending sufficiently to this discrimination of the different styles of Painting, have been led into many errors. Though they well know that they were allowed to imitate, or take ideas for the improvement of their own Art from the grand style of Painting, they were not aware that it was not permitted to borrow in the same manner from the ornamental.⁵¹

Reynolds' words reinforce the degree to which the hierarchy of the arts had cemented sculpture's position as subsidiary – and even contingent – to painting.⁵² Furthermore, the broad application of sculpture – and other artistic and decorative forms – so central to the visual culture of the seventeenth century had, within a century, been completely disavowed by Reynolds' definitions of the appropriate forms of sculpture. By codifying only specific aspects of sculpture in the Royal Academy, much of the output of the greatest sculptors of the previous century were denied a position as works of art. Anachronistic judgments had been applied, and ornament had been relegated.

to Chapter two. Sarah Burnage, "The British School of Sculpture – A Case Study", in *The British School of Sculpture, c.1760 – 1832*, ed. Jason Edwards and Sarah Burnage (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 21 – 22.

⁵⁰ Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, 147.

⁵¹ Joshua Reynolds, "Discourse X", in *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert Wark (New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Yale University Press, 1997), 175 – 176.

⁵² Reynolds's opened the lecture by assessing that "[p]ainting . . . is much more extensive and complicated than sculpture" and that "the leading principles of Sculpture are comprised in those of Painting". *Ibid.*, 175. For more on the reduction of sculptural modes in art writing of the time see Malcolm Baker, *Figured in Marble*, (London: V&A Publications, 2000), 24 – 28.

As the period continued, and the sense of a British artistic style gained traction, the fact that seventeenth-century sculpture did not conform to the stylistic demands of the proceeding century only became more problematic. British wars against France, culminating in the Napoleonic wars at the turn of the nineteenth century, fostered increasingly anti-French sentiment in Britain. The cultural dominance of France in the seventeenth century, particularly during the reign of Louis XIV, permeated English art of the period. These French influences had a lasting and damaging influence on British perceptions of seventeenth-century sculpture.⁵³

By the nineteenth century, then, both the style of seventeenth-century sculpture and the modes that sculptors employed were considered to be uneducated, grossly inadequate, and fundamentally un-English. By the early nineteenth century, central texts that established an instructional canon of British art, such as George Hamilton's *The English School*, entirely omitted works produced before the 1720s.⁵⁴ The sidelining of seventeenth-century art – and sculptors in particular – from discussions of English art was complete.⁵⁵ What is more, this narrative has had a lasting influence on the way that seventeenth-century sculpture has been incorporated into scholarly discussions to the present day, with the exception of Grinling Gibbons.⁵⁶

An enduring historiographical narrative

The historiography that emerged over the course of the eighteenth century has had an enduring influence on the narratives of English sculptural history.⁵⁷ By the early twentieth century, the idea that the eighteenth century had rescued English art was as

⁵³ As Sarah Burnage has explained, seventeenth century sculpture was “inadequate not only because it was ‘theatrical’, but, more fundamentally, because it was ‘not British’”, which more specifically meant French. Sarah Burnage, “‘Delighting the Common People’, John Bacon Senior’s Monuments to the Earl of Chatham (1778 – 84)”, in *The British School of Sculpture, c.1760 – 1832*, ed. Jason Edwards and Sarah Burnage (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 95.

⁵⁴ George Hamilton, *The English School, A series of the most approved productions in Painting and Sculpture executed by British artists from the days of Hogarth to the present time*; (London: Bossange, Barthés and Lowell, 1831).

⁵⁵ See also Llewellyn, “A Taxonomy for the Invisible”, 501.

⁵⁶ His particular historiography is discussed in detail in the introduction to chapter two.

⁵⁷ Summarised by Katharine Esdaile: “The principle on which our fathers and grandfathers were brought up is, briefly stated, that Gothic monuments are good; that Jacobean art – which elastic term often covers the whole reign of Elizabeth – is interesting; [and] that what follows is bad”. Katharine Esdaile, *English Monumental Sculpture Since the Renaissance*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1927), xi.

firmly-held as it had been at its inception almost two centuries earlier, inspiring comments such as the following passage:

When Anne ascended the throne in 1702 there were no English painters or sculptors worthy of particular consideration, for the arts in this country had sunk almost to their lowest ebb and there was as yet no indications of that great eighteenth-century revival that was to bring forth Hogarth, Reynolds and Gainsborough.⁵⁸

Moreover, the persistence of this narrative has had a profound influence on the central academic texts of the twentieth century. Margaret Whinney, despite writing nearly sixty years ago, remains the defining voice on British sculpture to this day. Whinney perpetuated the key tenets that were inscribed into the narrative of English sculpture in the eighteenth century:

The provincialism which had marred English sculpture for at least two centuries was, by about 1725, to give place to a style of far greater accomplishment [. . .] [b]ring[ing] about entirely new standards of both quality and taste.⁵⁹

An explicit denigration of the sculptural output that preceded the eighteenth century foregrounded much of Whinney's discussions.⁶⁰ What is more, Whinney only considered figurative sculpture in her formative discussions of English sculpture, applying an hierarchical model of working that was anachronistic to the seventeenth century, one that was founded upon sculptural divisions that were only cemented much later.⁶¹ This limited consideration of sculptural production was – at the very least – a contributing factor towards Whinney's conclusion that sculptors in the seventeenth century did not make a valuable contribution to the improvement of English art.⁶²

⁵⁸ Whitley, *Artists and their Friends*, Vol.1, 3.

⁵⁹ MW, 143.

⁶⁰ Indeed, in the 1963 preface, Whinney makes plain that “[s]ince the quality of English sculpture over the period is extremely uneven, it seemed best to devote most space to the eighteenth century, when the level was fairly high”. *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶¹ Whinney and Millar, *English Art*, 234 – 259.

⁶² Attesting in the opening lines of *English Art* that only “[t]hree great artists, Inigo Jones, van Dyck, and Christopher Wren, brought England once more to the level of European achievement”. *Ibid.*, v.

The wider art scholarship of the same period further supported Whinney's perspective. Hugely influential mid-century authors of architectural histories, including John Summerson and Howard Colvin, inherently viewed classical architectural examples from the seventeenth century to be superior to those of other styles.⁶³ Such authors also furthered the conception, enunciated by Reynolds almost two centuries earlier, that there was a distinction between mechanical craft practices and the learned liberal arts. This distinction was placed on the division between the architect and the craftsman, with sculptors such as Edward Pearce allocated to the secondary category.⁶⁴ Therefore, the argument for the supremacy of classicism, which persisted well into the latter decades of the twentieth century, also categorised creators as either naïve producers or cognitive designers, creating a hierarchy that subjugated sculptors, as creators of sculptural ornament, below architects. Cumulatively, these teleological conceptions of the emergence of classical art in Britain meant that twentieth-century scholars approached the seventeenth century with the aim of discovering a chain of development that directly led to the works produced in the following century, despite their self-professed "difficult[y] in trac[ing] a coherent stylistic development in the period".⁶⁵ From this perspective, the seventeenth century was necessarily profuse with slightly embarrassing examples of poorly-understood classical elements, which had been executed prior to the apotheosis of classical purity.

This position had only been made more deleterious as, until the end of the twentieth century, seventeenth-century sculptor's work had been largely obscured by the names of more prominent architects. Despite John Physick's seminal exhibition of sculptors' drawings in 1969, the prevalence of their drawings, and the hands of

⁶³ Summerson's coining of the term 'artisan mannerism' was created to separate the classical and architectural from the "broad and coarse" creations of craftsmen. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 155. See also Howard Colvin's description of the "mannerist" or vernacular classicism of the period. Howard Colvin, *Essays in English Architectural History*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 172. For a full discussion see, Elizabeth McKellar, "Populism Versus Professionalism: John Summerson and the Twentieth-Century Creation of the 'Georgian'", in *Articulating British Classicism, New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*, ed. Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), 35 – 56.

⁶⁴ John Summerson, *Georgian London*, third edition, (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd, 1978), 58 – 60. A full discussion of Edward Pearce can be found in Chapter 1.

⁶⁵ Whinney and Millar, *English Art*, 237.

specific sculptors from this period, have only emerged in recent years.⁶⁶ The distinction between ‘sculpture’ and ‘architecture’ had meant that many sculptors’ architectural drawings and ornamental designs for architectural projects had not been ascribed to them, but instead to more prominent architects.⁶⁷ Therefore, the full extent of their involvement in design processes – across the most significant architectural projects of the period – was not known and not integrated into historical accounts of their working lives and assessments of their skills.

However, the publication of *Articulating British Classicism: New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*, at the outset of the twenty-first century marks a turning point in architectural history.⁶⁸ Scholars have now started to dismantle the anachronistic application of eighteenth-century values to the architecture of the seventeenth century that has dominated scholarly writing for the last three hundred years.⁶⁹ Scholars such as Christine Stevenson and Anya Lucas have progressed on earlier research by Judith Hook, who introduced a dual assessment of the visual and cultural history of the period.⁷⁰ A new appreciation of the relationships between the cultural functions of architectural spaces and the built environment is also emerging, one in which ornament is becoming an increasingly important area of interest.⁷¹

⁶⁶ The catalogue records the scope of the exhibition. See John Physick, *Designs for English Sculpture 1680-1860*, (London: Butler and Tanner for Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1969). More recently, sculptors’ drawings have become more prominent in the work of Anthony Geraghty, Gordon Higgott, and for the eighteenth century, in the work of Malcolm Baker. See AG, 86, 87, 90, 195, 266 – 270; Gordon Higgott “The Revised Design for St. Paul’s Cathedral, 1685-90: Wren, Hawksmoor and Les Invalides”. *The Burlington Magazine*, 146: 1217 (August 2004): 537; Baker, *Figured in Marble*, 34 – 48.

⁶⁷ For example, it was only in 2013 that the drawings for the arches created on the entry into London of Charles II were published as being in the hand of Edward Pearce rather than Balthazar Gerbier, and only at a conference in 2021 (Renaissance Architecture and Theory Scholars, 11 June 2021, University of York, via Zoom) that the holders of the drawings at RIBA became aware of the new attribution, which has still not been implemented on their catalogue. See Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 104; for RIBA’s catalogue see <https://www.ribapix.com/Design-for-the-Garden-of-Plenty-triumphal-arch-at-Fleet-Street-near-Whitefriars-in-the-City-of-London-for-the-coronation-of-Charles-II> RIBA12986, accessed 26 May 2022.

⁶⁸ As does Elizabeth McKellar’s *The Birth of Modern London, The Development and Design of the City 1660 – 1720*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), particularly 93 – 119.

⁶⁹ In particular, the contributions of Barbara Arciszewska, Elizabeth Chew and Elizabeth McKellar have significantly advanced this change in narrative. See Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (eds.), *Articulating British Classicism*, 14 – 23, 40 – 50, 60 – 90.

⁷⁰ Hook acknowledged that artists of the period made claims to their “genius”. However, when considering sculptors in particular she assessed that “the link between masonry and sculpture was still too strong”, and that sculpture remained an “essentially manual occupation”. Such statements comprise fundamental prior assessments which my thesis questions. Hook, *The Baroque Age in England*, 53 – 58.

⁷¹ For example, see Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 4 – 7; Lucas and Russell, *The Livery Halls*, 15 – 19. See also Manolo Guerci, *London’s ‘Golden Mile’, The Great Houses of The Strand 1550 –*

Despite which, another critical voice of the traditional historical model, Christine Casey, still categorises architectural history as dominated by a “tenacious opposition to embellishment”, an opposition that Casey continues to erode.⁷²

Any progress in the interest in the sculptural profession in the seventeenth century is, therefore, limited to discussions of architecture.⁷³ While these works certainly undermine the ideal of the architect as the sole originator of all aspects of the design process, and make new space for reconceptualising the significance of other practitioners, they do not provide a holistic examination of the work of sculptors in the period. Even recent scholarship, such as the major edited volume *Court, Country, City: British Art and Architecture, 1660 – 1735* (2016), only includes case studies for two sculptures.⁷⁴ Casey’s interest in reasserting the various roles of craftsmen nevertheless leaves the emergence of a newly professionalised sculptor obscured. Architecture remains the primary art under consideration and, rather than broadening the discussion of the sculptural profession specifically, these offer a broader understanding of a range of professions as they interacted on architectural schemes. While distinctions between the scholarship of architectural sculpture and figurative sculpture remain – even when they are the work of the same individual – central questions regarding the sculptural profession in the seventeenth century will

1650, (New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2021), 49 – 53.

⁷² Christine Casey, “Surface Value: Ways of Seeing Decoration in Architecture”, *Architectural Histories*, 9:1, (2021), 1. Casey’s current project, CRAFTVALUE, is making significant research into the ornamental and decorative aspects of the built environment.

⁷³ Texts specifically relating to sculpture have either focussed solely on one sculptor, invariably Grinling Gibbons, as discussed in detail in chapter two, in which case they do not provide a grounding for the profession as a whole; or they focus on only one aspect of sculptural production and thereby fail to consider the full scope of the practice of sculptors in the seventeenth century. For a brief range of examples see David Green, *Grinling Gibbons, his Work as Carver and Statuary 1648-1721*, (London: Country Life, 1964); Geoffrey Beard, *The Work of Grinling Gibbons*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago and John Murray, 1989); David Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons and the Art of Carving*, (London: V&A Publications, 1998); Claudine van Hensbergen, “Public Sculpture of Queen Anne: The Minehead Commission (1715)”, in *Court, Country, City: British Art and Architecture, 1660-1735*, ed. Mark Hallett, Nigel Llewellyn, and Martin Myrone (New Haven and London: The Yale Centre for British Art and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2016), 241 – 262; Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France, and Holland*, (New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Yale University Press, 1978).

⁷⁴ Christine Stevenson’s “Making Empire Visible at the Second Royal Exchange, London”, 51 – 72, and Claudine van Hensbergen’s “Public Sculpture of Queen Anne: The Minehead Commission (1715)”, 241 – 262. Nigel Llewellyn’s survey chapter, “A Taxonomy for the Invisible: Categories for English Funeral Monuments”, 501 – 524, completes the sculptural contributions in this volume.

continue to go unanswered.⁷⁵ Such questions relate to the way that sculptors acquired new skillsets, which became central to the profession, and how they presented their emergent artistic identities in seventeenth-century England; in short, what was the process of transition between a craft status and an artistic one for sculptors in England?

Indeed, it is only in scholarship that focusses on other European countries, that such questions have been raised, albeit in limited contexts.⁷⁶ This is particularly the case for countries where, far from being derided in subsequent historiographic records, the period is instead remembered as an age of cultural vibrancy.⁷⁷ However, such scholarship is extremely limited, and sculptural examples remain marginalised when compared to the much greater prevalence of scholarship concerning painting and architecture.⁷⁸

In England, the supremacy of the eighteenth century has been reflected in the quantity of research dedicated to that century. With the exception of Roscoe's updated reference entries in the *Biographical Dictionary of British Sculptors*, there has been little published on the subject of seventeenth-century sculptors this century. By contrast, scholarship of the eighteenth century has undergone a revolution over the past thirty years, spearheaded by the authors such as Malcolm Baker. Baker's work has re-centred sculpture's position in discussions of visual culture, progressing narratives that reconstruct how sculpture was viewed by its contemporaries.⁷⁹ Significantly, he has also addressed the way that sculptors' careers have been

⁷⁵ David Green's assertion that "Gibbons' monuments, need to be considered at a lower level than his woodcarvings; and when they are so considered, as documents rather than as works of art, they are rewarding. Nevertheless they do tend to confuse and make it hard to define Gibbons' standing as an artist" exemplifies this segregation between scholarship of decorative and figurative sculpture. Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 20 – 21.

⁷⁶ The most significant of which is *Children of Mercury*, an edited volume that included two separate articles focussed on the education of sculptors in the seventeenth century. Jeffrey M Muller, (ed.), *Children of Mercury, The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Rhode Island: Published in Conjunction with an exhibition by the Department of Art, Brown University, March 2 through March 30, 1984, Department of Art, Brown University, 1984).

⁷⁷ In the Netherlands, in particular, the seventeenth century is famously charted as a Golden Age.

⁷⁸ Indeed, Netherlandish scholars have raised the same issues, see Paul Huvenne, "Introduction", in *Heads on Shoulders*, ed. Valérie Herremans, (The Netherlands: Snoeck publishers, 2008), 8 - 11. This situation is only more deleterious when applied to the scholarship of English sculpture from the same period and beyond. See Jason Edwards, "Sculpture Victorious; or, the British School, c. 1760 – 1832?", in *The British School of Sculpture, c.1760 – 1832*, ed. Jason Edwards and Sarah Burnage (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 1 – 20.

⁷⁹ Baker, *Figured in Marble*, 128 – 158.

interpreted and presented both in their lifetimes and in subsequent historiographies.⁸⁰ This thesis recovers the sculpture of the seventeenth century in similar terms. My research shines a light on the emergence of some of the concerns of sculptors in the eighteenth century, such as their distance from craft associations; however, my research also reveals points of contrast across the decades, such as the changing status of ornamental works, and disentangles the productions of the seventeenth century from anachronistic interpretations that first emerged in the subsequent century.⁸¹

Structure

I overturn the longstanding narrative that has diminished the value and significance of seventeenth-century sculpture, and the roles of sculptors in the period, using nine case studies. The sculptors that are the subject of my thesis often appear in individual documentary sources in a piecemeal and transitory fashion, sending occasional letters to potential or current patrons, witnessing payments, or estimating the value of workmanship. It has therefore been essential to combine information from across a wide range of documentary fragments in order to reconstruct their histories and provide a new interpretation. Tellingly, many of the sources from the period have previously been published in the Wren Society's series of volumes dedicated to an architect, including some of the sculptors' drawings included in this thesis.⁸²

My thesis takes the still currently overlooked processes of transition that were occurring in the sculptural profession in the seventeenth century as its main area of investigation. I build on the work of Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth Chew, whose research has interrogated the way that classicism was understood and

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 21 – 33.

⁸¹ In transcending the traditional divides between decorative sculpture and figurative sculpture, I build on the recent research of Imogen Hart and Claire Jones, who have argued for a “reassessment of the ways in which the two fields have been defined and separated”. Imogen Hart and Claire Jones, “Sculpture and the decorative: Towards a more integrated mode of art history writing”, in *Sculpture and the Decorative in Britain and Europe, Seventeenth Century to Contemporary*, ed. Imogen Hart and Claire Jones (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 1 – 17.

⁸² In *The Wren Society*. Particularly useful published sources are also found in Howard Colvin's *History of the King's Works*, Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones's *The London Mason in the Seventeenth Century*, and *The Walpole Society*.

deployed in seventeenth-century architectural settings.⁸³ By working from a perspective that assesses seventeenth-century sculptors within the concerns and cultural expressions that were vital to a seventeenth-century English audience, I reach new conclusions about their practices and productions that are untainted by the anachronistic comparisons that have, for so long, overshadowed the sculpture of the seventeenth century in England.

I follow the careers of three eminent sculptors who were active in seventeenth-century England, bringing together case studies and general discussions that reveal the ways in which they moved away from traditional professional models. This approach provides a picture of the various ways – including social, educational, and professional – that sculptors were responding to changes that were emerging across a range of disciplines in England. It further allows me to trace the ways that these leading sculptors took the initiative in revolutionising their discipline according to European paradigmatic figures, such as Michelangelo and Bernini, as well as tracing the ways that they took inspiration from the significant changes in the practice and status of the arts more generally across Europe. In considering the changing status and practice of sculpture in the period, I also interrogate the ways that sculptors influenced changes in the style of sculpture that was produced. By considering the extant material evidence alongside contemporary testimonies such as the diaries of Celia Fiennes and John Evelyn, which describe how the sculptor's works were seen by culturally-engaged viewers in the seventeenth century, I reconstruct a pathway that repositions the sculptural expressions of the period according to what contemporaneous audiences saw, and what they continue to communicate about their creators, patrons, and the visual culture of seventeenth-century England.

Few sculpted works have survived the past three centuries without change, either through erosion or modification, and yet more works have been lost or destroyed. Despite such losses, sculptors' productions stand at the very heart of my research. This is particularly the case as I include surviving drawings by the sculptors as key pieces of material evidence. Therefore, the material evidence collectively spans the

⁸³ Chew, "A Mockery of the Surveyor's Style?", 57 – 96; Arciszewska, "Classicism: Constructing the Paradigm", 14 – 23.

sculptural process from conception to completion, providing access to many of the central themes of my research. We have begun to see drawings by sculptors in the seventeenth century primarily because of the investigations of architectural historians, including Gordon Higgott and Anthony Geraghty.⁸⁴ However, sculptors' drawings are yet to receive detailed investigation.⁸⁵ No working drawings remain. The drawings under consideration do not reveal practical processes, and were not created to aid in working through issues of sculptural construction. Indeed, the reason they are so important is that they convey different information, such as the artistic skills of their creators – in a form completely removed from the dirty and physical realm of the sculptor's workshop – thereby also representing their creators' intellectual abilities, such as invention, as well as indicating their knowledge of European fashions and artistic practices.⁸⁶

The thesis broadly covers the period 1660 – 1715. The outset of this period is considered in chapter one, which follows the career of the sculptor Edward Pearce. Pearce was well-liked and respected both within the guild network and at the Office of Works.⁸⁷ However, his standing in London's cultural community is most clearly displayed in the close friendship and significant respect he elicited from William and John Talman, the notable antiquarians and collectors who were responsible for creating the most significant collection of European prints and drawings in England. It is through Pearce's drawings of his own designs, many of which William Talman

⁸⁴ Their following publications have also been particularly rich sources of information: AG, 86 – 87, 259, 264, 266 – 270; Higgott and Grimstone, "Drawings by Edward Pearce Senior", 1 – 114.

⁸⁵ Physick's *Designs for English Sculpture*, an exhibition catalogue, remains the only published work dedicated to the subject. Publications tend to focus on more contemporary sculptors' drawings or those from the Italian Renaissance. For example, see Colin Eisler, *Sculptors' Drawings over Six Centuries 1400 – 1950*, (New York: Agrinde Publications, 1981) n.p; Frances Carey and Rungwe Kingdon, *Sculptors' Drawings and Works on Paper*, (London: Pangolin, 2012), 13 – 17.

⁸⁶ Sculptors drawings have been remarkably understudied. Lee Bontecou, a contemporary sculptor, has described drawing as entering "the illusionary world of the magical pencil", a description that aptly captures the evocative purposes of the sculptors drawings under consideration: removed from the physical realities of sculpture, but encapsulating its sensory presence for a viewer. See Jo Applin, "Surviving Reality: Lee Bontecou's Worldscapes", *Tate Papers*, 14 (2010), n.p. <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/14/surviving-reality-lee-bontecou-worldscapes>, accessed 18 November 2022. For more on the difficulties of interpreting historical sculptors drawings see Baker, *Figured in Marble*, 40 – 42.

⁸⁷ For example he rose to the position of Master of the Painter-Stainers' Company, which many previous scholars have asserted displays his good-standing and respected character. He was also good friends with Robert Hooke, who recorded sociably conversing into the evening with Pearce. See Jane Seymour, "Edward Pearce: Baroque Sculptor of London," *The Guildhall Miscellany*, 1 (1952): 10; BDS, 961. Robert Hooke, *The Diary of Robert Hooke, 1672-1680*, ed. Henry Robinson and Walter Adams (London: Wykeham Publications, 1968), 29 Dec, 1673, 77.

added to his illustrious collection, that it is possible to discern the degree to which Pearce presents a new direction for English sculpture. Pearce employed a new skillset for an English sculptor through his command of both the geometric penmanship of scaled architectural design and the freehand and artistic qualities of sketched drawings, design skills that stemmed directly from the Renaissance in Europe.

Pearce was almost entirely alone in possessing such skills in England in 1660, but in the following decade sculptors arrived from Europe in ever increasing numbers. The best known of these today is, unquestionably, Grinling Gibbons. Despite a large scholarly interest in Gibbons, including in very recent years, he remains understudied in relation to the considerations of this thesis.⁸⁸ In particular, Gibbons' stone and wood carvings have not been studied in tandem, but rather as two separate entities.⁸⁹ Chapter two considers the full breadth of Gibbons' sculptural output, exploring the financial and reputational gains that drove his transition between materials.

Gibbons' legacy has been enhanced by the endearing remarks made about his character by Evelyn and Vertue. Evelyn recorded his friend as a quiet, modest, musical gentleman, whose sculptures were the physical manifestations of an unbridled artistic genius.⁹⁰ However, these friendships were also vital to the success that Gibbons enjoyed as a credible judge on artistic matters. He was involved with the London intelligentsia both via friendships with members of the Royal Society and with those of the fellow members of the Society of the Virtuosi of St. Luke.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Gibbons has not been contextualised amongst his peers and collaborators and has therefore not been considered as one of a host of figures who were changing the way that sculpture was practised, conceived, and presented. See chapter two for a thorough discussion of these issues.

⁸⁹ However, the recent special issue dedicated to Gibbons in *The Sculpture Journal* includes new scholarship from across the decorative and figurative sculptural divide suggesting that future scholarship will continue to erode this division. See *The Sculpture Journal*, 29.3, (2020).

⁹⁰ John Evelyn's description of his first meeting with Gibbons describes him as having an implausible degree of modesty regarding the value of his own work and continues to describe him as "musical, very civil, sober, and discreet in his discourse". 8 January, 1671. John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. William Bray, Vol. II, (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1901), 61. See also Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, 148 – 158.

⁹¹ John Evelyn, in particular, was a loyal supporter of Gibbon's abilities as described above. For Gibbons' membership of the Society of the Virtuosi of St. Luke see Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 28.

Therefore, in this thesis I consider Gibbons' artistic production alongside the relationships he developed away from the sculptor's yard.

Gibbon's legacy has overshadowed his contemporaries, who were hugely celebrated in their own lifetimes. Chapter three focuses on one of these, Caius Gabriel Cibber. The name Cibber is today more often associated with the sculptor's son, Colley Cibber, a playwright who, thanks to a long-standing quarrel with Pope, has been publicly and negatively characterised by Pope in many ways, but especially in terms of his vanity and "sycophantic attention [. . .] to any available titled person".⁹² By contrast, Caius Cibber was recorded by Vertue as being "a Gentleman like man and a man of Good sense" who "Liv'd creditably".⁹³ However, at least some of his son's characteristics likely stemmed from his father's influence. Cibber had travelled to Italy before he arrived in England and gained experience of classical and contemporary Italian artworks and working models while there, rare experiences for a sculptor working in seventeenth-century England. I investigate the ways that these experiences shaped his sculptural identity and practice, particularly exploring the novel relationships he enjoyed with wealthy aristocrats.⁹⁴ Interestingly, one of Cibber's final works was undertaken as an architect, a title that he advertised widely.⁹⁵ By the end of the century, the hierarchy that prevailed in England was not between different sculptural modes, but continued to be between sculpture and the other arts.

For sculptors, the emergence of the architect, and the new working practices that this role produced, might be the most significant example of the adaptive pressures that sculptors faced in the seventeenth century. As Matthew Walker has previously identified, architects did not only influence the ways that sculpture was practised on architectural projects, they were also at the forefront of a new intellectual culture that was emerging in the period. This was described in many architectural texts, but some

⁹² Eric Salmon, "Cibber, Colley", *ODNB*, 24 May 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5416>, accessed 24 May 2022.

⁹³ Add. MSS. 23, 070 V. 31 B.M. 21; Add. MSS. 23, 069, published in *The Walpole Society*, Vol. 18, (1929 – 1930): 39, 91.

⁹⁴ Particularly the Duke of Devonshire. Cibber worked at Chatsworth for over four years. Francis Thompson, *A History of Chatsworth Being a Supplement to the Sixth Duke of Devonshire's Handbook*, (London: Country Life Ltd, 1949), 86.

⁹⁵ Cibber had several prints made that depicted both the interior and exterior of his sole architectural endeavour, the Danish Church in Wellclose Square, discussed in detail in chapter three.

influential figures, such as Wren, also experienced new models of behaviour while travelling and emulated them in England on their return.⁹⁶ In this thesis I consider the ways in which sculptors responded to – and capitalised on – the opportunities presented in the late seventeenth century, including the adoption of paradigmatic behaviours that were modelled by other artistic figures that they interacted with, such as architects. I provide a new understanding of the way that sculpture emerged as distinct from the mechanical craft professions in England, and became positioned amongst the liberal arts. It is only from such a perspective that seventeenth-century sculpture can properly be contextualised within the broader sculptural history of England.

However, the transitional process under discussion was not completed in the course of the seventeenth century, and this thesis does not seek to overstate the successes of the sculptors of the period in this area. Instead, I will argue that without the shifts that were enacted by Pearce, Gibbons, Cibber, and their contemporaries, the profession at large – and the English public – would not have been sufficiently prepared for – or amenable to – the arrival of later sculptors who were able to inhabit an entirely modern artistic conception of the role, such as Bird. Stevenson has shown the importance of contextualising art-historical enquiries within the broader social realities of the seventeenth century.⁹⁷ I consider information including the parts of London they moved to, and use extant accounts, such as those for St. Paul's Cathedral, to reveal the type of work they willingly undertook for little – or even no – payment. Auction catalogues provide evidence of the ways that sculptors moved into new cultural spheres and inhabited intellectual roles associated with these. Simultaneously, the diaries of Robert Hooke and John Evelyn, and letters from the sculptors and their patrons, record the extent to which these sculptors held novel positions of artistic authority and social capital.

⁹⁶ For more information see Matthew Walker, *Architects and Intellectual Culture in post-Restoration England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 14 – 53.

⁹⁷ A methodology that permeates her works. For example, see Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 13 – 31.

Meanwhile, Casey has begun to question the primacy of the architect in early-modern building projects.⁹⁸ I rediscover the role of sculptors in these projects. To do so I use contracts, audits, and payments, particularly for royal projects, substantial country houses, and works overseen by the Commissioners for the rebuilding of London, where archival records are more complete than for many works of the period. Such records provide a means of establishing the extent of their presence – and the scope of their roles – on the most substantial architectural and sculptural projects of the period.

⁹⁸ Christine Casey, “Surface Value: Ways of Seeing Decoration in Architecture”, *Architectural Histories*, 9:1, (2021): 1 – 17. Christine Casey, “Silent Partner: Design and Making in the Early Modern Architecture of Britain”, *Revista de Arquitectura*, 23, (2021): 132 – 145.

Chapter 1: *Edward Pearce: Drawing a New Professionalism*

Introduction

Edward Pearce's career acts as a bridge between the pre-Interregnum decades of the seventeenth century and the Restoration.

⁹⁹ It was in 1657 that he gained his freedom from the Painter-Stainers' Company and started working independently.¹⁰⁰ These have historically been seen as constrained times for sculptors:

English sculpture of the seventeenth century is far less lively and distinguished than English architecture, not does it rise to the level of contemporary painting, for though several foreign sculptors worked here, they none of them had the brilliance of Van Dyck or the accomplishment of Lely.¹⁰¹

Whinney continued the above passage by highlighting the historical circumstances that gave rise to her assessment. The Reformation had already reduced Ecclesiastical sculptural commissions. By the Interregnum the other great patrons of the arts, the King and the Court, were largely living in exile. As a result of these restraints on the traditional patrons of sculpture, the canon of art historical scholarship – as evidenced in Whinney's words – posits that the period offers little innovation, artistic merit, or critical intellectual engagement that would allow for sculptural progress.¹⁰²

Despite such apparent constraints, Pearce is one of a handful of sculptors that are still remembered from the seventeenth century, achieving huge success in his lifetime. He worked closely with prominent emergent architects establishing their profession in England, including Wren, who fundamentally changed the practice of architecture in the period.¹⁰³ He contributed to the decorative sculptural programmes

⁹⁹ There is some debate about the spelling of Pearce's surname. As contemporaneous published documents use Pearce, rather than Pierce, I use the former throughout.

¹⁰⁰ GL, *Painter Stainers' Company Court Minute Book 1646 onwards*, 16th January 1656 (1657), MS5567/2, 46.

¹⁰¹ Whinney and Millar, *English Art*, 104.

¹⁰² Whinney particularly complains that there were no Italian texts on sculpture or exemplars of great classical sculptural works available to sculptors in England. *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁰³ For more information on the changes to the architectural profession see Barrington Kaye, *The Development of the Architectural Profession in Britain, A Sociological Study*, (London: George Allen

that characterised the most prominent civic and ecclesiastical buildings in the City of London, including St. Paul's Cathedral and the Guildhall. His bust of Wren (fig. 1.1) has been singled out for praise as "a truly Baroque creation, [which] cannot be paralleled by anything produced in Britain before its time".¹⁰⁴ Despite the prominence of this career trajectory, and the regular appearance of Pearce's hand on works that would come to signify key shifts in British art, he has not previously been thoroughly investigated and is only briefly acknowledged in sculptural surveys.¹⁰⁵

The resistance in identifying the influence of practitioners such as Pearce is, in part, due to a lack of recent sustained scholarship of seventeenth-century sculptors *en masse*. The most notable publications, by authors including Douglas Knoop and G.P. Jones, Whinney, and Rupert Gunnis, date from c.1930 – 1980. While these offer a wealth of factual information, they are products of their time, and largely omit a social and cultural analysis of the information they reveal. Pearce has been studied quantitatively from the financial perspective of his profits as a mason-contractor, not as an influencer within the artistic networks that were blossoming in the period.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the place and status of Pearce as a sculptural authority – and of his works as artistic creations communicating the sensibilities of British seventeenth-century culture – have gone unnoticed. These issues have been compounded by the still deeply unfashionable status of seventeenth-century British art. It remains a period largely considered little more than an adjunct to the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁷

Pearce's surviving sculptural works are outnumbered by his extant drawings. These items provide key information regarding his practice, design development, inspirations, and his conception of what the role of a sculptor constituted. Previous

& Unwin Ltd, 1960), 32 – 67. For information regarding Wren's changes to the profession see Anthony Geraghty, "New Light on the Wren City Churches; The Evidence of the All Souls and Bute Collections" PhD Thesis (Clare College, Cambridge 1999) 3 – 5.

¹⁰⁴ MW, 105. See also John Physick, "Edward Pierce," *The Dictionary of Art Vol. 24*, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan, 1996), 753. Seymour, "Edward Pearce", 12.

¹⁰⁵ Gordon Higgott, Geoffrey Fisher, and Anthony Geraghty have all contributed to a greater number of drawings being reliably identified to be in Pearce's hand. See AG, 86 – 87; Stevenson, "Occasional Architecture", 56; Gordon Higgott, "The Revised Design for St. Paul's Cathedral," *The Burlington Magazine* 146, vol. 1217 (August 2004), 534 – 547, 537 – 540.

¹⁰⁶ For the financial study see LM, 41 – 50.

¹⁰⁷ Sculpture of the eighteenth century has benefitted from the scholarship of figures such as Malcom Baker, who has argued "for the recognition of the centrality of sculpture in eighteenth-century visual culture", no such supporter for sculpture of the seventeenth century exists. Baker, *Figured in Marble*, 9.

analyses of Pearce were largely undertaken prior to the identification of his drawings, which have therefore been excluded from art-historical conceptions of his practice. I will argue that drawing was central to Pearce's career, repositioning the extant drawings as vital pieces of material evidence. The concept of the sculptor as an artist is virtually unacknowledged in British art prior to the arrival of eighteenth-century sculptors such as John Michael Rysbrack and Louis-François Roubiliac.¹⁰⁸ Instead, Pearce and his peers have been cast in the medieval model. Yet his training – exemplified by his drawings – reveals a different route to becoming a sculptor to the medieval model of a family of mason-carvers that passed masonic skills from one generation to the next.¹⁰⁹ I will argue that the influences that inspired Pearce indicate a shift in the nature of the sculptural profession in England, interrogating the historiographic perspective of seventeenth-century British art as lacking a distinct and merited artistic style and ultimately releasing him from anachronistic definitions adopted from previous centuries.¹¹⁰

I will move from a broad analysis of Pearce's working relationships to a sustained investigation of his specific relationships with architects. As an emergent figure in the design and construction process, the implications of their disruption to the working habits of sculptors must be explored. The narrative arc of architects as increasingly demanding total control over architectural and interior design, towards the end of the seventeenth century, is well established.¹¹¹ However, Pearce disrupts the clarity of a professional architectural progression that such a reading envisions. Crucially, his work as a draughtsman-designer – for many of the leading architects of the period – will lead to an investigation of whether a collaborative interpretation of his relationships with architects might be more accurate. The implication that work which was designed and produced by Pearce was then later assigned to the

¹⁰⁸ MW, 162, 198.

¹⁰⁹ LM, 3; Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530 – 1830*, Fifth edition, (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969), 155 – 156.

¹¹⁰ William Whitley's assertion that "when Anne ascended the throne in 1702 there were no English painters or sculptors worthy of particular consideration, for the arts in this country had sunk to almost their lowest ebb" remained the pervading assessment for the last century. Whitley, *Artists and their Friends*, 3.

¹¹¹ Barbara Arciszewska argues it is inseparably linked to the increasing dominance of classical architectural design. Barbara Arciszewska "Classicism: constructing the paradigm in Continental Europe and Britain", in *Articulating British Classicism, New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*, ed. Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), 1 – 34, 15 – 17.

named architect who was overseeing a project, both by present-day art historians and eighteenth-century commentators, will be interrogated. By devoting attention to the degree of collaboration and conversation that was part of Pearce's working relationships with architects, I will amend the pervasive perception of Pearce as a craftsman.

Furthermore, Pearce developed friendships from these working partnerships. Contemporary discourse about friendship placed great significance on their exclusivity, as defined by elite social markers such as shared knowledge.¹¹² The formation of relationships, particularly those based on exclusive personal attributes, is an important area that has not been investigated in prior scholarship of architects and those they worked with. From this perspective, the themes of social status, knowledge-exchange, and social capital will be introduced to our understanding of the way in which others perceived Pearce in his lifetime. I will employ material evidence, which remains as testaments to these friendships, in order to force a re-conception of his social standing, intellectual position, and personal reputation.

Dominant art-historical conceptions of seventeenth-century sculpture present carvers of the period as illiterate of the Renaissance acquaintance with classical forms and ideals that were prominent in the art of the rest of Europe.¹¹³ Instead they have been understood as merely "trained to produce and to decorate [...] basically gothic art and architecture".¹¹⁴ Pearce resists such a categorisation, not only within his carved works - but throughout the design process. I will interrogate the significance, meaning, and usage of sculpture in English seventeenth-century contexts. It is only by defining these factors that we can again access how his work was seen by his contemporaries. By analysing the ways in which these methods of seeing and understanding sculpture were lost over the intervening centuries I will further explain the ways that Pearce's works have become removed from the significance

¹¹² Cedric Brown, *Friendship and its Discourses in the Seventeenth Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 198 – 199.

¹¹³ Summerson summed up the influences as, in part, the result of pattern books that are "suggestive of the mannerisms" of the ornament of the period. However, he fundamentally ascribes the decorative style of artisan mannerism as one "in which influences circulated in the impenetrable anonymity of masons' yards and joiners' shops". Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 170.

¹¹⁴ Judith Hook, *The Baroque Age in England*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 93.

with which they were created. Ultimately, such investigations will further reveal why he has not received the scholarly recognition or understanding that he merits.

Part 1: *Bridging the Interregnum: Pearce and his Antecedents.*

From an early age Pearce was initiated into European paradigms that influenced both the skills he was taught and the style of his output. In this section, I will explore the influence of Pearce's father and Inigo Jones as key figures who imbued the young Pearce with a conception of sculptural ornament that would influence his practice and distinguish him from his peers. Pearce's early life provided him with an opportunity unlike that of other English sculptors; he comprehended modern European decorative forms and could create sculptures that deployed these with legitimacy for a contemporary audience. In this section I will investigate how he acquired the skills and understanding that would determine much of his career.

British influences

Pearce's sculptural style has caused some scholars to raise the possibility that he was trained in France or elsewhere in Europe.¹¹⁵ Yet no evidence has been found to support him ever having travelled abroad.¹¹⁶ Neither did he need to travel to France to access modern French designs, as he was trained in the fundamental principles of French ornament at home.¹¹⁷ Pearce's father, a painter, worked under Jones on some of the most ornate and modern decorative scenes of the mid-seventeenth century,

¹¹⁵ See Rachel Poole, "Edward Pierce, the Sculptor," *The Walpole Society* 11, (1922-23): 35; Geoffrey Beard and Cherry Anne Knott, "Edward Pearce's Work at Sudbury," *Apollo* 151, (April, 2000): 45.

¹¹⁶ He is documented in London in 1657 when he enrolled as a liveryman of the Painter-Stainers', indicating his intention to work in London throughout the final years of the Interregnum. In more recent years A.V. Grimstone has suggested Pearce was working in England through much of the 1650s. *Painter-stainers' company court minute book 1649 onwards*, 16th January 1656 (1657), 46. A.V. Grimstone, *Building Pembroke Chapel*, (Cambridge: Pembroke College, 2009), 37-38, 57-58, 79.

¹¹⁷ Carmen Bambach has noted that "the working habits acquired during the period of apprenticeship were formative. This was especially true of an artist's approach to drawing". Carmen Bambach, *Drawing and Painting in the Italian Renaissance Workshop, Theory and Practice, 1300 – 1600*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 83.

such as Wilton House and the Queen's House, Greenwich (fig. 1.2),¹¹⁸ and recent discoveries by Gordon Higgott and A. V. Grimstone have revealed that Pearce senior was:

by far Jones' most prolific draughtsman and that he brought to stage design and interior decoration a much wider vocabulary of naturalistic, figurative and stylised ornament than had hitherto been deployed, and far greater skill in the handling of perspectival illusion.¹¹⁹

Pearce senior's independent reputation reached beyond Jones' studio, with some of his paintings being displayed in the Royal Collection.¹²⁰ In short, Pearce senior was engaged at the forefront of developments in interior design and decoration, and was also a respected artist in his own right.

The status of Pearce senior was, in the 1640s, further elevated by his publication of two pattern books of designs, an exceptionally rare occurrence for a British designer in the seventeenth century, and one that exemplifies the high reputation for decorative design he must have enjoyed in his lifetime. One book was reprinted throughout the century (figs. 1.3 and 1.4).¹²¹ His publications are presented with a titlepage that identifies him as their "inventor", emphasising the creative role of their author.¹²² Invention is today often understood as the creation of something entirely new.¹²³ However, in the seventeenth century it was also understood as a method of creation via a process of combining and borrowing from other extant sources, following the Renaissance idea of *aemulatio*.¹²⁴ Indeed, Jones invented in exactly this way:

¹¹⁸ Grimstone, *Building Pembroke Chapel*, 24.

¹¹⁹ The authors also suggest that Pearce senior may have been involved in Van Dyck's studio. Gordon Higgott and A.V. Grimstone. "Drawings by Edward Pearce Senior (fl. c. 1630 – d. 1658): Painter, Decorator and Interior Designer", *The Walpole Society*, vol. 82, (2020), 5.

¹²⁰ Poole, "Edward Pierce," 33.

¹²¹ See Simon Jervis, "A Seventeenth-Century Book of Engraved Ornament," *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 128, No. 1005 (Dec., 1986), 894 – 897. It has since been discovered that one of these books was etched by Pearce senior himself. See Higgott and Grimstone, "Drawings by Edward Pearce Senior", 1.

¹²² See figure 1.3.

¹²³ Oxford English Dictionary. "Invention", *Oxford English Dictionary*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/98969?redirectedFrom=invention#eid>, accessed 3rd October 2022.

¹²⁴ See van Eck, *Classical Rhetoric and the Visual Arts*, 89 – 98.

When designing, Jones never ‘composed’ ornament himself; he always started from one or more sources, usually printed, and combined, altered or changed them according to context and his own judgement.¹²⁵

In this manner, Pearce senior positioned himself as a leader of a pan-European style, that had germinated in Paris in the 1630s, through the publication of his own patterns.¹²⁶ Pearce senior contributed to a growing body of published material that displayed classically inspired ornamental motifs in inventive compositions. Several French publications reached the office of Jones and were available to his designers, marking prints as a central source of inspiration for their artistic development.¹²⁷ Pearce senior was engaged in a dialogue with European artists, and extant copies of his works have been found in Amsterdam, Berlin, and Brussels.¹²⁸ Such information contextualises Pearce’s early home life as being exceptionally artistically engaged – particularly with Continental trends that emanated from the Court of Charles I and his principal designer, Jones.

In particular, recent research by Higgott and Grimstone has described the relationship between Jones and Pearce senior as one in which Jones increasingly relied on Pearce to fully express designs that had only been briefly sketched by the architect.¹²⁹ Indeed, the authors have established that Pearce senior was likely solely

¹²⁵ Mark Girouard, *A Biographical Dictionary of English Architecture 1540 – 1640*, (London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2021), 179.

¹²⁶For the spread of French decorative styles see Peter Thornton, *Form and Decoration, Innovation in the Decorative Arts 1470-1870*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1998), 86. For the rarity of such prints in England prior to the Restoration see Antony Griffiths, *The Print in Stuart Britain 1603 – 1689*, (London: The British Museum Press, 1998), 265 - 266.

¹²⁷ For example, Higgott and Grimstone highlight an overmantle designed by Pearce senior that is directly influenced by a print of Pierre Collot that was published in Paris in 1633. Higgott and Grimstone, “Drawings by Edward Pearce Senior”, 26 – 27. For more information on the prints emerging from Paris in the seventeenth century see Thornton *Form and Decoration*, 83 – 91. For more information about Jones’ collection of books, prints, and drawings see *BDBA*, 585 – 586; John Harris and Gordon Higgott, *Inigo Jones, Complete Architectural Drawings*, (New York: The Drawing Center, 1989), 22 – 29; John Harris, “Inigo Jones and his French Sources”, *Art Bulletin*, 19:9 (1961): 253 – 264.

¹²⁸ Jervis, “A Seventeenth-Century Book of Engraved Ornament,” 894 – 897. A copy must also have been in Paris in the eighteenth century, as the British Museum’s copy was bound in a volume issued by a Parisian publisher. See Alexander Globe, *Peter Stent London Printseller circa 1642 – 1665, Being a catalogue raisonné of his engraved prints and books with an historical and bibliographical introduction*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 157. This reinforces that English designs were engaged in the free circulation of images across Europe that has been described as a “visual lingua franca and template of European unity”. Carl Goldstein, *Print Culture in Early Modern France, Abraham Bosse and the Purposes of Print*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 8 – 9.

¹²⁹ See Higgott and Grimstone, “Drawings by Edward Pearce Senior”, 39 – 51.

responsible for the design of the scenery for some court masques, and described circumstances in which “it was Pearce who set out the initial design and Jones who developed the final version”.¹³⁰ A significant number of drawings previously ascribed to Jones are now known to be the work of Pearce senior.¹³¹ These drawings highlight the collaborative nature of their working relationship, and afford Pearce senior a greater involvement in the elaboration of decorative designs, which accords with his independent publication of frieze designs.¹³²

Interestingly, Poole suggested that Vertue recorded the existence of a collection of drawings by Jones and Pearce junior.¹³³ If such a collection was in existence it likely originated from Pearce’s personal collection, which was both a source of pride and a valuable working resource for the sculptor.¹³⁴ It may be that the drawings Vertue ascribed to Jones were in fact the work of Pearce senior, who had thoroughly integrated Jones’ design principles into his working practice over many years. If Pearce did indeed keep such works in his personal collection, he would have had access to Jonesian designs through the entirety of his career.¹³⁵ If such a collection of drawings was instead posthumously compiled by another, after the sale of Pearce’s collection, the inclusion of Pearce’s drawings with those of Jones (or his

¹³⁰ The argument for Pearce’s sole responsibility is supported by a bill for scenery which makes no mention of Inigo Jones. *Ibid.*, 53 – 54, 65 – 66.

¹³¹ The seventy-nine drawings for lesser characters in court masques gives some indication of the scale of drawings newly ascribed to Pearce senior. *Ibid.*, 47.

¹³² It is believed that Jones may have been apprenticed as a joiner-carver. His appreciation for the design abilities of his collaborators may have resulted from his own practical education. See Girouard, *Biographical Dictionary of English Architecture*, 175 – 6.

¹³³ Poole, “Edward Pierce”, 43. Her assertion relies on a list of items, some of which are cited as “in poses”[. . . of] “Dr Clarke”. Vertue’s note does not make clear if these items were collected together or not. Vertue, “Vertue’s Notebook Aj,” *The Walpole Society* 18, (1929-30): 69.

¹³⁴ The transcript for Pearce’s memorandum of his dues, debts, and disposals which was proved as his will makes clear how valuable his drawing collection was to him. For a full transcript of the will of Edward Pearce see John Harvey, “Winchester College,” *Journal of the Archaeological Association*, Third Series, vol. XXVIII (1965): 127. The possibility that some of Jones’ drawings were transferred into the Talman collection via Edward Pearce calls into question the traditional view that the majority of Jones’ drawings passed to Webb, then to John Oliver, and then to William Talman, broadening the scope of creators that had access to these in the later years of the seventeenth century. This assessment was based on John Aubrey’s note from the 1680s that “John Oliver, the City Surveyor, hath all [Jones’] papers and designs, not only of St. Paul’s Cathedral, but his designe of all Whitehall”. It is notable that Aubrey does not make any reference to Jones’ designs for masques or those for interior decoration, which Pearce senior is now known to have been heavily involved in the production of. John Aubrey, quoted in *BDBA*, 588. For more information see Harris and Higgott, *Inigo Jones*, 9 – 24.

¹³⁵ Higgott and Grimstone argue that Pearce junior probably kept a collection of his father’s drawings. Higgott and Grimstone, “Drawings by Edward Pearce Senior”, 11.

draughtsmen) would further indicate that Pearce's legacy was fundamentally understood by contemporary observers as originating with Jones.¹³⁶

European influences

Before Jones, English decoration had been dominated by strapwork.¹³⁷ This heavy and “resolutely anticlassical” style was characterised by intricate interlacing geometric forms that produced a robust and abstract symmetry.¹³⁸ Jones imported from Europe a more classically inspired form of decoration – one that was freed from strapwork's rigid and constraining frames. As an adult, Pearce's communication with such new European styles was perpetuated via print culture. Some French designers, such as Jean Le Pautre, achieved immense artistic status through their designs for sculptural ornament, facilitated by the improvement of the status of the decorative arts in France.¹³⁹ That ornamental designers were achieving such fame cannot have escaped Pearce's notice. By continuing in the style of ornamentation that his father had trained him, Pearce aligned himself with these international artistic figures and the modern style of ornament that they promoted.¹⁴⁰

Pearce's early drawings, which I will consider in detail in the following case study, reflect a diverse range of aesthetic norms that accord with French printed works of the mid and later-seventeenth century. Hook has noted the contemporary associations between foreign works and perceptions of quality.¹⁴¹ By creating drawings that so closely conformed to the visual norms of French prints – a primary mode of communicating French styles to an English audience – Pearce sought to

¹³⁶ The remainder of Pearce's drawing collection was sold in 1696 along with items owned by the painter Thomas Manby. See *BDBA*, 793.

¹³⁷ Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, The Influence of Continental Prints, 1558 – 1625*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 43 – 49.

¹³⁸ Margherita Azzi-Visentini, “Strapwork and Cartouches”, in *The History of the Decorative Arts, The Renaissance and Mannerism in Europe*, ed. Alain Charles Gruber (New York: Abbeville Press, 1994), 364.

¹³⁹ Thornton, *Form and Decoration*, 114 – 115.

¹⁴⁰ Publication titles of the period specifically emphasise newness and modernity. See Maxime Préaud, *Graveurs du XVIIe Siècle, Jean Lepautre*, (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1999), 331-32.

¹⁴¹ Hook, *The Baroque Age*, 95.

imbue his work with an equivalent status to those French exemplars.¹⁴² His lifelong immersion in this new decorative style afforded him legitimacy, to an English audience, as an expert in the modern style from the outset of his career.

Many of the publications that arrived from France combined three different but related types, namely chimneypieces, altarpieces, and doorways.¹⁴³ These three distinct structures all held unifying principles that allowed for similar decorative schemes to be applied, despite their varied purposes. In each case these structures acted as focal points, justifying dense ornamentation within architectonic frames that demarcated their distinct spatial zone.¹⁴⁴ Beyond their formal similarities, each structure stood at a threshold, marking sites of flux, and as such these sculptural forms adopt a quasi-architectural independence.¹⁴⁵ Pearce's career as a sculptor would be dominated by the ornamentation of these structures. The decorative motifs employed in the new style of ornament that arrived from overseas largely coalesce into fabric and foliage swags, putti and other mythological figures, urns, and cartouches. Despite the comparatively limited repertoire of motifs, prints from the period abound with inventive and varied displays that utilise every available surface area in designs that often tended towards the cacophonous in their unashamed abundance of ornament (fig. 1.5).¹⁴⁶ This sense of abundance would only have been exacerbated when the intricate layering of textures that characterise the French style was translated into the full physicality of three-dimensional carving.

¹⁴² French prints were at the time having a profound influence on decorative styles across Europe. See Charles Samurez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, (London: Widenfield and Nicholson, 1993), 19 – 22.

¹⁴³ For example see Jean Barbet, *Livre d'architecture d'autels, et de cheminees, dédié à Monseigneur l'Eminentissime Cardinal Duc de Richelieu etc., De l'invention et dessin de J. Barbet, Gravé à l'eau forte par A. Bosse*, (Paris: Herman Weyen, 1633).

¹⁴⁴ Particularly those engraved by Jean Le Pautre. Le Pautre would become the most prolific of the French decorative designers. Le Pautre's designs have been described as "overcharged . . . with classical figures, usually in high relief, and nude or almost so, in conjunction with scrolling acanthus, and floral and foliate garlands". George Savage, *French Decorative Art, 1638 – 1793*, (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1969), 47. See also Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, 25 – 29.

¹⁴⁵ They were clearly understood as such. In the early eighteenth century, the architect James Gibbs described them as "Ornamental pieces of Architecture". James Gibbs, *A Book of Architecture*, (London, 1728), ii.

¹⁴⁶ Indeed, since at least the eighteenth century such prints have been explicitly understood "less as [direct] models than as ideas gauged to fire the imagination". Unnamed eighteenth-century French printseller translated and quoted in Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, 29.

Pearce's training in three dimensions also provides information for understanding his position in the development of the sculptural profession in England. No records indicate in whose workshop he received his sculptural training; he became free, and entitled to work in the City, by patrimony and so avoided the typical requirement of a formal seven-year apprenticeship.¹⁴⁷ As such, it is entirely possible that he trained for a far shorter period, and that this was informally arranged through his father's network of artists.¹⁴⁸ Pearce senior was well-situated to negotiate training for his son from the elite sculptors in England, who shared in his modern approach to ornament, as he worked with many of them on Jones' projects.¹⁴⁹ Nicholas Stone, in particular, stands out as a likely candidate.¹⁵⁰ Stone worked closely with Jones, but in his independent commissions he created sculptural adornment that exceeded the more austere classicism of Jones' exteriors (fig. 1.6).¹⁵¹ Stone filled his surfaces with scrolls, grotesques, and scalloping, a series of ornamental motifs common to Jones and Pearce senior, creating spectacular porches and gateways of a bombastic English

¹⁴⁷ And therefore records of his apprenticeship are much less likely to exist. For Pearce's enrolment by patrimony see GL, *Painter-Stainers' Minute Book*, 16th January 1656 (1657), 46.

¹⁴⁸ There are examples of sculptors training for only a short period of time. Nicholas Stone is one, Bernini another, and this practice continued throughout the period as Roubiliac is also thought to have had only a short period of training. Moreover, the extent of the artistic training that Pearce's father would have been able to provide would also have reduced the need for a full seven year apprenticeship. For Nicholas Stone see Adam White, "Stone, Nicholas (1585 – 1647)," *ODNB*, (2004). Retrieved 11 Nov. 2019, from <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26577>. For Bernini see Anne Dawson, "Learning Processes: The Workshop Education of the Sculptor", in *Children of Mercury, The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey M Muller (Department of Art, Brown University, Rhode Island: Published in Conjunction with an exhibition by the department of Art, Brown University, March 2 through March 30, 1984, 1984), 40. For Roubiliac see David Bindman and Malcolm Baker, *Roubiliac and the Eighteenth-Century Monument, Sculpture as Theatre*, (New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 1995), 54, 61.

¹⁴⁹ For example Pearce senior and Nicholas Stone worked together for several years under Inigo Jones. Pearce is also recorded as having worked alongside Stone's son, John, also a sculptor. Higgott and Grimstone, "Drawings by Edward Pearce Senior", 4, 46.

¹⁵⁰ Incidentally, Stone's apprenticeship only lasted two years. Scholars have previously dismissed Stone as involved in Pearce's training on the basis of Pearce's young age at Stone's death. However, Pearce's current estimated birth date was arrived at by Jane Seymour on the basis of his completing a standard apprenticeship of seven years and joining the Painters' at its conclusion. As it is now believed that Pearce was working as an independent sculptor through much of the 1650s, it is entirely possible that Pearce was born several years earlier than the previous estimations surmised. Seymour, "Edward Pearce," 10-18. See also White, "Stone, Nicholas" n.p.; Grimstone, *Building Pembroke Chapel*, 38.

¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, Jones seems to have approved of Stone's style. When Stone designed the Goldsmiths' Hall in c.1634 the minutes record Stone asserting that "in the doeing thereof Me. Jones his Majestyes surveyor tooke especiall care and did advise and direct before the perfectinge and finishinge of each piece according to the severall draughts now shewed". *Goldsmiths' Hall Court Minute Books*, February 1634/5. Quoted in John Newman, "Nicholas Stone's Goldsmiths' Hall: Design and Practice in the 1630s", *Architectural History*, vol. 14 (1971): 33.

tradition that preceded the structures that Pearce would undertake throughout his career.¹⁵²

Ultimately, Pearce was deeply influenced by an indigenous artistic community that was established by Jones, revealing that Jones' influence extended across generations and throughout the seventeenth century. Jones' influence also brought Pearce into early contact with European experts in decorative ornament, via prints. French designers of sculptural ornament were paradigmatic for Pearce, as they forged the professional category of the designer. Pearce's training allowed him to present himself as an expert in the designing of sculptural ornament and also to take ownership of ornamental design as a particular specialism. Via these influences, Pearce was ideally positioned to capitalise on the ornamental requirements of Restoration London.

Case Study: The Coronation Arches for Charles II's Entrance into London

The earliest of Pearce's works that remain provide a specific basis for assessing the influence of Jones, Pearce senior, and French print culture. Four drawn designs for the archways built for the coronation procession of Charles II in London (figs. 1.7 – 1.10), reveal a range of influences, from the practical, such as how he presented his designs, to the conceptual, particularly how Pearce understood ornamentation, its place, and function. These skills allowed him to fashion a niche position in London in 1660.

Pearce's role in the design and creation of the arches for Charles II's coronation procession has never been fully reconciled.¹⁵³ Yet his knowledge, ability, and understanding of ornament prior to their creation has been identified by A. V.

¹⁵² The porch for St. Mary's Church, Oxford exemplifies Nicholas Stone's ornamental style. See Jennifer Sherwood and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Oxfordshire*, (Middlesex: Penguin, 1974), 285. For more information about English architectural precedents see Colvin, *Essays*, 67 – 94.

¹⁵³ See Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 104.

Grimstone.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, I suggest that it is most likely that Pearce was engaged to assist with the design of the decorative schemes. His involvement on such a high-profile, and early, commission in Restoration England reveals how his knowledge of ornamental design – particularly ornaments associated with the martyred King Charles – provided Pearce with opportunities to display his expertise, and his position as the foremost creator of sculptural decoration, to the metropolis at large.

Drawing techniques

These elevations have the detail and finish of presentation drawings; they have been constructed and finished with multiple washes and fine ink strokes. The architectural forms are scaled, and double scale bars sit along the base horizontal and leftmost vertical of the drawings. Higgott has described Pearce’s drawings as having a painterly quality, a clear testament to the training he received from his father.¹⁵⁵ However, the specific ways that Pearce integrated painterly techniques with architectural drawing suggests that the purpose of the drawings was to detail the ornamental schemes. Furthermore, the use of theatrical and painterly techniques – reminiscent of both his father and Jones – imply that Pearce sought to make this legacy apparent in his drawings, and that it may have contributed to his qualification for this role.

The Garden of Plenty reveals a sophisticated use of shade (fig. 1.9). Here, the recessed walls either side of the central arch are washed in two greys, a lighter one to the left, and a darker tone to the right.¹⁵⁶ These areas are still drawn over in inked decoration, and are not voids. Pearce instead used wash to build on the paper the three-dimensional form of the archway in tonal gradients. He deliberately shades

¹⁵⁴ Grimstone provides arguments for Pearce having worked on the ornamentation at Thorpe Hall for Peter Mills, the decoration of which Howard Colvin described as being “of considerable sophistication”. Colvin. *Essays*, 159. Grimstone especially linked Pearce to the interior decoration, which even in the early nineteenth century was acknowledged for having particularly “graceful examples of panelling and carved wood-work”, a view which has persisted throughout the centuries. Arthur William Hakewill, *General Plan and External Details with Picturesque Illustrations of Thorpe Hall, Peterborough; Measured, Drawn, Etched*, (London: Mr Castle’s, 1852), 5. Margaret Jourdain, *English Interior Decoration 1500 to 1830, A Study in the Development of Design*, (London: B. T. Batsford, 1950), 37. Grimstone, *Building Pembroke Chapel*, 38.

¹⁵⁵ Higgott, “The Revised Design for St. Paul’s Cathedral”, 537.

¹⁵⁶ All the Coronation arches designs have a light source to the left and shadows falling to the right. See figs. 1.7 – 1.10.

areas that are to be recessed, which draws attention to the brightest and most highly decorated central areas of the design. Importantly, this shading bears little relation to reality. Often Pearce shaded areas that would be bathed in light. However, these departures from reality are not immediately perceived. Rather than capturing natural light, Pearce reveals a preference for expressing form, depth, and sculptural dimensionality through imagined shade as much as realistically rendered crevices. As a result, he captures an increased sense of drama, the viewer's eye is directed to areas of contrast and detail by an enhanced portrayal of their prominence. These same techniques are also found on the *Temple of Concord* and the *Return of the Monarchy* (figs. 1.7 and 1.8). Here, the same block wash - lighter to the left and darkening with the overall shading to the right - has been applied to areas that fall behind the intricate sculptural detailing of the balcony panels. This allows the viewer to conceptualise the depth of this small balcony as greater than otherwise implied by the rest of the elevation. It further exacerbates the projection and the prominence of the pediment that acts as a plinth for the central sculpture. Pearce's shading intensified the dynamism of the overall architectural form. The same overriding concern with conveying the physical complexity of the proposed structures seems at the fore of the ornamentation itself, in which contrasts between decorated surface, recesses, and projections form the logic of each scheme.

There was a specific way that Pearce drew with wash, one which resulted in a unique freedom and sketched quality in his architectural drawings. Such effects form the basis of painterly associations. Significantly, Pearce's "loose, almost painterly" mode of drawing has also been noted in Jones' architectural designs, contributing to his categorisation as "the first Englishman to draw in the Renaissance manner".¹⁵⁷ Sketched detailing provided both their drawings with "an entirely different character reminiscent not of the craftsman's pattern but of the poet's inspired and untidy draft".¹⁵⁸ Thus, Pearce's sketched freedom would have been understood by seventeenth-century viewers as evidence of his creative process, and of the

¹⁵⁷ John Harris, *Catalogue of the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects: Inigo Jones and John Webb*, ed. Jill Lever (Farnborough: Gregg International Publishers, 1972), 11. For Pearce's drawing technique see Higgott, "The Revised Design for St. Paul's," 537.

¹⁵⁸ Ernst Gombrich, *Gombrich on the Renaissance Vol. 1 Norm and Form*, (London: Phaidon, 1993), 60.

originality of his design.¹⁵⁹ Such a drawing style was a conscious device that placed to the fore the inventiveness of the creator. Jones' legacy as the English example of the Renaissance artistic ideal was formed through not only his designs, but also the way in which he presented them; an example that Pearce learned from his father and applied in his own works.¹⁶⁰

Unlike his predecessors, Pearce liberally applied wash to his drawings. The drawings for the processional arches all involve at least four gradations of grey, and sometimes also softly coloured washes. These range from the lightest indication of colour through to deep tones. The darkest washes have been used with moderation and were reserved for the enunciation and dramatization of especially sculptural elements, such as deep relief-work and particularly for freestanding figures, rather than formal architectural details. For example, the central figure on the *Temple of Concord* leaps from the page due to the most dramatic contrasts between virgin paper and intense shading (fig. 1.11). None of the numerous Corinthian capitals evoke the same fleshy roundness of reality that Pearce lavishes on the keystones of the sculptural ornament.

By contrast, Pearce's preparatory drawing methods were much more rigorously methodical. He followed Jones and used a scorer to set out his drawings. This method caused Pearce to use pen sparingly on the structural body, his sparse lines were later elaborated with wash. Unusual decoration required clear depictions, these details were carefully rendered with pen, such as the capitals on the *Garden of Plenty* (fig. 1.12). These have been expressed by completely different strokes to the more familiar Corinthian capitals on the *Temple of Concord* and *Naval Arch*, which were hastily drawn, in some cases barely sketched marks and daubs of wash provide a general – and even impressionistic – sense of a Corinthian capital rather than a

¹⁵⁹ Such ideas had emerged in Italy over the Renaissance. Interestingly, in terms of devising a design manuscripts from Vasari and Leonardo both emphasise the importance of shadows as a secondary stage following the initial sketch. For more information on the role of drawings as a function of Renaissance conceptions of creativity and artistry, and particularly the process of making a design, see Bambach, *Drawing and Painting*, 271 – 273.

¹⁶⁰ For more information on the way that architects were perceived as virtuosi, and therefore above other artists in the period see Cinzia Sicca, "The Making and Unravelling of John Talman's Collection of Drawings," in *John Talman, An Early Eighteenth-Century Connoisseur*, ed. Cinzia Sicca (New Haven and London: The Yale University Press and The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2008), 6 – 7.

useful model (fig. 1.13). This sketched quality is deeply reminiscent of Jones' architectural drawings. However, in Pearce's drawings, attention was directed to the sculptural ornament, particularly that which was novel.

Unusually, in Pearce's drawings, wash was not the final stage of construction. The way he used wash in the sculptural detail suggests that it was applied prior to these areas being fully sketched, and that he returned to ink to provide detail to mass that had been realised by the application of tonal shading. *The Garden of Plenty* has fabric swags hanging from the central arch's sculpted keystone (fig. 1.12). These are a late addition and the drawn blockwork is clearly visible through the fabric. These insubstantial swags have been created with a loose glide of pale wash followed by a thin streak of darker wash, suggesting the weight and fold of cloth. Then, following roughly the same shape, quick strokes of ink streak along the outline of the swag. This suggests that Pearce was more concerned with actively balancing the interplay of shadows and textures, creating a harmonious decorative space as he worked, than he was with producing an exact expression of form.

In Pearce's drawings, detail was overarchingly conceived in the way that sculpture is formed. First he marked out the general shape and depth and then he refined, he drew as a sculptor thought: in mass and in shade. The *Naval Arch* provides an opportunity to further explore Pearce's drawing process. The upper storey of the constructed arch was dominated by a large painting, indicated in the design (fig. 1.13.). In Pearce's sketch for the painting the background detail was entirely painted in wash. He quite literally sketched in paint, adding more highly detailed figures in the foreground in more varied tones of wash, lightly sketched pen strokes, and thicker hatched lines. The resultant effect reproduces the depth of a carved relief. A single layer of light wash to the background elements coheres with the fine, lightly engraved carving used for distant forms in a relief panel. Meanwhile, in the foreground, heavier tones and overworking imply the shade and depth that would be achieved from the deep carving of almost freestanding forms that emanate from the foreground of a carved panel. Even Pearce's representation of a painting shows his construction in wash and pen as a layering of markings, expressing depth as a carver would indent stone, revealing his cognitively sculptural drawing process.

It is important to note an aspect of Pearce's geometric drawing technique that was almost unique in the period: his use of the double scale bar. This was directly adopted from French prints.¹⁶¹ On these drawings, he deployed two double scale bars, one horizontal and one vertical.¹⁶² No literature has so far interrogated why Pearce might have adopted these devices. I propose some possibilities here. It seems significant that Pearce added a vertical scale to his typical horizontal scale bar. By adding a scale that made the verticality more easily translatable, Pearce emphasised the height of these works. As a sculptor who was still comparatively early in his career, who is only known to have worked on doorways and overmantels prior to composing these drawings – works of a much smaller scale than the arches – it may be that he was particularly conscious of how large these works were going to be, that he knew how important their grandiose scale was to their purpose, and sought to emphasise the dominating height that would be experienced when standing before the completed archways.

More speculatively, by scaling both the horizontal and vertical axis he created a visual display in which his designs look, to the modern eye, almost as though they have been plotted onto a graph. Visualising algebraic and geometric problems was an area of rich mathematical enquiry in the period, and René Descartes and Pierre de Fermat were developing modern conceptions of the double axis graph in the years directly prior to Pearce's drawings.¹⁶³ As such works would not be published for several years after the creation of Pearce's drawings, a direct link between them and Pearce's double scales cannot be made. However, it is possible that his application of a double scale bar reflects his interest and engagement in the new mathematical conceptions that typified the intellectual engagements of the seventeenth century, revealing an attempt by the sculptor to place his productions within that intellectual milieu.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Particularly those of Jean Le Pautre, for an example see figure 1.5. Jean Barbet's prints also display a double scale bar, indicating the longevity of this as a scale in French decorative designs.

¹⁶² For more on Pearce's use of the double scale bar, first identified by Geoffrey Fisher, and other traits of his hand see Higgott, "The Revised Design for St. Paul's," 537.

¹⁶³ For more about the development of graphs see Gail Anderson, "The Evolution of the 'Cartesian Connection'", *The Mathematics Teacher*, Vol. 102, No. 2, (September 2008): 107 – 111.

¹⁶⁴ It may also reflect him displaying his work as connected to mathematical enquiry, a key way in which architecture was then understood. See, J. A. Bennett, "Architecture and Mathematical Practice in England, 1550 – 1650", in *English Architecture Public and Private, Essays for Kerry Downes*, ed. John Bold and Edward Chaney (London: The Hambledon Press, 1993), 25 – 27. Pearce's drawings

Contrasts between the preciseness of the architectural frames and the looseness of the ornamental detail may indicate the purpose of the drawings, and Pearce's involvement in the project. Pearce returned to the ornamental details several times while creating these drawings, applying successive layers of wash and ink. While this resulted in a sketched quality that explicitly shows that Pearce dedicated more time and concentration to the ornamental detail, the loose depiction of the ornamental details also implies that Pearce was significantly involved in the invention of the ornamental schemes as they appear in these drawings. Jones described the process of creating architectural ornament as:

[i]n all inventions of capricious ornaments one must first design the ground, or the thing plain, as it is for use, and on that, vary it, adorn it, compose it with decorum according to the use.¹⁶⁵

Pearce's construction of these drawings exactly echoes Jones' words. Aspects of his father's ornamental style and drawing construction also abound.¹⁶⁶ In the frontispiece to his book of designs (fig. 1.3), Pearce senior created an architectural surround suffused with foliated ornament and scrolls. Pearce rekindles this play on the fat volutes to either side of the painting on the *Naval Arch* (fig. 1.13). In the grotesque works etched by Pearce senior, of which only four remain, decorative ornament meets with figurative elements and landscape vistas (fig. 1.4), displaying the same ability across a multiplicity of forms as evidenced in Pearce's drawings for the archways. He used his father's designs to display his own inventiveness, creating new compositions from his father's motifs.

The marketing of French designs overwhelmingly emphasised their modernity and ingenuity.¹⁶⁷ In redesigning the free-flowing forms of his father, Pearce provided English audiences with exactly this. However, he used such ornament with more

likely predate the establishment of the Royal Society in November 1660, and any relationships that Pearce is known to have forged with its members. To what extent Pearce may have been aware of unpublished mathematical works is unknown; however, in section three of this chapter I outline other instances where Pearce showed himself to be intellectually engaged in topics that were of current interest to members of the Royal Society.

¹⁶⁵ Inigo Jones, "Notebook", 20 January 1614/15, reproduced in Girouard *A Biographical Dictionary of English Architecture*, 178.

¹⁶⁶ For a complete discussion of Pearce senior's drawing techniques see Higgott and Grimstone, "Drawings by Edward Pearce Senior", 11 – 38.

¹⁶⁷ See Pr  aud, *Graveurs du XVIIe si  cle*, 331-32.

caution than his father. It is confined to cartouches, friezes, and scrolls rather than covering the totality of the structures. The place and function of the coronation arches, and the propriety of English audiences, must surely be the reasons for Pearce restricting such ornament to points of emphasis.¹⁶⁸ He deployed garlands and swags in order to increase the energy, complexity, and tempo of compositions that were, above all, expressions of a particular decorative form that was emanating from France, one that displayed artistic ingenuity in the varied arrangements of diverse and lively forms.

Pearce's drawing technique also demonstrates his familiarity with continental modernity, and would have been readily interpreted as such by artistically engaged viewers.¹⁶⁹ His figures are over-hatched, exacerbating shading, at times all but obliterating the sketched details. In the cartouche above the central opening in the *Temple of Concord*, sharp vertical and diagonal lines obscure the sketched form of the right uppermost scroll (fig. 1.14). Similarly, in the *Return of Monarchy*, the frieze is depicted as ornately carved, but the central head above the right archway has been so over-hatched that the result is no more than a partial face looming from under shadow (fig. 1.15). His use of hatching, which occasionally obliterated design details, strongly accords with contemporaneous French prints of architecture and decorative ornament (figs. 1.16 and 1.17).¹⁷⁰ He imitated the effect of engraving, creating drawings that seem deliberately designed to invite viewers to make

¹⁶⁸ For an in depth analysis of the coronation arches and the particular decorum of architectural ornament see Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 63 – 118; Stevenson, "Occasional Architecture", 35 – 74; Lucas, "'Costly without, Richlier Inlaid'", 1 – 20.

¹⁶⁹ For example John Evelyn specifically commented on his visit to the Sorbonne Chapel in Paris in 1644 that the similar ornamental scheme that comprised the architectural programme for the Chapel made it "one of the most excellent moderne buildings". The facade facing the square is strongly reminiscent of aspects of the Naval arch and the arch celebrating the Return of the Monarchy. John Evelyn, *Memoirs Illustrative of the Life and writings of John Evelyn*, (London: H. Colburn, 1819), 37.

¹⁷⁰ The prints of Jean Marot particularly evidence similar uses of shading. A collection of prints that was subsequently published together, but which were all individually in existence prior to 1659, which includes the Sorbonne Chapel discussed in the previous reference, illustrates the similarity of Pearce's heavy cross-hatching and Jean Marot's similar obliteration of details under heavy hatched shading. Other English draughtsmen in the period would also adopt these techniques, influenced by the work of engravers such as Marot. Edward Woodroffe, for example, was known to possess a copy of Marot's engraving of the Sorbonne Chapel. See Anthony Geraghty, "Edward Woodroffe: Sir Christopher Wren's First Draughtsman," *The Burlington Magazine*, 143, No 1181 (August 2001): 477 – 478; Jean Marot, *Recueil des plans, profils et élévations des plusieurs palais, casteaux, élisés, sépultures, grottes et hostels, bâtis dans Paris, et aux environs, avec beaucoup de magnificence, par les meilleurs architectes du Royaume*, (Paris, 16??). See also Michaël Decrossas, "Jean Marot", *Architectura, Architecture, Textes et Images XVIe – XVIIe Siècles*, (2013), <http://architectura.cesr.univ-tours.fr/traite/Notice/Marot1659.asp?param=en>, accessed 27 June 2022.

associations between them and printed images, which would be a deliberate recreation of the main format in which French styles were consumed by English audiences. As such, Pearce encouraged his designs to be interpreted likewise: as exemplars of contemporary design that were as authoritative as the latest prints from France.

Pearce's works were eventually translated into printed images in John Ogilby's *The Entertainment of His Most Excellent Majestie Charles II*, which was published in 1662. The book included an engraving of each arch amid voluminous text giving varied explanations of the meanings to be found in the archways.¹⁷¹ The engravings follow the visual format that had been established in Pearce's drawings, entirely removing the arches from the landscape in which they were situated (figs. 1.18 – 1.21). Indeed, the dimensions, spacing, and lack of contextual backgrounds for the arches in Ogilby's publication strongly imply that Pearce's drawings were used as direct models for the engravings. Stevenson has identified that differences between Pearce's drawings and the engravings show that:

the ornament sketched on these sheets was subsequently modified, often in a way that would in the next year's *Entertainment* allow Ogilby scope for exegeses more elaborate than the straightforward descriptions appearing in his *Relation*.¹⁷²

The drawings were created at an intermediary stage, prior to the finalisation of the compositions, as sketched alterations on the designs attest.¹⁷³ This establishes that Pearce was involved on the project prior to the completion of the designs, allowing further space for his involvement as a collaborator in the ornamental design. However, the degree to which the ornament has been contrived to exemplify Ogilby's consideration of the iconographic schemes, over a year after their creation, also suggests an alternative reading. *The Entertainment* gives detailed descriptions for the decorative schemes on the reverse of the arches, although these are not illustrated. This is most likely because the arches had been dismantled and sold at

¹⁷¹ For a thorough discussion of Ogilby's publications relating to the entrance of Charles II see Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 63 – 118.

¹⁷² The latter publication was a shorter pamphlet without images of the archways. It was published ready to be read by attendees on the occasion of the procession itself. Ogilby's longer publication that included the images of the archways was published the following year. *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁷³ Stevenson concurs that these designs were not final. Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 98 – 104.

around the time that *The Entertainment* was produced.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, Pearce's drawings may have been the only visual source that the engraver, David Loggan, could work from. If Loggan did use Pearce's drawings alongside Ogilby's text to create his illustrations, it is possible that the ornamental deviations between Pearce's designs and the engravings are greater than the differences between Pearce's designs and the arches as built.

Understanding Pearce's involvement

It is difficult to overestimate the scarcity of people in London in 1660 who were capable of producing the quality of drawing and who could employ ornamental forms as confidently as Pearce did in the arch designs. These drawings were for centuries attributed to Balthazar Gerbier, largely due to Vertue's interpretation that Gerbier made public but coded references to his involvement.¹⁷⁵ More recently, the drawings have been ascribed to another architect, John Webb, who was trained under Jones.¹⁷⁶ Such an assessment recognises both the sophistication of the author's hand and – more importantly – the influence of Jones upon the draughtsman. However, there are inconsistencies in the drawing techniques when compared with Webb's other known drawings. In particular, he used hatching in sketches and wash in presentation drawings, almost never combining the two techniques in one drawing.¹⁷⁷ His overall expression also tends to be much tighter and more carefully expressed than Pearce's characteristically free style of ornamentation. Webb's elaboration of floral swags, profusely expressed in a design for a fireplace for Lamport Hall, also show marked differences with Pearce's depictions on the coronation arches, and in other examples. Webb's are composed of similarly-sized bulbous fruits, whereas Pearce's examples indicate various fruits and foliage,

¹⁷⁴ Having already been damaged in February 1662. *Ibid*, 95; Stevenson, "Occasional Architecture", 58.

¹⁷⁵ Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 115.

¹⁷⁶ By Christina Strunck, who has been supported by John Bold. John Bold. "Review: Britain and the Continent 1660 – 1727: Political Crisis and Conflict Resolution in Mural Paintings at Windsor, Chelsea, Chatsworth, Hampton Court and Greenwich", *The Burlington Magazine*, 164, (September 2022): 940 – 941.

¹⁷⁷ For example, compare the designs for Composite Capital for Amesbury Abbey and the Physician's College, displaying the different shading techniques of hatching and wash being employed separately. Images reproduced in John Bold *John Webb, Architectural Theory and Practice in the Seventeenth Century*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 99, 167.

providing far greater diversity in his forms.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, had someone as significant as Webb been involved in the project it is most likely that he would have led the whole endeavour, taking Mills' place and appearing in the accounts held at the London Metropolitan Archives.

Unlike Gerbier or Webb, Mills and Ogilby, who are documented as working on the project, were both members of the Corporation of London and had significant ties to their livery companies.¹⁷⁹ It is sensible to consider the Aldermen commissioners as invested in using creators from within *their* numbers to create *their* displays, expressions of *their* power and pride. The City identity was invested in these structures, and as model livery members, Mills and Ogilby – and Pearce – elevated this collective identity by exhibiting the talent of Company members. Mills, having acted as Master of his company a decade previously, was the most senior City figure to work on the arches.¹⁸⁰ As the livery Companies' had highly hierarchical structures, and Mills was an accomplished architect in his own right, it is entirely plausible that he led the structural and visual displays.¹⁸¹ Grimstone has suggested that Pearce had been engaged to create sculptural ornaments for Mills' architectural projects from as early as 1654; his employment of Pearce from such an early point is indicative of the esteem that Pearce enjoyed from the outset of his career.¹⁸² Given these connections, and that Pearce had recently returned to London, living close to the Leadenhall Street arch, and joined the Corporation, it is reasonable to suggest that Mills sought out Pearce to undertake the elaboration of the ornamental design, an area in which Mills was already convinced of his abilities. Furthermore, the

¹⁷⁸ The design for the chimneypiece at Lamport Hall can be found in Bold, *Webb*, 86.

¹⁷⁹ Gerbier was primarily a courtier, his architectural associations are only for members of the aristocracy and he is not associated with any other City works. Webb was primarily a royal architect and his contemporaneous works were at Whitehall Palace and Somerset House. For more information on the careers of Gerbier, Webb, Mills, and Ogilby see *BDBA*, 414 – 416, 695; Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 107; Charles Withers, "John Ogilby", *ODNB*, (2007), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/20583>, accessed 27 June 2022; John Bold, *Webb*, 2 – 5.

¹⁸⁰ *BDBA*, 695. For more on the significance of Mills' reputation in the city see Michael Cooper, *A More Beautiful City' Robert Hooke and the Rebuilding of London After the Great Fire*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2003), 116.

¹⁸¹ Gerbier had political motivations for re-establishing himself as a loyal royalist, which his involvement on this project would have aided. This makes his pronouncements on his involvement less reliable. If he was involved, it was in a far less formal capacity than the others leading me to ascribe the greater responsibility to Mills.

¹⁸² Mills had himself been "one of the most promising young artificers in the City". Anya Matthews, *London's Livery Halls, c.1603 to c. 1684: Their Architecture and Political Uses*", (Doctoral Thesis, The Courtauld Institute of Art, 2015), 137. Grimstone, *Building Pembroke Chapel*, 38.

legacy of Pearce senior, as one of Jones' trusted designers for court entertainment, may have influenced Mills and Ogilby to involve Pearce, as he was so clearly trained and influenced by his father's work.¹⁸³

The particular composition of the arches may also have encouraged Mills to engage a sculptor with particularly painterly attributes. The arches were not permanent structures made from stone; they were essentially a form of mixed-media trompe l'oeil. Therefore, some of the ornament Pearce depicted was not carved: some was painted, other aspects – such as the fabric swags – were real items added to the construction. Pearce's effortless two-dimensional depictions of carved recessions visually translated such a fictive composition in a harmonious manner, his combined skills may have been especially useful in the design and execution of these structures.

I have focussed on the degree to which Pearce was influenced by a style of ornament and mode of designing that he inherited from his father, one that stemmed directly from the circle of Jones, and the ways that these skills elevated him from his competitors. In the following section I will pursue his utilisation of the fraternal networks available to him from in the City corporation. I will focus on the way that Pearce's specific skills, as considered here, made him a desirable sculptor for the London livery companies. I will further consider the support that such companies offered Pearce in return, through which he became a citizen whose critical artistic judgement commanded the respect of others.

Part 2: *Pearce and his Relationships in the City of London*

All the formative figures outlined in the previous section (Pearce senior, Jones, Mills, and Stone) were liverymen and undertook commissions for London's

¹⁸³ Mills may even have worked with Pearce senior on Stone's rebuilding of the Goldsmiths' Hall. See Newman, "Nicholas Stone's Goldsmiths' Hall", 38. Ogilby had been a theatre manager during Jones' heyday and therefore might have been particularly aware of Pearce senior's abilities in theatrical displays. Withers, "John Ogilby".

aldermen.¹⁸⁴ Pearce is believed to have left the city for most of the 1660s, during which London suffered outbreaks of plague and the Great Fire.¹⁸⁵ On his return, during the ensuing period of rebuilding, his reputation as a sculptor was cemented, largely through his work for the livery companies. In tandem, Pearce rose through the ranks of the company hierarchy, establishing his position in metropolitan London society. I will consider the influence of the fraternal networks of the livery companies on his reputation as a sculptor and citizen.

The City companies acted, to an extent, as a self-supporting ecology.¹⁸⁶ Pearce capitalised on the close peer-to-peer networks through which seventeenth-century business was conducted. He never achieved a position in the royal household, instead gaining rank and status within the merchant classes. This social hierarchy was led by “the oligarch grandees of the Company, [who] alone voted on elections and elected freemen for the livery [followed by] the liverymen [who] were a Company’s economic and social elite”.¹⁸⁷ Pearce joined this elite on the 16th February, 1668/9, just prior to his engagement on large-scale company rebuilding projects.¹⁸⁸ Significantly, the status provided by livery companies extended beyond the limits of the company hall. Visual distinctions, such as dress, denoted the members in public spaces, and public engagement was practised in the form of voting, charitable events, peacekeeping activities, and processions through which London society was presented with an image of respectable governance.¹⁸⁹

Pearce rose through the ranks of the Painter-Stainers’ Company, eventually sitting as their master towards the end of his life. Previous scholars, including Jane Seymour and Roscoe, have emphasised that this role reveals the high esteem in which he was

¹⁸⁴ See Anya Lucas and Henry Russell, *The Livery Halls of The City of London*, (London and New York: Merrell in Association with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects, 2018), 236, 238. *BDBA*, 695. White, “Stone, Nicholas” n.p.

¹⁸⁵ For example, he is recorded working at Horseheath and Hampstead Marshall. *BDS*, 961.

¹⁸⁶ S. R. Epstein and Maarten Prak, “Guilds, Innovation, and the European Economy, 1400-1800,” in *Guilds Innovation and the European Economy, 1400 – 1800*, ed. S.R. Epstein and Maarten Prak, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4.

¹⁸⁷ Lucas and Russell, *The Livery Halls*, 20.

¹⁸⁸ GL, *Painter-Stainers’ Company Court Minute Book MS5567/2 part 1*, 96.

¹⁸⁹ For more information about the wider social implications of the guild structure see Michael Berlin, “Guilds in Decline? London Livery Companies and the Rise of a Liberal Economy, 1600-1800”, in *Guilds Innovation and the European Economy, 1400 – 1800*, ed. S. R. Epstein and Maarten Prak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 316 – 342.

held.¹⁹⁰ It also provided Pearce with privileged access to significant visitors to the Company, which would have allowed him to socialise with an exclusive and international artistic circle.¹⁹¹ Once elected to the court, Pearce was further entrusted with assuring the quality of painting undertaken across the City.¹⁹² He evidently took this role seriously; under his leadership the company pursued court cases with vehemence, the minutes noting in one litigious instance “that this Company will reimburse whatever money shall be payed out in the prosecution of the Cause”.¹⁹³ However, the influence of this role on Pearce’s self-conception has not previously been explored, nor has his self-fashioning that facilitated him securing this position.¹⁹⁴

The reputational benefit of company positions also infiltrated wider London society. An advertisement for a painting lottery, a newly established and fashionable combination of gambling and art-acquisition, listed Pearce as a “trustee”.¹⁹⁵ Other trustees included Henry Cooke, a member of the elite Society of the Virtuosi of St. Luke.¹⁹⁶ Trustees reassured ticket-buyers that the painter, William Seeks, was a reliable man who would execute a worthy portrait. Pearce’s public reputation is here revealed to be bound to his position as an artistic authority, which elevated him to a commensurate level as those at the height of London’s artistic social circles, such as members of the Virtuosi of St. Luke. Furthermore, such instances reveal that his authority was not limited to his own creative abilities – or even his own discipline –

¹⁹⁰ See Seymour, “Edward Pearce,” 10; *BDS*, 961.

¹⁹¹ For example, at the Feast of St Luke in 1687 Sir Godfrey Kneller and Antonio Verrio attended as special guests. LMA. *St Luke’s Feast*, Invitation. 1687. What is more, respected artists, including Thornhill, were still being apprenticed to the company in Pearce’s time. For more on the status of the Painters’ Company in this period see Richard Johns, “James Thornhill and Decorative History Painting in England after 1688”, (doctoral thesis, University of York, 2004), 39 – 52.

¹⁹² See Borg, *History of the Worshipful Company of Painters*, 44.

¹⁹³ GL, *Painter Stainers’ Minute Book*, 5th February 1693/4, 334.

¹⁹⁴ The idea of self-fashioning is understood to be an idea that members of the Royal Society were very interested in. See Douglas Chambers, “John Evelyn and the construction of the Scientific Self”, in *The Restoration Mind*, ed. W. Gerald Marshall (London: Associated University Press, 1997), 135.

¹⁹⁵ William Seeks, “Proposals of Mr William Seeks, painter, at the Sun, next door to the Bell Savage, on Ludgate Hill” (London, ca. 1694), *The Art World in Britain 1660 to 1735*, accessed January 30, 2019, <http://artworld.york.ac.uk>. Lotteries were still a comparatively new form of money-raising at the time. Thomas Neale, whom, incidentally, Pearce worked with in the final years of his life at Seven Dials, was influential in their popular uptake to the extent that a published eulogy described Neale as “the Lord of Lotteries”. Anonymous. *An Elegaic Essay Upon the Decease of the Groom-Porter, and the Lotteries*. (For John Nutt, 1700).

¹⁹⁶ Anonymous, “Cooke, Henry”, *The Art World in Britain 1660 to 1735*, <http://artworld.york.ac.uk>; accessed 14 November 2019.

but encompassed his judgement of others, and that his endorsement could reassure the wider public about the abilities of other artists.

Pearce's engagement with livery companies increased following the Great Fire, when the rebuilding and beautification of livery halls became a major concern.¹⁹⁷ Ornamentation is now considered an integral aspect of architectural design, but this is not how ornament was culturally understood – or used – in the majority of seventeenth-century cases, where ornament could best be described as a form of dressing or clothing for buildings.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, sculptural decoration was not always conceived in synchronicity with the main body of a structure. This was also the case for some of Jones' architectural projects, described by Colvin in the following passage:

At Hatfield House in 1609 Jones appears in the role of an architectural consultant, apparently modifying certain features of a building already in progress, but not as an architect in general control of the whole operation.¹⁹⁹

The same is true of his work at St. Paul's Cathedral, where he was initially tasked with rebuilding the termination of the tower, eventually adding a classical façade to the west end of an otherwise gothic building, similar to Pearce's rebuilding of the entranceway to the Guildhall.²⁰⁰ Contemporary conceptions of ornament as a separate layer offered Pearce a distinct area in which to claim expertise. Moreover, such a conception did not necessarily place Pearce in competition with architects,

¹⁹⁷ Lucas and Russell, *The Livery Halls*, 242.

¹⁹⁸ Jones' design process was recorded in some notes in his sketchbooks. Higgott described his process as follows: "Jones likens architectural composition to figurative drawing ('dessigne'). The functional parts of the building are first studied separately, then put together and clothed with a host of ornaments". Gordon Higgott, "Varying with Reason": Inigo Jones' Theory of Design", *Architectural History*, Vol. 35, (1992), 51 – 77, 55. For the persistence of such ideas throughout the period see Anya Matthews, "Honour, Ornament, and Frugality, The Reconstruction of London's Livery Halls after the Great Fire", in *Court, Country, City: British Art and Architecture, 1660-1735*, ed. Mark Hallett, Nigel Llewellyn, and Martin Myrone (New Haven: The Yale Centre for British Art, 2016), 89. In a period where great value was placed on strictly codified forms of dress it is not surprising that the decorous ornamentation of buildings was given significant and dedicated consideration. For more see David Howarth, *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485 – 1649*, (Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997), 9.

¹⁹⁹ *BDBA*, 585.

²⁰⁰ Harris and Higgott, *Inigo Jones*, 38 – 39; Gordon Higgott, "The Fabric to 1670", in *St. Paul's the Cathedral Church of London 624 – 2004*, ed. Derek Keene, Arthur Burns and Andres Saint (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 178 – 182. Seymour identified Pearce's work at the Guildhall as limited to the façade where he "replaced the medieval gable of the porch with a baroque pediment incorporating the royal arms, flanked by a pair of dragons and having, perched rather insecurely on the top of the segmental pediment, a bust which appears to have been that of the Lord Mayor". Seymour, *Edward Pearce*, 10 – 11.

instead he was able to act as a supporting character – with specific expertise – who could aid in the creation of architectural designs.

The livery halls were model recipients for Pearce’s particular skills. They were amongst the earliest structures to be rebuilt following the fire, and were built for patrons who were engaged in a “continual process of competitive comparison, emulation and assuring [their] place in the order”.²⁰¹ Ornament was a pressing ideological requirement for livery halls, their corporate identities expressly necessitated ornamentation that conveyed their particular ideals and identities. Anya Lucas has further identified the livery companies as having been deeply invested in contracting artists of the highest reputations and abilities possible, and that they were as concerned with establishing their contemporary positions through modern fashions as they were with maintaining their ancient rights through displays of their noble histories.²⁰² Such practices caused Ian Archer to describe livery halls as “theatres of memory”.²⁰³ The decorative style employed by Pearce would only become more established as *the* expression of decorative modernity through the seventeenth century.²⁰⁴ In addition to proclaiming the companies’ relevance and engagement as modern institutions, the disposition of ornament – as Pearce had been taught – used symbols of triumphalism, dynamism, and ingenuity, qualities which readily translated to commercial identities.

Lucas’ identification of emulation between companies is key to understanding how Pearce increased the work he undertook for the livery companies.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, as will be discussed in the following case study, he simultaneously accessed the sociable networking spaces of the livery company buildings that he was adorning.

²⁰¹ Lucas and Russell, *The Livery Halls*, 19.

²⁰² Lucas, ““Costly without, Richlier Inlaid””, 9 – 18. Howarth also notes the employment of continuity and newness as a trait of English art in the seventeenth century. See Howarth, *Images of Rule*, 15.

²⁰³ Ian Archer, “The Arts and Acts of Memorialisation in Early Modern London,” in *Imagining Early Modern London, Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype 1598-1720*, ed. J.F. Merritt, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 90.

²⁰⁴ Many texts discuss the stylistic changes and influence of France that arose from great building projects such as Versailles. For a good overview see Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, 7 – 51; Giles Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain, The Heroic Age*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1995), 39 – 40, 72. For the European scope of this decorative style see Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England*, 3 – 10.

²⁰⁵ Lucas and Russell, *The Livery Halls*, 19.

His self-presentation as an honourable member of company society provided Pearce with privileged access to company commissions, which increasingly provided him with greater opportunities to display his creative abilities, and further enhance his artistic persona. In short, Pearce's company work provided the opportunities that cemented his independent reputation as an ornamental designer, a reputation that secured even greater projects later in his career.

Company halls have largely been considered *en masse*, in order to categorise the unifying features of their specific typology.²⁰⁶ In the following case study I will instead trace one individual creator's career, in the institutions of the companies and on the fabric of their halls. By reuniting Pearce's work with his company career I provide new perspectives on the ways that he developed his position in contemporary society.

Case Study: *Pearce's Involvement with London Livery Companies*

Pearce's work for livery companies was not as prolific as someone such as Edward Jerman, who worked across many companies.²⁰⁷ Instead, Pearce's involvement is remarkable because his limited involvement significantly advanced his career, as will be discussed in this case study. I will consider how Pearce established himself in livery company networks, the types of work that this network offered him, and the ways that he used these opportunities to progress his career and reputation.

Pearce returned to London following the Great Fire.²⁰⁸ Soon after his return he republished his father's frieze designs with leading London publishers, reflecting the appetite for the Pearce family's style of florid ornament during the rebuilding of

²⁰⁶ Lucas and Russell's recent publication, *The Livery Halls*, exemplifies this trend.

²⁰⁷ John Newman, "Edward Jerman", *ODNB*, 4 October 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14774>, accessed 29 September 2022.

²⁰⁸ Having worked in the country at Horseheath and Hampstead Marshall for several years. *BDS*, 961.

London.²⁰⁹ Echoes of the influence of these publications can still be found in company halls today. The Goldsmith's Hall was rebuilt in 1835, but the frieze and ceiling were remodelled from the 1669 Hall that was built by Jerman.²¹⁰ The frieze presents a clear replication of scrolling floral whorls that defined Pearce senior's prints (figs. 1.22 – 1.23). Evidently, following the Fire "[his] prints were in demand".²¹¹ On the 16th February 1668/9, possibly aided by the capital generated by republishing his father's designs, Pearce paid his fees and joined the livery, a clear indication of his intention to work in London.²¹² Within a couple of months he was undertaking his first Company contract. Joining the livery must have aided Pearce in securing contracts from the livery Companies.

Company doorways

Jerman had monopolised hall rebuilding in London, but upon his death the Fishmongers' Hall remained unbuilt.²¹³ Pearce and a more experienced mason, Thomas Bedford, were contracted and jointly paid over £1345 between 1668 –1672 to build the Fishmongers new hall.²¹⁴ Jerman had begun its design before his death.²¹⁵ However, scholars have long believed that another designer was involved in the final design. In 1977 Priscilla Metcalf suggested:

the advisory hand it is so tempting to see at Fishmongers' Hall in May 1669 is that of Robert Hooke, also one of the surveyors for the rebuilding of the City, a considerable scientist and soon to be an architect, never of the first rank but working closely with Wren and as aware of both English and Continental precedent as Pratt.²¹⁶

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 961; Eileen Harris, assisted by Nicholas Savage, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556-1785*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni Press, 1990), 367; Jervis, "A Seventeenth-Century Book of Engraved Ornament," 897; Globe, *Peter Stent*, 157 – 158.

²¹⁰ Lucas and Russell, *The Livery Halls*, 253.

²¹¹ Jervis, "A Seventeenth-Century Book of Engraved Ornament," 897.

²¹² GL, *Painter-Stainers' Minute Book*, 96.

²¹³ Despite Jerman having met with the Fishmongers as early as 13 September, 1666. Priscilla Metcalf, *The Halls of the Fishmongers' Company, An Architectural history of a Riverside Site*, (London: Philmore & Co, 1977), 57.

²¹⁴ Metcalf, *The Halls of the Fishmongers*, 70-71.

²¹⁵ Metcalf, *The Halls of the Fishmongers*, 57.

²¹⁶ It is important to note that there is no documented connection between the building of Fishmongers Hall and either of the architects she suggests. Metcalf, *The Halls of the Fishmongers*, 74.

Significantly, Pearce's awareness of European design, and ability to execute such designs, at least equalled that of both Hooke and Pratt.²¹⁷ Moreover, Metcalf saw the building as embodying a particularly sculptural design, which recalled both the Italian precedents of Michelangelo and the work of Jones.²¹⁸

Metcalf was not aware of Pearce's architectural designs. In particular, a design by Pearce for Lowther Hall follows a similar design to the Fishmongers' Hall (figs. 1.24 – 1.25).²¹⁹ Similarities with his wider repertoire support the theory that he was more involved in the design of the Fishmongers' Hall than is currently acknowledged. Moreover, there is a drawing by Pearce for the Thames Street entrance of the hall (fig. 1.26). This design, discussed in detail below, further evidences that Pearce was the designer of the hall's ornamental sculpture. Had his authorship of these designs been available to Metcalf, who was writing in 1977, she may have ascribed Pearce a greater hand in the design.

Later illustrations of the Thames Street area confirm that Pearce's design depicts the hall doorway almost exactly as built (figs. 1.27 – 1.28).²²⁰ His doorway combines the historic heraldry of the Fishmongers with what contemporary audiences would have considered to be a sophisticated application of classical architectural detail. John Evelyn, writing in 1664, described the metopes and triglyphs as deployed in Pearce's Doric frieze as:

²¹⁷ Indeed, both employed Pearce to aid in the ornament of some of their buildings. For Pearce's work with Pratt see R.T. Gunther, *The Architecture of Sir Roger Pratt* (Oxford: John Johnson at The Oxford University Press, 1928), 130. For Pearce's work with Hooke see Hooke, *Diary*, 121.

²¹⁸ On Jones and Michelangelo as influences Metcalf emphatically argues that the "Capitoline and Greenwich designs were sculptural in conception and so, on a much less grand and subtle scale, it was here". Interestingly, Metcalf even acknowledges the prior relationship between Pearce and Pratt at Horseheath Hall during her discussion of the sculptural sophistication of the design, but was hesitant to afford Pearce direct control, a situation that would likely have been very different had Metcalf had access to the information regarding Pearce's designs that is available today. Similarly, Metcalf discussed similarities with Thorpe Hall as an argument for Mills' involvement rather than as a further possibility that Pearce had been influenced from his earlier work there. Metcalf, *The Halls of the Fishmongers*, 75 – 76.

²¹⁹ The aristocratic seat has the additional decorative additions of a grand order of pilasters, a larger front by two bays on either side of the central pedimented entranceway, and a cupola that confer more grandeur and would have added significant additional costs. However, the broad decorative format including the alternating window pediments and a central pedimented bay have significant similarities.

²²⁰ The Doric columns seem to have been changed to ornamented pilasters.

not necessary always, to the great ease of *Architects*, who oftentime find it so difficult to place them at just distances that except in *Church-Works*, they frequently leave them out.²²¹

Pearce employed the Vitruvian method for placing the ornaments that was favoured by Roland Fréart in *A Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the Modern*, which Evelyn had translated into English in the early 1660s.²²² He achieved a decorative detail that Evelyn, who represented the fore of British art criticism and who was also following continental precedents, considered to be a feat beyond all but the most skilled of architects. Such details raise the possibility that Pearce and Bedford held separate roles in the project, with Bedford largely managing the construction process while Pearce took control of the decorative scheme.²²³ Such a separation in the management of the building and designing of the ornament would have been possible because, as outlined in the previous section, there was a greater conceptual distinction between structural architecture and decorative ornament in the period.

Pearce certainly appears to have been aware of the opportunity for his career that this commission signified. Any viewer who had an interest in architecture, such as Evelyn, or Wren, would have noticed the flamboyant gesture Pearce made in executing such a complex frieze decoration. As such, the doorway would have stood as the height of accomplishment. Indeed, Fishmongers' Hall seems to have gained a reputation almost as soon as it was completed. A coterie from the court of the Brewers' Company had surveyed the newly built Fishmongers' Hall, to inform the designing of their own hall, as early as 1670.²²⁴

²²¹ John Evelyn, *An Account of Architects and Architecture*, In *A Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the Modern: in a Collection of Ten Principal Authors Who Have Written on the Five Orders...* Roland Fréart (John Evelyn, Trans.), (London: Tho. Roycroft for John Place, 1664), 34.

²²² Pearce's confidence in applying the triglyphs, described by Fréart as an ornamentation "whereof obliges one to a very great inconvenience" indicates that Pearce was already well-practiced in such ornamental design. Fréart, *A Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the Modern*., 12. For more information on the placement of triglyphs see Vitruvius, *Vitruvius, Ten Books on Architecture*, ed. Ingrid Rowland and Thomas Noble Howe. trans. Ingrid Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 4.3.1, 57.

²²³ Pearce is not known to have undertaken any large-scale projects as a mason prior to the Fishmongers Hall. It is likely that this was a hugely formative experience for Pearce's career as a mason-contractor.

²²⁴ Lucas, "'Costly without, Richlier Inlaid'", 9.

In a further indication of the success of Pearce's ornamentation of the Fishmongers' Hall, his next company commission was again for a doorway. In 1675 Pearce created a doorway for his own company that was more modest in both the materials used and the degree of decorative detail (fig. 1.29). The length of the pilasters were filled with carved floral garlands and fabric swags with foliated and scrolled consoles above. A simply moulded broken pediment housed the company arms. With remarkable economy Pearce provided the Painter-Stainers' with a doorway that announced their substance, dignity, and modernity. However, in actuality it was a meagre commission when compared with the scale of projects – and the fees – that Pearce was commanding by the mid-1670s.²²⁵ Instead of financial gain, this doorway provided Pearce with reputational rewards. Undertaking work for his company, particularly at a subsidy, would have improved his standing, and ultimately contributed to his progression to a prestigious role, which he assumed in the early 1680s.²²⁶

Pearce's nurturing of professional relationships did also provide him with lucrative and esteemed contracts. In the same year that he assumed a position in the Painters' Court he secured work for the Grocers', one of the supreme London companies.²²⁷ Here, Pearce again appears to have been directly responsible for the carved ornament.²²⁸ Unfortunately, records do not detail the carved work that Pearce undertook, merely his payments.²²⁹ However, his presence at such a prominent and influential livery company suggests that his position as the leading purveyor of decorative ornament had been secured. That this coincided with his election to high company office further evidences the social influence that Pearce wielded in the City, testifying to the relationships he had established with influential members of society, which in turn served as a valuable reputational asset for his artistic abilities.

²²⁵ He was simultaneously employed at St Lawrence Jewry, where he was paid over £7000. London Metropolitan Archives, *Abstract of Bills*, MS25550, 19.

²²⁶ Records indicate Pearce was paid for this, although the amount is not known. Given the poor finances of the Company, it is unlikely Pearce charged a full fee. GL, *Painter-Stainers' Minute Book*, 314.

²²⁷ Lucas and Russell, *The Livery Halls*, 46.

²²⁸ In the accounts he is explicitly referred to as a carver at every instance rather than a mason, as he was at the Fishmongers'. See GL, *Grocers' Account Book*, MS11571/ 016 and 017, n.p.

²²⁹ GL, *Grocers' Account Book*, MS11571/017 n.p.

Company sculptures

As Pearce's reputation as a sculptor and livery member grew, he gained contracts for explicitly sculptural commissions destined for locations in the privileged interior spaces of the halls. In the 1680s, Pearce provided the Fishmongers and Painters with such work. His selection for such commissions synchronises with his appointment to senior roles in the company hierarchy. The Fishmongers officially decided to commission a statue of Sir William Walworth in January 1683/4. The company wardens were given the freedom "to treat with any person for makeing of the said effigie And report the same to the next court".²³⁰ Just over a month later Pearce was the only sculptor mentioned as having been contacted by the wardens in the court minutes, having already agreed to complete the statue.²³¹ There is no competitive process at work. Pearce was selected on his reputation alone, which had been boosted by his recent appointment as warden in his own company. As wardens themselves, the commissioners seem to have been fully invested in providing advantages to members of the livery hierarchy.²³² The following year, while Pearce was again serving his company, then as Upper Warden, the Fishmongers contracted him to undertake a second sculpture, this time for the Royal Exchange.²³³

Pearce's commissions for the Painters' follow a similar trajectory, despite their far more limited resources. Indeed, following his election to their court, his presence at company meetings can be tracked alongside the commissions he received. Pearce was heavily invested in attending all court meetings during the two terms that he served as a warden.²³⁴ In the intervening two years he maintained a steady presence in the company, increasing his involvement ahead of important annual celebrations, such as the Lord Mayor's Day.²³⁵ After 29th October 1686, following the end of his term as Upper Warden, and with only the position of Master left to achieve, Pearce became noticeably absent from court. The only meetings he attended in the entirety

²³⁰ GL, *Fishmongers' Court Ledger*, MS5570/5 4th January 1683/4, 562.

²³¹ GL, *Fishmongers' Court Ledger*, MS5570/5 13th February 1683/4, 563.

²³² Matthews identified the "shared identity" and "parity" that was felt between liverymen and promoted in shared symbols such as their dress. Matthews, "Honour, Ornament, and Frugality", 75.

²³³ See Table 1.1 and GL, *Fishmongers' Court Ledger*, 9th March 1684/5, 582.

²³⁴ From October 1682 – October 1683 Pearce attended 14 meetings and from October 1685 to October 1686 he attended 11. See Table 1.1 for full details.

²³⁵ Attending twelve meetings in total. See Table 1.1.

of 1688 directly follow the court selecting him to undertake a bust of Thomas Evans.²³⁶ By 1690, and until his appointment as Master, Pearce only attended meetings in the months leading to October, when the selection of a new Master would take place.²³⁷ Following his commission for the bust of Evans, and his terms spent as warden, he seems to have been waiting to be offered the position of Master, and to have felt that he had already dedicated enough to the company to ensure his selection.

It was an unique decision for the Painters' to commemorate Evans, a past master, in a bust. Unsurprisingly, all the other commemorative portraits take the form of paintings. Today, the bust still takes centre stage in the hall where it is flanked by paintings of other prior masters (fig. 1.30). The decision to have Pearce sculpt a portrait indicates his exceptional success and the influence that he exerted in the Painters' Company. This bust is his final company work. It is both a personal dedication between the sculptor and the master he served in his youth, and a dedication from Pearce to the fraternity that had nurtured his success. Pearce's payment remains unknown; however, it is likely that he created this sculpture as a donation – as much to his own legacy – similar to the donations of plate that were commonly gifted by successful company members.²³⁸ Today, the bust stands more in Pearce's honour than Evans', a reversal in commemoration that may have started as early as 1718, when the company had the bust gilded.²³⁹

Pearce was involved in only a small portion of the forty-four livery halls that were rebuilt. However, the scale of his involvement at the Fishmongers Hall, spanning 1669 – 1673, was substantial.²⁴⁰ Over those years he also secured a position as a contractor for Wren, Pearce was not dependent on the income from livery company projects thereafter.²⁴¹ Instead, the company contracts that Pearce pursued later in his

²³⁶ And for two of the three meetings the bust was a point of discussion included in the minutes. See Table 1.1.

²³⁷ Pearce attended only eight meetings from 1689 until his selection as Master in September 1693. See Table 1.1.

²³⁸ See Archer, "The Arts and Acts of Memorialisation in Early Modern London," 96 – 99.

²³⁹ Borg, *History of the Worshipful Company of Painters*, 77.

²⁴⁰ During which time three-quarters of the Halls were rebuilt. Lucas and Russell, *The Livery Halls*, 242.

²⁴¹ Pearce's first contract with Wren was signed on the 10th November 1670. London Metropolitan Archives, *Signed Contracts*, MS25542/1-2, 199-201.

career provided him with reputational benefits, which improved his social standing. As such, Pearce followed the paradigm of the companies themselves, “achiev[ing] impact and influence through a formula in which image was as crucial as wealth”.²⁴²

Part three will follow Pearce’s mature career in which he developed a substantial practice that was, for at least a decade, almost entirely dedicated to working on Wren’s projects in the City. I will investigate the nature of his working relationship with Wren, and with other architects, as it was through such relationships that he became one of the most celebrated sculptors of his generation and one of the most highly paid – and trusted – contractors at St. Paul’s Cathedral. In particular, I will identify how the skills that Pearce learned from his father, as outlined in part one, and the development of commercial relationships, as discussed in this section, provided the foundations for the final chapter of his career.

Part 3: *Pearce and the Architect, Carving out New Professional Relationships*

The architectural profession was without concrete definition during Pearce’s career, but ideas about architectural design increasingly distinguished between the creative and conceptual processes of design, and the manual and procedural process of construction.²⁴³ As such, architecture was increasingly viewed as the summative form of intellectualised artistic expression. However, figures such as Bernini, who achieved colossal fame in the period as both a sculptor and an architect, highlight that professionals were not fixed to single roles. Pearce formed a career that existed across intellectual and manual practices; his training had been focussed on design as much as creation, and the career Pearce realised was similarly framed by this duality. He occasionally worked as the sole architect for a building, but was more regularly involved on projects headed by another architect. In this section, I will argue that

²⁴² Lucas and Russell, *The Livery Halls*, 18.

²⁴³ Anthony Gerbino and Stephen Johnston, *Compass and Rule, Architecture as Mathematical Practice in England 1500 – 1750*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with Museum of the History of Science and Yale Centre for British Art, 2009), 11.

Pearce often retained a sculptural role – even when contracted as a mason, and that when working alongside architects he found a distinct position: assisting in the design of much of the ornamental schemes for architects.²⁴⁴

Pearce’s involvement on projects led by Wren has traditionally been gauged by the size of his payments, yet this measure only assesses the scale of his operations as a contractor.²⁴⁵ His contribution to architectural projects reached far beyond the construction phase, and included aspects of the design process. In this section I investigate Pearce from a position that lies beyond the dominant historiographic perception of an architect/craftsman and designer/maker dualism. Instead, I focus attention on *how* Pearce worked with architects, the relationships they formed, and the opportunities he was offered as a result of his advanced skillset.

Pearce emulated the Vitruvian ideal of the architect, particularly with his literacy, draughtsmanship, and geometry.²⁴⁶ Moreover, with no formalised training for architects, in many cases he had more skills than the architects that he worked for. As a result, Pearce was employed by William Winde, who is today considered less an architect than a “co-ordinator” because of his reliance on the designs of others.²⁴⁷ A letter remains from Pearce to Roger Pratt, in which he informs the absent architect of changes that he has implemented on the ornamental scheme, placing Pearce in a leadership role in Pratt’s absence.²⁴⁸ Pratt’s trust in Pearce becomes more significant when Pratt’s opinions regarding ornamental design are considered:

²⁴⁴ This is particularly the case with Pearce’s work for architects such as William Winde, discussed in more detail later in this section. I argue in the following sections that a similar working relationship was also formed between Pearce and Wren.

²⁴⁵ Partly because the most detailed research into the contractors working at St. Pauls and the city churches remains Knoop and Jones’ *The London Mason*, an account-based study published in 1935.

²⁴⁶ Later in this section I will argue that Pearce also nurtured an interest in contemporary philosophical and scientific enquiry. It would be virtually impossible for anyone to completely satisfy the ambitious educational requirements set by Vitruvius, which included a thorough understanding of law, medicine, music, and astronomy. Vitruvius, *Vitruvius, Ten Books on Architecture*, Book 1, 21-24.

²⁴⁷ Winde’s drawing background was in cartography rather than design. Drawings in Winde’s hand have notable areas of hesitancy, the lines are inconsistent in their thickness, the washes are applied without fully realising the shading they imply (fig. 37). As Colvin noted, Pearce’s draughtsmanship was “if anything more accomplished than that of Winde himself”. *BDBA*, 20. Drawing skills continued to be something of a rarity for architects into the eighteenth century. See McKellar *The Birth of Modern London*, 119.

For more information on Winde see *BDBA*, 1132. For Pearce as the ‘Clerk of Works’ see *BDS*, 961.

²⁴⁸ This has been interpreted by R.T. Gunther as Pearce acting as Pratt’s Clerk of Works at Horseheath Hall. For a reproduction of the letter and the interpretation see Gunther, *Pratt*, 130.

Mean workmen are not to be thought on as decorators, but only that we may the more earnestly avoid them; for should we make use of them their work would make us seem to have introduced deformity instead of ornament, and at our great charges to have erected a monument of our ignorance to be the sport and derision of all times till the first judicious of our posterity shall out of his piety deface it for us.²⁴⁹

Pearce was evidently exempt from such criticism, and was accepted as an expert on modern, French-inspired ornament by architects who recognised his expertise and sought his assistance.

In his diary, Hooke records that he and Pearce worked together at their homes over a period of several days in September 1674.²⁵⁰ The two men spent days and evenings discussing and drafting the design for a building, probably Montagu House, the drawings for which Pearce completed alone.²⁵¹ Hooke explicitly states that Pearce was present when the design was finalised, acknowledging his involvement as a collaborator in the creative process.²⁵² As Montagu House was built for Ralph Montagu, who was deeply interested in French art, Hooke may have required Pearce's particular knowledge of modern French ornamental styles, his collection of relevant prints and drawings, as well as his draughtsmanship skills.²⁵³ The completed design is noticeably similar to Horseheath, where Pearce had worked previously. It is reasonable to expect that Hooke was aware of his involvement on such projects. Pearce's formative training with his father, and others in Jones' circle, and his early

²⁴⁹ Taken from Pratt's notebook. Reproduced in Gunther, *Pratt*, 8.

²⁵⁰ Hooke, *Diary*, September 13 – 16, 1674, 121.

²⁵¹ For the identification of Montagu House see Matthew Walker, "Architectus Ingenio: Robert Hooke, the Early Royal Society, and the Practices of Architecture", (doctoral thesis, The University of York, 2009), 19.

²⁵² Hooke, *Diary*, September 13, 1674, 121.

²⁵³ For more information on Ralph Montagu see Tessa Murdoch, "The Patronage of the Montagus", in *Boughton House, The English Versailles*, ed. Tessa Murdoch (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 33 – 36. John Evelyn famously described the house as built "in the French pavilion-way". Evelyn, *Diary*, 10 October 1683, 189. Although Hooke spent some time training under the painter, Peter Lely, this was very short and would not have provided him with the architectural drawing skills that he would need later in life. See Lisa Jardine, *The Curious Life of Robert Hooke, The Man who Measured London*, (London: Harper Collins, 2003), 53.

Although Hooke's large library is well-known to historians, it is not clear that he had any contemporary works on decorative ornament when Montagu House was being designed. It was only in the month following the finalisation of this design that Hooke purchased his first documented book of French prints, Pierre Le Muet's *Manière de bien bastir*, and it was not until the following year that he would receive a copy of Jean Marot's works. See Anthony Geraghty, "Robert Hooke's Collection of Architectural Books and Prints", *Architectural History*, Vol. 47, (2004): 114.

involvement on the iconic coronation arches, supported the realisation of a career in which he was recognised from the early 1660s as one of the most accomplished ornamental-sculptural designers of the period, a specialism that made Pearce desirable to architects who wanted modern ornamental schemes in their works.

Significantly, Hooke never records making any payments to Pearce for making these designs.²⁵⁴ This reinforces that Pearce was not engaged to act as Hooke's copyist or draughtsman; instead it implies that he may have shared his skills and knowledge with Hooke in order to develop their relationship. At the time Hooke held a surveyorship for the City of London and this influential position may have motivated Pearce to assist Hooke. As Geraghty has noted "[t]he architectural draughtsman had next to no status in late seventeenth-century England", and Pearce seems to have carefully avoided officially working in this capacity.²⁵⁵ Instead, he seems to have shared his expertise with Hooke through a framework of sociable knowledge-exchange – as a favour – and with the expectation of a return in the form of desirable contracts, but also as an extension of friendship.²⁵⁶ As such, Pearce also accompanied Hooke on a surveying visit to the site for St. Martin's Church, which was also unpaid. Those present "saw all things [and] concluded what to doe".²⁵⁷ Pearce's presence as a knowledgeable expert for a project that he was not formally connected to is another instance of him assisting Hooke as an expert and a friend.

There are further social interactions between Pearce and Hooke that support my interpretation that their relationship was founded on sociable intellectual exchange. Hooke mentions an evening with Pearce that he described as being spent discussing the "Latine Universall Character".²⁵⁸ Hooke, along with many members of the Royal

²⁵⁴ Indicating that there was no payment. Hooke is rigorous in the recording of payments made and debts owed throughout his diary. He also comments on others "soliciting" for contracts, suggesting he did not consider his relationship with Pearce in this way. Hooke, *Diary*, March 30, 1674, 94. See also Shapin, "Who was Robert Hooke?", in *Robert Hooke, New Studies*, ed. Michael Hunter and Simon Schaffer (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1989), 273.

²⁵⁵ AG, 8.

²⁵⁶ Brown describes offering "the gift of time . . . and skills" as an aspect of the laws of friendship that were typical in the period. Brown, *Friendship and its Discourses*, 135.

²⁵⁷ Hooke, *Diary*, Saturday 4th July 1674, 110. Again, this is a building that Pearce is not otherwise connected with and for which no payments to Pearce are recorded.

²⁵⁸ Hooke, *Diary*, 29 December 1673, 77.

Society, was actively interested in the work of John Wilkins.²⁵⁹ The latter's *An Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* (1668) dealt with the potentials of universal knowledge.²⁶⁰ Pearce's socialising with Hooke is here found to be intellectually based. It further reveals Pearce's interest in engaging with the intellectual discourse that emanated from the Royal Society.²⁶¹ At other instances Hooke records going to Garraway's with Pearce.²⁶² Garraway's was known for being one of the foremost auction houses in London, and was one of the locations in which Hooke held his 'club'.²⁶³ Their socialising in such a space further draws their relationship into a sociable and culturally-elevated sphere of metropolitan life.²⁶⁴

Pearce kept a large collection of his own drawings amongst his closet of books, prints, and drawings, which would likely have been used as references while entertaining colleagues such as Hooke.²⁶⁵ His inclusion of his own designs in his collection indicates how he viewed his creations, and their value. Rather than trading his drawings for money, Pearce appears to have understood that they could be traded for more restricted, less tangible rewards; and, moreover, that they held greater value in these exchanges where they could enhance his social and intellectual station. What is more, Pearce seems to have exerted some influence over the draughtsmen and designers that coalesced around Wren in the Office of Works and across other City projects. Pearce's distinctive use of the double scale bar, as discussed in part one of this chapter, had, by the 1670s, begun to appear in drawings created by some of

²⁵⁹ Such as John Evelyn. Evelyn's *Account of Architects and Architecture* (1664) covers similar themes from an architectural focus.

²⁶⁰ This aim encouraged members to attempt to collect a vast range of information, including information relating to all trades. James Campbell, "Wren, Architectural Research and the History of Trades in the Early Royal Society", *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 6 (2008): 9 – 28, 9 – 10.

²⁶¹ Christopher Hill, "Puritanism, Capitalism and the Scientific Revolution," in *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*, Charles Webster (ed.), (Oxon: Routledge, 1974), 249-250.

²⁶² Hooke, *Diary*, Sunday July 5 1674, 110.

²⁶³ Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert, *The London Encyclopaedia*, (London: Book Club Associates, 1985), 303; Shapin, "Who was Robert Hooke?", 261.

²⁶⁴ "The ostensible reason for an individual's presence at a cultural site – seeing a play, attending an auction, visiting an artist's studio, listening to a concert – was therefore subordinate to a more powerful set of social imperatives. An audience did not passively attend a performance separate from the social world. It incorporated culture as part of its social recital". Caroline Anne Good, "Early English Literature on the Connoisseurship of Pictures," (doctoral thesis, The University of York, 2013), 114.

²⁶⁵ Many of which were taken by Talman on Pearce's death, as discussed in the coda to this chapter.

Wren's most significant draughtsmen including Thomas Laine, Edward Woodroffe, and Hooke.²⁶⁶

Despite the multiplicity of roles that many creators undertook in this period, Pearce established for himself a reputation that was dependent on discrete and scarce skills. It was his designs for decorative ornament that secured his reputation, a reputation that provided him with more diverse career opportunities, including architectural commissions. The new breed of architects that emerged contemporaneously with Pearce were aware of the exceptional skills he offered, and these doubtless contributed to him developing strong working relationships with almost all the well-known architectural names of the period. As the foremost architect of the period, and the architect with whom Pearce worked most consistently and for the longest time, he may owe the largest debt to Wren. The following case study investigates Wren's interpretation and utilisation of Pearce's skills, and the effect that this relationship had on Pearce's career.

Case Study: *Pearce at the Wren City Churches*

Pearce was exceptional amongst the mason-contractors that undertook the first parish churches that were scheduled for rebuilding. The others were all well-established mason-contractors in the City; whereas Pearce had not even completed the Fishmongers Hall – his first contract for an entire building – when he secured a parish church contract in 1670.²⁶⁷ From the outset, he held more responsibilities than those of a typical contractor. In a further testament of the degree to which Pearce's design and draughtsmanship were central to his career successes, his first role – for which no payments are recorded – before the building stage of his contracted church

²⁶⁶ Examples from the parish church drawings include the *East Elevation of St. Peter Cornhill*, by Thomas Laine c. 1677 (AS 1.77), *Section looking West, St. Benet Thames Street*, by Robert Hooke c.1675 (AS 1.94), *Plan for St. Benet Fink*, by Edward Woodroffe c.1670, (AS II.58), all held at All Souls College, Oxford. Thomas Laine, who was new to the office in the latter 1670s seems to have adopted this device more than others, indicating that Pearce may have been involved in his training. Laine was a member of the Painter-Stainers' so may have known Pearce during his apprenticeship. See Geraghty, "Introducing Thomas Laine", 241.

²⁶⁷ 10 November 1670, *Signed Contracts*, MS25542, LMA, 199 – 201. For more information about how the rebuilding of the parish churches was funded see Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 203.

began, was the creation of designs for several other churches, which are the focus of the first part of this case study.

I will explore the working relationship that developed between Pearce and Wren over the period 1670 – 1685, a period covering the design, construction, and decoration of several parish churches and Pearce’s involvement at St. Paul’s Cathedral. I will reveal his increasing independence over the course of this working relationship, and will argue that this was a result of Pearce’s confidence in his creative skills, skills which must first have attracted Wren’s attention. However, these qualities, alongside Pearce’s burgeoning social status, may eventually have tended towards insubordination, which, ultimately, may have caused the breakdown of their working relationship.

c.1670 – 1673

For Wren, drawing was more than a means of depicting a design, it was a process which facilitated the conceptualisation and refinement of a design. It was by ‘drawing’, he believed, that skill in ‘invention’ was most effectively acquired.²⁶⁸

The above passage underlines Wren’s belief in the purposes and possibilities of drawing. These convictions drove his drastic overhaul of the Office of Works and his management of architectural projects. His leadership of the major architectural projects of the period provided the setting for the birth of the modern architectural profession in Britain.²⁶⁹ Pearce is never officially listed as working in the Whitehall base of the Office of Works, or at Wren’s Office at St. Paul’s Cathedral.²⁷⁰ However, his drawings are present in the collections of drawings that remain from Wren’s

²⁶⁸ Geraghty, “Introducing Thomas Laine”, 240.

²⁶⁹ Creating what Colvin described as “a kind of unacknowledged substitute for a royal academy of architecture such as Colbert established in France”. *BDBA*, 33. Geraghty described the Office of Works as “the closest equivalent in late seventeenth-century England to a modern architect’s office”. Anthony Geraghty, “Nicholas Hawksmoor and the Wren City Church Steeples”, *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. X, (2000): 1.

²⁷⁰ It is important to note that neither did Robert Hooke hold an official position in the Office of Works. See *KW*, 20. For more information on Wren’s organisational structures for the various rebuilding projects see Geraghty, “Nicholas Hawksmoor”, 1 – 14.

offices, testifying to his participation in this transformative environment.²⁷¹ If Pearce had been employed by Wren merely as a copyist, as several draughtsmen were, extant records suggest that he would have been paid for this work at a level far below his income as a sculptor, let alone as a contractor.²⁷²

The design and building of the parish churches all followed the same format:

In each case the parish took the initiative. Having obtained a warrant for the rebuilding, signed by two of the commissioners, they approached Wren for a ‘model’. The next step was to persuade him to get the church built, and this was not always easy. Throughout the parish accounts we find gifts of money or wine or entertainment charges being paid as incentives to Wren, the surveyors, and Phillips to get the work started and keep it going.²⁷³

The scale of the rebuilding, and the pressure exerted by parishes for new church designs, may have contributed to Wren’s decision to enlist Pearce’s assistance. Wren was still relatively new to architecture, capable draughtsmen were in incredibly short supply, and competent designers who could also create ornamental schemes – following the unifying decorative language Wren employed across the churches – were virtually non-existent, except for Pearce.

However, it is clear that there were some differences between their approaches to ornament. As the previous sections have outlined, Pearce excelled in producing abundant ornamental schemes, but Wren, from as early as 1668, described his distaste for the practice of “filling every corner with ornaments” because they have a tendency to “glut the eye”.²⁷⁴ Wren went even further in his architectural tracts, which he had begun to write from the 1670s. He described the connection between beauty and geometry in some detail, outlining that a regularity of shape, their symmetry, and straight lines rather than curves create beauty.²⁷⁵ By 1711, Wren would describe the ideal church building as characterised by “Plainness and

²⁷¹ Particularly as Elizabeth McKellar has specified that drawings were not a primary means of communication for builders and craftsmen that were outside of the architectural team. McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London*, 119.

²⁷² Over approximately the same period Laine received £82 10s. compared to several thousand pounds for Pearce. See Geraghty, “Introducing Thomas Laine”, 241.

²⁷³ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 208.

²⁷⁴ Wren, “Report on Salisbury Cathedral, 31 August 1668”, 3v, reproduced in Lydia Soo, *Wrens “Tracts” on Architecture and Other Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 63.

²⁷⁵ Wren, “Tract I”, reproduced in Soo, *Wren’s “Tracts”*, 154.

Duration”.²⁷⁶ Although Wren’s writings display an increasingly divergent position on beauty between the two men, in practice, Wren’s ornamental schemes diverged from a purely geometric ideal of beauty. A limited repertoire of motifs, deemed appropriate for Anglican ecclesiastical sites, were employed across the parish churches and St. Pauls’ Cathedral. Wren must have had control over these ornaments, but, in the need for speed, seems to have been content for Pearce to inventively, albeit economically, employ these ornaments on several designs for church facades.

As such, a suite of four elevations for parish churches remain by Pearce (figs. 1.31 – 1.34). Figure 1.30 has been identified as the design for St. Edmund the King, Lombard Street, a church with which Pearce was not otherwise involved.²⁷⁷

Geraghty has suggested that figure 1.32 represents an earlier draft, giving alternative designs for the same church.²⁷⁸ It is possible that the contemporaneous design for a heretofore unidentified church represents a mid-stage between these two drawings in the design of this church (fig. 1.33).²⁷⁹ In several instances this design displays features that seem to be transitional elements between the two identified designs. It displays the same simply-moulded semi-circular arched windows as the final design, having abandoned the pedimented windows proposed in the earlier models.

However, the windows lack the decorative keystones, consoles, and cornices that appear in the final design. It further adopts the quoining proposed on half of the initial design, which was carried through to the final design and the church as built (fig. 1.35). The central pediment is in place, the flaming urn has been finalised for the pinnacles, as has the lantern according to the final approved design. The scale of the building appears wider than the site outlined in the other two drawings, but, as this drawing lacks a scalebar, this may be a mistake in the measurements.

These drawings show that Pearce was involved from a specific point in the design process for the church. The main mass of the architectural body had been determined

²⁷⁶ Wren, “Letter to a Friend on the Commission for Building Fifty New City Churches”, 1711, reproduced in Soo, *Wren’s “Tracts”*, 113.

²⁷⁷ AG, 86.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁷⁹ This may also explain why the two proposed designs by Pearce are still held together in the Warwickshire County Archives.

and Pearce started by offering Wren a variety of decorative options. Conversation evidently ensued, resulting in a refinement of the design, which was again brought to Wren for him to further critique before Pearce incorporated Wren's changes and a final design was reached. By working with Pearce in this manner, Wren, who had previously travelled to Paris and gathered first-hand experience of contemporary ornamental design, substantiated Pearce's expertise as a foremost ornamental designer. It may be that the pressures for numerous church designs necessitated this working relationship. However, it is possible that the conception of ornament as a more distinct aspect of the building process made it seem appropriate to employ someone with expertise in ornament as a discipline. This is remarkably similar to the working relationship that Pearce senior had enjoyed with Jones, as discussed in part one, revealing that there were English precedents for professionals being engaged by architects in a collaborative creative process.

1670 – 1680

Although Pearce secured the contract for St. Lawrence Jewry in 1670, actual building at this site did not commence for several years.²⁸⁰ Instead, in 1670 he was creating the designs described above. He appears to have also undertaken this role for the church that he was contracted to rebuild. Recent scholarship has indicated that Pearce may have created an alternative design for St. Lawrence Jewry (fig. 1.34).²⁸¹ If the process of refinement described by the designs for St. Edmund the King was repeated at St. Lawrence Jewry, then this elevation of the west end would represent an intermediary design phase that refined the design following Wren's consideration of an initial proposal from Pearce, which would have offered a variety of ornamental schemes. However, it is possible that Pearce was involved from an even earlier point in the design process. A now lost plan that appears to be in his

²⁸⁰ To the considerable consternation of the churchwardens. See "St. Lawrence Jewry Vestry Minutes 1669 – 1720", in The Wren Society, *The City Churches, Vestry Minutes and Churchwarden's Accounts*, Vol. 19, (1942): 23 – 24. Pearce's first payment for the church, which included making the ground ready for the foundations, was not made until 1672. *Accounts of Expenditure for the City Churches*, MS25539/2, LMA, 169. It is worth noting that Pearce secured this contract a couple of years before either Edward Strong or Christopher Kempster were awarded contracts for City churches. Melody Mobus, "The Burford Masons and the changing world of building practice in England, 1630-1730" (PhD Thesis, The Open University, 2012), 92.

²⁸¹ AG, 86.

hand, which remains in photographs, may date from the early planning for the site (fig. 1.36).²⁸² This unusual site plan, with oblique angles at on the north wall, is remarkably similar to the site that was available for St. Lawrence (fig. 1.37).

The parameters of Pearce's contract for St. Lawrence Jewry, that "The sd M E Pearce shall in all things follow the Directions of D^r Christopher Wren and such as he shall appoint, and draughts by him signed", does not deny the possibility that he was involved in its design.²⁸³ Any mention of designs in the churchwardens accounts describes drawings being sent to Wren for approval, rather than these coming directly from Wren.²⁸⁴ Pearce may have created designs for the architectural scheme following discussions with Wren, as he did for other churches. While he had no official position in the Office of Works, he did attend the offices – as did many workers – to sign contracts, discuss designs, and, importantly, collect payments. The latter of these has the benefit of being recorded through the numerous accounting ledgers that remain. In these documents, Pearce is not recorded as attending the Office of Works regularly until 1674.²⁸⁵ Yet the drawings discussed here attest to his presence long before he can be traced through payment records. From 1670 Wren placed an extraordinary amount of trust in Pearce, relying on his design and draughtsmanship skills to meet the scale of work with which Wren had been tasked. Possibly, it was his willingness to assist with so much unpaid work that caused Wren to give Pearce the contract for St. Lawrence, one of the most expensive churches to be built during the whole rebuilding scheme.²⁸⁶ He was paid a total of £7585 there, excluding the interior decoration, the second-largest payment to a single mason of all the forty-two churches rebuilt.²⁸⁷ Moreover, Summerson identified St. Lawrence as "a show-piece, adumbrating the east elevation of the Model design for St. Paul's",

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 86; Summerson, "Drawings of London Churches in the Bute Collection: A Catalogue," *Architectural History* 13 (1970): 36.

²⁸³ London Metropolitan Archives, *Signed Contracts*, MS25542, 201.

²⁸⁴ While these are for the internal fittings, which did not fall under Wren's control, they indicate methods of working that allowed the initiative for designs to be with other workers. See The Wren Society, *The City Churches*, 23 – 24.

²⁸⁵ Pearce is only recorded six times from 1670 – 1673. See Table 1.2.

²⁸⁶ With a total cost of £11,870. The only church to be more expensive was St. Mary Le Bow, and only because of the exorbitant costs of the tower there. For an account of the costs of all the churches see The Wren Society, *The Parochial Churches of Sir Christopher Wren 1666 – 1718 Part Two*, Vol. 10, (1933): 45 – 53.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

highlighting the importance of the building amongst the parish churches, and in Wren's architectural oeuvre.²⁸⁸

Pearce and Wren's working relationship would only increase through the 1670s. In 1678 Pearce joined St. Paul's Cathedral as a contractor. This was only a couple of years after Wren had lost Edward Woodroffe, "a much relied upon draughtsman".²⁸⁹ Woodroffe's replacement, Thomas Laine, was still new to Wren's office, which must have exacerbated the pressure on Wren.²⁹⁰ More significant still was the death of Edward Marshall, whose contract at St. Paul's Pearce partially replaced.²⁹¹ In securing his role at St. Paul's, Pearce became one of the most significant contractors working in London.

It was in the years directly preceding his appointment at St. Paul's that Pearce undertook his most famous sculpture, a bust of Wren now at the Ashmolean (fig. 1.1). Scholars have long identified the French characteristics of this bust and have struggled to believe that it could have been produced solely by Pearce.²⁹² I have previously discussed that Pearce was deeply influenced by French decorative styles in his ornamental sculptural work. It would be inconsistent not to expect the same degree of French influence on his statuary.²⁹³ Sculpting Wren would have been a clear opportunity for Pearce to impress his skills on the Royal Surveyor. The timing of this work implies that figurative sculptures could act as opportunities to display virtuosity, as well as providing time with the sitter. As such, the bust may have assisted Pearce in securing substantial ornamental commissions from Wren.

Several contractors made drawings for St. Paul's, but Pearce's drawings are markedly different to those of the other mason-contractors, which largely comprise

²⁸⁸ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 219.

²⁸⁹ Geraghty, "Introducing Thomas Laine," 240 – 241.

²⁹⁰ Geraghty, "Edward Woodroffe", 475.

²⁹¹ *BDS*, 811; *LM*, 46.

²⁹² *MW*, 105.

²⁹³ The features are repeated in his other busts. The intimate expression of the facial features and the graceful movement achieved by a largely frontal posture with an inclination of the head is repeated in the busts of Dr. John Hamey and Thomas Evans. However, Pearce's most famous bust of Wren has been cited as a possible "copy by Pearce after a lost bust by a French sculptor". *BDS*, 962.

plans for the areas they were responsible for constructing (fig. 1.38).²⁹⁴ From as early as the mid-eighteenth century, Horace Walpole used Vertue's notebooks to claim that Pearce had "much assisted Sir Christopher in many of his designs".²⁹⁵ Pearce's drawings for St. Paul's testify to the continuation of a working relationship with Wren that was formed on the parish churches.

Wren's son, writing after his father's death, claimed that when Charles II passed the Royal Warrant:

the King was pleas'd to allow [Wren] the Liberty in the Prosecution of his Work, to make some Variations, rather ornamental, than essential, as from Time to Time he should see proper.²⁹⁶

Indeed, in the Warrant Design, approved in 1675, the ornamental scheme had not been thoroughly devised (fig. 1.39). The majority of Pearce's drawings for St. Paul's involve areas of ornamentation that are entirely omitted from this approved design. There is no frieze decoration, no decorative panels below the windows, and the spandrels are bare. However, Wren had been developing a cohesive ornamental scheme for the Cathedral in the years between the approval of the Warrant Design in 1675 and Pearce's engagement in 1678. Figure 1.40, drawn by Wren, shows that he had determined the form and tone of the ornament for this, his most important building. This constitutes a more controlling approach to ornament than Wren seems to have had for the parish churches, commensurate with the expectation that this building would stand as his legacy.

Nevertheless, Pearce edited Wren's designs (fig. 1.41). He never changed the content: tripartite garlands and candelabrams, as indicated in Wren's earlier designs, still form the decoration in the areas he elaborated. Pearce's drawings were instead concerned with the disposition of these decorative forms, he filled the spaces that Wren made available for decoration, adding a freedom and sense of abundance to these demarcated areas. Even when Wren wished to determine the decorative themes

²⁹⁴ For example, the *Half plan of the transept end* (fig. 1.38) drawn by Edward Strong. It is a purely geometric work with none of the artistic expression which so characterises Pearce's drawings.

²⁹⁵ Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, 247.

²⁹⁶ Christopher Wren, *Life and Works of Sir Christopher Wren. From the Parentalia; or Memoirs by his Son Christopher*, ed. Ernest Enthoven (London and New York: E. Arnold and S. Buckley, 1903), 139.

for himself, he still found it appropriate, and useful, to have Pearce make alterations to his designs. This implies that Wren considered this to be an area of particular expertise for Pearce. It is possible that an interest in mechanical processes, which was common to both Wren and Hooke, caused both architects to have a particular appreciation for the expertise of makers who understood the entire process of a particular discipline.²⁹⁷ Pearce was evidently considered by both architects to be an expert in sculpture, and it may be that this extended to the whole process of designing and implementing sculptural ornamentation, thereby affording Pearce superior abilities – even when compared to an architect – in this area of building design.

1680 – 1685

By 1680, the working relationship between Pearce and Wren reached its peak. Pearce was working at St. Paul's and on the 13th May 1680 he signed a contract for another church, St. Clement Danes.²⁹⁸ His success had allowed him to move to a property off the Strand, beside the remains of the Arundel statue collection, making him a parishioner of this church.²⁹⁹ His local standing seems to have helped him secure this contract; his wife, Anne, was listed as the first donor on an annuity for the rebuilding of the church.³⁰⁰ St. Clement's is one of a cluster of City churches that were completed with only the peripheral oversight of Wren: the rebuilding was managed by the parish rather than from the Office of Works.³⁰¹ Nevertheless, in

²⁹⁷ The Royal Society's interest in mechanical processes in the late seventeenth century can be seen in the creation and discussion of such documents as the *Lexicon Technicum*. The Royal Society, "An Account of a Book. *Lexicon Technicum*: or, an universal English dictionary of arts and sciences, explaining not only the terms of art, but the arts themselves. In folio", *Philosophical Transactions*, 24, (1705): 1699 – 1702.

²⁹⁸ Westminster City Archives, *Abstract Accounts of Building Expenses, St. Clement Danes*, B1057, 13 May 1680, 6.

²⁹⁹ *BDS*, 961. In a reference to Pearce's success at this time, James Campbell described this 45 foot wide house as "massive". An inventory of Arundel house in 1684 outlines the huge number of statues still on the site. See Guerci, *London's 'Golden Mile'*, 52 – 53; James Campbell, "Building a Fortune: The Finances of the Stonemasons Working on the Rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral, 1675 – 1720", *Proceedings of the Third International Congress on Construction History*, (Cottbus, May 2009), n.p.

³⁰⁰ Westminster City Archives, *Abstract Accounts of Building Expenses, St. Clement Danes*, B1057, 2.

³⁰¹ Westminster City Archives, *Abstract Accounts of Building Expenses, St. Clement Danes*, B1057, 1. 13 May 1680, 6.

Pearce's verbose contract the Churchwardens went to great lengths to ensure that the church would be built with Wren's approval:

[Pearce] alsoe shall and will performe the worke according to the Designe or Modell now made therof or sum other designe or directions as from tyme to tyme shall be given them in writeing under the hand of the said Sr Christopher Wren or in case he should happen to dye according to the directions of any other person to be named by the Rector and Churchwardens and Vestry of the said [church].³⁰²

Summerson described the curved east end of St. Clement Danes as "unique in English architecture until imitated, here and there, in the next century".³⁰³ Given his apparent involvement in the early plans for the site at St. Lawrence, it is possible that such innovations at St. Clement's were, in part, a result of the particularly fruitful collaboration between Pearce and Wren that had developed by the end of the 1670s.³⁰⁴

Pearce was certainly involved in aspects of the design of the church. A drawing by him exists for the flanking doorways either side of the main entrance on the west front. This proposes two alternate mouldings for the doorways, with the right-hand side representing the doors as executed (fig. 1.42). It displays Pearce's involvement in the evolving design process, and particularly highlights that when it came to the ornamentation of entrances he retained a position as one of Wren's foremost designers.

Summerson identified St. Lawrence Jewry as foreshadowing aspects of the design for St. Paul's Cathedral, but at St. Clement Danes the reverse can be seen.³⁰⁵ Early engravings show a semi-circular portico on the south door that closely accords with the porticoes at St. Paul's Cathedral (fig. 1.43). Interestingly, Pearce's role at St. Paul's mainly involved the creation of the south portico.³⁰⁶ Moreover, the church has

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 219.

³⁰⁴ A period in which Pearce was frequently to be found in the Office of Works. In July of that year Pearce is even found there without also receiving a payment, suggesting he was there on other specific business. See Table 1.2.

³⁰⁵ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 219.

³⁰⁶ The Wren Society, *Designs and Drawings by Sir Christopher Wren for St. Pauls Cathedral, The Residentiaries' Houses, and the Deanery*, Vol. 13, (1936): 116 – 117.

been described as an “[o]rnamental Church, both in and outside”.³⁰⁷ Such an assessment may reflect how much Pearce’s decorative expertise shaped the character of the building. It is significant that Summerson identified both St. Lawrence Jewry and St. Clement Danes as being architecturally significant buildings, further testifying to the trust and respect that Wren had for Pearce.

St. Clement Danes suggests a good working relationship between Pearce and Wren. However, as previously discussed, Pearce used his social networks to secure this contract, a contract one step removed from Wren’s direct control. As such, it is possible that it represents the beginning of Pearce seeking more independence than Wren willingly afforded his contractors. As the church was not accounted by the Office of Works, records for the rebuilding are only found in the parish accounts, therefore it is difficult to establish what might have occurred between the two men. However, other contemporaneous accounts clearly indicate that fractures were emerging in their relationship. On the 16th August 1681 Pearce signed for receiving a significant sum that vastly outweighed any of his previous instalments; he signed for the receipt of several thousand pounds, all the outstanding money due to him for his work at St. Lawrence Jewry.³⁰⁸ No records remain to explain why Pearce received this sum at this point, or how much pressure he was exerting in order to recoup the money he was owed.

It may be that Pearce was financially overstretched, the city churches and St. Paul’s Cathedral projects were notorious for severely delaying payments to contractors.³⁰⁹ When Wren recommended Joseph Roberts as Sargent Painter, Colvin noted that Wren’s recommendation recognised that Roberts was one “to whom large sums of money were owing to the Crown, and who nevertheless ‘continued with great

³⁰⁷ The Wren Society, *The Parochial Churches Part Two*, 24.

³⁰⁸ There are no further payments to Pearce for work completed at St. Lawrence Jewry after this date. The totals signed on this date are significantly larger than his previous payments. *Accounts of Expenditure for Rebuilding the City Churches* MS25539, LMA, 171 – 174.

³⁰⁹ *LM*, 50. Furthermore, the churchwardens of St. Andrew’s Holborn accused Pearce of using less stone, and of smaller sizes than was contracted in the 1680s, implying he may have been financially stretched. The Wren Society, *The Parochial Churches Part Two*, 98. Pearce had been involved on work at the Duke of Buckingham’s Cliveden House in the late 1670s, for which he and other workers were not paid. They eventually took the Duke to court in 1685, signifying further financial pressures for Pearce in this period. The Parliamentary Archives, “Duke of Buckingham v. Coombes”, 1 June, 1685, HL/PO/JO/10/3/182/46.

cheerfulness' to give credit to the office".³¹⁰ It is possible that Pearce had been waiting for a similar recommendation from Wren and became frustrated when his financial outlay was not rewarded with a position in the royal household.

In April 1682, following his completion of two of the most significant churches, Pearce was contracted to rebuild St. Matthew's Friday Street, the cheapest of all the churches that were built.³¹¹ In a highly unusual turn for the parish church contracts, a memorandum was attached to Pearce's:

Mem^d. The said Edw. Pearce doth further agree to observe in particular the orders & directions of S^r Chr Wren as to the manner of ye worke, the proceeding therein, & to stop & cease working et. When by him required.³¹²

The memorandum emphasises Wren's concern that Pearce had been undertaking work that could not be afforded. It also implies that Pearce had been exercising an undue degree of independence when following, or – possibly more accurately – when not following, Wren's directions.

As a further indication of the fracturing of their relationship, despite maintaining a near-monthly presence in the office for several years previously, at the date that this contract was signed Pearce had not been documented in the office for the previous eight months, nor would he return for another six months afterwards.³¹³ As for the memorandum's comments on Pearce's need to follow Wren's guidance, Pearce's reply makes no mention. He merely stated: "I doe agree to the rates & prices specified in the aforesd Contract or Estimate withoff my hand".³¹⁴ His refusal to even acknowledge Wren's complaints, coupled with his distance from Wren's offices, suggests most strongly that Pearce was no longer willing to be subject to Wren's demands or oversight.

Given these strains, I find it surprising that Pearce built another church for Wren. However, the rebuilding of St. Andrew's Holborn was managed by the parishioners

³¹⁰ Wren, *Calendar Treasury Payments* 17-8-14, 197, quoted in *KW*, 27.

³¹¹ Pearce was paid around £700. Less than one tenth of his charges at St. Lawrence. See Table 1.2.

³¹² *Signed Contracts*, MS25542, April 25 1682, LMA, 211.

³¹³ See Table 1.2.

³¹⁴ *Signed Contracts*, MS25542, April 25 1682, LMA, 211.

and was not under Wren's direct control.³¹⁵ Pearce had lived in this parish previously and can therefore be presumed to have had a strong reputation with the parish community.³¹⁶ Wren was only involved in the project from a distance, and when called to adjudicate on a conflict between the masons and joiners, Wren resolved the matter in Pearce's favour.³¹⁷ However strained their working relationship may have become, they remained professional, their relationship may even have benefitted from the distance provided by a project outside of Wren's direct oversight.

A disagreement arose between Pearce and the parishioners at St. Andrew's, resulting in a court case.³¹⁸ The churchwardens insisted that the masons had not used the correct quantity of stone, substituting it for inexpensive and unsafe iron supports.³¹⁹ The churchwardens also claimed that Wren was unable to impartially adjudicate on the matter because of his relationship with Pearce.³²⁰ In actuality, their relationship seems to have ended. Pearce petitioned to extend his contract at St. Paul's in March 1685/6, but Wren refused his request.³²¹ Following over fifteen years of near-continuous work, Pearce exited Wren's great ecclesiastical rebuilding projects in the city.

Pearce and Wren developed a specific working relationship in which Pearce was a collaborator in the design process. He became increasingly independent and was given responsibility for projects at the periphery of Wren's control. In one instance the hierarchy between them is even recorded as having been inverted: when Arundel House was due to be rebuilt the contract stated that Wren was to complete the

³¹⁵ The Wren Society, *The Parochial Churches Part Two*, 46 – 47, 95.

³¹⁶ *BDS*, 961.

³¹⁷ “the wooden pillars and capitals of the church were intended by Sir Christopher Wren to be putt in the masons contracts P & S to covenant to perform them”. *A Copping of the Booke of Report relateing to the Workemens Accompts that built the Church and the Revenew belonging to the said church* quoted in The Wren Society, *The Parochial Churches Part Two*, 95.

³¹⁸ *Harris v Pearce*, 12th April 1691, C 8/543/36, The National Archives, London.

³¹⁹ Despite Wren having classed such work as “against the Rules of good Architecture” as early as 1668 he supported Pearce's cause against the parishioners' complaints. Wren, “Report on Salisbury Cathedral, 31 August 1668”, in Soo, *Wren's Tracts*, 67.

³²⁰ *Harris v Pearce*, 12th April 1691, C 8/543/36, The National Archives, London. See also the summary of the auditor's report in The Wren Society, *The Parochial Churches Part Two*, 98.

³²¹ At a committee meeting 11 March 1685/6. The Wren Society, *Drawings and Models of the Construction of St. Paul's Cathedral*, Vol. 16, (1939), 52.

building to Pearce's design.³²² When Pearce left Wren's oversight he undertook projects as an architect in his own right.³²³ It is possible that Pearce had come to consider himself Wren's equal as a designer, and that Pearce's pride forced to the end of their working relationship. Similarly, Pearce may have become frustrated that Wren did not create a position that formally acknowledged Pearce's contribution.

Coda: *Pearce and the Talmans*

In Pearce's final years he worked almost exclusively for William Talman, all but severing his previous contracts with Wren, Hooke, and the livery companies. Under his patronage, Pearce created sculptures for the most exclusive audiences, for which he was paid vast sums.³²⁴ In loyalty to Talman, and as a further blow to the past relationship with Wren, by 1690 Pearce had testified – on Talman's behalf – that Wren's poor workmanship at Hampton Court Palace had caused a collapse that killed several workmen.³²⁵ John Oliver, Wren's second in command, replied in Wren's defence, claiming that not only was Pearce not a competent mason or architect, but that neither was he capable of *understanding* the methods Wren had employed.³²⁶

Talman offered Pearce a different relationship to Wren. With Wren he had a professional working relationship; Pearce and Talman are recorded as “good

³²² The significance of Pearce's involvement in this building is exemplified by the recent assertion that the great houses of the Strand “stood as the epitome of a unique architectural and political epoch whereby an image of potency and influence was displayed both for internal and international consumption, so as to shape not just English but European identity”. Guerci, *London's 'Golden Mile'*, 225. *BDBA*, 793.

³²³ Such as at the Bishop's Palace, Litchfield. *BDBA*, 792.

³²⁴ Pearce received a larger sum, totalling over £1,262, for work on the Diana Fountain with Talman than he did for the entire building of St. Matthew Friday Street. For Friday Street payments see Table 1.2, For the Diana Fountain payments see *BDS*, 964.

³²⁵ Ironically, Pearce testified to Wren's poor workmanship on the same charges that Wren had defended Pearce's work for at St. Andrew's Holborn. *KW*, 34.

³²⁶ “Mr Oliver says none of ye masons Mr Tallman brought understood so good work as this. Mr Tallman says that *Pierce, Thompson* and another (in his certificates) are three masons that Sir Christopher employs, that the piers are all hollow, and crampt with iron to keep them together”. The Treasury Minute Book, 13 January 1690, quoted in The Wren Society, *Hampton Court Palace*, Vol. 4, (1927), 73.

friend[s]”.³²⁷ Talman was a notoriously difficult character, which led John Harris, his biographer, to sympathetically describe him as “a man of colic and irritability, of an affluent station in life which made him feel that there was no need to bow and scrape”.³²⁸ It is clear that Talman would not have forged a friendship with someone he perceived to be his social or intellectual inferior.

Talman publicised himself as the ultimate contemporary connoisseur of architecture and sculpture and engaged in a lifelong effort to create the largest collection of architectural drawings in Europe.³²⁹ Pearce’s will made special mention of Talman in this regard:

As to my Clositt of Books prints & drawings before menshoned I doe will yt Mr. William Tallman Comptroller of there Majesties workes my very good friend (to whome I haue been obledged & must beg his friendship euen after my death to my Executors) to haue ye Choice & picking of what therein shall seeme to make up ye worthy Collection he intends.³³⁰

Here, Pearce makes clear his pride in his collection, which included his own designs. Talman evidently also valued his drawings, many entered his collection.³³¹ The passage also indicates that Talman knew – and admired – Pearce’s collection in his lifetime, further indicating the social and intellectual nature of their friendship. However, only drawings by Pearce can be traced as passing from his collection into

³²⁷ From Pearce’s will. Reproduced in John Harvey, “Winchester College”, *Journal of the Archaeological Association* Third series vol XXVIII (1965): 127.

³²⁸ John Harris, *William Talman, Maverick Architect*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), 20. Others have been more direct in their assessments, “In the 1690s Talman’s reputation rose very high and he became arrogant and arbitrary in his dealings, adopting a pose which may have gone a long way towards losing him the Comptrollership in 1702”. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 263. See also Peter Smith, “William Talman,” *ODNB*, accessed March 13, 2019, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26956>.

³²⁹ In his petition to the Lord High Treasurer in 1713 Talman described himself as “still Collecting by his son abroad, the most valuable Collection of Books, Prints, Drawings &c., as is in any one persons hands in Europe, as all the artists in Towne well know, and your pet’r has kept his son abroad this seven years to view the most famous buildings in Italy &c.”. Quoted in The Wren Society, *The Work of Sir Chr. Wren, Sir John Vanbrugh, William and John Talman, James Gibbs, Thomas Archer, William Dickinson and of C. Gabriel Cibber, Edward Pierce, Peter Scheemakers, William Watson, and Sir James Thornhill*, Vol. 17, (1940): 42 – 43.

³³⁰ John Harvey, “Winchester College”, 127.

³³¹ I have counted eighteen instances of Pearce’s identified drawings which have the intersecting T’s of Talman’s collector’s mark.

Talman's. It is impossible to know what other original works and prints Talman might have acquired from him.³³²

Louis Fagan first identified the collectors mark E.P as belonging to an "Edward Pearf" active prior to 1765.³³³ However, no further information for a person by this name has been found, therefore the Fritz Lugt Foundation now ascribes this mark to Edmund Prideaux, but declines to date the mark to a specific Edmund Prideaux.³³⁴ Interestingly, the mark is noted as being substantially different to the other marks associated with the Prideaux family. It is, therefore, possible that Pearce – a known collector – and a good friend of Talman, who was the contemporary paradigm of the collector, emulated his friend and also created a collectors mark and included this on his most prized drawings.

Talman's respect for Pearce is exemplified by the actions of Talman's son, John. Some years after Pearce's death John staged a party for "the top Virtuosi in Rome both for learning & arts" and incorporated a portrait of Pearce in the decorations.³³⁵ A portrait hang included an artist from classical antiquity, the Italian Renaissance, and contemporary British history each for painting, sculpture, and architecture; the nine figures collectively represented the summation of artistic achievement across each epoch. For sculpture Glycon, Michelangelo, and Pearce were selected. Michelangelo was contemporaneously viewed as the ultimate Renaissance sculptor, hence his inclusion, and Glycon was then famed for being the creator of the *Farnese Hercules*.³³⁶ Pearce was elevated to the same position in contemporary British art by John Talman, and positioned at the fore of a British Renaissance.

Complex associative metaphorical dialogues were increasing in popularity in portrait hanging schemes, and it is likely that the portraits were chosen to do more than

³³² The sale of Pearce's prints, sculptures, and paintings was still sizeable after Talman had taken his pick. Cinzia Sicca has also suggested that Pearce could have provided additional drawings than those created by him to the Talman collection. See Sicca, "John Talman's Collection of Drawings", 13.

³³³ Fritz Lugt Foundation, "Edmund Prideaux", *Marques de collections 1921*, <http://www.marquesdecollections.fr/detail.cfm/marque/6779/total/1>, accessed 5 July 2022.

³³⁴ Fritz Lugt Foundation, "Edmund Prideaux", *Marques de collections depuis 2010*, <http://www.marquesdecollections.fr/detail.cfm/marque/6779/total/1>, accessed 5 July 2022.

³³⁵ The letter is reproduced in full in Graham Parry, based on the work of the late Hugh Mcandrew, "The John Talman Letter-Book", in *The Walpole Society*, Vol. LIX, (1996/97): 145.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

merely highlight the artists depicted.³³⁷ The importance of the Medici as patrons to Michelangelo was well known, and Lorenzo il Magnifico “went out of his way to honour the memory of artists, he erected monuments to Giotto and to Fillipo Lippi”.³³⁸ The portrait of Pearce may have been intended to be read in such honorific terms for the Talman family. Ernst Gombrich identified a perceived link

between the person of a ruler and the character of an age [...] the Medici myth, which makes the Medici in general, and Lorenzo in particular, directly responsible for a magic efflorescence of the human spirit.³³⁹

John’s decorative scheme could be similarly interpreted as establishing his father, who was funding his son’s trip to Rome, as central to the flowering of an English Renaissance via his patronage of native artists, such as Pearce. It would certainly match the egotistical assignations that characterise descriptions of Talman.

Regardless of my speculative interpretation, the inclusion of Pearce’s portrait is further evidence of the Talmans’ earnest appreciation of Pearce’s artistic ability and sincere attempts to establish for him a legacy that they felt matched his contribution to English art.

Conclusions

Pearce reveals how conceptions and approaches to artistic professions changed during the seventeenth century. His career displays the extent to which European influences changed the sculptural profession. Unlike most, Pearce was trained by those that initiated these changes in England, which allowed him to capitalise on the demand for the new ornamental style and forge a reputation as a sculptural designer that was taken from artistic paradigms that had emerged in France.

Furthermore, Pearce’s involvement in the design process subverts the dominant notion that architects, such as Wren, had sole control of the creative design process.

³³⁷ See Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 1 – 9.

³³⁸ Gombrich, *Gombrich on the Renaissance*, 55.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

It is revealed to be an anachronistic conception of the role of the architect. Instead, Pearce's career reveals a far more mediated creative process. Collaboration, and the sharing of ideas, were important aspects of the working relationships of architects, and through Pearce, a light has been shone on the marks that these interpersonal relationships have left on the built environment.

Pearce was provided with the necessary skills to achieve a vaunted position in English sculpture by his father and Jones. Anthony Gerbino lamented that:

Despite the profound influence that his architecture would later exert, [Jones] could provide no professional exemplar for contemporary craftsmen. For most of the seventeenth century, the humanist conception of architectural design remained the province of gentlemen virtuosi, who saw the art as a complement to other forms of polite learning. Figures such as Hugh May or Roger Pratt were initially attracted to architecture as cultivated and travelled amateurs.³⁴⁰

However, the close working ties between Jones and Pearce's father, and the training that Pearce received from his father, provide the links of a chain of influence reaching from Jones to the end of the seventeenth century. Pearce imbibed a Jonesian conception of design, and adopted this across his work. His success, therefore, further suggests that there was a wider collective memory of Jones' contribution to design, which Pearce traded on and patrons eagerly bought into when employing him.

A scholarly emphasis on categorisation has caused Pearce's work to be approached without any overall unity. At the livery halls he was considered to be working as an artisan mannerist, meanwhile his contemporaneous designs for Wren were acknowledged for their "scrutiny of Vitruvius".³⁴¹ Pearce has suffered from the anachronistic perception that architects were sole creators. As such, his work has not been considered as an *oeuvre*, instead his scattered contributions have too often been subsumed into the work of better-known architects. Moreover, he has been discussed for either his architectural ornament or his figurative sculpture, a contrived

³⁴⁰ Gerbino and Johnston, *Compass and Rule*, 83.

³⁴¹ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 213.

segregation that has excluded and favoured his works according to anachronistic disciplinary distinctions. Prior scholarship has also anachronistically interpreted the construction industry in the seventeenth century, and arrived at the assessment that discrete roles did not exist in the period.³⁴² Pearce reveals that this was not entirely the case. While a multitude of roles were available to those that were considered able, and speculative projects in the City could be undertaken by any freeman, the new class of architects desired workers with particular expertise. Pearce maintained a reputation as a specialist in the design of architectural ornament throughout his career. This discrete area of expertise allowed him to establish himself as an expert with a specific artistic identity.

Pearce's career further reshapes the degree of exchange between England and Europe. It is possible that Jane Seymour was correct in suggesting that Pearce's works could have been known in Rome in his lifetime.³⁴³ The Talmans certainly posthumously promoted Pearce in Rome, and may have also done so in his lifetime. His father's prints were available in Europe, and prints of works that Pearce undertook were also in circulation. In recent years the Painter-Stainers' Company have received requests from Italian museums to display Pearce's bust of their Company master, Evans.³⁴⁴ This present-day interest in Pearce's sculptural work reveals an awareness in continental Europe of Pearce's role in engaging with – and contributing to – European visual culture in seventeenth-century Britain.

This re-conception of Pearce's career has wider ramifications for the period. He acted as an influential sculptural figure, initiating a new paradigm for how the professional sculptor could forge a career in Britain. The following chapters will address two European sculptors who arrived in England over the course of Pearce's career. By also tracing their changes to the profession I will investigate the different influences that sculptors who were trained abroad, but settled in Britain, brought to the profession.

³⁴² Summerson, *Georgian London*, 58 – 59.

³⁴³ Seymour, "Edward Pearce", 18.

³⁴⁴ I am grateful to Christopher Twyman the Painter-Stainers' Company Clerk for providing me with this information during an interview at Painters' Hall on 7th February 2019.

Chapter 2: *Grinling Gibbons: Raising the Value of Sculpture*

Introduction

Grinling Gibbons needs no preface. His name is a household word, being perhaps more generally known than any other in the sphere of the Decorative Arts in England. It has been, and still is, applied not only to his own authentic work, but to much else which only distantly resembles it.

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Avray Tipping's passage above, written in 1914, still resonates today. Grinling Gibbons has been the subject of public and academic interest above all other seventeenth-century sculptors in England. This has given him a place in art history that has been withheld from his peers. However, as Tipping recognised a century ago, the interest in Gibbons' sculptural output has largely been limited to his decorative woodcarved interiors rather than the full scope of his sculptural output.

Attentive scholarship on Gibbons' statuary has only recently emerged, and remains in its infancy.³⁴⁶ His statuary has, historically, been deliberately omitted from art-historical analysis. David Green's assertion summarises the predominant scholarly position:

These, Gibbons' monuments, need to be considered at a lower level than his woodcarvings; and when they are so considered, as documents rather than as works of art, they are rewarding.³⁴⁷

The reasons for the preferment of his woodcarvings are polyvalent, and arose over a considerable period of time. By the end of the eighteenth century, a historiography of English sculpture had been created. By denying Gibbons a position as a sculptor,

³⁴⁵ H. Avray Tipping, *Grinling Gibbons and the Woodwork of His Age, 1648-1720*, (London: Country Life, 1914), xi.

³⁴⁶ For example, see Christine Stevenson, "Making Empire Visible at the Second Royal Exchange, London", in *Court, Country, City: British Art and Architecture, 1660 – 1735*, ed. Mark Hallett (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 51 – 73. Claudine van Hensbergen's recent work also attempts to overturn the pejorative assessments of Gibbons' abilities as a statuary that have pervaded in scholarly literature. See Claudine van Hensbergen, "Print, Poetry and Posterity: Grinling Gibbons's Statue of Charles II for the Royal Exchange", *The Sculpture Journal*, 29:3 (2020): 313 – 337.

³⁴⁷ Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 20 – 21.

instead positioning him as a more primitive woodcarver, the ‘birth’ of sculpture was located with the high classicism of the eighteenth century, alongside the academisation of artistic disciplines, and synchronous with imperial Britain establishing itself on an international sculptural stage.³⁴⁸ Gibbons, lauded as an “Original Genius, a citizen of Nature”, was considered as a historical forefather for British sculpture, one that practised as a carver before the emergence of the modern discipline of sculpture; his woodwork – conceptualised according to Pliny’s hierarchy of materials – became understood as a less developed and more humble, but nevertheless brilliant, expression of sculptural virtuosity that preceded the monumental marbles that typified the academy works of the eighteenth century.³⁴⁹

It was in the early- to mid-twentieth century that the majority of scholarship dedicated to Gibbons appeared. In the context of the World Wars – which heightened anxieties regarding the loss of English heritage – the narrative of Gibbons as a founding father of British sculpture took on a new significance.³⁵⁰ Following the Second World War, such fears became a reality as numerous country houses were sold – or left to ruin – as unaffordable relics of the past.³⁵¹ The subsequent reclamation of country houses by The National Trust was inspired in part by the efforts of Christopher Hussey, the then “dominating personality” at *Country Life*, and publisher of several monographs on Gibbons.³⁵² Collectively, these institutions reframed the country house in the public consciousness as an icon of English cultural heritage. Much of Gibbons’ decorative woodwork was housed in exactly these buildings. Unprecedented public access to such spaces – facilitated by the institutional involvement of the National Trust and *Country Life* – both

³⁴⁸ For detailed accounts of the way that British sculpture was conceived as emerging in the eighteenth century see Burnage, “The British School of Sculpture”, 21 – 33.

³⁴⁹ Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, 148.

³⁵⁰ Alex Potts described the construction of an ideal of English past as one aspect of a “defensive turning away from the realities and challenges of the present; . . . one that at the same time has been incorporated into a national mythology mobilised at times of political tension to figure some essence of true Englishness”. Alex Potts, “‘Constable Country’ Between the Wars”, in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Vol. III, National Fictions*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 160.

³⁵¹ Giles Worsley, *England’s Lost Houses From the Archives of Country Life*, (London: Aurum Press, 2002), 71.

³⁵² Jennifer Jenkins and Patrick James, *From Acorn to Oak Tree, The Growth of the National Trust 1895 – 1994*, (London: Macmillan, 1994), 75.

heightened the profile of Gibbons' woodworks and further entwined these works, and their creator, with an ideal of English history.

The primacy of Gibbons' legacy in twentieth-century histories of English sculpture has, in turn, influenced sculptural scholarship of seventeenth-century sculpture more broadly. The weight of literature presenting Gibbons as an exception amongst his contemporaries has suffocated research into other sculptors active in the period, further cementing the idea that Gibbons was the only seventeenth-century sculptor in England of consequence. What is more, the near-total attention given to Gibbons' decorative woodwork has provided a skewed representation of the output of sculptors in the period.³⁵³ In short, the attention that Gibbons' life and selected works have been afforded has been reductive for the scholarly understanding of seventeenth-century sculpture as a whole.

In this chapter I reframe Gibbons' sculptural practice in two ways. Firstly, I redress this historic imbalance by considering his work in a broad range of media and contexts. I place new significance on his statuary and architectural ornament and consider why it was valuable for Gibbons to develop a career that included a diverse range of sculptural output. Such an approach provides new contexts for understanding his practice, and reveals previously overlooked connections across his work in different media. Secondly, I trace his sculptural developments through the specific lens of his career ambitions, which I recover by investigating the changes that he made to his working practices, identifying how he sought to add value to his sculptural works. Finally, I consider how Gibbons added value to his position as a sculptor, considering the various social and professional networks that supported him in living as a gentleman. These varied areas of investigation reconnect Gibbons' works with the values that he, and others, applied to them at the time of their creation.

³⁵³ For more on the late twentieth-century interpretation of Gibbons see M. G. Sullivan, "This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison", *The Sculpture Journal*, 29.3, (2020): 269 – 270.

Part 1: *The ‘Style’ of Grinling Gibbons*

I refute the enduring narrative that Gibbons’ quintessential sculptural style is found in his limewood floral surrounds, which have retained their popularity over the intervening centuries.³⁵⁴ I will interrogate his early life in order to establish the sculptural styles that were privileged in Gibbons’ lifetime. As such, this first section reconsiders the most essential questions about his sculptural style. In so doing, I will reconnect Gibbons with his contemporaries and analyse the ways that he was both influenced and influencer in English sculpture.

Traditional narratives

Gibbons’ floral garlands were achieved through deep undercutting techniques and appliqué additions, which created an appearance of naturalistic freedom that has become synonymous with his name (fig. 2.1). Floral garlands had been increasingly used over the course of the seventeenth century to decorate the domestic interior, a trend that Gibbons’ work continued.³⁵⁵ In focussing the loci of his ‘genius’ in this decorative woodwork, scholars have limited Gibbons’ sculptural contribution to the development of technical carving skills, which were not known by his English counterparts, and the application of these to the decorative interior.³⁵⁶

However, contemporaneous accounts of Gibbons’ work suggest that, in his own time, he was understood to be producing sculpture in an English manner. Joseph Addison’s scathing criticism of his tomb for Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell are well known, but little attention has been paid to the concluding lines of his criticism:

The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of Genius, shew an infinitely greater Taste of Antiquity and Politeness in their Buildings and

³⁵⁴ A popularity described by Jason Edwards as an “increasingly fetishistic focus on wood”. Jason Edwards, “Got Wood? Queering Grinling Gibbons, at Fairfax House and Beyond”, *The Sculpture Journal*, 29.3 (2020): 261. In particular, the works of H. Avray Tipping and David Esterly, which bookend the century, promoted Gibbons’ woodwork to the exclusion of all else. Less than 5% of Tipping’s work concerns Gibbons’ sculpture in other media while Esterly relegates discussion of Gibbons’ stonework to three examples in his conclusion. See Tipping, *Grinling Gibbons and the Woodwork of his Age*, 80 – 97; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 206 – 211.

³⁵⁵ Tipping, *Grinling Gibbons and the Woodwork of his Age*, 8.

³⁵⁶ Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 20 – 21; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 14, 206.

Works of this Nature, than what we meet with in those of our own Country. The Monuments of their Admirals, which have been erected at the publick Expence, represent them like themselves; and are adorned with rostral Crowns and naval Ornaments, with beautiful Festoons of Seaweed, Shells, and Coral.³⁵⁷

Addison identifies Gibbons as entirely removed from Dutch styles of sculpture. Furthermore, while Gibbons' early training unquestionably influenced him, the material evidence of his earliest works, following his arrival in York in the late 1660s, does not support the idea that Gibbons arrived in England practicing a completely novel style of decoration (fig. 2.2 and 2.3).³⁵⁸ Indeed, works displaying the marked undercutting and appliqué techniques that made Gibbons famous only definitely appeared after he had been in London for some time, while he was working with Henry Phillips, Carver to the King, under Hugh May at Windsor.³⁵⁹ Interestingly, a contemporaneous design by Wren for an altarpiece to be created solely under the direction of Phillips, for the Chapel Royal at Whitehall, implies the use of just these techniques (fig. 2.4). Howard Colvin described the drawing as follows:

[It is] the nearest we have to a visual record of any of Phillips's work; the upper festoons around the oval show that he was considered capable of considerable skill in undercutting.³⁶⁰

Gibbons' employment of similarly extreme undercutting techniques may have been influenced by his time working alongside Phillips in the 1670s.³⁶¹

³⁵⁷ Joseph Addison 'Friday March 30' *The Spectator* no 26, 1711, pp. 424-6. As Gibbons' work wasn't considered to be Dutch it stands to reason that Addison considered Gibbons to be completely naturalised.

³⁵⁸ Scholars have long wrestled with the floral frame of Gibbons' *Crucifixion* after Tintoretto, which, with its heavy and bulbous composition correlates closely with the typical floral carvings of sculptors working in England prior to Gibbons' arrival. See Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 24; Green, *Grinling Gibbons* 34; Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 16.

³⁵⁹ The works at Windsor Castle, for which Phillips and Gibbons were paid jointly, are the first to display this style. Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 20 – 21; *BDS*, 512.

³⁶⁰ *KW*, 275. See also *AG*, 170.

³⁶¹ *KW*, 473.

Early influences

Scholars are in agreement that Gibbons had a conventional sculptural education in the Netherlands.³⁶² Katharine Gibson summarises this as one in which apprentices

[r]egister either as *beltsnyder* (carver in wood and ivory) or *belthouwer* (stone carver) [. . . However,] in practice their training consisted of carving in a variety of media, which made sound commercial sense.³⁶³

This significantly undermines the idea, still perpetuated, that Gibbons was untrained – and thus unable – to carve in other media.³⁶⁴ Indeed, L. C. Cutler has highlighted that modern master carvers have interpreted Gibbons’ modelling techniques as indicative of someone trained to carve in stone.³⁶⁵ It is clear that Gibbons would have been trained in the creation of work across a range of sculptural modes, and that these were considered to be integral professional skills for Dutch sculptors. Diversity of production was thus likely ingrained in Gibbons’ understanding of sculptural practice from the outset.

A further testament to Gibbons’ training in the Netherlands is found in his skills in design in two dimensions, which have been identified as indicating a “Continental rather than English training”.³⁶⁶ Victoria Potts described a “sense of weightlessness [. . .] in seventeenth-century sculptors’ graphic technique” in Europe, which she understood to be a direct expression of the “liberation from the technical

³⁶² Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 9 – 10; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 37 – 38; Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 24 – 29.

³⁶³ Katharine Gibson, ‘The Emergence of Grinling Gibbons as a ‘statuary’, *Apollo*, Vol. CL, No. 451, (September 1999): 22.

³⁶⁴ Indeed, Léon Lock’s research of Netherlandish sculptural workshops in the seventeenth century has found that, irrespective of the final media, a range of materials and models were used during the planning and designing process, further broadening the range of sculptural modes that Gibbons would have been comfortable using. Léon Lock, ‘Picturing the Use, Collecting and Display of Plaster Casts in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century artists’ Studios’, in *Plaster Casts, Making, Collecting and Displaying from Classical Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Rune Frederiksen and Eckhart Marchand (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 256.

³⁶⁵ Particularly the present master carvers working at St. Paul’s Cathedral. See L. C. Cutler, “Grinling Gibbons: A Dutch Master in England”, *The Sculpture Journal*, 29.3, (2020): 278.

³⁶⁶ For example, Esterly described Gibbons’ work according to “decisive compositional lines within a grouping, usually predicated on the sense of a central axis”, which fundamentally resulted in compositions where “spectacular projections [gave] way to pleasure in fineness of drawing.”. Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons and the Art of Carving*, 70, 105, 119 – 120. For more information on the centrality of drawing in the training of Netherlandish sculptors see Bert De Munck, *Technologies of Learning, Apprenticeship in Antwerp Guilds from the Fifteenth Century to the End of the Ancien Régime*, Trans. Lee K. Mitzman, (Belgium: Brepols, 2007), 246 – 247.

concentration required by carving”.³⁶⁷ This description resonates with Gibbons’ loose drawing style, which is characterised by unmeasured lines that flow freely on the page, resulting in drawings that only loosely cohere with the tight and exacting carved finish of his sculptures (fig. 2.5). The changes in sculptor’s drawings are contemporaneous with a conceptual shift in the sculptural profession. As Renaissance thought permeated across Europe, sculptors increasingly aligned themselves with the other arts.³⁶⁸ Sketched drawing techniques were understood to represent the inventive artistic process in action.³⁶⁹ Therefore, the emergence of such techniques suggests that sculptors were increasingly comprehending a distinction between their profession and those that were purely mechanical.

It is worth noting that Gibbons’ penmanship was very different from Artus Quellin’s, the influential Netherlandish sculptor who was long assumed to have been responsible for his early training (fig. 2.6).³⁷⁰ The use of gentle shading is similar to both sculptors, but Quellin’s strokes are much firmer and more controlled than the freely sketched lines drawn by Gibbons, which only loosely formulate the carved detail. These differences add weight to more recent scholarship that has denied a link between Gibbons and the Quellin workshop.³⁷¹ In Gibbons’ drawings the most intense pen strokes connote areas of especially complex detailing in the design, resulting in strong contrasts that do not always cohere with the elements that would be in shade in his three-dimensional carvings (fig. 2.7). His process of construction, which was as concerned with the building up of carved decoration as it was with cutting away material, seems evident in the way that he conceptualised and

³⁶⁷ Victoria Potts, ‘The Education of the Sculptor outside the Workshop and Academy’, in *Children of Mercury, The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey Muller (Rhode Island: Brown University, 1984), 67.

³⁶⁸ De Munck, *Technologies of Learning*, 246 – 247.

³⁶⁹ See Anna Tummers, “‘By His Hand’: The Paradox of Seventeenth-Century Connoisseurship”, in *Art Market and Connoisseurship, A Closer look at Paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens and their Contemporaries*, ed. Anna Tummers and Koenraad Jonckheere (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 50.

³⁷⁰ Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 9 – 10; Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 29; MW, 116.

³⁷¹ However, it must also be noted that no drawings have been reliably attributed to Gibbons prior to the 1680s, which raises the possibility that his drawing technique continued to develop into his mid-career, and as a result of his experiences once in London. For example, Esterly has long noted that Edward Pearce – who also deployed a loose drawing style for sculptural ornament – was “perhaps the most important of [Gibbons’] potential rivals in London at the time of [his] arrival”, and it cannot be discounted that Gibbons enhanced the looseness of his drawing style in imitation of the most successful sculptors in London. See Esterly *Grinling Gibbons and the Art of Carving*, 45 – 46, 76 – 77.

constructed his designs: heavily worked areas in his drawings were often those that were likely to require additional elements to be added rather than cut away. This drawing approach seems unique to Gibbons.

In the Netherlands, sculptors were permitted to join the Guild of St Luke from 1606.³⁷² As a result, sculpture was included in the earliest academy of the arts in Antwerp, founded in 1663.³⁷³ Gibbons' sculptural education was undertaken in the increasingly artistic milieu that emerged between these dates.³⁷⁴ His earliest known works are all direct copies of acclaimed masterpieces. This practice was considered to be an exemplary form of training for painters at the time, highlighting the extent to which Gibbons was educated in a framework that understood painting and sculpture to be harmoniously intertwined professions.³⁷⁵ Gibbons' loose strokes position his designs in the realm of the sketch, an acknowledged and significant artform that was understood to be "expressing qualities thought by sixteenth-century theorists to be the perfection of art".³⁷⁶

Indeed, Gibbons' drawings share similarities with sketches by the influential artists of the period, such as Rubens (fig. 2.8). Gibbons' presentation drawings retain a sketched quality because, like Rubens' initial sketches, they focus on the density of the compositional mass rather than the intricate detailing of each individual carved item. Such a comparison may be more than coincidental, and an artist of Rubens' fame may have been a significant influence for the young and ambitious Gibbons. Rubens was the most successful painter of the time and had a close interest in sculpture, creating a sculpture 'museum' at his home.³⁷⁷ In his writing, Rubens

³⁷² Léon Lock, 'Picturing the Use, Collecting and Display of Plaster Casts', 251.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 251.

³⁷⁴ For a thorough discussion of the Netherlandish context for sculptors in the mid seventeenth century see De Munck, *Technologies of Learning*, 246 – 252.

³⁷⁵ Gabeille Bleeker-Byrne, "The Education of the Painter in the Workshop", in *Children of Mercury, The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey Muller (Rhode Island: Brown University, 1984), 32.

³⁷⁶ Patricia Lynn Price "Learning through Imitation: Some Examples" in *Children of Mercury, The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey Muller (Rhode Island: Brown University, 1984), 50.

³⁷⁷ For more see Jeffrey Muller, 'Rubens Museum of Antique Sculpture: An Introduction', *The Art Bulletin*, 59, no 4, (December 1977): 571 – 582.

“stressed the ‘community of painting and sculpture’”.³⁷⁸ Such a ‘community’ might even have been the location of Gibbons’ earliest training. Drawing was not always taught in sculpture workshops; therefore it is possible that he learned to draw in one of the drawing schools – which catered to all artists – that were emerging across northern Europe; indeed, the closest drawing school to Gibbons’ hometown of Rotterdam was in Delft, only fifteen kilometres away.³⁷⁹

Bridging the North Sea

Gibbons’ earliest years in England, when he was located in York, remain the least understood period of his life.³⁸⁰ York was a thriving city in the seventeenth century and records indicate that Gibbons worked under John Etty, the city’s leading architect.³⁸¹ His few years in York, between c.1667 and c.1671, were enough to cement a lifelong friendship between the two men.³⁸² What is more, Gibbons continued to have strong ties to the city throughout his career, creating monuments for York Minster as late as the 1690s.³⁸³

York’s vibrant cultural sphere was, in part, sustained by the York Virtuosi, a loosely bound club that acted as a leading source of conviviality and enlightened thought in the North.³⁸⁴ While Etty was not a leading member of the society, he was good friends with those who were, and his prominent position in York is also apparent from his role as a city official.³⁸⁵ His monument asserts the principles to which he held:

³⁷⁸ Léon Lock, ‘Picturing the Use, Collecting and Display of Plaster Casts’, 251. See also Jeffrey Muller, “Moribvs Antiquis: ‘according to ancient ways’”, in *Heads on Shoulders*, ed. Valérie Herremans (The Netherlands: Snoeck publishers, 2008), 13 – 27.

³⁷⁹ Laura Olmstead Tonelli. “Academic Practice in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries”, *Children of Mercury, The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey Muller (Rhode Island: Brown University, 1984), 96, 105.

³⁸⁰ The most recent biography highlights the mystery of the years in York, commenting “it is unclear why Gibbons went to York in the first place”, but does not progress current knowledge. Ada de Wit, *Grinling Gibbons and his Contemporaries*, 164 – 166.

³⁸¹ *BDBA*, 365 – 6.

³⁸² *BDS*, 511.

³⁸³ The monument to Archbishop Thomas Lamplugh, who died in 1691. *Ibid.*, 514. Local historians have posited that further monuments in the surrounding area are also by Gibbons, including the monument to the First Earl Fauconberg, at Coxwold, which bears similarities to his late monumental style. This attribution was communicated to me via email by Moira Fulton.

³⁸⁴ R. J. Malden, “Elusive Virtuosi: Thomas and Joshua Mann”, *York Historian*, Vol. 6, (1985): 43.

³⁸⁵ Such as Ralph Thoresby. J. Brighton, “Henry Gyles, Virtuoso and Glasspainter of York, 1645 – 1709”, *York Historian*, 4, (1984): 10. For more information on Etty’s council roles see “City Officials

Nigh to this lieth John Etty, Carpenter, who
By the strength of his own genius & application
Had acquired great knowledge in Mathematicks,
Especially Geometry & Architecture, in all its
Parts, far beyond any of his Co-temperares
In this City
Who died the 28 of Jan: 1708/9
Aged 75
His art was great, his industry was no less
What one projected the other brought to pass.³⁸⁶

This memorial makes clear that Etty's learned status was central to his identity.³⁸⁷
The words are inscribed on an escutcheon ornamented by two cherubim's heads.³⁸⁸
In Etty then, Gibbons enjoyed the support of someone who had successfully
transitioned from his craft origins to a position that was founded on intellectualism.

Etty and the York Virtuosi were probably responsible for Gibbons' later success. Prominent members such as Ralph Thoresby, a good friend of Gibbons, and Etty were in a position to endorse Gibbons to their contacts in London, including Royal Society members such as John Evelyn, who famously claimed to have discovered Gibbons.³⁸⁹ These supporters were in a position to provide further opportunities by promoting Gibbons amongst their wider network. It seems highly likely that when Gibbons moved to London, Etty would have recommended him to his associates and that he was responsible for Evelyn's much repeated 'chance' encounter with the young sculptor.³⁹⁰

Furthermore, Etty probably exerted a significant influence over Gibbons. Etty had originally trained as a carpenter, but by the time Gibbons arrived in York at the end of the 1660s, he had risen to being the most celebrated architect in the city,

Responsible for the Walls", in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in City of York, Volume 2, the Defences* (London, 1972), pp. 174-175. *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/york/vol2/pp174-175> [accessed 25 November 2020].

³⁸⁶ See fig. 2.9.

³⁸⁷ Malden, "Elusive Virtuosi", 44.

³⁸⁸ Recalling Gibbons' recently completed and celebrated carvings for the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral.

³⁸⁹ Malden, "Elusive Virtuosi", 47; Brighton. "Henry Gyles", 10.

³⁹⁰ As outlined in a reworked section of his Diary. See Evelyn, *Diary*, 18 January 1671, 61.

overseeing a significant workshop.³⁹¹ Gibbons' move to England, before he was ready to set up an independent workshop of his own, may have been due to the failures of Netherlandish styles of training. Bert De Munck describes the situation in the Netherlands as follows: "apprentices needed to roam from one workshop to the next to acquire a broad range of skills, as not all expertise or work was available at a single workshop".³⁹² De Munck has established that it was particularly difficult for apprentices to learn account management and leadership skills.³⁹³ Etty's large workshop, and his involvement in civic governance, would have provided ample opportunities for Gibbons to observe these skills in action. Etty further bolstered his professional identity by establishing an intellectual and gentlemanly reputation via his involvement in the emergent club culture in the city. As I discuss later in this chapter, Gibbons would enhance his reputation in similar ways to those that he had observed Etty practicing decades earlier.

Becoming a sculptor

In Etty's workshop, Gibbons would have become accustomed to the diverse sculptural output – across a range of materials – that a large English workshop typically created. By the 1690s, his own workshop would be equally diverse.³⁹⁴ However, by the twentieth century this was not how Gibbons' work was being discussed.

In Britain, by c.1930, there was really only one way of being modern. To be modern was to carve, and to carve abstracted forms derived from but not dependent on the human figure.³⁹⁵

Conflicts between tradition and modernity raged across the arts in the early twentieth century; modernity was specifically associated with stonecarving.³⁹⁶ Therefore,

³⁹¹ *BDBA*, 365 – 6.

³⁹² De Munck, *Technologies of Learning*, 50.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 57 – 58.

³⁹⁴ Gibbons' workshop produced a sizeable quantity of carving in marble, stone, and wood. His contract for the Whitehall Palace Chapel, which required him to retain fifty workmen, is often cited as an example of the scale of his operation. *BDS*, 511; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 176. For a thorough discussion of his workshop operations when carving in limewood see Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 174 – 187.

³⁹⁵ Penelope Curtis, 'How Direct Carving stole the Idea of Modern British Sculpture', in *Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain, c. 1880 – 1930*, ed. David Getsy (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), 291.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 292.

Gibbons became a useful example for traditionalists, since his woodwork was in antithesis to the modern sculptural path. The nineteenth-century ideal of Gibbons as a precursor to the British sculptural tradition found new strength in arguments that rejected the modern fashion for direct carving.³⁹⁷ That scholarly interest in Gibbons increased over the period of this ideological battle can only have exacerbated the privileging of Gibbons' carved woodwork over his other endeavours. Therefore, the contemporary sculptural debates of the 1930s contributed to a narrative of his work in which stone and other materials barely feature.

However, Gibbons' output does not privilege woodcarving. Indeed, even in his early years, Gibbons produced works in a variety of media. Alongside his emergence as a sculptor of decorative woodcarvings he was simultaneously gaining a reputation as a funerary sculptor. The earliest known funerary monument, to Sir Roger Burgoyne, was contemporary with his first major woodwork commissions at Windsor Castle, in c.1679.³⁹⁸ By 1681 he was diversifying even further; and is recorded presenting designs for iron gates to the Marquess of Ormond.³⁹⁹ It is clear that Gibbons was confident of his abilities in these other materials, as he quoted the Marquess £20 more than his competitors.⁴⁰⁰

Evelyn's response to seeing Gibbons' woodwork at Windsor in 1683 has been much commented on. He praised Gibbons' brilliance as a decorative carver and added; "nor doubt I at all that he will prove as great a master in the statuary art".⁴⁰¹ Gibbons was already emerging as a statuary. Indeed, Evelyn had already seen an example of his statuary, and evidently hoped to assist his friend in diversifying his career.⁴⁰² Gibbons' work has often been described as recalling Quellin's sculptures for the Amsterdam Stadhuis (fig. 2.10).⁴⁰³ This building quickly achieved international

³⁹⁷ Burnage, "The British School of Sculpture", 21.

³⁹⁸ *BDS*, 514 – 516.

³⁹⁹ Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 212.

⁴⁰⁰ A letter, reproduced by Geoffrey Beard, from the Earl of Longford to the Marquess of Ormond on 24 December, 1681 notes that "if his Grace fixes upon Mr Gibbons' draft it will cost 80L., whereas the other will be done for 60L." *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ Evelyn, *Diary*, 16 June 1683, 177.

⁴⁰² Gibbons is understood to have sculpted the model for the equestrian statue of Charles II at Windsor Castle in 1678-9, which was cast in bronze by Josias Iback. Evelyn recorded viewing this statue and crediting it to Gibbons on 24 July 1680. Evelyn, *Diary*, 145; *BDS*, 515, 655.

⁴⁰³ Tipping asserted as much over a century ago. Tipping, *Grinling Gibbons*, 22. See also Cutler, *Grinling Gibbons*, 277 – 278.

recognition and was widely reproduced in prints.⁴⁰⁴ While other scholars have identified Gibbons as being stylistically influenced by Artus Quellin, his influence must also have extended to showing Gibbons the significance of architectural sculptural commissions for a sculptor's reputation. Therefore, Quellin's example likely encouraged the young sculptor to pursue a sculptural career that embraced diversity. By the early 1680s, concurrent with works such as the *Cosimo* panel, so often used as a byword for the apex of Gibbons' woodcarving career, he was establishing a reputation as a diverse and vibrant sculptor.⁴⁰⁵

Gibbons displayed an awareness – from the first decade of his independent career – that working solely in wood would not have propelled him to the apex of his profession. Evelyn's excited anticipation of Gibbons' statuary, discussed above, serves as a reminder of the contemporary values in which Gibbons shaped his career, and situates the importance of diversity in sculptural output as a contemporary marker of virtuosity. As such, the following case study proposes a revised interpretation of Gibbons' ambitions for his sculptural career.

Case Study: *The Significance of Gibbons' Stoning of St. Stephen Panel*

In this case study I rediscover the connections between Gibbons' sculptural works, bringing into focus the breadth of his repertoire. I use one of his limewood carvings, the *St. Stephen* panel (fig. 2.11), in order to highlight that his figurative sculpture and ornamental carving were afforded equal importance. By so doing, this case study offers a new interpretation of the direction of Gibbons' career, making connections between those that influenced him in his early years and shining new light on the ways that they shaped his presentation as a sculptor in London.

Gibbons was a comparatively prolific carver of relief panels. However, these works have not always received the greatest critical acclaim. Despite relief carvings

⁴⁰⁴ Cutler, *Grinling Gibbons*, 278.

⁴⁰⁵ For praise of the *Cosimo* panel see Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 17; Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 17; Tipping, *Grinling Gibbons*, 66.

forming a central space in Evelyn's oft repeated discovery myth of Gibbons, and the *Cosimo* panel's wide acclaim (fig. 2.12), Frederick Oughton's comment is typical of scholarly opinion in the twentieth century:

In judging Gibbons' relief panels we are not unnaturally influenced by the quality of his better known works, which are of a radically different order. His body of work was in the field of ornamentation. It would be a sorry mistake to judge the man on the evidence of the panels.⁴⁰⁶

And yet Gibbons' panels are today considered on a par with his other woodcarvings.⁴⁰⁷ They also seem to have been popular in Gibbons' lifetime, as narrative relief panels feature throughout his career – from the very earliest known works – through to some of his last.⁴⁰⁸ Neither is it possible, as Oughton suggests, to remove such works from a discussion of ornamentation; it would be an anachronous reading of the way ornament – in all forms – was comprehended by a seventeenth-century audience.⁴⁰⁹ A historiographical desire to compartmentalise Gibbons' works by media has facilitated false distinctions in his oeuvre. His later works, across all modes of sculpture, tend to be carved in stone rather than wood. Therefore, Gibbons' later relief panels have been largely ignored, with his earlier wooden relief panels categorised *en masse* as an early, but failed, endeavour.⁴¹⁰

Horace Walpole's confusion of the *St. Stephen* and the *Tintoretto* panels in the mid-eighteenth century encouraged an overly-early dating of the *St. Stephen* to c.1670.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁶ Frederick Oughton, *Grinling Gibbons and the English Woodcarving Tradition*, (Hertford: Stobart Davies Ltd, 1979), 93 - 94. For a similar criticism see Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 12. Conflicting judgements regarding the *Cosimo* panel can be found in Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 17. Esdaile provides a differing view, claiming that his narrative reliefs were "every whit as great" as his decorative carving. Esdaile, *English Monumental Sculpture*, 93.

⁴⁰⁷ The recent acquisition of the *King David Panel* by Fairfax House in York, for example, was shortlisted as one of the top ten funded works by the Art Fund in 2017. Fairfax House, 'Gibbons' King David Panel Nominated for Top Ten Art Fund Work of the Year', *Fairfax House*, 27 November 2017, <https://www.fairfaxhouse.co.uk/news/gibbons-king-david-panel-nominated-top-ten-art-fund-work-year/> accessed 9 August 2022.

⁴⁰⁸ There are at least forty instances of relief panels constituting a component of his designs. Furthermore, they appeared as central design elements in several of Gibbons' most elaborate full-height chimneypieces from the 1680s to the 1700s. See table 2.1.

⁴⁰⁹ For example, Wren described "'publick Buildings [as] being the Ornament of a Country", providing an indication that ornament was understood very differently in the seventeenth century. Notably, it could apply to a much wider range of things that we might not typically consider to be of the decorative order. Wren, "Tract I", in Lydia Soo, *Wren's "Tracts" on Architecture and Other Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 153.

⁴¹⁰ See Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 50.

⁴¹¹ See Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, 266.

This has been compounded by a scholarly insistence on seeing definite, and separate, periods to Gibbons' career, in which his relief panels are understood as precursors to his eventual success as an interior decorator.⁴¹² This belief has been so firmly held that even Esterly, writing at the end of the twentieth century – who acknowledged the date to be too early – promoted the idea that the *St. Stephen* panel was created as a hobby-piece by the master carver, because:

[b]y the time of the *St. Stephen* relief, however, the great revolution in Gibbons' career had occurred – a revolution which will transform Gibbons from a European figural sculptor into a decorative carver.⁴¹³

This case study re-envisioned the *St. Stephen* panel entirely, showing it to be thoroughly entwined with Gibbons' sculptural identity and professional practice.

Artistic sensibilities

Virtually all previous scholars have considered the *St. Stephen* panel exclusively in relation to Gibbons' early wooden panel works, which are very different.⁴¹⁴ The earlier panels follow the scale of known engravings, which were traced onto the wood (figs. 2.3 and 2.13).⁴¹⁵ The copying of celebrated printed sources – as seen in his early panels – was a common part of artists' training. Yet this was not the case with the *St. Stephen* panel, which does not copy any known artworks or engravings.⁴¹⁶ Moreover, it was created at the height of Gibbons' career, coming after he had created two significant works, the *Modena* and *Cosimo* panels, the latter

⁴¹² Tipping assumed that an account in Evelyn's diary that recorded Gibbons' house being furnished with his own carvings to relate specifically to the *St. Stephen* panel, providing a completion date prior to 1680 that successive scholars perpetuated. Beard gives c.1670, while Esterly merely places it as later than the *Crucifixion* panel of 1671. Today, the Victoria and Albert Museum place its creation as taking place over a significant number of years, between 1680 – 1690. Tipping, *Grinling Gibbons and the Woodwork of his Age*, 53. Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 186; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 48; Victoria and Albert Museum, "The Stoning of St Stephen by Grinling Gibbons", *Victoria and Albert Museum*, <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/stoning-of-st-stephen-grinling-gibbons>, accessed 16 August 2022.

⁴¹³ Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 50.

⁴¹⁴ For example, it appears in a section titled "The Early Panels" in Beard's work, and appears in conversation with the other wooden panel reliefs in Esterly's work. Only David Green sought comparisons across media, acknowledging a stylistic link between the trees in the *St Stephen* panel and the font in St. James' Piccadilly. See Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 64.

⁴¹⁵ See Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 41 – 47.

⁴¹⁶ At 181 cm tall and almost 134 cm wide it is also of a scale that makes this mode of creation highly unlikely. *Ibid.*, 48.

served as a diplomatic gift from the king. In both these panels he made prominent assertions regarding the independence of his design process.⁴¹⁷

Therefore, it is sensible to consider this panel as entirely Gibbons' creation.⁴¹⁸ The composition indicates that it was created with three-dimensional representation in mind, rather than deriving from an existing painting. The perspectival composition was designed to accentuate the carved depth of the work. The strong verticality of the foremost tree and building, which frames the scene, provide some of the most projecting elements (fig. 2.14). Both create shadows, indicating how Gibbons used light to create tone in his unpainted carvings, and how effectively he could accentuate an illusionistic approach to perspective with real carved depth.

The panel consists of a wedge shape, almost a foot deep at its base and tapering to a much slimmer summit (fig. 2.15). The depth of carving recedes with the plane of the relief, allowing the perspectival plane to be exaggerated. Rather than having the central action of the narrative in the centre of the panel, the majority of the figures are situated in the lower and thicker base section, where it was possible for Gibbons to model the figures fully so that they are virtually freestanding. His densely clustered and intricately carved figures rise in a swell of bodies that increases the perception of full three-dimensional carving into the imagined distance of the scene (fig. 2.16). The entirety of the composition seems designed to make the most of the possibilities of relief carving, and it makes no sense to seek its progenitor in painting. To do so ignores that the panel was created by an experienced carver, as Gibbons had become by the 1690s, in his middle age.

The panel showcases Gibbons' skill in designing sculpture. His creative design faculties are on full display; indeed, arguably his design skills are the central focus of the panel, which was displayed in his home. I consider the panel as a pictorial

⁴¹⁷ The *Modena* and *Cosimo* panels both famously include inscriptions that attest to Gibbons as their "inventor". This word directly follows his signature on the ribbon in the *Cosimo* panel and the inscription upon the self-portrait medallion in the *Modena* panel.

⁴¹⁸ While some scholars have proposed paintings by Veronese, and Vasari's *Martyrdom of St Stephen* for San Stefano dai Cavalieri could have influenced Gibbons' design, these similarities are not more than the didactic nature of religious scenes necessarily engender. The panel remains compositionally distinct from the works that have been suggested as sources. See Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 16; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 48.

representation of the claims Gibbons engraved on the *Cosimo* and *Modena* panels of the 1680s, where he had attested to his status as their sculptor and designer.

Moreover, I believe there is a reason for a Netherlandish-trained sculptor – at the peak of their career – to embark on such an elaborate performance of his skills: the masterpiece trial remained an essential aspect for conferring master status in Netherlandish guilds, including in the Guild of St. Luke.⁴¹⁹ Gibbons would have witnessed master carvers presenting their masterpieces in his formative years, but he had no opportunity to fulfil this important “cultural construct” as a master carver in England.⁴²⁰

Professional understanding

When the *St Stephen* panel is understood as an exemplar of Gibbons’ sculptural ability, it can also be used to provide insights into the particular values that Gibbons associated with his sculpture. The panel lacks his typical floriated ornaments and instead focusses on the human form and the built environment. I believe these were chosen by Gibbons because they were the areas in which he wanted his commissions to grow. They also provided the greatest opportunities for him to display a learned artistic persona, promoting his intellectual and gentlemanly standing.

For example, when botanical elements do appear in the panel they are represented differently from those in his overmantel swags. Plants are depicted as complete botanical specimens rather than cut blooms (fig. 2.17). Displaying complete plants recalls the increasing contemporary interest in botany.⁴²¹ His sculptural depictions may be reflecting the scholarly botanical interests of his most influential friends, who were also members of the Royal Society.⁴²² In particular, the focus on botanical accuracy may be a tangible reference to Gibbons’ friendship with Evelyn, the well-

⁴¹⁹ It was “not designed for finishing apprentices or for those becoming free journeymen. Rather, it was for those who became masters”. For a detailed discussion of the central position of the masterpiece in the master trials see De Munck, *Technologies of Learning*, 67 – 85. For the quote, 75.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴²¹ Vera Kaden, *The Illustration of Plants and Gardens 1500 – 1850*, 12 – 23.

⁴²² L. C. Cutler has noted that in items created for scholars of botany, including Elias Ashmole, Gibbons included plants that held particular significance to their work, further highlighting how eager Gibbons was to display their scholarly interests in his carvings. See Cutler, *Grinling Gibbons*, 288 – 289.

known horticulturalist.⁴²³ In his attempt to replicate natural forms in a naturalistic setting, his work can also be considered alongside the increasing interest in ancient texts such as Pliny's *Natural History*, which outlined the moral purposes that bring value to art: maintaining truth to nature and honesty of materials.⁴²⁴ Such texts would have been available to Gibbons through his social and professional networks in the metropolis, particularly with intellectuals such as Evelyn. Gibbons' ability to read Dutch may have given him a significantly greater access to art discourses than other English sculptors.⁴²⁵

Indeed, Gibbons makes further references to antiquity in the panel. Near the centre, standing atop of the leftmost loggia, he included representations of famous examples of antique sculpture: *The Dancing Faun* and *Venus de 'Medici* (fig. 2.18).⁴²⁶ The inclusion of such highly-praised antique statuary in Gibbons' work seems to serve several purposes. It signifies his awareness of canonical works and his expectation that any viewers at his home would also know them. The inclusions are small, and in the semi-distance of the work, looking down on the main compositional thrust of the action. They therefore function as a commentary on sculptural education, recalling Gibbons' early training carving examples of masterpieces before developing his own work, as epitomised by the figures in the foreground of the panel that are overlooked by the antique paradigms. Such inclusions frame the ways that Gibbons positioned himself – and his work – as relevant to the discussions held by those that engaged in

⁴²³ The extent of Evelyn's horticultural interests is evidenced by his publication of *Sylva*, a discourse on trees.

⁴²⁴ For example, Pliny's telling of Nero's corruption of Lysippus' statue of Alexander by gilding it would have resonated with viewers of Gibbons' starkly bare limewood. Sarah Blake McHam, 'We Penetrate the Earth's Innards and Search for Riches': Pliny's Hierarchy of Materials and Its Influence in the Renaissance', in *Material World: The Intersection of Art, Science, and Nature in Ancient Literature and its Renaissance Reception*, ed. Guy Hedreen (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021), 95; Jacob Isager, *Pliny on Art and Society, The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 14.

⁴²⁵ For the numerous art texts in Dutch then circulating in England see Eileen Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556 – 1785*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 12, 23 – 24.

⁴²⁶ These figures have been reversed. This implies that Gibbons copied from prints, resulting in a reversed image. It further highlights the limited ways that prints were used by Gibbons in this panel, taking individual elements rather than whole compositions. Victoria and Albert Museum, 'The Stoning of St Stephen by Grinling Gibbons', *The Victoria and Albert Museum*, <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/stoning-of-st-stephen-grinling-gibbons/> accessed 9 August 2022. The Two were often represented together and were placed alongside each other in the Tribuna of the Uffizi. Frances Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 205.

learned discourse. Furthermore, they highlight his awareness of contemporary artistic debates and attempts to display his sculpture as being relevant to the values of elite social groups, comprised of potential clients.

Carving a career

Esterly justified his belief that the *St. Stephen* panel was “executed less for career or commercial motives than for Gibbons’ own satisfaction” by suggesting that:

this kind of carving may have lain close to Gibbons’ heart throughout his career. Long after he had abandoned it as a profession, Gibbons may have continued as a closet figural relief carver – or at least an admirer of such work.⁴²⁷

The basis for Esterly’ argument is that Gibbons was unsuccessful as a figural relief carver, an assertion that does not correlate with the fact that the vast majority of his figurative relief panels appear in his mid and late career, after 1680, but in stone rather than wood.⁴²⁸ Esterly’s chronology is demonstrably inaccurate. Rather than abandoning relief carving to become a decorative carver of over-mantels, the examples from Gibbons’ workshop show a business that evolved over time – never totally abandoning any specific form of carving-work – but diversifying, adapting, and growing in order to accommodate market demands.⁴²⁹

As such, it is likely that the *St. Stephen* panel was created to evidence a different style of sculpture to the foliated decoration in which Gibbons had already established his reputation. Vertue’s notes from the early eighteenth century include the detail that, at his lodgings at Ludgate Hill, Gibbons “carvd a flower pot the flowers of light wood so thin & fine that the coaches passing by made them shake surprisingly”.⁴³⁰ Eye-catching advertisements continued at Gibbons’ later home in Covent Garden, called ‘The King’s Arms’, for which he carved a large sign.⁴³¹ His predilection for

⁴²⁷ Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 50.

⁴²⁸ Table 2.1 lists 13 works that include portrait or narrative relief panels from Gibbons’ documented executed works in stone compared with the three wooden figurative relief panels on which Esterly based his conclusions.

⁴²⁹ Such as diversifying into stonework, leadwork, and bronze casting.

⁴³⁰ George Vertue, MS. 23, 071 (V.2, B.M.9b), in “Vertue IV”, *The Twenty-Fourth Volume of the Walpole Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935 – 1936): 11.

⁴³¹ Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 12.

self-advertisement is pertinent when considering the *St. Stephen* panel, which all scholars agree was created for his own home – and displayed amongst his sizeable collection of continental art.⁴³² I consider the panel to be an elite form of advertising, aimed at the exclusive friends and clients that he entertained at home.⁴³³ Such clients would, moreover, be the ideal audience for discussions about classical statuary and botany, as discussed above.

The prices Gibbons commanded for wooden over-mantels had been in decline from as early as 1679; a trend which continued into the 1680s.⁴³⁴ The *St. Stephen* panel may have been created to counteract this climate of declining fees, particularly by exhibiting Gibbons' expertise in different modes of sculpture. The most profitable forms of carving for sculptors in the period were funerary monuments and large-scale architectural ornamental work.⁴³⁵ Gibbons only secured contracts for the latter from the 1690s, following the creation of the panel.

David Green described the panel as “an essay in architectural perspective first, a biblical tableau second”.⁴³⁶ Much of the strong perspectival effect is due to the buildings that dominate the right hand and centre of the image and reach into the distance. The columns and entablature at the extreme right cover almost the full height of the panel, signifying the attention that has been dedicated to architectural expression. Such dedication to a fictitious and highly ornamental cityscape advocates for Gibbons' aptitude in architectural ornament. Indeed, this architectural fantasy provides numerous and varied opportunities for the sculptor to enrich, ornament, and

⁴³² See George Vertue, “Grinling Gibbons; Wall Paintings in Temple, etc”, (MS. 23, 073. V. 20b, B. M. 25b), in “Vertue V”, *The Twenty-Sixth Volume of the Walpole Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937 – 1938): 34; Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, 266 – 267; Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 16; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 50.

⁴³³ Such as those that were encouraged to visit his home by Evelyn, who recorded taking the Lord Chamberlain and his wife, and their daughter the Duchess of Grafton, to Gibbons' house for this purpose. Evelyn, *Diary*, 8 August 1679, 136. In this way Evelyn and Gibbons were enacting the “sociable character” of connoisseurship, which had spread from Italy. See Genevieve Warwick, *The Arts of Collecting, Padre Sebastiano Resta and the Market for Drawings in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 77 – 79.

⁴³⁴ The following payments outline the decline: one overmantel at Sudbury in 1678 was recorded in George Vernon's account book at £40. Two at Windsor 1678-9 - £63 5s just over £32 each, four at Whitehall 1685-88 - £100 only £25 each, a decline of 37%. See Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 191; *KW*, 325; *BDS*, 516.

⁴³⁵ These works reached into the thousands of pounds. Large architectural contracts could secure a sculptor's employment over a number of years.

⁴³⁶ Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 36.

decorate the architectural surfaces. Fluted columns and smooth pilasters rise to Ionic and Corinthian capitals. Coffered vaults sit above entwining pierced panels, and scallop shells and escutcheons fill pediments and rise above archways. In the foremost building, everything – from the spandrels to the dentils – is enriched. Significantly, elements of this imagined ornamental scheme appear in Gibbons’ realised architectural decoration. By 1692 Gibbons had replicated the statues on the balustrade at Petworth House (fig. 2.19), and by the end of the century the decorated dentils, carved to appear like scrolls with acanthus leaves, had reappeared at St. Paul’s Cathedral on the brackets of the organ case and the choir (fig. 2.20).⁴³⁷ An amalgamation of the scallop shell pediment over the doorway and the hemispherical arches with escutcheons appears in Gibbons’ early eighteenth-century marble-work in the Saloon at Blenheim (fig. 2.21).

Moreover, the links between the panel and Gibbons’ later works are continued in the other main aspect: the figures. Curiously, the numerous figures, often commented on for their sheer quantity, have not been considered alongside Gibbons’ output as a statuary.⁴³⁸ This may be because the vast array of postures and emotions on display provide a more positive reading of Gibbons’ abilities as a figurative carver than are often asserted. As a result, there has been no enquiry into the purpose of his overwhelming display of poses. In the panel, he provides finely-carved musculature, children, the elderly, riders on horseback, women in graceful repose and woe, and men of action, judgement, and contemplation (fig. 2.16). Most are carved almost in three dimensions, standing partially free from the panel. Numerous comparisons can be made between the figures in the panel and Gibbons’ output as a statuary: the armoured figure standing to the right of the main cluster bears a pose and outfit reminiscent of his statues of Charles II, James II, and the Duke of Chandos (figs. 2.22, 2.23, and 2.24). The pose of Stephen, towards the bottom of the group, is repeated in the effigy of Mary Beaufoy, and the female figure at the left of the main group is repeated in his personifications of Justice and Prudence on the tomb of Henry Somerset, First Duke of Beaufort (figs. 2.25 and 2.26).

⁴³⁷ Gervase Jackson-Stops, “The Building of Petworth”, *Apollo*, 105, (May 1977): 324 – 33.

⁴³⁸ While Esterly comments on similarities, he takes this no further as he does not attend to Gibbons’ monumental sculpture. Other scholars have merely commented on the multitude of figures. See Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 48; Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 16; Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 36.

The dominating force of the composition, with its emphasis on the architecture and the foregrounded figures, seems deliberately designed as a *tour de force* of Gibbons' abilities as a sculptor of architectural ornament and statuary. This provides a vantage for understanding it as intrinsically linked to his career aspirations. It testifies to his abilities in areas of sculpture that he *wanted* to grow into. As previously discussed, a guild masterpiece in the Netherlands was produced to prove that a sculptor was equipped with the skills to lead a workshop; it is telling that Gibbons devoted so much time to producing a piece that exemplified types of sculpture, particularly architectural ornament, in which he had not yet cemented his reputation. As such, the panel stands as a testament to his career ambition. It reaches across the varied areas of production over Gibbons' long career, and attests to the synchronicity of his productions across media. As such, it is the location of the panel, as much as its content, that highlights the ways that Gibbons reimagined the identity of the professional sculptor. The panel includes such variety that it could even have functioned in a similar way to a pattern book. By placing such a work amongst his sizeable collection of continental art, Gibbons removed the requirement that clients travel across the water to his main workshop when commissioning new works.⁴³⁹ Rather than travelling to the less salubrious areas of London and its extremities, clients could visit his home in fashionable Covent Garden, the artistic heart of seventeenth-century London.⁴⁴⁰

This case study has found new purposes for Gibbons' largest carved panel and reunited it with his wider sculptural productions. I have outlined the need for interconnected investigations of his work and argued for the centrality of works in media other than wood. As such, I have destabilised the traditional belief that his endeavours in other media were opportunistic, instead positing that large-scale architectural ornament and sculptures, particularly in stone, were a central career

⁴³⁹ Sally Jeffery has used water-taxi rates and the records of one of Gibbons' patrons that suggests Gibbons had a main workshop on the South Bank, which clients visited to inspect works in progress. Sally Jeffery, "Grinling Gibbons's Chimneypieces for the Duchess of Buccleuch", *The Georgian Group Journal*, XXIV (2016): 3. Sculptors' studios have long been characterised as dangerous and unwelcoming spaces. See James Hall, *The World as Sculpture, The Changing Status of Sculpture from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1999), 19 – 20.

⁴⁴⁰ David Mitchell, "The Three Londons", in *City Merchants and the Arts 1670 – 1720*, ed. Mireille Galinou (London: Oblong for the Corporation of London, 2004), 8.

goal. In the following sections I will turn attention to examples of Gibbons' work in these areas, and position them within the context of his career trajectory. I will further recontextualise his career by continuing to interrogate the commonalities between his work across the material divide of wood and stone, and in so doing, move towards a comprehensive understanding of Gibbons' sculptural productions.

Part Two: *Gibbons the Ornamentalist*

In this section, I progress the re-conception of Gibbons' career by exploring the way that he developed his professional practice in his mid-career, the period in which he secured significant success and a position in the royal household. As such, this section focusses on his key sculptural developments from the 1680s and 90s, which are discussed in relation to a selection of his funerary monuments.

Monuments have previously been considered as an economic imperative for Gibbons, rather than an area of expertise.⁴⁴¹ Indeed, the lack of concern for his monuments has found them listed "among the world's most endangered historic sites".⁴⁴² However, Gibbons did not merely undertake the occasional opportunistic commission. He had a thriving business, securing several of the most lucrative commissions of the period.⁴⁴³ These display his position as one of the foremost monumental sculptors of the period. His selection as the sculptor for Queen Mary's catafalque, and other monuments funded by the monarchy, only reinforce this assessment.⁴⁴⁴ In this section I will reconsider the value of monumental contracts,

⁴⁴¹ MW, 118; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 206.

⁴⁴² The World Monuments Fund categorised the Campden monument, discussed in the following case study, as this in 2000. Maev Kennedy, "Decaying Tomb on Endangered List", *The Guardian*, 14 June, 2000, 11.

⁴⁴³ Including the Campden monument, the Beaufort monument, and the Chandos monument, which were each valued at £1000. *BDS*, 514 – 515.

⁴⁴⁴ I disagree with assessments that claim the crown was compelled to offer Gibbons these contracts because of his title as the Royal sculptor, advocated by Geoffrey Beard. Cibber also held a royal position at the time of Mary's death, and there are numerous examples of other sculptors being contracted for work by the Crown in the period, several of which are discussed at other points in this thesis. Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 83.

reconsidering them as opportunities to display stylistic developments. As such, I will also reconnect Gibbons' monumental works with his wider sculptural repertoire.

The value of tomb commissions

Gibbons' stone commissions have been all but ignored.⁴⁴⁵ However, in his lifetime, Gibbons was variously described as a carver and statuary.⁴⁴⁶ These terms were not wholly interchangeable, or definitively hierarchical in nature, but were largely used to describe the particular work that a sculptor had created.⁴⁴⁷ Gibbons' fees for work undertaken across these roles attest that there was not yet a clearly wrought hierarchical distinction between statuaries and carvers.⁴⁴⁸ Instead, the main factors that determined the cost-value of sculpture seem to have been pragmatically linked to the expense of the materials and the scale and detail of the carving involved. Interestingly, Gibbons did request higher prices than some of his competitors on the basis of his personal reputation.⁴⁴⁹ The influence of artists such as Rembrandt on the Dutch art market may have introduced Gibbons to the idea that the "quality" of the workmanship – and of its creator – were more important than the labour.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁵ While Geoffrey Beard and David Green include Gibbons' monumental works, they are as surveys only. Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 149 – 169; Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 51 – 84.

⁴⁴⁶ Even Gibbons' royal position included the twin skills, naming him Master Sculptor and Carver in Wood. *KW*, 473. It is worth noting that by 1715 this situation had changed somewhat, and Gibbons was recorded solely as "Master Sculptor", possibly reflecting his abandonment of woodcarving in his late career. "List of Patent Offices During Pleasure Under the Lords Committee of The Treasury", TNA SP 25/9/131 f.244.

⁴⁴⁷ The clearest example of the interchangeability of terms between sculptural work is found in the accounts from Hampton Court Palace, where Gibbons is always listed as a carver. However, when undertaking statuary, Caius Gabriel Cibber was listed as such. When creating decorative work similar to the work Gibbons was contracted for he is listed in the same way as Gibbons, as a carver. TNA, Audit Office, Declared Accounts, Hampton Court 1694 – 1696, AO/2482/297, and Declared Accounts, Hampton Court Gardens 1689 – 1696, AO/1/2482/298, 8v.

⁴⁴⁸ Indeed, it is not uncommon for Gibbons to be paid more for an over-mantel, where he would be listed in accounts as a carver, than a statue, where he may be listed as a statuary. For example, Gibbons was paid £50 for statues at the Royal Exchange compared with £180 for a marble chimney-piece and limewood overmantel for the Great Bedchamber at Whitehall Palace. *BDS*, 515 – 516.

⁴⁴⁹ An example of this with the Marquess of Ormond was discussed in part 1, see also Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 212.

⁴⁵⁰ For example, Rembrandt's letter to Huygens, secretary to Prince Frederik, dated January 1639 includes the line: "I send your lordship these two pieces which I think will be considered of such quality that His Highness will now even pay me not less than a thousand guilders each.". Rembrandt van Rijn, *Seven Letters by Rembrandt*, ed. H. Gerson, trans. Yda Ovink (The Hague: L.J.C. Boucher, 1961), 46. It is significant that Rembrandt did not always secure the higher prices that he sought. See Eric Jan Sluijter, "Introduction", in *Art Market and Connoisseurship*, ed. Tummies and Jonckheere, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008) 9 – 13; Paul Crenshaw, *Rembrandt's Bankruptcy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 111 – 133.

In a period where distinctions between the roles of decorative carvers and statuary were yet to be defined, it is unsurprising that there was a general expectation that a truly great carver could accomplish any commission for carved work. As discussed in the previous section, Evelyn had commented on Gibbons' sculptural ability in 1683, concluding: "nor doubt I at all that he will prove as great a master in the statuary art".⁴⁵¹ Virtuosity in carving in the seventeenth century seems to have been fundamentally understood as an ability to create carved works, irrespective of material or subject matter. The most successful workshops, such as those considered in this thesis, were all capable of producing work in a variety of media and actively undertook a range of sculptural commissions.

Tombs may have been particularly lucrative commissions because the simple productions at the lower range of the market could be produced relatively quickly and with little expense.⁴⁵² However, the most elaborate tombs offered elite sculptors like Gibbons valuable opportunities to advertise their abilities in relatively public spaces and across the full gamut of sculptural modes.⁴⁵³ A large funerary monument typically involved the creation of a fictionalised architectonic space that housed a carved scene. Such monuments stood as a showcase of the carver's ability in architectural expression, ornamental decoration, and statuary.

Monuments were also created with the expectation of significant longevity and so provided Gibbons with a platform to substantiate his reputation as a sculptor in stone. Of all his sculptures, only three items are known to have been signed: two signatures appear on limewood panels presented as royal gifts, the third signature is on his monument to Robert Cotton at Connington, Cambridgeshire (fig. 2.27).⁴⁵⁴ It seems highly significant that, of all his works, a funerary monument was signed. The

⁴⁵¹ Evelyn, *Diary*, 16 June 1683, 177.

⁴⁵² Katharine Esdaile, *English Church Monuments 1510 to 1840*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 55 – 56.

⁴⁵³ David Bindman and Malcolm Baker. *Roubiliac and the Eighteenth-Century Monument, Sculpture as Theatre*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 9.

These could have long legacies, and those in notable locations, such as Westminster Abbey are still seen by large numbers today. Publications such as John Dart's *Westminster Abbey*, first published in 1723, which included many engravings of the tombs in Westminster Abbey (including Gibbons'), dispersed the monuments to a geographically broad audience shortly after Gibbons' death.

⁴⁵⁴ Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 162.

signature likely indicates his personal involvement in the sculpting of the wistful portrait to the deceased child, signifying his pride as a portrait sculptor and desire to advertise his abilities in this area.⁴⁵⁵ Nor does the cynical impression of tomb commissions, as quick cash making endeavours, cohere with the way that these commissions were treated in the period. For example, Gibbons' contract for the monument to Sir Roger Burgoyne stipulated that "Sir Peter Lely, Kt., and Hugh May, Esquire, are to decide, when the monument is complete, whether 100l. or 120l. should be paid for it", showing real a concern with the artistic merit – and dignity – of the work created.⁴⁵⁶ Clearly there was contemporary appreciation, and significant concern, regarding the design and execution of funerary monuments which were, after all, often created to dignify the memory of loved ones.

Gibbons was ambitious in his monuments, securing ever-grander commissions across the span of his career. His earliest works were small wall-mounted plaques, but from 1683 his works overwhelmingly became large-scale freestanding architectural edifices with full-length figures, a type of monument described by Katherine Esdaile as "the classicising canopied tomb".⁴⁵⁷ As such, they testify to Gibbons' growing success, the increasing scale of his workshop operation, and his confidence in producing work across a more varied range of sculptural modes. Such works acted as a bridge between Gibbons' early work, as an interior decorative sculptor in wood, and his late career in which he undertook external architectural ornament in stone. The monuments provided opportunities for Gibbons to display his abilities as a stone carver and develop skills as a designer of architectural ornament.

Gibbons' approach to carving

Gordon and Philippa Glanville describe the taste for decoration in the seventeenth century – across a variety of materials and practices – as following certain principles:

⁴⁵⁵ Although other skilled statuaries were known to work in Gibbons' workshop, including Quellin and Nost, none are known to have been in his workshop when this monument was completed. Therefore, it is very possible that this portrait was Gibbons' own work. See *BDS*, 512.

⁴⁵⁶ Reproduced in Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 151. As discussed in chapter one, many of Edward Pearce's designs for monuments were kept by William Talman in his collection of architectural drawings, highlighting the appreciation that seventeenth-century audiences had for the artistry of their monumental commissions.

⁴⁵⁷ Katharine Esdaile, *English Monumental Sculpture*, viii.

Value was attached to rich effects, figurative ornament and fine workmanship, and these costly artefacts were appreciated rather more than works on canvas.⁴⁵⁸

Gibbons' success emphasises that he well understood the economic values that sculptures were judged against in the period. Indeed, he contrived works with intricate detailing and a sheer quantity of carved ornament that supported his demands for higher prices, resulting in ornamentation that was suffused with textural enrichment.

Gibbons introduced only a limited number of natural forms into his regular repertoire of floral motifs: seashells, fish, and fowl, all of which provided him with the potential for greater textural expression. Seashells appeared early in his work, in the late 1670s at Holme Lacy (fig. 2.28).⁴⁵⁹ They are of a similar scale to his floral elements and so were easily incorporated into his floral compositions without requiring any changes to the typical composition of his overmantel designs of the period.⁴⁶⁰ They were most likely added because they had more potential as carved objects than flowers, specifically providing Gibbons opportunities to carve a greater variety of surface textures. Seashells provide concavity amongst the otherwise swollen natural forms, their surfaces are textured with variegations, ripples, and burrs that offer novel points of contrast from within the overall mass.

Fish and fowl both appeared in the late 1670s. They are in Gibbons' overmantels at Windsor and Sudbury (figs. 2.29 and 2.30). In contrast to seashells, the larger scale of these forms makes them dominating interventions in his compositions. Initially, he experimented with the compositional novelties that these forms provided. Dramatically askance limbs were a short-lived phenomenon, birds became ever more conventional in pose, more centralised in the floral setting, and less influential on the outline of the designs.⁴⁶¹ Fish were always depicted dead, and so add very little

⁴⁵⁸ Gordon and Philippa Glanville 'The Art Market and Merchant Patronage in London 1680 to 1720', in *City Merchants and the Arts 1670-1720*, ed. Mireille Galinou (Wetherby: Oblong for the Corporation of London, 2004), 12.

⁴⁵⁹ Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 72 – 73.

⁴⁶⁰ For a thorough discussion of Gibbons' evolving compositional techniques see Esterly, *Ibid.*, 179 – 187.

⁴⁶¹ For example, compare the overmantel at Sudbury, c. 1677, (fig. 2.30) with the Petworth carved room c. 1692 (fig. 2.31)

dynamism to an overall composition, making clear that these new elements provided only limited compositional advantages. Doubtless, the thematic benefits for dining spaces were a significant reason for their inclusion. However, feathers and scales also offered novel and complex textural effects that must have appealed to the sculptor. On each outstretched wing he carved a graduation of incisions, from fully modelled individual feathers all the way to the gentlest intonations of soft down. In the case of fish, Gibbons presents dramatic contrasts between the deep scores of the gills and the light perforations of tessellating scales. In short, their whole bodies could be given over to intricate and technically exacting surface enrichment.

Gibbons' exacting level of detail suggests that he designed his carvings to be inspected at close proximity. In his early woodworks, a viewer is rewarded for drawing near with intricate textural details. As L. C. Cutler has identified, Gibbons invited in his works the same close and considered attention that were being applied in the empirical sciences.⁴⁶² As such, his work shows an awareness of the revolutionary changes to ways of looking that had developed in London's scientific circles, in which the empirical experience of the senses garnered ever-greater importance, as epitomised by Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* (1665) (fig. 2.32).⁴⁶³ Gibbons had augmented his sculptural forms to include those that provided an experience – when a viewer drew close – that was similar to that of looking through a microscope. This change was likely influenced by the relationships that he had formed with scientifically engaged individuals, particularly Evelyn. When Gibbons later developed a sizeable output of monumental sculpture he continued to pay close attention to the textural surface, indicating that when he adapted his sculptural style he did so across his output.

Continuity across media

In the 1680s, as Gibbons diversified into funerary monuments, his feathered carvings increasingly appeared as cherubs rather than birds. These are often reduced to their

⁴⁶² Cutler, "Grinling Gibbons: A Dutch Master in England", 286 – 291.

⁴⁶³ For more information on the importance of the senses see H. James Jensen, *The Sensational Restoration*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), ix. For more on the influence of the Royal Society upon visual imagery see Griffiths, *The Print in Stuart Britain*, 266 – 267.

most elementary parts, appearing as nothing more than heads above wings splayed in flight. In his stone work these became features of the architectural ornament, appearing as brackets, supports, and frames for heraldic reliefs. Interestingly, Gibbons' decorative limewood carvings mirrored his stonework, with cherubs also increasingly replacing birds here. Chubby and lifelike cherubs had become a popular form of architectural ornament on the continent, appearing in Italian sculpture before being popularised in the early part of the century by French designers such as Jean Barbet (fig. 2.33).⁴⁶⁴ By following such prototypes, Gibbons was conforming to European ornamental prototypes – both as a result of patrons who increasingly desired works that reflected European tastes, and – as other sculptors in England were increasingly being influenced by French designs.

Fish appeared infrequently in Gibbons' carvings, but scales became a recurring form of surface decoration. They ornament such diverse locations as the baltea on the statue of Charles Seymour, sixth Duke of Somerset, the breastplate of the statue of James II, and the leatherwork scrolls on the Choir at St. Paul's (figs. 2.23, 2.34, and 2.35). Fish-scale ornamentation is one example of the shared motifs that appeared in Gibbons' carvings in hard and soft woods, and in his marble and bronze statuary, highlighting that, for Gibbons, decorative textural surfaces transcended medium and form.

The final decorative element that Gibbons incorporated across his sculpture in a sustained way is fabric. This differs from those previously discussed as it was not taken from the natural world. Fabric made a spectacular appearance in his work in the form of virtuoso replications of point lace work.⁴⁶⁵ However, fabrics also appeared in many of his funerary monuments, where items such as cushions were textured with carved brocade. These could have been finished as polished stone, but Gibbons chose to create a suffusion of intricate and coiling carved detail in the most lavish and costly examples of his architectural sculpture, such as the choir at St. Paul's Cathedral, where whole columns are filled with brocade patterns (figs. 2.36 and

⁴⁶⁴ Stefano Pierguidi, "Putti: The Birth of a Genre", in *Bernini*, ed. Andrea Bacchi and Anna Coliva (Rome: Galleria Borghese and Officina Libraria, 2017), 54 – 63.

⁴⁶⁵ Most memorably as a sumptuous canopy in the Medici panel and as a cravat, famously worn by Horace Walpole.

2.37). Fabric held far greater social significance in the seventeenth century. The trade in fabrics had long represented a significant portion of England's economy, and tapestries often commanded higher prices than paintings and other decorative items.⁴⁶⁶ By replicating the most sumptuous and costly forms of fabric in his carvings, such as point lacework and brocade, Gibbons was representing items with inherent value, signifiers of the greatness of the person they embellished, to a contemporary audience. As John Styles has noted:

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a tide of novelty in decorated fabrics made from a range of materials [. . .] the principle trend was a shift towards lighter, more colourful, and more highly patterned fabrics, both for clothing and for furnishing.⁴⁶⁷

By imitating costly fabrics with great realism, Gibbons may have been proclaiming the supremacy of his carvings over other decorative trades, such as weaving, that had historically been more highly valued. He was also a member of the Drapers' Company by patrimony.⁴⁶⁸ As such, he may have been particularly aware of the social value of fabric and the changing market demands for their decoration.

I propose that Gibbons created richly detailed sculptural surfaces in order to satisfy contemporary judgements of value. He displayed highly valuable materials, such as highly-worked fabrics, in order to allow his sculptures to compete with the most valuable material productions of the period. However, such values were not to remain Gibbons' primary mode of expressing value. Over time, he increasingly carved classical architectural sculptural ornament, expressing new intellectual values. In short, his carvings included elements that responded to traditional values as well as those that reflected contemporary changes in taste. The following case

⁴⁶⁶ The lasting importance of fabric to European economies is well-summarised by Giorgio Riello in "Governing innovation: The Political Economy of Textiles in the Eighteenth Century", in *Fashioning the Early Modern Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe, 1500 – 1800*, ed. Evelyn Welch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 68 – 78. For more on the significance of tapestries see Katja Schmitz-von Ledebur, "Representatives of Power – Tapestries Made for Kings and Emperors", in *Arrayed in Spendour, Art, Fashion and Textiles in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Christoph Brachmann (Belgium: Brepols, 2019), 179 – 198. For fabric costs relative to paintings see Maria Hayward, "Virtue and Vice: Clothing and Kinship at the Courts of Charles I and Charles II (1625 – 85)", in *Arrayed in Spendour, Art, Fashion and Textiles in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Christoph Brachmann (Belgium: Brepols, 2019), 205 – 206; Glanville, "The Art Market", 12.

⁴⁶⁷ John Styles, "Fashion and innovation in Early Modern Europe", in *Fashioning the Early Modern Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe, 1500 – 1800*, ed. Evelyn Welch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 37.

⁴⁶⁸ *BDS*, 514 – 519.

study investigates his responses to social change in more detail. I will chart the development of his decorative carving over several decades, across a range of funerary monuments, paying particular attention to his changing approach to surface texture.

Case Study: *Surface Texture on Three Funerary Monuments*

All funerary monuments of the late seventeenth century remain under-represented in sculptural scholarship.⁴⁶⁹ Gibbons' sculptures in this area are also under-studied.⁴⁷⁰ However, it is clear that funerary monuments were important to him, as he secured some of the most expensive and sought after contracts of the time.⁴⁷¹ Large-scale funerary monuments are an amalgamation of numerous carved elements – architectural, figural, relief, and decorative enrichment – allowing for a broad investigation of the way that he developed his sculptural practice. In this case study I consider his monumental work alongside other examples from across his career, revealing the experimentation and development that occurred between media.

Previous scholars have cited Gibbons' collaborations with renowned stone-sculptors, such as Arnold Quellin, as a reason not to study Gibbons' work in stone and marble.⁴⁷² Stonework has either been determined to have been created by his partners, or, if of a lower quality, used to display Gibbons' weaknesses in this area.⁴⁷³ As a result, scholarly opinion is well-summarised by Geoffrey Beard:

⁴⁶⁹ Particularly in comparison with their eighteenth-century counterparts. Esdaile summarised the scholarly position that still dominated in the interwar years as follows: "Gothic monuments are good; that Jacobean art . . . is interesting; that which follows is bad, though it is an odd fact that Flaxman, Nollekens, and Chantry have always been treated with respect". Esdaile, *English Monumental Sculpture*, xi.

⁴⁷⁰ Nigel Llewellyn has described the art history of funerary monuments of the period as having "tended to fall back on standard models and systems, devised originally to explain the art of quite other times and places, and which are deployed rather indiscriminately to promote a description of these years as an intermediate or fallow era". Llewellyn, "A Taxonomy for the Invisible", 501. In Gibbons' case, the majority of the literature has eschewed discussion of his monuments entirely, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter.

⁴⁷¹ MW, 113. 123 – 129.

⁴⁷² See Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 208; Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 51; Green *Grinling Gibbons*, 134, 140.

⁴⁷³ Green *Grinling Gibbons*, 134.

“[d]espite any shortcomings in skill, Gibbons, as Master Sculptor to the Crown, had to be involved in the making of monuments”.⁴⁷⁴ Such a view does not account for the fact that the majority of his monumental commissions – including those that commanded the highest fees – were created before he was appointed to the royal household.⁴⁷⁵ Neither does Beard’s view account for Gibbons’ other stone and marble works that were created for royal patrons prior to his appointment, in 1693.⁴⁷⁶ For example, amongst the chimneypieces and over-mantels that he made for William and Mary at Whitehall Palace in the late 1680s was a chimneypiece for the Great Bedchamber, now destroyed, that included a marble bas-relief of Goliath, for which he was paid £110.⁴⁷⁷ He was evidently considered to be a competent sculptor in stone, irrespective of his position in the royal household.

Questions surrounding the ‘quality’ of Gibbons’ work in stone were first propagated by Vertue who, somewhat contradictorily, recorded both that Gibbons was not able to carve in stone and that he was a competent statuary.⁴⁷⁸ Indeed, it was while discussing one of the monuments considered here that Vertue announced:

the whole Workmanship by Mr. Grinlin Gibbons. whose Carvings at Windsor & Whitehall Hampton Court and elsewhere in this Nation. have caused him to be esteemed as one of the best Statuaryes.⁴⁷⁹

It is significant to note that criticisms of Gibbons’ stone carving have been limited to the statuary.⁴⁸⁰ The architectonic bodies of his funerary monuments, and his architectural enrichments on major buildings, have evaded criticism, but have also been almost entirely overlooked.⁴⁸¹ This case study focuses on these under-explored

⁴⁷⁴ Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 83.

⁴⁷⁵ *BDS*, 514 – 519.

⁴⁷⁶ Including marble chimneypieces at Whitehall Palace in the late 1680s. Jeffrey, “Grinling Gibbons’ Chimneypieces”, 6.

⁴⁷⁷ *KW*, 295. Nor was this a solitary example of Gibbons creating sizable marble narrative reliefs for interior settings. The last known chimneypiece created by Gibbons was for the Duchess of Buccleuch at Moor Park, subsequently moved by him to Dalkeith House in 1703. This chimneypiece included a large relief of *Neptune and Galatea*. For this relief alone Gibbons was paid £80, substantially more than his payments for limewood carvings of a similar scale. Jeffrey, “Grinling Gibbons’ Chimneypieces”, 4.

⁴⁷⁸ van Hensbergen, “Print, Poetry and Posterity”, 326.

⁴⁷⁹ Vertue was discussing the Campden monument. MS. 23, 073 (V.13, B.M.18). Reproduced in The Walpole Society, “Vertue V”, 25. Interestingly, Vertue took this passage from James Wright’s *Additions to the History and Antiquities of Rutlandshire* (1687). I am indebted to Christine Stevenson for this information.

⁴⁸⁰ As will be discussed later in this case study.

⁴⁸¹ Despite there being approximately three times the quantity of monuments to over-mantels. See *BDS*, 514 – 517. Both Green and Beard, notable for including the monuments in their discussions of

productions from the Gibbons workshop. I will create a more unified discussion of his output by making a place for stone work in Gibbons' sculptural development, denying the separation of media that has dominated previous discussions. I will investigate how he used textural enrichment to provide high-value sculptures in his early monumental commissions, exploring how this changed over the course of his late career, charting how changing societal values were reflected in and created by his sculpture.

Several of Gibbons' monumental commissions were substantial undertakings, commanding fees of up to £1000. It is these commissions that I focus on, as they provided him with the greatest opportunities to display his sculptural prowess. Moreover, such commissions span from his mid-career, in the 1680s, to its conclusion in the late 1710s, comprising a late period of development in his career that has been overlooked. The monuments discussed are the Campden monument (c. 1683), the Beaufort monument (1701), and the monument to Admiral Sir Cloudesly Shovell (1708) (figs. 2.38, 2.39, and 2.40). Significantly, these were created while Gibbons is not believed to have had more respected stone carvers, such as Quellin or John Nost, in his workshop.⁴⁸² Therefore, these monuments give a sound representation of his role as the designer and master-carver directing the sculptural production in his workshop. I discuss the monuments in tandem, focussing on their architectural ornament and statuary, in order to chart developments in his work.

All the monuments share a general form, depicting the deceased's effigy above a plinth and surrounded by an architectural frame. The monuments follow a tripartite horizontal structural form, plinths at the base, a central area housing a fully modelled effigy in an architectural enclosure, and a crowning canopy. However, it is clear that each monument has been individually designed. Beyond very general similarities,

Gibbons, only describe the monuments. See for example, Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 64, Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 152 – 153.

⁴⁸² Gibbons stopped working with Quellin in May 1683, a year before the Campden monument was undertaken. There was a short return to working together after its completion in 1685-6 before Quellin's death in 1686. Neither is there any documentary evidence that John Nost was working with Gibbons during the time that the earliest of the monuments was created, he had established his own workshop by the time that the later monuments were created. *BDS*, 512, 913 – 914, 1015 – 1017.

many of which are common to most large-scale monuments of the period, these are highly individual works.⁴⁸³

Architectural frameworks

Gibbons used his most directly architectural vocabulary in funerary monuments. In the majority of his work before 1690, architectural devices were almost entirely absent. Large monuments forced a change in his sculpture, as they require a structural frame to delineate the boundaries of their space. In the earliest example considered here, the Campden monument, Gibbons eschewed columns in favour of obelisks (fig. 2.38). These are simply wrought, as are the mouldings that convey a general sense of an entablature and pediment behind them. Rather than using the architecture as an area for enrichment and sculptural ornament, he applied separate decorative elements that supplanted the architectural substructure. There is no relationship between the architectural body and that decoration. Indeed, the separation between the elements has been made more extreme with contrasting marbles. Gadrooned urns in dark marble sit as pinnacles to pale obelisks, countered by spherical feet in the same dark stone (fig. 2.41). The urns, in turn, have been swathed in another layer of contrasting decoration in the form of milky garlands, placed so that they appear to be loosely draped over the monument and freely hanging from the obelisks. On the shaft of the obelisks, decorative elements have been layered on the structural body in much the same way that Gibbons' limewood carvings were added to simply-wrought panelled frames in his overmantels.⁴⁸⁴ Garlanded reliefs and floral swags have been made distinct – as adornments – by the sculptural elaboration of fictive pegs, from which they appear to hang (fig. 2.42).⁴⁸⁵ Rather than providing formal architectural ornaments, Gibbons applied superficial decorative elements that were similar, in their design and construction, to his decorative woodwork.

⁴⁸³ For more information regarding the norms of seventeenth century funerary monuments see Esdaile, *English Monumental Sculpture*, 31 – 33; Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 82 – 95.

⁴⁸⁴ Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 66.

⁴⁸⁵ A contrivance that Gibbons often employed in his woodcarvings, including those at Holme Lacy and Windsor Castle, indicating the shared decorative approaches across Gibbons' woodwork and early monuments.

When first completed, the Campden monument was one of the largest and most elaborate works that Gibbons had undertaken. It evidences that he had not yet developed a sculptural style that considered the classical relationship between an architectural frame and its decoration.⁴⁸⁶ His notable eschewal of architectural forms in his decorative limewood carving and his early tombs are characteristic of each other, suggesting that he employed a common approach to the design process in his work across contexts and media. However, by the end of the seventeenth century Gibbons' conception of sculptural ornament seems to have shifted significantly. As a result, his monumental style moved away from the overt appliqué layering of ornament, as witnessed on the Campden monument and in his limewood overmantels. This was replaced by a very different treatment of architectural forms, one in which sculptural enrichment became integrated with the architectural structure. Significantly, this approach increased the quantity of formal sculptural ornament in his designs.

By the turn of the century, when Gibbons was completing the Beaufort monument (fig. 2.39), he had developed different skills through commissions that required an integrated approach to sculptural ornament and the architectural structure, including the Choir for St. Paul's Cathedral.⁴⁸⁷ Such works caused notable shifts in Gibbons' approach to ornamentation. On the Beaufort monument, ornaments have been more integrated with the architectonic structure than in the previous example. A more coherent expression of classical architectural forms is visible on the body of the monument, where double Corinthian capitals are supplanted by a more clearly expressed entablature. Carved reliefs – notably similar to those Gibbons created on the foremost building of the *St Stephen* panel – add to the enrichment on the frieze (fig. 2.43). In contrast to the Campden monument, the spaces used for decorative reliefs were no longer depicted as panels, which 'hung' separately from the monument. Instead, they have been integrated with the objects they ornament, as

⁴⁸⁶ Which was central to Wren's conception of architecture. See Soo, *Wren's Tracts*, 215. The central basis of the classical orders for expressing classical architecture are summarised by Summerson in Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture*, 9 – 13. However, following the *symmetriae* required by the classical orders was something many struggled with in the period. For more see Richard John, "Vitruvian *Symmetriae*: The Debate About Method", in *The Persistence of the Classical, Essays on Architecture Presented to David Watkin*, ed. Frank Salmon (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2008), 1 – 11.

⁴⁸⁷ Discussed in more detail in the following section.

depicted in the frieze and the plinth supporting the sarcophagus. The integration is enhanced because the reliefs are no longer carved in a contrasting stone, displaying Gibbons' desire for unity between object and ornament.

Changes in Gibbons' approach to decorative surfaces are even more pronounced in the columns on the Beaufort monument and St. Paul's choir (figs. 2.37 and 2.44). In both cases, a complex design of floral forms and ribbons wrap the shafts. These were carved with much less depth than his typical ornamental carving, which tended to maximise the illusion of three-dimensionality. Despite clear similarities between the two examples, the earlier columns from the choir were not merely reproduced for the Beaufort monument. The design has been elaborated in the later example, which displays a profusion of complex overlaid details, compared to the spacious and organised design for St. Paul's. Here, Gibbons can be seen developing his carving style across works in stone and wood, highlighting that aspects of his sculptural designs were developed irrespective of media.

The final tomb under discussion, the monument to Sir Admiral Cloudesley Shovell, holds a particular position in relation to Gibbons' reputation as a sculptor. It was the first public monument to a fallen war hero that was paid for by the crown.⁴⁸⁸ Therefore, it was created to serve a different purpose to the previously discussed monuments. It was created while England's naval might was increasing, but before the great triumphs that occurred later in the eighteenth century, from which emerged a style of public sculpture that articulated and valorised the nation's naval and military might.⁴⁸⁹ As such, Gibbons was tasked with creating a new form of monument, made to commemorate new values for England, for which there was no established paradigm.

This monument diverges from those previously discussed in several ways. Gibbons was curtailed by a dramatically smaller budget, necessitating a more focussed

⁴⁸⁸ Joan Coudu, "Sculpture and the Forming of National Tastes in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century", in *The British School of Sculpture*, ed. Jason Edward and Sarah Burnage (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 35, 51.

⁴⁸⁹ Burnage, "The British School of Sculpture", 21 – 22. The emergent category of monuments has been described by Nigel Llewellyn as "The Strong Arm" Monument. See Llewellyn, *A Taxonomy for the Invisible*, 513 – 514.

approach to the decoration (fig. 2.40).⁴⁹⁰ The architectonic frame of the monument has more restrained sculptural detailing, providing a clarity that assertively expresses the formal design. Pairs of dark marble columns flank the central space, capped with confidently worked Corinthian capitals and an entablature that uses veined marble in place of sculpted detail. The main focus of the carved decoration ensconces the central statue of Shovell, particularly the plinth below the reclining figure, which includes a large and intricately carved relief panel. This panel is significant as it recounts the tragedy of the Admiral's death, pointing to the monument's function as a public memorial to a national disaster.⁴⁹¹ Whereas Gibbons had previously added enrichment across large areas of his monuments to create rich textural effects, in the Shovell monument virtually all the sculpture is didactic, providing iconological and narrative descriptors. Floral garlands have receded from prominence as a decorative element, in a gesture that is representative of the diminishing reliance on such decorative elements in Gibbons' career as a whole.

Monumental statuary

Statuary is of central importance in funerary monuments, but they are the most contentious area of Gibbons' sculpture. Scholars have long followed a small note of Vertue's, claiming that Gibbons did not create the most highly-praised statuary that came out of his workshop.⁴⁹² As a result, some scholars have suggested that he should not be considered as a statuary.⁴⁹³ Such an assessment undermines how

⁴⁹⁰ Gibbons received £332 10s. from the Treasury, less than a third of the payments he received for the other monuments discussed here. See Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 79.

⁴⁹¹ The disaster was considered so great that it prompted The Longitude Act of 1714. B. S. Smith, "A Cross-Staff from the Wreck of HMS Stirling Castle (1703), Goodwin Sands, UK, and the Link with the Last Voyage of Sir Cloudesley Shovell in 1707", *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 39:1 (2010): 172 – 181. The monument was erected in Westminster Abbey in 1708 and by 1710 reproductions of Gibbons' relief had appeared in print and on other monuments, such as the *Narborough* monument at St Clement, Knowlton, demonstrating the impact that this monument had on contemporary society. The laboured copying of the windswept sails, gun ports, figures on the deck, and stern ornamentation render these aspects disproportionately larger than in the original, suggesting it was the product of a separate workshop. As such, to some extent Gibbons successfully instigated an early typology of commemorative naval monuments. For more information on the monument see Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 79 – 80; Charlotte Davis, "Grinling Gibbons in context: the vitality of English seventeenth-century sculptural production", *The Sculpture Journal*, 29:3 (2020): 6 – 7, 14.

⁴⁹² He recorded that "he was neither well skilld or practized. in Marble or Brass. for which works he imployd the best Artists he could procure". V.38, B.M. 43, in The Walpole Society, "Vertue V", 59.

⁴⁹³ Green's assessment that in his statuary Gibbons "was not aspiring to be a Bernini, but simply a good tradesman" is one example. Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 20.

Gibbons' work was interpreted in his own age, and fails to explain the quantity – and qualities – of the figures that he produced. Indeed, figures comprise the vast majority of the decoration on the Campden monument (fig. 2.38).⁴⁹⁴ As this was Gibbons' first large-scale monumental commission, the profusion of figures may, in part, reflect his desire to publicly assert his competence as a statuary. The stances of the men follow the same poses that he would later use for statues to Charles II and James II (figs. 2.45, 2.22, and 2.23). Such continuity in the statuary coming from Gibbons' workshop implies that he maintained a strong control of the design process, even when statuary was executed by others.⁴⁹⁵

There is an interesting approach to the depiction of figures in the relief panels on the Campden monument. Gibbons has clustered the bodies into lyrical masses, overlapping limbs coil and entwine around the bodies just as branches would in his carved foliage. The result is an attractive and rich pattern of decorative detail. The figures have become vehicles for intricate surface texture in the deeply folded and draped clothing, providing areas of shallow relief work over the more deeply cut bodies, adding further texture to the finish of the reliefs. In such ways, he seems to have employed figures as he would any other object, as opportunities for decorative adornment and surface embellishment.

Less than ten years later, on the Beaufort monument, Gibbons had progressed to including more large-scale fully-worked figures surrounding the central effigy. These additional statues have been positioned at the foreground of the monument, displaying the confidence the patron had in his skill as a figure sculptor (fig. 2.39). Again, the bodies provide for exuberant displays of textural detail. Ribbons, cords, and belts are all depicted. A lace cravat and sleeves recall the virtuosity of Gibbons' limewood examples of lacework: every aspect of the carved lace has been covered in fine marks to replicate the texture of bound thread. It is a clear example of him transposing the minute detail that characterised his limewood carvings into his stonework, and further highlights the way that he approached the human figure: as a

⁴⁹⁴ In all, twenty-five figures adorn the monument.

⁴⁹⁵ They stand proudly with one leg forward. A level of contrapposto is achieved by a twisting in the shoulders that results in either a hand on the hip or reaching away from the body. It is commonly believed that Gibbons did not produce the bronze statues of Charles II and James II, subcontracting this aspect of the work to Dievot of Malines and Thomas Besnier. *BDS*, 513.

site for maximising decorative surface enrichment. The period's conception of the value of ornament, and what it conveyed, permeated the entirety of his sculpture. A lively and competitive sculptural market in a growing economy provided opportunities for Gibbons to become a wealthy member of society. He achieved this by providing sculpture that responded to the demand for enrichment, as a demarcation of the magnitude of those being decorated and commemorated.

Of all Gibbons' output his monuments have been the subject of the most criticism, all of which has been directed towards the figures.⁴⁹⁶ However, there has been a notable shift in the way that his monuments have been critiqued over time. There are remarkably few contemporaneous criticisms of his statuary. A couple of patrons complained about the likeness of his works, such as the Duke of Chandos, who complained that:

there never was so much reason from ye workmanship to allow of an abatement in this case – from ye judgement of every one who has seen ye figures.⁴⁹⁷

However, records indicate that Gibbons was paid in full following such disagreements – even when he disputed the criticism and refused to rectify the work.⁴⁹⁸ Joseph Addison's critical article in the *Spectator* falls outside of the small number of complaints by patrons. Addison's public criticism of his statue of Sir Cloudesley Shovell, on the Shovell monument, has been used by historians in more recent years to further the narrative that Gibbons could not sculpt figures (fig. 2.40).⁴⁹⁹ Yet Addison criticised the sculpture for its lack of decorum – not the likeness or fineness of the statuary. Indeed, many of the complaints by modern scholars follow the same format, criticising the sculpture for failing to adhere to

⁴⁹⁶ See Davis, "Grinling Gibbons in Context", 6 – 7.

⁴⁹⁷ Letter to Gibbons from the Duke of Chandos, 10 January 1718, The Huntington Library. Reproduced in Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 81. The Board at Christ's Hospital also made complaints regarding the likeness of their statue of Sir John Moore, which it must be noted was completed after substantial delays and without a sitting. See Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 135; Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 72.

⁴⁹⁸ As he did most robustly with the Duke of Chandos. See Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 81.

⁴⁹⁹ As Katharine Esdaile described: "it is the figure, not the dignified setting, which is absurd". Esterly attacked Gibbons for his "foppish, periwigged treatment" of Shovell. Esdaile, *English Monumental Sculpture*, 133; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 210.

anachronistic paradigms of heroic naval figures – that only emerged following Gibbons’ death – not the facility of the statuary.⁵⁰⁰

This case study has revealed Gibbons’ evolving approach to the enrichment of surface textures. In particular, I have aligned his attempts to enhance the value of his sculptural output with stylistic changes, reflecting the shifting contemporary values of the period. As such, I have charted the decline of heavily-worked surface enrichment in his late work, showing that this was increasingly replaced with classically derived sculptural ornament. By the early decades of the eighteenth century, classical architectural forms had reached widescale use in England, which drove a change in the types of sculptural ornament that were most valued.⁵⁰¹ This change was reflected in Gibbons’ practice: he no longer needed to evidence his intricate workmanship in order to communicate the value of his sculptural work. In the following section, I will pursue Gibbons’ late career, charting the highly significant period in which he moved to primarily working on large-scale sculptural ornament for architectural projects. I will position the development of an understanding of architectural ornament, as discussed in this case study, as a vital factor that positioned Gibbons as a sculptor capable of undertaking such contracts and investigate how he acquired this specialist knowledge.

Part Three: *Falling out of Fashion?*

The final years of Gibbons’ career, in the early decades of the eighteenth century, have traditionally been described in terms of failure. Scholars that positioned him as primarily a woodcarver have held that, by the new century, his style of carving had fallen out of fashion:

Fashions change more rapidly than habits, and public favourites who have held complete sway over the first generation that knew them find themselves

⁵⁰⁰ Walpole’s comment that “Men of honour dread such honour” started this trend. Horace Walpole, quoted in George Lewis Smyth, *Biographical Illustrations of Westminster Abbey*, (London: Whittaker & Co., 1843), 82. Whinney’s criticism, that “Gibbons has failed to suggest the dramatic character of the admiral’s career”, continued this tradition. MW, 126.

⁵⁰¹ Kerry Downes, *English Baroque Architecture*, (London: A. Zwemmer Ltd, 1966), 2.

slighted and ignored by the generation that is young and dominant in their old age.⁵⁰²

This narrative necessarily ignores the substantial commissions that Gibbons undertook in this period, which were predominantly in stone, instead placing the end of his career as synchronous with the end of him working in wood. In this section I will pay new attention to his later career, arguing that by diversifying his output he retained a position as one of the foremost sculptors in England. Furthermore, I posit that the preferment of Gibbons' woodcarvings by modern critics is not representative of the way that ornamental sculpture was valued in the period. Simon Jervis has investigated seventeenth-century ornament books and has tentatively described the value system that applied to ornament in the seventeenth century as follows:

architecture and architectural ornament are followed by pure ornament and then by ornament applied to title pages and to other special purposes. The classification of ornament is a notoriously inexact science but there are here signs of a hierarchy.⁵⁰³

Therefore, according to Jervis' matrix, in Gibbons' final years he achieved the apex of ornamental sculptural success by undertaking architectural ornament.⁵⁰⁴

It was only from the 1690s, once he had been appointed as Master Carver and Sculptor to the King, that he began to secure contracts for such work.⁵⁰⁵ This section considers these commissions to have been a long-term aspiration, one that required Gibbons to display new skillsets from those that his training had provided. The previous sections have considered how he displayed these in his sculpture prior to securing architecturally-focussed contracts. This section focusses attention on his transition to becoming a sculptor of architectural ornament and assesses the

⁵⁰² Tipping, *Grinling Gibbons and the Woodwork of his Age*, 241. See also Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 210 – 212; de Wit, *Grinling Gibbons*, 356.

⁵⁰³ Simon Jervis, "A Seventeenth-Century Book of Engraved Ornament". *The Burlington Magazine*, 128: 1005 (Dec 1986): 893.

⁵⁰⁴ The outline of a hierarchy for ornamental sculptural works here outlined is only intended as a representative guide to the values that might have influenced how Gibbons conceived of opportunities for career advancement rather than a definitive description of the importance of various modes of ornament. Furthermore, as it is limited to ornament, I do not here seek to position sculptural ornament in a hierarchy with other forms of sculptural expression.

⁵⁰⁵ Colvin outlined how central a royal position could be for furthering a career: "[T]he royal service was not only a welcome addition to their income, but also an advertisement. To be one of the king's craftsmen was to be visibly at the top of one's trade, and to enjoy almost automatically the patronage of the great who saw one's handiwork in Presence Chamber or Drawing Room." *KW*, 10.

influence of his professional network, investigating how architects and artists supported his move into different professional roles.

Gibbons' extant designs reveal a lack of confidence in formal architectural drawing and the application of classical sculptural ornament. The design for a memorial to Queen Mary (fig. 2.46) is a clear case in point. The architectural structure of the monument lacks a clear expression. The entablature sits as a straight horizontal line according to the orthogonal construction; however, the entablature is so simply outlined and so broadly coated in wash that it lacks a clear delineation of the recess implied, hinting at his inexperience in drawing architectural constructions. His difficulties in expressing three-dimensional architectural forms, and slightly haphazard approach to constructing an architectural design, are indications that – for all of his “exceptional fluency as a draughtsman” – he was not originally taught to draw and design in architectural terms.⁵⁰⁶ Further indications that he was not trained, or skilled, in formal architectural drawing are found in the extant designs for his work at St. Paul's Cathedral. Proposed designs for the choir and organ case provide strikingly two-dimensional representations of the ornamental schemes, which barely attempt to convey the carved depth of the designs (fig. 2.47). The architectural frames are scantily expressed, with single lines plotting the dimensions of the frame. There has been no attempt to illustrate the sculpture's setting, the mouldings, or the panelling as fully-realised aspects of the design. What is more, when drawings do include more complex depictions of the architectural setting for sculptural ornament, the architectural aspects were prepared by a professional draughtsman, such as Hawksmoor, before being passed to Gibbons who overdrew the ornamental details.⁵⁰⁷ Architectural drawing was evidently a limitation; however, this did not prevent him from eventually securing large-scale architectural contracts, such as at Blenheim Palace. Indeed, architects, including Wren and Hawksmoor, came to trust Gibbons' ability in the area of architectural ornament.

⁵⁰⁶ Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 38.

⁵⁰⁷ AG, 182 – 183.

Establishing a network

By the end of the seventeenth century, the largest architectural commissions in England were overseen by a small group of royal architects.⁵⁰⁸ Gibbons' career was shaped by the relationships that he established with architects, particularly those – such as Hugh May, Wren, and Hawksmoor – that worked for the crown. Architects could exert much influence over the careers of sculptors (and other artists). This was well-understood in the period. Upon meeting Gibbons, Evelyn quickly introduced him to May, Wren, and the king.⁵⁰⁹ Gibbons would go on to create a significant proportion of work for projects overseen by these two architects. From the outset the sculptor seems to have understood the importance of building relationships.⁵¹⁰ By maintaining successful working relationships with royal architects, Gibbons fostered support that can only have assisted in his securing of major sculptural roles at royal palaces and achieving a position in the royal household.⁵¹¹ Wren and May, therefore, were significant actors in supporting his reputational (and financial) successes.

However, a much wider professional network substantiated his reputation and assisted his elevation to a position of sculptural authority. He was well-versed in art, and established himself within a network of the most artistically engaged and discriminating voices of the period. When Evelyn was discussing with John Place Junior, his publisher, about a reprint of his translation of Roland Fréart's *A Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the Modern*, the following discussion took place:

you have some time since Acquainted me with your Intention of Reprinting the Parallel; desiering that I would Revise it, and Consider what Improvements may decently be added in relation to your general designe: As for the Parallel, I take it to be so very Usefull, and perfect in its kind, and as far as it pretends to (namely all that was material in those Ten Masters upon the Orders) that I cannot think of any thing it farther needes to render it more

⁵⁰⁸ Namely, Hugh May, Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor, and later John Vanbrugh.

⁵⁰⁹ Evelyn, *Diary*, 1 March 1671, 63.

⁵¹⁰ A letter by Vanbrugh, of 1710, relating to Blenheim specifically requests that Gibbon's bill be sent to Hawksmoor, indicating the closeness of these relationships. Letter reproduced in Frances Harris, "An Unpublished Letter of Sir John Vanbrugh", *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 50:4, (1987): 395 – 396.

⁵¹¹ For example, Wren is recorded as providing recommendations for other artists when positions became vacant in the royal household, such as Joseph Roberts who he recommended for the role of Sargent Painter. See Wren, *Calendar Treasury Payments 17-8-14*, 197, quoted in *KW*, 27.

Intelligible. As for what I have annex't to it, concerning Statues, My Good Friend Mr. Gibbon [*sic.*] would be Consulted; and for the Latter; so much as I conceive is necessary, I will take care to send you with your Interpolated Copy.⁵¹²

In this letter, Evelyn is shown to be endorsing – and advertising to others – Gibbons' presentation as an intellectual authority on sculpture, one who was capable of making adaptations to a treatise by one of the great Italian Renaissance authors on the subject of statuary. Nor was this the only occasion that Evelyn emphasised Gibbons' learned qualities, praising his musical talents on other occasions.⁵¹³ Music was part of the quadrivium of the liberal arts, and was then understood as “reflect[ing] the mathematical harmony and structure of the universe”.⁵¹⁴ Such praise shows Evelyn as positioning Gibbons according to contemporary ideals of virtuosity, which encompassed the acquisition of knowledge, the judicious application of knowledge, and mastery of the art of judgement.⁵¹⁵

Nor did Gibbons limit his presentation of artistic expertise to sculpture; he owned a substantial personal collection of paintings.⁵¹⁶ Vertue records that:

yet was his inclination to knowledge in every branch of his profession, that he was vigilant in Collecting the knowledge of prints drawings and pictures as much as his circumstances would allow, in order to converse on that Subject with tollerable judgement.⁵¹⁷

As well as attending picture sales in the capital, which were also attended by the social elite, Gibbons made attempts with Walter Parry, the King's Keeper of Paintings, and others to break into the emergent picture dealing trade as an importer and a seller.⁵¹⁸ By entering into partnership with Parry, he was able to capitalise on

⁵¹² Letter from John Evelyn to John Place Junior, August 17, 1696. Reproduced in Douglas Chambers et.al. *The Letterbooks of John Evelyn*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 1095 – 1097.

⁵¹³ Evelyn, *Diary*, 18 January, 1671, 61.

⁵¹⁴ H. G. Koenigsberger, *Politicians and Virtuosi*, (London: The Hambleton Press, 1986), 182.

⁵¹⁵ Sorana Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 81.

⁵¹⁶ Vertue, V, 25b, B.M. 31b, reproduced in The Walpole Society, “Vertue 1”, *The Eighteenth Volume of The Walpole Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929 – 1930), 126.

⁵¹⁷ Vertue, V5, B.M. 83, *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵¹⁸ Gibbons was one of four men to each contribute £250 towards Thomas Manby's travel to Italy in order to purchase paintings in 1685-6, following which they arranged a picture sale. “The Answer of Thomas Manby”, 6 March 1692/3, TNA C 8/432/57; Grinling Gibbons and Walter Parry, *A Catalogue of Divers Excellent Italian Pictures of the Most Eminent Masters*, (London, 1686). Vertue records Gibbons buying artwork at various sales which were also attended by members of the aristocracy including the Duke of Devonshire and the Duke of Somerset. Vertue, V35b, B.M. 40b, in

the “advertisement” that royal patronage amounted to; the pair attempted to transfer the “almost [automatic] patronage of the great” from their established practical professions to their wider business dealings in the commercial art trade.⁵¹⁹

Gibbons further elevated his virtuoso reputation as a founding member of the exclusive artistic network, the Society of the Virtuosi of St. Luke.⁵²⁰ The exclusive (and expensive) society was focussed on fine dining and socialising, a space in which “gentlemen and practising artists could meet socially as ostensible equals”, in contrast to the more practical guilds of the same name that he would have been acquainted with in the Netherlands in his youth.⁵²¹ However, it did offer artistic advice and members were involved in attempts to establish an art academy.⁵²² The membership included some of the most acclaimed names in art and connoisseurship including Peter Lely, James Thornhill, Michael Dahl, Vertue, and William Talman.⁵²³ Prior to the formal establishment of an academy of art, the club provided a social network for the most influential – and affluent – artists and connoisseurs in the capital. As such, Gibbons’ membership seems to have functioned in similar ways to how Etty’s social networks had functioned in York: supporting his gentlemanly reputation, establishing his position as a taste-maker in society, and enhancing his social circle.⁵²⁴

These anecdotes reveal that, by the 1690s, Gibbons had provided England with new paradigms for how sculptors could present themselves as valued members of society. Rather than endorsing his abilities as a practical sculptor, these social networks reinforced his intellectual capabilities and elevated his social position. The deeply

The Walpole Society, “Vertue V”, 55. For more on the emergent market, see Glanville, “The Art Market”, 14 – 15.

⁵¹⁹ *KW*, 10. Their reputations as artists with ties to the crown may also have lent credibility to their picture-dealing operation, overcoming some of the public’s anxieties that dealers sold fakes. See Koenraad Jonckheere, “Supply and Demand: Some Notes on the Economy of Seventeenth Century Connoisseurship” in *Art Market and Connoisseurship*, ed. Anna Tummers and Koenraad Jonckheere (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 70 – 71.

⁵²⁰ Martin Myrone, “Society of the Virtuosi of St. Luke”, *ODNB*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/96316>, published online 24 May 2007, accessed 19 October 2022, n.p. See also Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 176 – 177.

⁵²¹ Good, “Early English Literature on the Connoisseurship of Pictures”, 152 – 156, for the quote, 156; Myrone, “Virtuosi of St. Luke”, n.p.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 176; Myrone, “Virtuosi of St. Luke”, n.p.

⁵²⁴ As discussed in section 1.

hierarchical framework of seventeenth-century society meant that the endorsement of elite social groups, such as the Virtuosi of St. Luke, and intellectual figureheads, such as Evelyn, both increased Gibbons' respectability and substantiated his claims to an intellectual understanding of art based on classical and continental exemplars: exactly the type of artistic understanding that architects such as Wren most desired from his collaborators.⁵²⁵

Developing working relationships

Many scholars have commented on how long it took Wren to employ Gibbons on any of his projects, with some suggesting that Wren had not been impressed by his carving style when he first saw it in 1671.⁵²⁶ I suggest the delay between Wren first seeing Gibbons' work and employing him may have been more practical. At the outset of Gibbons' career the majority of Wren's sculptural requirements were for different types of sculptural work than those that Gibbons displayed when he first arrived in London. The intimate scale of his early carvings would have been completely ineffective at the scales required for adorning building façades, such as the parish churches, which took a significant amount of Wren's attention in the 1670s and 80s. Wren was not responsible for the interior ornamentation of these buildings, although was often consulted; instead it was organised and paid for directly by the parishioners.⁵²⁷ Nor was Gibbons an appropriate choice for much of the interior ornamentation of these buildings, as his prices were prohibitive for the majority of parishes.

However, when Wren did require intimate interior ornamentation, Gibbons was employed. Following several years of employment with May at Windsor in the 1670s, by the 1680s Gibbons was working under Wren's direction at Whitehall Palace.⁵²⁸ By the 1690s, Gibbons was involved in the majority of Wren's projects

⁵²⁵ As outlined in his first tract. Wren, "Tract I", in Soo, *Wren's Tracts*, 153 – 157.

⁵²⁶ Evelyn, *Diary*, 19 February, 1671, 62. Whinney, for example, suggested that Wren may have found Gibbons' style "a little bizarre, perhaps even a little shocking". Whinney, *Grinling Gibbons in Cambridge*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 4. See also Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 22 – 23.

⁵²⁷ Mark Kirby, "Furnishing Sir Christopher Wren's Churches", (Doctoral thesis, University of York, 2018), 18 – 19.

⁵²⁸ *BDS*, 516 – 517.

including Trinity College, Cambridge; St. Paul's Cathedral; and Hampton Court Palace.⁵²⁹ In all these cases Gibbons was employed to create moments of particularly sumptuous sculptural detailing, which serve as the apogee for the wider interior ornamental scheme. When Wren had work that required such interior ornament he evidently saw Gibbons as a highly favoured candidate for the work, suggesting that Wren had a clear understanding – and appreciation – of Gibbons' sculptural skillset.

In the 1690s, and contemporaneous with the peak of Gibbons' social capital, he transitioned into large-scale sculptural projects for stone architectural ornament. Significantly, these were first offered to Gibbons on projects that Wren undertook in his capacity as Royal Surveyor: on the façades at St. Paul's Cathedral and the proposed rebuilding schemes for Whitehall Palace. I propose that Wren was a central figure in assisting Gibbons to develop the necessary skills for such work, which he had long sought. I further suggest that Wren's nurturing of him in the 1680s and early 1690s was central to increasing Gibbons' social capital, which was only boosted by his own shrewd networking. These elements coalesced in positioning Gibbons as the prime candidate for securing the position of Sculptor to the King, which cemented his position as the most valued sculptor in England in the final years of the seventeenth century. Once he reached this vaunted position, his reputation was secured, allowing him the freedom to obtain yet more large-scale commissions in the coming years, most notably at Blenheim Palace. The following case study investigates how Wren influenced Gibbons' architectural sculpture during this transitional phase in the 1690s.

Case Study: *Wren's Influence in Gibbons' Sculpture*

By the early 1690s, Gibbons' work for Wren's projects had increased dramatically. In this period he undertook work at Cambridge University, Hampton Court Palace, and St. Paul's Cathedral, emerging for the first time as a sculptor of significant ornamental elements of the architectural exterior. This transition moved Gibbons'

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, 518.

workshop to predominantly practising in stone. This case study focusses on his efforts in this area, initially for Wren at St. Paul's Cathedral, and follows the lasting traces of Wren's influence on the latter years of Gibbons' career.

Gibbons' work at St. Paul's Cathedral

When Gibbons arrived on the St. Paul's works, Wren had already established a strong team of respected designers, draughtsmen, and creators. The contracts that Gibbons received for decorating the exterior of the cathedral and the choir were for ornaments that had, to varying degrees, been under Wren's (and others') consideration for the past twenty years.⁵³⁰ As such, it is hardly surprising that preparatory drawings by Hawksmoor, displaying designs for the choir and organ case, were being created before Gibbons' hand appears (fig. 2.48). These drawings influenced the work that Gibbons would eventually create, directly informing the designs that he and Hawksmoor later worked on together (such as fig. 2.47).⁵³¹ Decorative elements from the preparatory designs for the organ case foreshadow elements of the choir stalls as built: in particular the tower profiles with candelabra finials. The multiple drawings highlight the numerous phases of design and revision that these ornaments underwent. The final creation involves a high degree of integration between the decorative ornament and the architectural framework, from the consoles and brackets to the columns, indicating that the final form – and its decoration – were developed in complete unison, exemplifying that over a significant period of time a deeply collaborative process of design was undertaken between Gibbons, Hawksmoor, and Wren.⁵³²

The work produced for the choir is marked by new forms of ornament for Gibbons, which display his increasing understanding of the relationship between an

⁵³⁰ As discussed in more detail in chapter one.

⁵³¹ Kerry Downes has identified that Hawksmoor "took charge of the drawing office" at St. Paul's in the 1690s. Kerry Downes, *Hawksmoor*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), 17.

⁵³² The working relationship between Gibbons and Hawksmoor seems to have been initiated in 1686, in the April Hawksmoor had witnessed the contract between Gibbons and Arnold Quellin for the altar in the Roman Catholic Chapel, Whitehall Palace, and a couple of months later Gibbons is recorded in the Parish Church Office where he was most likely visiting Wren and Hawksmoor. Gibbons witnessed a payment to the painter Edward Bird for St. Martin Ludgate in September 1686. Parish Church Accounts, MS. 25539:3, 18. For the chapel contract see PRO, Works 5/145, 184 – 185, The National Archives, London, reproduced in AG, 171.

architectural object and its ornament. When working on the choir, Gibbons was for the first time involved with architects in the simultaneous creation of a freestanding architectonic construction and its ornamental scheme. As a result, the ornamental carving was an extension of the architectural form itself. The lyrical swellings of the carvings, a common theme in Gibbons' floral swags and drops that were unrelated to their architectural settings, became in the choir a swelling melody that responded to the stalls, answering the rhythm of the seats as demarcated by the constructed geometry (fig. 2.49).

His stonework for St. Paul's was developed in a similar context. The exterior panels beneath the lower windows of the building had been present in designs from the 1670s, even appearing as a detail for the west front overdoors in the Greek Cross design.⁵³³ Designs for the ornamental panels, pre-empting Gibbons' arrival, had been created by Wren and Edward Pearce when designing the south portico, as discussed in Chapter 1, and later designs appear by Hawksmoor (c.1685-7) in the Revised Design drawings.⁵³⁴ It is therefore not sensible to consider Gibbons' ornament as a drastic act of individualism on the part of the sculptor. However, it is striking that a sculptor with no masonic links was given the contract for this decoration, signifying that Wren considered the ornamental panels as significant points of ornament on a par with the only other architectural ornaments to be undertaken by leading sculptors: the north, south, and west tympanum reliefs. Indeed, the panels – the most human level of the architectural ornament – serve as a form of exegesis for the wider ornamental scheme, introducing a tripartite garlanded ornamental scheme that is repeated in the aprons above the windows on the exterior, between the capitals on the interior and exterior, and other significant aspects of interior decoration such as in panels above the north and south doors (figs. 2.50 and 2.51). The close relationship between these panels and the wider ornamental scheme indicate the extent to which Gibbons' first architectural ornamental works were created with the close oversight of Wren. Interestingly, Kerry Downes has noted that Wren's ornament for St. Paul's reveals his "concern with surface texture and enrichment",

⁵³³ See AS. II.22 Elevation from W, drawn by Edward Woodroffe. Reproduced in AG, 50.

⁵³⁴ See AS. II.29. S Elevation, drawn by Hawksmoor. *Ibid.*, 68.

terms that typified Gibbons' carving style in the early 1690s, possibly explaining Wren's choice of sculptor for the highlights of the ornamental scheme.⁵³⁵

In contrast to his early work, these floral carvings display an overt symmetry and clarity of design expressed by a focus on repetition, regular spacing, and more modulated designs than his virtuoso carved works. Gibbons' embracing of a logical approach to ornament, which bears out a mathematical harmony in its regular features, might have been accompanied by explanations from Wren regarding his approach to architecture, particularly that beauty could be expressed through divine fundamental principles of geometry, which he understood as the expression of "Uniformity and Proportion".⁵³⁶

The influence of Wren's approach to ornament

Indeed, a more formal and integrated approach to ornament within its architectural setting only became more apparent in Gibbons' work in the years following his time with Wren at St. Paul's, highlighting how formative the experience must have been. Hawksmoor's Orangery at Kensington Palace, ornamented with Gibbons' carvings in c.1707, provides one such example (fig. 2.52). Here, Hawksmoor and Gibbons were again working together on a design that likely originated with Wren.⁵³⁷ Gibbons' floral carvings are clearly contained by their architectural setting, but his carvings also explicitly respond to the architectural ornament: the cornice projects to meet the outermost edges of the decorative ornament. His decorative carving is also more architectural in nature. Light and airy floral swags remain in the centre of the carving, but this is framed by intricately scrolled consoles on either side, bolstering the fragile floral sculpture with a solidity and substance that extends the form of the pilasters sited directly below. Such solid masses of carved wood also provide Gibbons' sculpture with clean vertical exterior lines that cohere with the sleek linear decorative scheme that Hawksmoor delineated across the architectural setting,

⁵³⁵ Downes, *English Baroque Architecture*, 30.

⁵³⁶ Wren, "Tract I", in Soo, *Wren's Tracts*, 154.

⁵³⁷ The Oxford Dictionary of Architecture, "Hawksmoor, Nicholas", *The Oxford Dictionary of Architecture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021) <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191918742.001.0001/acref-9780191918742-e-2208?rskey=f196wq&result=2669>, accessed 20th September 2022.

displaying a level of integration between the architectural interior and the ornament that was not present in Gibbons' interior carvings prior to the 1690s.⁵³⁸

Such work was necessarily predicated by considerations of the overall architectural scheme, indicating a close working relationship between architect and sculptor. Gibbons and Hawksmoor established exactly such a relationship together under Wren's oversight. The relationship was evidently fruitful, Gibbons worked alongside Hawksmoor for nearly two decades.⁵³⁹ Indeed, all Gibbons' architectural sculpture would be created in collaboration with Hawksmoor: at St. Paul's, across the plans for Whitehall Palace, and at Blenheim Palace.

Tom Foxall has already noted Wren's keen belief in the value of educating his workforce.⁵⁴⁰ Hawksmoor was deeply influenced by the training he received under Wren.⁵⁴¹ Gibbons' changing approach to ornament, over the course of roughly a decade working with Hawksmoor, indicates that he too was offered a practical understanding of the principles that underpinned Wren's conception of ornament. In particular, and as reflected in the changing ways that Gibbons designed ornament, he developed an appreciation for design that allowed for a formal dialogue between decorative sculpture and architectural ornament. Specifically, he seems to have no longer been assigned an area for ornament, which he decorated to the fullest. Instead, Gibbons worked much more closely with the wider architectural ornamental scheme, augmenting his design process in order to create decorations that responded to the greater rationale of their architectural setting.

By 1710, at Blenheim Palace, Gibbons produced chimneypieces and doorcases that have been considered to show a complete change in character (fig. 2.53).⁵⁴² There is a near-total rejection of natural forms. Instead, ornament is expressed in geometric terms: abstracted forms, square masses, and clean lines. The surfaces are smooth, the

⁵³⁸ The new focus on the line is a further element reflected in Wren's discussion of beauty. See Wren, "Tract I", in Soo, *Wren's Tracts*, 154 – 155.

⁵³⁹ Working together at Kensington Palace, St. Paul's Cathedral, and Blenheim between c.1690 and c.1712. *BDS*, 516 – 518; *BDBA*, 496 – 500.

⁵⁴⁰ Tom Foxall, "Schooled by Wren, or a School by Wren? The Conception and Design of Christ's Hospital Writing School, London", *Architectural History*, 51, (2008): 91.

⁵⁴¹ Vaughan Hart, *Nicholas Hawksmoor, Rebuilding Ancient Wonders*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 61.

⁵⁴² Green, *Grinling Gibbons*, 126; Beard, *Grinling Gibbons*, 47.

expression of the carving is carried purely in the disposition of mass and line, a particular characteristic of Vanbrugh's designs, the lead architect at Blenheim.⁵⁴³ Gibbons had transitioned to creating an entirely different type of ornament to his early floral examples. Nor is it reasonable to suggest that he was not an active participant in creating the designs for these works. An alternate design for the saloon remains in his hand, indicating that he continued to be involved as a designer (fig. 2.54). This drawing was again created jointly between Hawksmoor and Gibbons, further indicating the lasting relationship between the two men and the specific role that Gibbons played in the design process: elaborating the ornamental schemes for architectural bodies created by the architect. Furthermore, elements of the ornamental forms that appear in these works had appeared in Gibbons' earlier works. The *St. Stephen* panel, discussed in the first case study, includes the same scallop-headed arch ornaments, decorated brackets, and giant Corinthian order above fluted columns. Gibbons had been independently producing work according to the changing styles for many years before he started working for Vanbrugh. The change to a more architectural style of ornament had been initiated in the 1690s, the period in which Gibbons started working closely with Wren, across a range of his most significant architectural projects.

The commonalities between the distinctly different works that Gibbons produced at St. Paul's, Kensington, and Blenheim is not found in their sculptural forms but in what they display of their creator's approach to his role as a sculptor. His relationships with architects offered a new way for him to conceptualise the role of the decorative sculptor – and a new way of working – one which was fundamentally based on a collaborative process between sculptor and architect. Through these close working relationships he developed an appreciation for how sculptural ornament could be integrated within the wider architectural design, creating ornament that acted as points of exegesis that précised the wider ornamental scheme. This change was predicated on Gibbons learning from Wren's conception of sculpture's role in architectural schemes, positioning their relationship as one which was intellectually

⁵⁴³ However, James Legard has emphasised how central Hawksmoor was to the design and building process at Blenheim, arguing that Gibbons would have collaborated with Hawksmoor more closely than Vanbrugh. See James Legard, "Vanbrugh, Blenheim Palace, and the Meanings of Baroque Architecture", (doctoral thesis, The University of York, 2013), 35.

based. By being responsive to the changing values placed on architectural sculpture, Gibbons exhibited the role of the sculptor as one that was elevated through architectural understanding.

Conclusions

Gibbons' work has been exceptionalised by prior scholarship that used anachronistic value judgements, privileging elements and materials in ways that did not reflect the values of the period. However, this does not mean that his career was not exceptional. Indeed, I have argued that he forged new ways of working as a sculptor in seventeenth-century England. By looking beyond the parameters of his virtuoso woodworks I have reconnected him with the changing sculptural values that drove his career, rediscovering the ways that he forged a new conception of the social and artistic value of the sculptor in seventeenth-century England.

As such, this chapter has traced the continental influences in Gibbons' early years, influences that provided him with different conceptions of the professional role of the sculptor, on which he capitalised once he emigrated to England. I reconsidered his career by highlighting how early he transitioned into a broad range of sculptural modes. I also provided new insights through an investigation of the way that his understanding of, and approaches to, his work became influenced by the emergent role of the architect. I posited that his awareness of the integral relationship between sculptural detail and its environs became the defining characteristic of his later work, one that positioned him not as an individualistic virtuoso but as a collaborator. It is worth noting that classical architecture was more widely embraced in Gibbons' birthplace than it was in England, and yet it was not until he had been in England for some time that he developed his sculptural practice in this direction.⁵⁴⁴ I have argued that it was Wren's influence that caused Gibbons to practise sculpture according to an entirely different set of values than those defined by his early sculpture.

⁵⁴⁴ See Mark Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture its Rise and Fall, 1540 – 1640*, (New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by the Yale University Press, 2009), 175.

Alongside Gibbons' development of relationships with architects, he evidences a decline of the traditional relationships for sculptors of the period. He appears not to have associated with masons. Instead, he positioned himself and his work within an intellectual and cultured elite comprised of artists, picture collectors, and dealers, as well as members of the Royal Society and the aristocracy. Such relationships provided a network that supported an elevated social standing that cohered with the elevated values that he attached to his professional output.

Chapter Three: *Caius Gabriel Cibber: Emulating Italian Paradigms*

Introduction

In the final years of the seventeenth century, Cibber adorned the two most magnificent buildings to be produced in England in the period; Hampton Court Palace and St. Paul's Cathedral. Moreover, the figurative decoration he created for the tympanums on both buildings was a novel departure from the heraldic forms and escutcheons that had, until his examples, comprised the traditional ornament for English buildings. Despite being instrumental in creating such a change in English architectural design, Cibber is not a prominent figure of scholarly interest in sculptural history.⁵⁴⁶ His entry in the *Dictionary of British Sculptors*, revised in 2009, includes only marginally more information than that compiled by George Vertue and first published by Horace Walpole in 1762.⁵⁴⁷

In terms of Cibber's sculptural output, his long career (spanning over thirty years of independent work in England alone) has been overshadowed by a singular work from the 1670s, the figures of *Melancholy and Raving Madness*, created for the gates of Bethlem Hospital (fig. 3.1).⁵⁴⁸ It is for these figures that he was romantically adopted by nineteenth-century writers such as Allan Cunningham, who claimed him as inhabiting "the earliest indications of the appearance of a distinct and natural spirit in sculpture".⁵⁴⁹ Such conceptions of his role within the history of English sculpture persisted into the twentieth century, with E. Beresford Chancellor characterising him in 1911 as "the first artist without the additional labour of an artisan".⁵⁵⁰ These are striking statements that posit Cibber's central role in the emancipation of sculpture from the mechanical crafts. Despite such assessments, Cibber himself, and his career

⁵⁴⁶ Margaret Whinney, for example, charted Cibber as "not very exciting", of interest only because his work displayed influences from both the northern and southern Renaissance traditions. MW, 115.

⁵⁴⁷ BDS, 274 – 277; Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, 165 – 167.

⁵⁴⁸ In the period they were "the most famous architectural sculpture in England". Christine Stevenson, *Medicine and Magnificence*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 51.

⁵⁴⁹ Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, Vol. III, (London: John Murray, 1830), 26.

⁵⁵⁰ E. Beresford Chancellor. *The Lives of the British Sculptors*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1911), 61.

more broadly, have not been privileged with the degree of attention one might expect. While Henry Moore found these same sculptures fascinating, since the mid-century interest in Cibber has largely continued to decline.⁵⁵¹ Indeed, there is only one publication dedicated to his life and work, *Caius Gabriel Cibber 1630 – 1700: His Life and Work*, Harald Faber’s contribution from 1926. Questions relating to how Cibber arrived as one of Wren’s close collaborators, undertaking novel sculptural decoration – on his most important projects – has not previously been subject to close interrogation.

In this chapter I will argue that Cibber is a seminal figure for English sculpture, as the writers above attest, but that this is not solely as a result of the novel emotion he conveyed in the figures of *Raving and Melancholy Madness*, or their subsequent influence on artists as disparate as William Hogarth and Moore.⁵⁵² Instead, I argue that Cibber’s significant contribution to English sculpture is that he fashioned a career in seventeenth-century England that was built on Italian paradigms of patronage, enacting artistic ideals that situated sculpture as an artform rather than a mechanical performance. By working within such concepts, Cibber shifted the position of sculpture in the English cultural landscape, paving the way for the ‘birth’ of an English school of sculpture in the decades following his death.⁵⁵³

Part 1: *An International Education*

Biographical accounts of Cibber agree that in the years before he arrived in England he trained under his father, a cabinet maker, in his native Denmark, before undertaking further sculptural training in Italy.⁵⁵⁴ However, once Cibber arrived in

⁵⁵¹ MW, 115. Henry Moore misattributed a sculpture as one of Cibber’s works for Bethlem in Henry Moore, *Henry Moore: My Ideas, Inspiration, and Life as an Artist*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books), 1986, 68.

⁵⁵² Jane E. Kromm, ‘Hogarth’s Madmen’, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 48 (1985): 238.

⁵⁵³ Burnage, ‘The British School of Sculpture’, 21.

⁵⁵⁴ MW, 110; *BDS*, 274 – 275; Harald Faber, *Caius Gabriel Cibber 1630 – 1700, His Life and Work*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926), 2 – 3. It is worth noting that cabinet making was an elite craft in the period that “used new woods, such as walnut and mahogany, and new techniques, such as

England, accounts of his career progress become highly contested. This section positions the significance of his early working experiences on his successive working practices and career development. I establish a connection between Cibber's sculptural output in England and his prior experiences in Italy, including the specific sculptural training he received and the particular patronage and guild structures to which he was introduced. By considering these aspects, I argue for Cibber's sculptural career in England to be considered according to the continental models in which he was trained.

Establishing Cibber's hand

In 1969, following the first exhibition dedicated to sculptors' drawings at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Physick wrote:

A volume of designs in the department of Prints and Drawings was acquired in 1898 as the work of Cibber. But for a variety of reasons it is now considered that the drawings were more likely to have been the work of members of the Stanton family, master masons of Holborn.⁵⁵⁵

Despite Physick's fifty year-old assertion, the collection of drawings referred to continue to be listed as the work of Cibber, perpetuating a mid-nineteenth-century misattribution.⁵⁵⁶

The collection entirely relates to designs for funerary monuments, which range from modest plaques with ornamented borders to grand wall-mounted tombs with life-sized figures. The variety in the designs, and budgets catered to, is matched by the variety of drawing techniques and abilities that are displayed in the collection. In particular, frequently recurring motifs, such as cherubs, display markedly different treatments across the several drawings, with bodies that are variously fleshily

venering". Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660 – 1760*, (London: Routledge, 1996), 33.

⁵⁵⁵ Physick, *Designs for English Sculpture*, 26. Physick also specifically outlined that "Cibber's style of drawing was different" to these drawings. See John Physick, "Tracing the Work of William Stanton", *Country Life*, (1968): 88.

⁵⁵⁶ Accession numbers D.1100 – 1898 – D.1139-1898. For an example see Victoria and Albert Museum, *Untitled*, June 30, 2009, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O902748/untitled-drawing-cibber-caius-gabriel/> accessed 9 November 2021. The misattribution dates at least since the sale of the drawings at Sotheby & Wilkinson's on 27 November, 1861. See Peter Cunningham, "Caius Gabriel Cibber, or Cibbert, Sculptor", *The Builder*, September 5 (1868): 655 – 656.

modelled, with indications of the musculature of the limbs, or alternatively with bodies that have been elaborated by barely more than a few simple lines (figs. 3.2 and 3.3). The finish of the drawings is similarly inconsistent, some adopt strikingly heavy washes while others use hatching to emphasise the contrast of materials and shadows, only providing the slightest indications of depth beyond their carefully worked lines, others still are left unshaded (fig. 3.4). In some cases, shading provides a bold emphasis to the elaborate surrounds, positioning the design against an imagined wall, others make no such attempt (figs. 3.3 and 3.5).⁵⁵⁷ In short, Physick's assertion that this collection of drawings was the product of more than one hand must be correct.

There are signed drawings by Cibber in other collections. These drawings, rather than the Victoria and Albert volume, must be taken as the standard for establishing the traits of Cibber's hand. The earliest signed drawing relates to a proposed monument for the chapel of Lamport Hall (fig. 3.6). On the reverse of the drawing is a description of the measurements, materials, finish, and charges; it is dated to the 12 March 1670/1 (fig. 3.7).⁵⁵⁸ The document reveals several significant aspects of his penmanship. The design is scored and measured, with a scale bar roughly indicating one foot to an inch. Pencil, ink, and wash are overlaid to produce a competent, though heavy, rendering of the design in three dimensional space. The design is purely architectural. A simple Doric structure has been created to house the polished marble tablets ready for inscribing. On the reverse, Cibber's handwriting is free and extended, with a lack of concern for accuracy which is mirrored in his generous use of wash in the drawing.

This drawing reveals that, by 1670, Cibber was already well-versed in the contemporary modes of presenting architectural drawings. These are drawing skills that, in the immediate years following Wren's appointment to the Office of Works, were still rare in England.⁵⁵⁹ It must have been either while training in Italy – or even

⁵⁵⁷ For more on the differing styles of the Stanton family see Whinney and Millar, *English Art*, 256 – 258.

⁵⁵⁸ I.L. 3079/A.46, Northamptonshire County Record Office, Northampton.

⁵⁵⁹ As Wren's comments in a letter to Nathaniel Hawes in 1694 made clear: "our Natives want not a Genius, but education in that which is the Foundation of all Mechanick Arts, a practice in designing or drawing". Reproduced in The Wren Society. *Designs by Sir Chr. Wren for Westminster Abbey*, Vol. XI, (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1934), 74.

during his extended involvement with the Stone family upon arriving in England – that Cibber was trained to draw in such a manner.⁵⁶⁰ Nicholas Stone the elder is well-known as both an architect and a sculptor, and he is believed to have trained all his sons to draw.⁵⁶¹ John Stone, with whom Cibber worked closely through much of the 1660s, was remembered by his cousin as an “Exelent Architectt”, and the works that Cibber is recoded as working on with John in these years are all architectural in nature.⁵⁶² This drawing extends Cibber’s repertoire into a more architectural realm than he is currently remembered for, although this work in particular seems never to have been produced.⁵⁶³

Placing Cibber’s career aims

The outset of the 1670s marked a significant period in Cibber’s career more broadly. He had recently remarried into a gentrified family, one which came with ancestral ties to William of Wykeham (the legendary architect).⁵⁶⁴ He and his new wife were living in the salubrious and fashionable Southampton Square, which had a “dominant aristocratic presence”, and Cibber had recently established his independent workshop.⁵⁶⁵ Cibber’s marriage conferred on him substantial wealth, which placed his means far beyond that of his professional contemporaries.⁵⁶⁶ His elevated financial position was mirrored by his social network; he is recorded in early accounts from Robert Hooke’s diary as a dining companion of Sir George Ent,

⁵⁶⁰ It has even been suggested that Cibber’s interactions with the Stone family began in Rome. Chancellor, *British Sculptors*, 63.

⁵⁶¹ Thanks to the notebooks preserved at Sir John Soane’s Museum, evidence is particularly rich for the skills of his son Nicholas. However, drawings also remain by John, which indicate that an ability to draw was shared by all the children.

⁵⁶² Charles Stokes, the cousin of the Stones, made this comment in the *Notebook of the Stones*, Sir John Soane’s Museum reproduced in Walter Lewis Spiers, “The Note-Book and Account Book of Nicholas Stone”, *The Seventh Volume of the Walpole Society*, (1918 – 1919): 138. Cibber is recorded with John at Chesterton House, Warwickshire, a location that has long ties with the Stone family as architects thanks to the earlier Chesterton Windmill, believed to have been designed by Nicholas Stone in 1632. *BDBA*, 989 – 990; Adam White, “A Biographical Dictionary of London Tomb Sculptors c. 1560 – 1660”, *The Walpole Society*, Vol. LXI (1998 – 1999): 115; Colvin, *Essays*, 179 – 188; Howard Colvin, “Chesterton, Warwickshire”, *Architectural Review*, Vol. 118, Iss. 704, (1955): 115 – 116.

⁵⁶³ Physick, *Designs for English Sculpture*, 26.

⁵⁶⁴ Faber, *Cibber*, 76. For an account of Wykeham’s lasting influence as the paradigmatic English architect see Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 23 – 26.

⁵⁶⁵ McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London*, 198; *BDS*, 274.

⁵⁶⁶ Totalling £6000. George Vertue, MS. 23.069 quoted in “Vertue I”. *The Eighteenth Volume of the Walpole Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929 – 1930): 91.

who lived nearby.⁵⁶⁷ By socialising in private spaces alongside gentrified acquaintances, Cibber evidences an elevated social network when compared with other artificers, whom Hooke typically recorded meeting at workplaces and coffee-shops.⁵⁶⁸

Cibber also approached the securing of contracts in a different way to his peers. In 1667, as soon as he was working independently, Cibber had established a minor role working as a sculptor on royal projects.⁵⁶⁹ In the same year, he was suggested as the sculptor for all the twenty-seven statues that were to be erected on the new Royal Exchange.⁵⁷⁰ Although Cibber was unsuccessful in securing this contract, he was proffered as a suitable candidate for this work by the then Lord Chamberlain, Edward Montagu, Earl of Manchester. It is significant that he attempted to further his career on the basis of established ties with powerful influencers at the Court of Charles II.⁵⁷¹ Furthermore, on being rejected for this contract – on the basis that as the building was not begun it was too early to consider the ornamental statuary – Cibber responded by putting himself forward for the role of architect, competing against established architects, including the City Surveyors.⁵⁷² Despite being unsuccessful, it was not a completely ludicrous proposal. The Lamport drawing, discussed above, establishes that Cibber was equipped with the drawing skills that were becoming expected for such significant architectural roles, and his previous work as a foreman for John Stone reveals his prior experience overseeing architectural projects. The speed with which Cibber asserted his capability for such significant roles upon establishing his independent workshop reveals his early ambition to undertake both sculptural and architectural commissions for the most significant spaces in London.

⁵⁶⁷ In the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields. Harold Cook, ‘Sir George Ent’, *ODNB*, 11 November, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/8823>, accessed 25 October, 2022; Hooke, *Diary*, 1 October, 1672, 3 October, 1672, 12 October, 1672, 8 – 10.

⁵⁶⁸ Matthew Walker has identified that Hooke’s friendships of this elevated nature tended to be limited to Royal Society members. See Matthew Walker, ‘The Limits of Collaboration: Robert Hooke, Christopher Wren and the designing of the Monument to the Great Fire’, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, 65 (2011): 121- 143, 123.

⁵⁶⁹ *BDS*, 274; Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 162.

⁵⁷⁰ Faber, *Cibber*, 31.

⁵⁷¹ Cibber’s supporters at court also included Charles Sackville, the sixth Earl of Dorset and William Cavendish, the Earl (later Duke) of Devonshire. *Ibid.*, 12, 16. For more on how influential these supporters could be see *KW*, 26 – 27.

⁵⁷² Walker, ‘The Limits of Collaboration’, 125.

This attempt reveals an entirely different approach to securing work than those used by his peers. While training in Italy, Cibber was exposed to a sculptural profession that functioned in different ways to the profession in England in the seventeenth century. In Rome, while sculpture was still nominally regulated by a guild, known as the *Arte dei Marmorari*, there was also an established academy, the *Accademia di San Luca*.⁵⁷³ Peter Lukehart's research into the seventeenth-century manuscript, *Discorso Sopra la Scultura*, has established that in Rome the practice of sculpture was finely regulated within a skills-based framework of designations: "*scarpellino, intagliatore, modellatore, and scultore*", which translate to "carver, engraver, model maker, and sculptor".⁵⁷⁴ He notes that a sculptor's placement in this hierarchical system was dependant on their mastery of *disegno*. Therefore, while sculpture in London remained nominally under the control of the Masons' Company, and was therefore generally designated as an aspect of building, in Rome, sculpture had a specific guild dedicated to its craft, and a place within a framework of education and fraternity in which it was recognised as an art. Comparative to painting and architecture, sculpture was understood as an expression of the master-skill of *disegno*.

Alongside these cultural and structural differences in the training of sculptors, Italy – and Rome in particular – functioned on a system of patronage to a far greater degree than London society.⁵⁷⁵ Jill Burke and Michael Bury go so far as to assert that "[w]hatever their pre-existing links, to flourish in Rome, artists needed to be as adept as any other newcomer at 'playing' court life."⁵⁷⁶ Piers Baker Bates has also identified this phenomenon, emphasising "the importance of personal contact to forging a successful career" in Rome.⁵⁷⁷ For sculptors in particular, Italy also offered the two greatest paradigms for a stratospheric sculptural career: the historic exemplar of Michelangelo, and Cibber's contemporary, Bernini. Both achieved such success,

⁵⁷³ Lukehart, "Carving Out Live", 206.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁵⁷⁵ Jill Burke and Michael Bury, "Introduction", in *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, ed. Jill Burke and Michael Bury (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 3 – 5.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁷⁷ Piers Baker Bates, "The Bishop and the Artist: The Quest for Patronage in High Renaissance Rome", in *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, ed. Jill Burke and Michael Bury (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 50.

in part, through “princely patronage”, which provided them with great artistic freedom in their roles that were, essentially, salaried court positions for life.⁵⁷⁸ Socially, artists had long enjoyed a greater standing in Italy than elsewhere, as Albert Durer’s comments – over a century earlier – make clear: “here [in Rome] I am a gentleman, at home I am a parasite”.⁵⁷⁹

It has long been acknowledged that Cibber’s years in Rome influenced his sculptural output, yet this influence has not previously been extended to the ways that he approached his career.⁵⁸⁰ His efforts to secure a role on the Royal Exchange rebuilding evidence him as a sculptor that absolutely conceived of his role according to Italian definitions of the profession, as discussed above, and who undertook to establish a formidable career in England using the routes to success which he had witnessed, and doubtless practised, while in Italy. Therefore, his early contact with influential members of Court, and his presentation of his skills as grounded upon *disegno*, can be linked to his socialising with members of the aristocracy, his living in the fashionable Southampton Square, and even to his marriage to Jane Colley, which must have been preceded by Cibber socialising in the higher ranks of society.⁵⁸¹

Even Cibber’s name is believed to be an Italianisation of his original surname, in a constructed presentation of his Italian ‘roots’.⁵⁸² He reinforced his presentation of noble Italian ancestry by adopting the arms of the Cibo family, which simultaneously boosted his personal prestige and the presentation of his artistic credentials as rooted in an Italian pedagogy.⁵⁸³ All these behaviours fall within the contemporaneous Italian model of patronage, in which the “construction of a position in the world

⁵⁷⁸ Lukehart, “Carving out Live”, 207; Guido Guerzoni, “Between Rome and Ferrara: The Courtiers of the Este Cardinals in the Cinquecento”, in *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, ed. Jill Burke and Michael Bury (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 68 – 69. Indeed, the power of sculptors was such that Bernini was termed a “dictator” by Ann Sutherland Harris in a 1974 lecture to the Frick Museum. Quoted in Michael Conforti, “Pierre Legros and the Role of Sculptors as Designers in Rome”, *The Burlington Magazine*, 119: 893, (1977): 557.

⁵⁷⁹ Albert Durer, Letter to Pirckheimer, 1507. Reproduced in Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albert Durer*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 9.

⁵⁸⁰ MW, 110; Faber, *Cibber*, 5.

⁵⁸¹ Regarding Cibber’s marriage to Jane Colley, Harald Faber asserted that Cibber “evidently moved in very good society”. Faber, *Cibber*, 17.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

[arose] through careful self-presentation – a form of identity assertion – was crucial to realising ambition”, requirements that often included expenditure beyond one’s means.⁵⁸⁴ It has been widely recoded that Cibber regularly struggled with debts, particularly in the 1670s.⁵⁸⁵ Even while being held in debtor’s prison, he was to be found extravagantly gifting paintings to Hooke.⁵⁸⁶ It is likely that Cibber’s excessive expenditure in the 1670s, while attempting to establish his independent career, was a further example of him following the Italian cultural mode of conspicuously presenting a successful image in society.

Maker’s mark or signature?

The architectural nature of the monument that Cibber proposed for Lamport Hall in 1671 may be a perpetuation of his early-career attempts to secure roles as an architectural designer, rather than an attempt to break into the monumental market.⁵⁸⁷ It is well-known that funerary monuments were often a lucrative way for sculptors and masons to support their independent workshops and there are numerous examples of the most famous workshops of the period producing a steady stream of such work.⁵⁸⁸ The lack of documented monumental commissions for Cibber has not deterred some scholars from believing that he must have produced a reasonable quantity.⁵⁸⁹ However, as outlined above, Cibber was quantifiably distinct from the owners of the sculptural and masonic workshops that were operating on such a basis in London in the 1660s. Indeed, Cibber’s only extant and documented funerary monument is starkly different from the wall-mounted format that was so common in the period.

⁵⁸⁴ Burke and Bury, “Introduction”, 4 – 5.

⁵⁸⁵ MW, 112; Faber, *Cibber*, 20 – 21.

⁵⁸⁶ Hooke, *Diary*, 16 September, 1673, 59. Interestingly, Cibber gifted Hooke a painting depicting events from the book of Tobias, which included popular themes of patronage amongst artists, suggesting that this gift may have held considerable significance for Cibber’s career aims. See J. Duncan Berry, “Imagination into image: On visual Literacy”, in *Children of Mercury, The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey Muller (Rhode Island: Brown University, 1984), 76; Michael Conforti, “Pierre Legros”, 556 – 561.

⁵⁸⁷ Indeed, scholars have noted the surprising lack of funerary monuments in Cibber’s known works. MW, 112; Walter Lewis Spiers, “The Note-book and Account Book of Nicholas Stone”, *The Seventh Volume of the Walpole Society*, (1918 – 1919): 34; John Physick, *Designs for English Sculpture*, 26.

⁵⁸⁸ The Stanton volume of designs described earlier is a prime example.

⁵⁸⁹ See John Blatchly and Geoffrey Fisher, “Thomas Essington at Brightwell and the Identity of his Sculptor”, *Proceedings of the Suffolk Archaeology and History*, 39: 4 (2000): 468.

At Withyham, Sussex, Cibber produced a funerary monument that dominates its chapel (fig. 3.8). Fully freestanding figures of mourning family members radiate around a tomb that stands in the centre of the space, creating an intimate, but striking, depiction of familial grief that was revolutionary for an English monument.⁵⁹⁰ Indeed, in the early years of establishing his independent workshop, Cibber's various productions are linked by their constancy for upturning English sculptural precedents. For the Lord Mayor's Show in 1672, he built the two giants, Gog and Magog. One contemporary report described the giants as having "travelled in two separate carriages and delighted onlookers by 'moving, talking and taking tobacco'".⁵⁹¹ These creations were evidently one of the highlights of the festivities, and were so novel that Hooke recorded visiting Cibber twice to view them in the weeks before the show.⁵⁹² Upon seeing the giants, the Lord Mayor increased their involvement in the festivities.⁵⁹³ Thomas Jordan, the Pagentmaster, reported that:

at the conclusion of the show, they are to be set up in Guildhall, where they may be daily seen all year and I hope never to be demolished by such dismal violence as happened to their predecessors.⁵⁹⁴

Cibber's giants were clearly novel and widely celebrated statues in seventeenth-century London.

These works indicate a sculptor who was attempting to secure his reputation by emphasising his difference from his competitors. Despite which, his career has most recently been considered within the traditional English framework of mason-sculptors. Since 1973, in *Northamptonshire*, from Nikolaus Pevsner's Buildings of England Series, Cibber's involvement at Lamport Hall has been overestimated. The letter and enclosed design, discussed previously, have been cited as evidence for

⁵⁹⁰ MW, 112 – 113. For more on the use of emotion in monuments see Llewellyn, "A Taxonomy for the Invisible", 512, 518.

⁵⁹¹ P.E. Jones, "Gog and Magog", *Guildhall Historical Association Papers*, vol. II, (London, 1957), 136 – 141, quoted in Philip Ward Jackson, *Public Sculpture of The City of London*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 184.

⁵⁹² Hooke, *Diary*, 12 and 29 October, 1672, 10 – 11.

⁵⁹³ The Repertory of the court of Aldermen records that "Upon the request of the right hon^{ble} the Lord Mayor Elect This Court doth thinke fitt & Order that the two Gyants now preparing to bee sett upp in the Guildhall shall bee used upon the next Lord Maiors Day for such purpose and his Lo-pp (Lordship) shall think fitting". Repertory 77 of the Court of Aldermen, 15 October 1672, The London Metropolitan Archives, COL/CA/01/01/081, 266.v.

⁵⁹⁴ As quoted in Dominic Reid, *The History of the Lord Mayor's Show*, Gresham College Lecture, 12th October 2011, transcript.

Cibber undertaking other sculptural work at the hall with Pevsner attributing a chimneypiece, built according to an earlier design by John Webb, to him.⁵⁹⁵ This assertion is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, there is no evidence that Cibber ever travelled to Lamport, undertook any work at Lamport, or had any connection to Lamport other than presenting a design of his own, which was not carried out.⁵⁹⁶ Secondly, Cibber was suggested as the possible carver because the Lamport archives record the chimneypiece being made by a “Mr Keyes”.⁵⁹⁷ The similarity of the surname Keyes and the first name Caius were considered enough to make such an assertion. However, when recording his name, Cibber often omitted the name Caius, and there is some indication that he instead went by the name Gabriel.⁵⁹⁸ Moreover, there are other sculptors whose surnames are close to Keyes, and who appear more likely to have been working in the area at the time. Andrew Kearne, in particular, seems likely to have been the actual sculptor at Lamport. He is known to have been working at Lamport when the chimneypiece was carved, with Vertue recording that he “carv’d many Statues for Sr Justinian Isum” at Lamport.⁵⁹⁹

However, the most problematic aspect that has arisen from the link between Cibber and this chimneypiece is that, in 2000, John Blatchly and Geoffrey Fisher established that the Lamport chimneypiece included a masons’ mark, of a small four-petalled flower.⁶⁰⁰ They asserted the creation of the chimneypiece at Lamport to

⁵⁹⁵ Also reproduced in the most recent edition: Bruce Bailey, Nikolaus Pevsner, and Bridget Cherry. *The Buildings of England, Northamptonshire*, third edition, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 381 – 383.

⁵⁹⁶ Any introduction or discussion between Justinian Isham and Cibber would most likely have taken place in London, where Cibber was known to be working in 1670 and where Isham had cause to visit in his role as an MP for Northampton. Furthermore, as a founding member of the Royal Society, Cibber may have been recommended by mutual acquaintances such as Hooke and Sir George Ent. R. Priestley, “Isham, Sir Justinian, Second Baronet”, *ODNB*, 23 September 2004, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14489>, accessed 11 November 2021.

⁵⁹⁷ Bruce Bailey, Nikolaus Pevsner, and Bridget Cherry. *The Buildings of England, Northamptonshire*, third edition, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 383.

⁵⁹⁸ On prints created in his lifetime his name appears as either “C. Gabriel Cibber”, “C.G. Cibber”, or “C.G.C”, but never Caius. See Physick, *Designs for English Sculpture*, 49. These are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Furthermore, in the Office of Works accounts, he is often listed as merely “Gabriell Cibber”, see, for example TNA, WORKS 5/46, March, April and May 1693, 325.

⁵⁹⁹ Vertue, MS 23.069, in “Vertue I”, 98. He is further recorded as being a competent sculptor in stone, and brother-in-law to Nicholas Stone. He created the lioness for the York Watergate, and also a chimneypiece for Castle Ashby, not far from Lamport. Mark Girouard, *A Biographical Dictionary of English Architecture 1540 – 1640*, (London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2021), 188, 285. See also *BDS*, 683; Spiers, “Nicholas Stone”, 31. There is also John Key, an associate of Stone’s, who is known to have produced sculptural work in the counties. See White, “Dictionary of London Tomb Sculptors”, 74 – 75.

⁶⁰⁰ Blatchly and Fisher, “Thomas Essington at Brightwell”, 466.

Cibber as certain, and enthusiastically attributed this mark to him, along with several other tablet monuments on which they have discovered the same mark.⁶⁰¹ However, none of Cibber's extant – and documented – works include the same motif.

Moreover, Cibber's drawings, such as his designs for statues of Pallas and Apollo, expressly indicate that when he chose to assert his place as the creator of his works, he signed his name, or give his initials in place of his signature (figs. 3.7, 3.9 – 3.11).⁶⁰² Indeed, the tradition of masons' marks stems directly from the masonic and stonemasonry trades and their historic practices, in which Cibber simply was not trained.⁶⁰³ It is almost certain that the creator of the marks had training in these professions. Instead, Cibber presented himself as a sculptor – according to the Italian model – and therefore primarily as a master-designer, and as such he signed his paper-works with his signature. Such qualities and sensibilities are incompatible with the tradition of maker's marks.

The conflation of Cibber with the sculptor who carved their mark into the Lamport chimneypiece reveals the fundamental ideological schisms that were emerging in the sculptural profession in England during the second half of the seventeenth century. Traditions were being tested as sculptors, such as Cibber, established themselves in London with ranges of influence that were broader than had before been possible. As I have shown in this section, Cibber was working from outside of the traditional sculptural framework that had been established in England since at least the medieval period. The following case study considers the most dramatic of Cibber's extant and documented works from the outset of his independent career, in order to further analyse the ways in which he publicly presented himself as knowledgeable in these new skills.

⁶⁰¹ Blatchly and Fisher note that for two of these, the monuments to Thomas and Anna Essington, the antiquary Matthias Candler recorded the sculptor as being German. Cibber was not German, but Danish, whereas Andrew Kearne was German. *Ibid.*, 468. For Kearne's heritage see *BDS*, 683; Vertue MS. 23.069, in "Vertue I", 98.

⁶⁰² Note also the discrepancies in the spelling of his name in the two instances that it appears in figure 3.7.

⁶⁰³ For more on masons' marks see Jennifer Alexander and Kathryn Morrison, "Apethorpe Hall and the Workshop of Thomas Thorpe, Mason of King's Cliffe: A Study in Masons' Marks", *Architectural History*, 50 (2007): 59 – 94.

Case Study: *Cibber at The Monument*

When Whinney described Cibber's relief on the *Monument to the Great Fire of London* as "perhaps the most elaborate piece of sculpture which had been produced in England since the Middle Ages", she was primarily concerned with its position in the broad developments of English sculpture.⁶⁰⁴ This case study instead considers the motives and consequences of such a commission on the sculptor and his burgeoning career.

Once Cibber's career is viewed through the lens of the Italian paradigms of patronage, as outlined in the previous section, it becomes unsurprising that Hooke first records their friendship as sociable, rather than a working relationship.⁶⁰⁵ By 1667, the year that Cibber began working independently, Hooke had recently been made one of the surveyors for the rebuilding of the City of London.⁶⁰⁶ He was an eminent and influential figure throughout the rebuilding, and Cibber would have been well aware that Hooke had the potential to influence decisions on large-scale building contracts in the City. Indeed, Cibber first appears in Hooke's diary in 1671, the same year that a Rebuilding Act first ordered "that a Columne or Pillar or Brase or Stone be erected on or as neare unto the place where the said Fire soe unhappily began", shortly after which Matthew Walker asserts that the initial designs for the monument were being drafted by Hooke.⁶⁰⁷ It is therefore entirely possible that Cibber developed a relationship with Hooke exactly because of his well-known proximity to projects such as the monument.

However, social manoeuvres may not have been entirely central to Cibber securing the contract to create the immense allegorical relief that covers the west side of the monument's plinth. The monument was conceived and understood by contemporaries as representing the newly rebuilt London on equivalent terms with

⁶⁰⁴ MW, 112.

⁶⁰⁵ Hooke, *Diary*, 1, 3, 12 and 29 October, 1672, 16 September 1673, 8 – 11, 59.

⁶⁰⁶ Hooke was appointed in October 1666. *BDBA*, 533.

⁶⁰⁷ Reproduced in The Wren Society, *Designs of Sir Chr. Wren for Oxford, Cambridge, London, Windsor, etc.*, Vol. V, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1928), 45; Walker, "The Limits of Collaboration", 127.

ancient Rome.⁶⁰⁸ While recent scholars have identified influences that can be traced across the ancient world, as well as more recent influences from Paris, the formal design of the plinth – where Cibber’s involvement was focussed – directly references Trajan’s Column in Rome (fig. 3.12).⁶⁰⁹ His training and experience working in Italy involved far more interaction with ancient Roman sculpture than the vast majority of his peers in England would have had the opportunity to experience. As Peter Lukehart records, it was common for sculptors in Rome to also practice as “restorers, antiquarians, and dealers”.⁶¹⁰ Furthermore, there were multiple collections of ancient and modern sculpture, such as those held at the Vatican, displayed across the Villa Borghese, and at the home of Vincenzo Giustiniani, which were understood to be essential to the education of sculptors while in Rome.⁶¹¹ Such proximity to antique sculpture encouraged contemporary sculptors in Rome to conceive of themselves as in competition with their contemporary peers *and* the ancient sculptors that preceded them.⁶¹² Hooke is remembered as a keenly empirical scholar who had a great appreciation of the value of direct observation. It is reasonable to suggest that Cibber’s direct understanding, both of Italian precedents for the monument, such as Trajan’s Column, and of ancient Roman sculpture more broadly, would have influenced Hooke’s perception of Cibber’s sculptural credentials. Certainly, he was one of only a very limited number of people, let alone sculptors, in London in the 1670s who would have even seen a monumental column of the kind that was being created, even Hooke had not had the opportunity to observe one in person.

⁶⁰⁸ Vaughan Hart, *Christopher Wren, In Search of Eastern Antiquity*, (Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art: New Haven and London, 2020), 136; John Moore, “The Monument, or, Christopher Wren’s Roman Accent”, *Art Bulletin*, 80: 3 (1998): 498 – 533; Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 234 – 235.

⁶⁰⁹ For more information on the various columns that have been identified as influences see Hart, *Christopher Wren*, 136 – 141; Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture of The City of London*, 265; Moore, “The Monument”, 500 – 525; Christine Stevenson, “Robert Hooke, Monuments and Memory”, *Art History*, Vol. 28: 1, (2005): 55.

⁶¹⁰ Lukehart, “Carving Out Live”, 200.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 205. The drawings of Nicholas Stone the younger, including those of the ‘Pleasure House’ at the villa of Cardinal Ludovisini and the Villa Medici, from his travels in Rome display this education in action. Andrew Moore, *The Paston Treasure*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), 462 – 463. Stone’s notebook describes days filled with visits to view ancient sculpture and buildings. See Spiers, “Nicholas Stone”, 170 – 180; Girouard, *Dictionary of English Architecture*, 290.

⁶¹² Lukehart, “Carving Out Live”, 201.

While Cibber is not known to have produced works in London that evidenced his affinity with classical sculpture prior to the monument, it is highly likely that his workshop included several examples that displayed this aspect of his training. In the Stone workshop, sculptures made while the Stones travelled Italy, as well as items bought there, were prominently displayed, Cibber would have had ample opportunity to see how beneficial this form of advertisement was with their London patrons, and there is evidence that he did the same in his studio or home.⁶¹³ In a report of 1675, concerning the sculptural ornament for the summit of the monument, Wren specifically commented on his concern that the ornamentation be well-suited to an international audience.⁶¹⁴ This concern must have been present throughout the whole design process. Cibber's direct experiences of European sculpture would have been immensely valuable to Hooke and Wren when considered from this perspective.

Cibber's role in designing the relief

While the central aspects of the monument had been drafted by Hooke and approved by the City Lands Committee as early as 1671, it is evident that the design for the relief came several years after this date (fig. 3.13).⁶¹⁵ Hooke's preliminary design, dating from 1671, includes an almost completely unrecognisable relief from that which was ultimately carved (figs. 3.14 and 3.15). It has not been drafted with the same accuracy or confidence as the rest of the design, being only lightly indicated in insubstantial pencil and ink strokes. The relief has been presented to appear as if it were a parchment pinned to the plinth, depicting the terrible image of the fire in full progress engulfing the city. In this design the decorative adornments surrounding the relief and at the base of the shaft have also not yet been finalised. It is far from

⁶¹³ "While in Rome", Nicholas Stone the Younger "sent back six chests one in 1639 and five in 1642 or marbles models books, prints, etc." as well as his own models and drawings "including a plaster model of the Laocoon." Girouard, *Dictionary of English Architecture*, 289; Vertue, MS. 23.069 in "Vertue I", 90. It is possible that Cibber acquired some of these upon the death of the final Stone and the closure of their workshop. Hooke recorded being in Bloomsbury, and then "at Sibbers", where he saw a statue of "Mark Antony" in 1675. Hooke, *Diary*, 31 August, 1675, 177. Cibber is also known to have made models and would likely have displayed these in his workshop. A clay model for the statue of Raving Madness survives in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin, <https://id.smb.museum/object/870249>. Cibber's terracotta models for the statues of King Edward III and King Edward IV are also extant. See BDS, 275.

⁶¹⁴ Arguing that a statue would "be more valuable in the eyes of Forreiners and Strangers". Christopher Wren, reproduced in *The Wren Society*, Vol. V, 47.

⁶¹⁵ As these were still being discussed several years later. *Ibid.*, 45 – 47; see also Walker, "The Limits of Collaboration", 127.

unusual on architectural projects of this period for the final ornamental scheme to be developed while the building itself was being constructed.⁶¹⁶

A further design by Hooke indicates that he developed the scheme for the ornamental detailing shortly after the preliminary design had been approved (fig. 3.16).⁶¹⁷ However, no other drawings remain to indicate the evolution of the design for the relief. It is interesting that when Hooke developed the ornamental scheme for the plinth, he centred the design on the east face, which did not include the relief. It suggests that the architectural ornament and relief panel were considered to be two separate schemes, and that each was designed in a different way. The architectural ornamental detailing was treated as an integrated architectural element, and was designed by Hooke in the early stages of construction beginning on the column. By contrast, the relief was treated as a semi-autonomous sculptural detail, additional to the essential structure, and designed at a later stage.

Cibber's role in the design of the relief has largely fallen through the cracks between architectural and sculptural history. Architectural historians tend to ascribe the entirety of the design of the monument to either Hooke, Wren, or Hooke and Wren jointly.⁶¹⁸ However, sculptural historians ascribe the design of the relief to Cibber, or Cibber and either Wren or Hooke.⁶¹⁹ I believe there is enough evidence to assert that Hooke and Cibber both worked on the design. It has been established that Hooke borrowed a copy of the *Iconologia* from the Arundel Library early in 1673, which gives a clear indication that the final design of the relief panel was being created in that year.⁶²⁰ Cibber received his first payment that June, but it was not uncommon for sculptors in this period to submit designs for projects without payment.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁶ For example, this also happened at St. Paul's Cathedral and Hampton Court Palace as discussed throughout this thesis.

⁶¹⁷ Walker, "The Limits of Collaboration", 129.

⁶¹⁸ Vaughan Hart, "London's Standard", Christopher Wren and the heraldry of the Monument", *Res*, 73 – 74 (2020): 325; Moore, "The Monument", 498 – 499; Walker, "The Limits of Collaboration", 121; Cooper, 'A More Beautiful City', 200.

⁶¹⁹ As Phillip Ward-Jackson's account displays: "[d]rawings for the Monument are in a variety of hands, some evidently Wren's, some Hooke's. Some are attributed to Edward Woodroffe, whilst others betray the fluent touch of a painter or sculptor." Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture of The City of London*, 263.

⁶²⁰ Hooke, *Diary*, 9 April 1673, 38.

⁶²¹ There is evidence for Hooke working in exactly this way with Edward Pearce as detailed in chapter one.

Furthermore, it seems likely that Hooke would have wanted a sculptor such as Cibber involved in the design of the monument's relief, as there is no evidence from Hooke's architectural projects prior to the monument that he had any experience in designing figurative and allegorical ornament. Moreover, despite Hooke retaining the Arundel copy of the *Iconologia* until 1676/7, and subsequently buying a copy for himself in October 1677, iconological figurative displays do not feature in his subsequent works.⁶²² There is, therefore, no evidence to suggest that Hooke was comfortable designing sculptural decoration of this kind.

Furthermore, the printed sources for the design were broader than those that Hooke appears to have had access to. There were two volumes of the *Iconologia* in the Arundel collection, listed in William Perry's catalogue as "an octavo and quarto of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (Milan, 1602 and Padua, 1611)".⁶²³ Anthony Geraghty has noted that Hooke preferred illustrated versions of books, which would certainly have been more useful in this circumstance.⁶²⁴ As the 1602 copy was a reprint of the unillustrated first edition from 1593, he almost certainly used the Padua volume.⁶²⁵ However, Philip Ward-Jackson has identified that the figure of Liberty was taken from a Dutch version of the *Iconologia*, which Hooke would not own until several years after the relief had been completed.⁶²⁶ This indicates that the design was not created solely with the works in Hooke's possession, and therefore that he did not create the design alone.

Cibber had travelled to Holland in 1660, and would also have had ample opportunities to purchase this text in London or Rome.⁶²⁷ He was well-versed in a sculptural practice that used reference texts as sources of inspiration and education, and would have had ready access, over many years, to the sizeable library held by

⁶²² Hooke, *Diary*, 26 January, 1676/7, 9 October, 1677, 270, 319.

⁶²³ Anthony Geraghty "Robert Hooke's Collection of Architectural Books and Prints", *Architectural History*, 47 (2004): 116.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁶²⁵ Stefano Pierguidi "Giovanni Guerra and the Illustrations to Ripa's *Iconologia*", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 61 (1998): 158.

⁶²⁶ Philip Ward Jackson, *Public Sculpture of The City of London*, (Liverpool University Press: Liverpool, 2003), 267; Hooke, *Diary*, 9 October, 1677, 319; Walker "The Limits of Collaboration", 128.

⁶²⁷ *BDS*, 274.

the Stone family.⁶²⁸ He would also have had ample opportunities to familiarise himself with Dutch sculptural styles via the work of the De Keyzers, who were tied by marriage to the Stone family: he had met members of the family while in the Netherlands and they had also periodically worked in the Stone workshop.⁶²⁹ Most significantly though, Cibber is known to have contributed designs for other elements of the monument. “Mr Cibber’s Proposals” remain in the Guildhall archives, which originally included his designs for a statue for the summit, although no drawings have survived.⁶³⁰ It is virtually inconceivable to suppose that Cibber may have contributed designs to aspects of the monument for which he was not ultimately responsible, and not also have contributed such designs for the elements that he had been contracted to create.

Establishing an artistic identity

The scholarly hesitancy in ascribing Cibber a role in the design process is due to a lack of confirmatory documentary evidence. The main documents that record the building of the monument are the City Lands Committee papers. Details in such documents are – unsurprisingly – limited, with Cibber’s presence restricted to the records of his payments. However, he appears in other contemporaneous City documents, which relate to his other works. In a badly damaged audit report of workmen dated 20 December, 1675, Cibber is discussed in more detail:

Mr Sibbers bill cannot be audited . . . [damaged] . . . be made by Sir Xper Wren and the City Surveyors of the value of his worke, but upon consideration of his bill and Receipts, we think it Reasonable that he should have at present a Warrant for one hundred pounds upon account to be paid him when he hath erected the statues by him prepared at Newgate.⁶³¹

⁶²⁸ Mark Girouard has identified that the Stones owned a copy of Domenico Fontana’s *Della Trasportatione Dell’Obelisco Vaticano*, one of the few texts to specifically focus on the erection of pillars in Rome. Cibber was likely familiar with this text through his many years running the Stone workshop, providing opportunities for Cibber to share such knowledge with Hooke during the creation of the Monument. See Girouard, *Dictionary of English Architecture*, 19, 283 – 289, particularly 286.

⁶²⁹ *BDS*, 274; Faber, *Cibber*, 7.

⁶³⁰ “Mr Cibber’s Proposals”, The Guildhall Archive, MS5761, quoted in Ward Jackson, *Public Sculpture of The City of London*, xvi.

⁶³¹ Audit of Workmen, 20 December 1675. City Lands Committee Orders and Reports, London Metropolitan Archive, f.148.

Despite the damage, it is entirely clear that the auditors chose not to audit Cibber's work because they did not consider themselves to be equipped to pass judgement on the value of his sculpture. Those involved in the audit included Sir Thomas Player, an influential member of the lands committee, and Chamberlain of London.⁶³² These were consequential people, and they had no hesitation in auditing the work of the glaziers, plasterers, and masons that are also listed in the document. It is clear that Cibber's figurative statuary was widely accepted by the lands committee as separate from the workmanship of other professions. Furthermore, they explicitly abated themselves from making decisions because they did not consider themselves to be equipped to pass artistic judgements, deferring this aspect to Wren and the other surveyors who held such specialist knowledge. This document reframes Cibber's omission in the City Lands Committee papers. Rather than his holding an inconsequential role, it would seem that the committee simply deferred all aspects of the relief – excluding the release of payments – to Hooke and Wren, whom they considered to be more equipped to manage decisions relating to the relief. This document further evidences that Cibber presented himself as equipped with artistic skills and knowledge that elevated his work above that of other craftsmen, a hierarchy that had long been established in Italy.⁶³³ This distinction was founded upon a conception of the skill of *disegno* as an intellectual display of invention, a skill made apparent through the production of designs. Moreover, the audit report displays that Cibber's presentation of an artistic identity was accepted by others from a range of social and professional spheres.

Whinney interpreted that a stipulation in Cibber's contract for the Sackville monument, which insisted that Cibber's work was to be assessed "to ye well liking of Mr. Peter Lilly his Mat^ys painter", was evidence that sculpture was still considered

⁶³² Eveline Cruickshanks, "Player, Sir Thomas (d.1686), of Hackney, Mdx. And Basinghall Street London", in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1660-1690*, ed. B.D. Henning (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1983), <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/player-sir-thomas-1686>, accessed 18 November 2021.

⁶³³ Till Verellen posits that Michelangelo, and a host of his contemporaries, refocused sculpture as a process of *disegno*, "oppos[ing] the manual and pecuniary connotations of the workshop [by] demonstrat[ing] a proficiency in the liberal arts." Till Verellen, "Patterns of Patronage: Antonio da Sangallo the Younger and the *Setta* of Sculptors", in *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. F.W. Kent, Patricia Simons, and J.C. Eade (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1987) 298.

a lesser art in comparison to painting and that, by extension, sculptors continued to be assigned an “artisan[al]” role rather than an artistic identity.⁶³⁴ I propose a different interpretation. Peter Lely was a peerless individual in late seventeenth-century England. He was the King’s painter, and had been knighted for his abilities.⁶³⁵ That such an individual, the doyen of art in England, was requested to judge Cibber’s workmanship indicates most strongly that his sculpture was considered an art, and implies a similar apprehensiveness in the patrons over their own ability to judge his artistry as was witnessed by the lands committee members.

Certainly, the relief significantly raised Cibber’s profile, “commentators were from the first impressed by the overall effect of the composition, naming Cibber ‘another Praxiteles’”.⁶³⁶ The idea, promoted by such commentators, that he was the creator – in all senses – of the relief, was encouraged by Cibber. Ward-Jackson has identified that the first English publication of Ripa’s *Iconologia*, published in 1709:

contains a frontispiece by Isaac Fuller the Younger, showing the Romans arriving on the shores of Britain and pointing out Cibber’s relief on the Monument. Some of the engraved emblems are signed ‘C.G.C.Deli’ and are presumably taken from drawings prepared by Cibber.⁶³⁷

His involvement in this publication indicates that he attempted to secure a legacy as a contributor to allegorical representations in English art. Cibber’s concern for perpetuating the memory of his name alongside the monument reinforces the significance that this work held for him. Cibber was paid £600 for the relief, representing a new league of financial reward.⁶³⁸ It established him as a prominent sculptor with a distinct sculptural identity that was focussed on figurative works.

Indeed, the extant drawings by Hooke imply that Cibber was not involved in designing the sculptural elements that comprised the architectural ornament, such as the mouldings. As with his other commissions in the City, Cibber’s work was

⁶³⁴ MW, 112.

⁶³⁵ Diana Dethloff, “Sir Peter Lely”, *ODNB*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16419>, 21 May 2009, accessed 26 October 2022.

⁶³⁶ E. Chamberlayne, *Angliae Notitia, or the present state of England*, 11th edition, second part, London, 1682, 228. Quoted in Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture of The City of London*, 265.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, 268.

⁶³⁸ London Metropolitan Archives, *Repertory of the Court of Aldermen*, COL/CA/01/01/081, 26 October, 1672, 280.r.

dedicated to figurative sculptural elements.⁶³⁹ His career displays the emergent distinction between architectural ornament and sculptural decoration. The monument stands as a testament to Cibber's conscious alignment of his career away from the decorative architectural elements of the sculptural spectrum from an early stage. It further exemplifies his importation of Italian paradigms relating to the sculptural profession, ones which were focussed on distinguishing sculpture from the mechanic crafts.

Part Two: *From City to Country*

Cibber's working practices underwent a dramatic shift between the 1670s and the 1680s. This affected the type of work he produced, the materials he used, and the locations for his work. This section considers the motivations that drove Cibber from being a City sculptor, working closely with Hooke and the other City surveyors, to moving into the country, where he lived and worked on estates for many years at a time. I consider these changes to be caused by the same influences as the previous section: in short, that Cibber was a sculptor in England who was following Italian paradigms in both his workmanship and career trajectory.

After the completion of his relief for the monument, Cibber gained a small but steady set of commissions for statuary in London.⁶⁴⁰ However, there was not an inexhaustible demand for statuary in the city in the 1670s, he may have struggled to gain many commissions beyond the few that are already documented from this period.⁶⁴¹ Furthermore, despite Hooke and Cibber seemingly having developed

⁶³⁹ For example, his statues of Raving and Melancholy Madness for the gates of Bethlem Hospital, his bust of the third Earl of Essex for Deveraux Court, his statue of a mermaid for the pump in the Leathersellers' Court, and his statues of virtues for the west side of Newgate. *BDS*, 275 – 276.

⁶⁴⁰ *BDS*, 275 – 276.

⁶⁴¹ The Masons' company conducted a general search in April 1678. This indicates that he had five sculptors working for him, but it is likely that they were brought in to undertake the large amount of sculptural work that Cibber had at that time, which included the tomb of Thomas Sackville at Withyham and the monument to James Fox at Westminster Abbey, as well as only recently having completed the statues of Raving and Melancholy Madness for Bethlem Hospital. See *LM*, 69. Despite having been made a Sculptor in Ordinary to the Crown at the start of the decade, this does not seem to have provided Cibber with many commissions. Christine Stevenson, "Making Empire Visible at the Second Royal Exchange, London", in *Court, Country, City*, 55.

strong professional and social relationships together through the 1670s, Cibber had all but vanished from Hooke's diary by 1678. It is notable that when Hooke promised Wren that he would speak with Ent, the previous social companion of Cibber, about £100 for the statue of Sir John Cutler (presumably for the Royal Surgeons Hall), within days Hooke had met with Pearce – and offered the commission of the statue to him – not Cibber.⁶⁴²

It is possible that, while completing the monument, Cibber believed that further commissions of a comparable scale would be forthcoming. However, through the late 1670s and 80s, the rebuilding of the City Churches and St. Paul's Cathedral took much of Hooke and Wren's attention. Additionally, Cibber was not the only statuary in the City that was considered to be a highly capable sculptor, as displayed by Hooke's choice of Pearce. Cibber had established a reputation that completely eschewed architectural ornament in favour of statuary. This decision must have contributed to him being side-lined for the commissions that Hooke and Wren were then undertaking in the City. It is, therefore, likely that in the years following the completion of the monument, Cibber became increasingly disillusioned with his experience as an independent sculptor in London.

Making connections

Although the previous section focussed on Cibber's efforts to secure roles in the City that were authorised by the Aldermen, and undertaken by Hooke and the other City Surveyors, he had not solely focussed his attention on the people and projects that contributed to the rebuilding the City in the years following the Fire. He had simultaneously been establishing connections that were focussed on the Court as an avenue for patronage, as indicated by the Lord Chamberlain's support of Cibber's career advancement at the Royal Exchange. His exploitation of numerous spheres of power and patronage is another aspect of his career that mirrors the contemporary experiences of sculptors in Rome, and he seems to have approached the London

⁶⁴² Hooke, *Diary*, 26 January, 1674/5 and 5 February, 1674/5, 143, 145.

market with an awareness that it would be profitable to establish a reputation both in the City and at Court.⁶⁴³

Indeed, throughout his working life, Cibber sought to forge lasting relationships with wealthy aristocrats. His son, Colley, the playwright and Poet Laureate, barely mentions his father in his autobiography, but he does comment on this aspect of his father's way of working, giving details about the relationship his father developed with the then fourth Earl of Devonshire while at Chatsworth. Colley describes that his father's fealty to the Earl resulted in the Earl promising to "provide" for Colley in the future.⁶⁴⁴ Cibber's expectation that his relationships with influential patrons would secure benefits and security for his children is a recurring theme, with Colley also detailing his father's intentions for his son's career:

as soon as his Affairs would permit, he would carry me with him, and settle me in some College, but rather at Cambridge where, (during his later Residence at the Place, in making some statues that now stand upon Trinity College New Library) he had contracted some Acquaintance with the Heads of Houses, who might assist his Intentions for me.⁶⁴⁵

Such anecdotes reveal that Cibber had a different conception of the networks he was seeking to establish than those typical to sculptors in England, who predominantly worked according to the contract system.⁶⁴⁶ His relationships with patrons were more permanent than was typical for sculptors, and were designed to provide him and his family with a degree of security and preferment that reached beyond purely financial rewards.⁶⁴⁷ Piers Baker Bates has stressed "the importance of personal

⁶⁴³ Burke and Bury describe the situation in Rome in more detail. There was no single court, competing spheres of influence coalesced around the Papacy, the aristocratic families, and the ambassadors and cardinals. See Burke and Bury, "Introduction", 3.

⁶⁴⁴ Colley Cibber *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre Royal. With an Historic al View of the Stage during his Own Time, Written by Himself*, Fourth Edition, (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1740), 37.

⁶⁴⁵ Cibber, *Apology*, 36.

⁶⁴⁶ As can be seen in the work of Pearce and Gibbons as discussed throughout Chapters one and two. See also *LM*, 19.

⁶⁴⁷ Ronald Weissman describes the Mediterranean style of patronage as defined by "a long-term relationship, having a moral or social rather than a legal basis [and] is not restricted to a single kind of transaction. It is multistranded and multipurpose". Ronald Weissman, "Taking Patronage Seriously: Mediterranean Values and Renaissance Society", in *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, Patricia Simons (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 25.

contact to forging a successful career” in Rome.⁶⁴⁸ Cibber’s career development was centred on his interpersonal relationships, mainly with powerful individuals at Court, in a replication of the way of working he would have experienced when in Rome.

Such a position wielded significant advantages for the sculptor. It offered long-term security, and opportunities to enhance his reputation with other members of Court.⁶⁴⁹ Cibber experienced some of these benefits under the Earl of Devonshire, while working on one of the most extravagant and palatial buildings then being undertaken in England.⁶⁵⁰ A salaried role may also have conferred a greater degree of creative freedom on the sculptor, allowing for the expression and presentation of unfettered individual artistic genius.⁶⁵¹ This type of employment, and these advantages, were not available within the confines of the City, and could only have been afforded by the wealthiest members of the aristocracy.

Mutually beneficial relationships

This type of employment did not only confer benefits to the sculptor. The Cavendish family had long patronised the philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who lived and travelled with the family as their tutor, fostering a relationship with William Cavendish in which he was “not so much a master as a friend, allowing Hobbes both leisure and whatever sorts of books he needed for his studies”.⁶⁵² The Cavendish family’s reputation was improved through their support of such a substantial intellectual figure.

The relationship that Cibber established with the Earl provided similar reputational improvements for his patron, legitimising his artistic exploits at Chatsworth.⁶⁵³

⁶⁴⁸ Piers Baker Bates, “The Bishop and the Artist: The Quest for Patronage in High Renaissance”, in *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, ed. Jill Burke and Michael Bury (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008) 50.

⁶⁴⁹ As Weissman elaborated, “Patronage is a relationship in which the patron provides more than simple protection. He provides brokerage, mediation, favours, and access to networks of friends of friends.” Weissman, “Taking Patronage Seriously”, 26.

⁶⁵⁰ As will be discussed in the following case study.

⁶⁵¹ As had been experienced by the most successful salaried sculptors in Italy, such as Bernini.

⁶⁵² Noel Malcolm, “Thomas Hobbes”, *ODNB*, 23 September 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13400>, accessed 27 October 2022.

⁶⁵³ “The only way for a rich patrician to gain power in seventeenth century England was through building up his image by every means at his disposal. Chief of these was the assumption of a

Manolo Guerci has recently described the aristocrats of the seventeenth century as using their great houses to visibly demonstrate a “galaxy of power and prestige broadcast to the Early Modern world via an unprecedented level of architectural conspicuous consumption”.⁶⁵⁴ These buildings also housed prestige items such as books, paintings, clocks, tapestries, silverware, and sculpture, possessions that supported an image whose “potency and influence was displayed both for internal and international consumption, so as to shape not just English but European identity”.⁶⁵⁵ Italianate styles were particularly influential in this relationship, and were understood contemporaneously to “stress cultural lineage and distinction”.⁶⁵⁶ Therefore, Cibber’s consciously Italianate treatment of his name, and adoption of a noble Italian crest, reinforced the credibility of his sculptural work for aristocratic patrons. He offered sculptural adornments for aristocratic estates – the physical representations of their familial lineage, power, and prestige – that communicated an artistic language that stemmed from Italy, and which was becoming understood in England as the physical manifestation of cultural distinction.

Artistic expression

Cibber worked hard in his early independent works to establish an identity that highlighted his artistic innovation. The figures of *Raving and Melancholy Madness* for the gates at Bethlem Hospital are one such example, and so is Cibber’s first known work for an aristocratic patron, the Sackville monument in Withyham, Sussex (figs. 3.1 and 3.8).⁶⁵⁷ In Charles Sackville, the sixth Earl of Dorset, Cibber was engaged by a close member of the court who had travelled Europe and, as Harold Love described, held the “role as Charles’s unofficial minister of the arts”.⁶⁵⁸

magnificent venue”. James Lees-Milne, and John Cornforth. “Chatsworth, Home of the Dukes of Devonshire”. *Country Life*, Part 3, Vol. CLXIV (1968): 13.

⁶⁵⁴ Guerci, *London’s ‘Golden Mile’*, 1.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁶⁵⁷ Of the figures of *Raving and Melancholy Madness*, Roscoe wrote that their “bold and disturbing naturalism . . . transcended all the sculptural conventions of the time”. BDS, 274. Of the Sackville monument, Whinney commented that “Cibber has taken a traditional theme but has changed it into something new”. MW, 113.

⁶⁵⁸ Harold Love, ‘Sackville, Charles, sixth earl of Dorset and first earl of Middlesex’, *ODNB*, 03 January 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24442>, accessed 21 June 2021.

This monument has been praised for marking a change in English funerary monumental tradition by providing new depictions of familial grief.⁶⁵⁹ Cibber achieved this with a much larger floorspace than the majority of contemporaneous funerary monuments, which tended to be wall-mounted, as this tomb was placed in the centre of a family chapel.⁶⁶⁰ The central position allowed for sculpted figures of the grieving parents to be positioned at the human level. They radiate away from the tomb, into the space of the viewer, creating a fully three-dimensional sculptural tableaux. While undeniably establishing a novel form for English funerary monuments – and thereby indicating Cibber’s prowess in *disegno* – this design, with three life-sized figures carved in the round, also showcased his abilities as a statuary.

I find it unlikely that Cibber undertook this work in an attempt to initiate a lucrative monumental career.⁶⁶¹ In stark contrast with the typical workshops of the period, which sought to maintain a lucrative and steady output of funerary monuments, he seems to have been more concerned with securing significant patrons and developing his network of patronage into the most influential areas of society. He was not always successful in this aim. Cibber was criticised posthumously by his son, as one “who knew little how the World was to be dealt with”.⁶⁶² Cibber’s aims – for his family as well as himself – are most clearly expressed in the work he undertook almost immediately after the completion of the Withyham monument. In 1681 he travelled to Cambridge to work with Wren on the pedimental figures for Trinity College Library.⁶⁶³ At this time, he was likely already considering the futures of his young sons, Colley records that he was conscious of the benefits that a university education would provide for them.⁶⁶⁴

In his statues for Bethlem, Cibber also increased his reputation as a sculptor who was working in different ways to his contemporaries. The figures caused considerable

⁶⁵⁹ See MW, 113.

⁶⁶⁰ Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England*, 82 – 95.

⁶⁶¹ It was far too expensive for the majority of customers. Whinney has noted how exceptional Cibber’s relatively small number of monuments was for a sculptor of the period. MW, 113.

⁶⁶² Cibber, *Apology*, 34.

⁶⁶³ *BDS*, 276.

⁶⁶⁴ Colley records his father believing that he had established relationships at Cambridge that would secure places for his sons. *Ibid.*, 36.

interest when they were first erected, and for many years afterwards.⁶⁶⁵ They have continued to be remarked upon for their appearance of having been modelled from life, a practice that further indicates Cibber's training in established continental practices.⁶⁶⁶ As such, the figures stand as a testament to his continental artistic credentials. The figures also borrow, consciously, from both of Italy's superstar sculptors. Faber and Whinney have previously identified formal similarities with Michelangelo's figures on the tombs in the Medici Chapel, but the contrasting extremes of human facial expressions, modelled from life, are also strongly reminiscent of Bernini's busts of Blessed and Damned souls (figs. 3.17 and 3.18).⁶⁶⁷ Doubtless, Cibber courted such comparisons while securing his artistic identity.

References to Bernini and Michelangelo further attest to Cibber's career aspirations. As the most successful sculptors in Italy they enjoyed an unprecedented level of creative freedom. The type of patronage Cibber sought from aristocratic patrons in the 1680s would have been as close as he could get to that freedom – and security – in England.⁶⁶⁸ In his first decade of independence, Cibber had been building a network of clients who were influential at court.⁶⁶⁹ In the process of establishing this network, by 1680, Cibber must have realised that aristocratic landowners were prepared to expend larger quantities of money on their country estates than their city houses, and that these estates, with large formal gardens in need of sizeable quantities of statuary, would be a more profitable place for a sculptor to work.⁶⁷⁰ These clients had influence at Court, the resources to purchase sculpture, and an interest in decorating their houses and gardens with art that responded to current fashions – and a growing awareness and interest in European art as a means to

⁶⁶⁵ Vertue records Charles Stokes' comments that one was modelled from the life, a remark that highlights how striking his depictions of psychological pain were. Vertue, MS 23,069, *Vertue I*, 91.

⁶⁶⁶ *BDS*, 274.

⁶⁶⁷ See MW, 111; Faber, *Cibber*, 43. It is interesting that Nicholas Stone the younger sketched Michelangelo's figures from the Medici chapel while in Florence, which Cibber was clearly inspired by, writing: "I drew in chapple after the worke of Michell Agnolo". 4 July, 1638, Spiers, "Nicholas Stone", 162.

⁶⁶⁸ For more on the security provided to sculptors by Italian patrons see Clare Robertson, *Rome 1600, the City and the Visual Arts Under Clement VIII*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 295.

⁶⁶⁹ Including the Lord Chamberlain and the Earl of Dorset. *BDS*, 275; Faber, *Cibber*, 41.

⁶⁷⁰ R. G. Wilson and A. L. Mackley, "How Much did the English Country House Cost to Build, 1660 – 1880?", *The Economic History Review*, 52:3, (August 1999): 438 – 439.

express their personal cultural capital – mirroring the cultural conditions that were so prevalent in Rome.

Cibber's adoption of the unusual practice of living at the various country estates for substantial periods – and undertaking the work in the local freestone – offered numerous advantages to his patrons. The relative economy of using local stone has been widely reported, but, as I have discussed, Cibber also provided the opportunity for patrons to cultivate a cultured image and to adopt the role of a great artistic patron, built on Italian models.⁶⁷¹ Cibber's often severe financial struggles in the 1670s must also have contributed to his move away from the city, but in such straightened circumstances he evidently returned to practices that he had learned in his formative years, capitalising on the networks that he had cultivated over several years.

This change in direction would dominate his career for the following decade. He travelled widely and is barely recorded in London through the 1680s.⁶⁷² Despite his son's criticism, this approach provided Cibber with a lucrative career throughout the 1680s. He was in near-constant employment moving between Belvoir Castle, Thoresby Hall, and Chatsworth House. The following case study considers his work at Chatsworth, which represents his most prolonged relationship with one patron. I will investigate the working practices that Cibber adopted in this period and analyse the ways that Cibber navigated the often conflicting wishes of the demanding architect – and patron – that he encountered at Chatsworth.

Case Study: *Chatsworth House*

Chatsworth is the exemplar for the type of sculpture Cibber undertook for country estates. His sculptures there were virtually all created on site from the local stone,

⁶⁷¹ Indeed, it was specifically advertised by Cibber himself in his letter to the Earl of Devonshire, reproduced in Faber, *Cibber*, 48.

⁶⁷² The only works dating to that decade in London are his lost monument to William Fox and his elaborate fountain for Soho Square, both of which have been dated to 1681. *BDS*, 275 – 276.

and in these respects Chatsworth serves as a model for his working practices at a number of other country houses. Such work exemplifies the singular career that Cibber developed, which stands apart from the diverse range of sculptural output that defined the workshops of his most significant competitors. He spent the 1680s working almost exclusively as a statuary, creating freestanding figurative sculpture in the round. The style of work Cibber undertook – and the means by which he secured these contracts – were working practices that he had imported to England from Italy, and speak to Cibber inhabiting a different, and ultimately foreign, conception of the role of a sculptor to that which was being practised in England prior to his arrival.

Chatsworth underwent a large scale rebuilding and remodelling project, overseen by an architect, in the final decades of the seventeenth century. I will argue that Cibber, who did not undertake the architectural sculptural work on the house, was a less collaborative sculptor than the norm. By avoiding architectural sculpture he was less constrained by the requirements of an architect, or by their overall design schemes. Instead, he created freestanding figures that were generally created for the gardens. Thereby, his work was distanced – both literally and conceptually – from the other masonry and carved works that were being created for the house.

It was long understood that Cibber gained his contracts at Chatsworth on the basis of his preceding work at Thoresby Hall, where he had created sculptures that adorned the façade of the house, destroyed by fire in the eighteenth century.⁶⁷³ Up until the late twentieth century, it was believed that William Talman had been the architect at Thoresby, and that Cibber, along with Goudge, Verrio, and Laguerre were moved *en masse* under the architect's supervision to his next contract, at Chatsworth.⁶⁷⁴ But in recent years an elevation of Thoresby has been identified as being by Hawksmoor, which scholars argue has reduced the likelihood of Talman's involvement at Thoresby, instead placing the building as one designed and built from the control of the Office of Works under Wren.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷³ MW, 114 – 115; Faber, *Cibber*, 49; Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 34 – 36.

⁶⁷⁴ *BDBA*, 1011 – 1011; John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530 – 1830*, (Middlesex: Penguin, 1970), 260; Faber, *Cibber*, 49.

⁶⁷⁵ John Harris, Talman's biographer, asserted that "the most that can be said for Thoresby is that it comes out of the Office of Works stable and was central to the parapeted brick and stone-coigned

The belief that Cibber had moved to Chatsworth under Talman's direction has nevertheless held fast.⁶⁷⁶ However, a letter from Cibber to the Earl of Devonshire remains in the archive at Chatsworth, providing evidence that Cibber made independent efforts to secure his contract at Chatsworth.⁶⁷⁷ In the letter, Cibber outlines his prices and provides a description of the work that he had recently undertaken at Thoresby, indicating that he hoped to produce similar work for the Earl. It supports Colley's account of his father, who he described as establishing his own relationships with his patrons.⁶⁷⁸ Cibber does not describe any architectural sculpture, only listing statues that he had created.⁶⁷⁹ This shows very clearly the kind of work that he presented himself as sculpting – and that he hoped to continue to produce – as well as the distance between his work and the main construction programme.

The Earl of Devonshire employed Cibber at Chatsworth for at least four years.⁶⁸⁰ This sizeable period of time beautifying one patron's property reflects the style of patronage that he would have been cognisant of during his time in Italy, as described in the previous section. Cibber evidently hoped that this relationship would evolve into sustained patronage from the Earl for him and his family. Colley recounted that upon the Earl raising an army to support William III, "he found his father in arms there, among the forces which the Earl of Devonshire had raised in defence of the liberties of the nation."⁶⁸¹ While Colley's account is doubtless tinged with poetic license, he nevertheless describes a constant feature of his father's understanding of the patron – sculptor relationship. Cibber seems to have believed that the level of support between a patron and artist extended beyond a working relationship and included the support of his family – including his sons' education – a level of patronage that sculptors were not offered in England in the period, but that he may

style of Wren's Hampton Court Palace from 1688." John Harris, *William Tavan Maverick Architect*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982, 29.

⁶⁷⁶ Appearing as recently as 2009. *BDS*, 275.

⁶⁷⁷ Reproduced in Faber, *Cibber*, 48.

⁶⁷⁸ Most notably with the Earl of Devonshire. Cibber, *Apology*, 194.

⁶⁷⁹ Including twelve Caesar's heads, relief figures, and statues in the round. Faber, *Cibber*, 48.

⁶⁸⁰ He appears in the accounts from late in 1687 to mid 1691. Reproduced, *Ibid.* 49 – 51.

⁶⁸¹ Cibber, *Apology*, 194.

have experienced both in Italy and in his youth, when the king of Denmark funded his travels.⁶⁸³

Cibber's employment at Chatsworth

Cibber's work at Chatsworth was briefly described by Celia Fiennes, who had visited within a few years of him completing his work there. Her account of the arrival to Chatsworth gives a contemporaneous perspective of the property and grounds:

the Dukes house stands on a little riseing ground from the River Derwent which runs all along the front of the house and by a little fall made in the water which makes a pretty murmuring noise; before the gate there is a large Parke and severall fine Gardens one without another with gravell walkes and squairs of grass with stone statues in them and in the middle of each Garden is a large fountaine full of images Sea Gods and Dolphins and Sea Horses which are full of pipes with spout out water in the bason and spouts all about the gardens; 3 Gardens judt round the house; out of two of the Gardens you ascend by severall steps into other Gardens which some have gravell walks and square like the other with Statues and images in the bason, there is one bason in the middle of one Garden that's very large and by sluces besides the Images severall pipes plays out the water, about 30 large and small pipes altogether, some flush it up that it frothes like snow; there is one Garden full of stone and brass statues; so the Gardens lyes one above another which makes the prospect very fine.⁶⁸⁴

This description is important. It provides an insight into the significant elements of a house and its environs for a contemporary visitor, indicating how important the sculpture was, and signifying the extent to which the built elements of a garden were given greater attention than the plants. The gardens are described in terms of stone statues and fountains, gravel paths, and feats of engineering. Significantly, in Fiennes' account, the gardens are afforded far more attention than the appearance of

⁶⁸³ Colley explicitly states that the Earl "promised, that when affairs were settled, he would provide for his son" and that he had "the interest of the Earl of Devonshire". Cibber, *Apology*, 194. For the patronage of the King of Denmark see Faber, *Cibber*, 4.

⁶⁸⁴ Celia Fiennes, *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, ed. Christopher Morris (London: The Cresset Press, 1949), 97.

the house, despite Talman's new frontages that had been only recently completed.⁶⁸⁵ This contemporary interest in the sculptural programme of the gardens has not been matched in later scholarship, which has instead focussed on the decorative architectural sculpture involved in the house building programme.⁶⁸⁶

In the seventeenth century, European styles were influencing English garden design and it was the beautification of the gardens, according to European taste, that comprised the majority of Cibber's employment at Chatsworth.⁶⁸⁷ His European travel and training provided him with an understanding of contemporary garden styles that was beyond his peers, and which would have reinforced his claims as a specialist in garden ornamentation. Studies of Italian sculptors of the period note that they often undertook the engineering for complex garden ornaments – such as fountains – and it is therefore plausible to suggest that Cibber had developed a good understanding of the specific requirements for particular elements such as fountain statuary.⁶⁸⁸

Prior scholarship asserts that Talman largely controlled the design process for the gardens at Chatsworth but acknowledges that the patron, the Earl of Devonshire, who changed his mind frequently during the construction process, made conventional processes of design and construction difficult.⁶⁸⁹ The gardens were created by the London designers and nurserymen, George London and Henry Wise, who were at the forefront of garden design in the period and were most likely also involved in the design process.⁶⁹⁰ Despite many overseers of the garden designs, the

⁶⁸⁵ Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 34 – 38.

⁶⁸⁶ In particular, Samuel Watson has become a figure of interest. For example, see Trevor Brighton, "Samuel Watson, Not Grinling Gibbons at Chatsworth", *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.140: 1149, (1998): 811 – 818.

⁶⁸⁷ Albert Forbes Sieveking, *Sir William Temple Upon the Gardens of Epicurus, With Other XVIIth Century Garden Essays*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908), xii. John Evelyn's comments upon visiting the Hague also reveal the contemporary garden taste. He focussed on describing them as "full of ornament, close-walks, statues, marbles, grotts, fountains, and artificiall musiq". Evelyn, *Diary*, 19 August, 1641, 21.

⁶⁸⁸ Not least Bernini, who continued a tradition in Italian sculpture that had been present since at least the Renaissance. Bertha Harris Wiles, *The Fountains of Florentine Sculptors*, (New York: Hacker, 1975), 3 – 4, 101 – 106.

⁶⁸⁹ Harris, *Talman*, 43 – 45; Downes, *English Baroque Architecture*, 60.

⁶⁹⁰ David Green referenced Addison's contemporaneous description of London and Wise as "our heroick Poets". Reproduced in David Green, *Gardener to Queen Anne, Henry Wise (1653 – 1738) and the Formal Garden*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 183. See also Julia Berrall, *The Garden*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), 263.

statuary Cibber created was produced with a large degree of independence and artistic freedom. He had a small number of sculptors who were under his direct control, they were separate from the sculptors that produced the main quantities of sculptural ornament for the work at Chatsworth. What is more, Cibber negotiated his work independently, either with Talman or, on occasion, directly with the Earl.

The bills that Cibber submitted while working at Chatsworth attest to the fact that he was initially working directly under the Earl's control, and only later worked under Talman's direction.⁶⁹¹ A receipt by Cibber, dated August 17th 1688, explicitly states: "Receaved then of James Whildon in full for making three figures, viz^t Pallas, Apollo & the Triton, by his Lord^{ps} especiall order the sum of fifty-poundes".⁶⁹² Indeed, it was only from October 1689 that Cibber started to be listed as "making figures at Chatsworth by Mr Talmans order".⁶⁹³ Therefore, it seems likely that while Talman was busy rebuilding the South Front, the Earl was giving his attention to the gardens. London and Wise were contracted on August 16th 1688, the day before Cibber's bill for figures, and it can therefore be ascertained that the statuary that Cibber had been producing for Chatsworth prior to late 1688 were all for the gardens that were already established around other sides of the house, and therefore outside of Talman's, or London and Wise's, remit.⁶⁹⁴ It was only from August 1690 that Cibber was paid for work that correlates with the new south parterre being created by London and Wise, which was not completed until 1694.⁶⁹⁵

The works that Cibber itemised in his letter to the Earl, when he was first seeking employment, directly connect with some of the works that Cibber made for Chatsworth. Two sphinxes, completed at Thoresby, also appear at Chatsworth. They were only included as an afterthought to the main outline of statues and fees that Cibber listed in his letter. He briefly described them as created "at ten pounds a piece having in them but three quarters of a tunn".⁶⁹⁶ One of the earlier Thoresby sphinxes

⁶⁹¹ Downes' identification that Talman "acted as sole contractor, an unusual procedure for the time, which meant that the artificers were engaged and paid by, and were responsible to, him and not his client" highlights how unusual Cibber's position was at Chatsworth. Downes, *English Baroque Architecture*, 61.

⁶⁹² Reproduced in Faber, *Cibber*, 50.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁴ The contract between London and Wise and the Earl is reproduced in Green, *Henry Wise*, 34.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.* See also the Chatsworth accounts, reproduced in Faber, *Cibber*, 51.

⁶⁹⁶ Reproduced in Faber, *Cibber*, 48.

and both of the later pair from Chatsworth are still extant (figs.3.19 and 3.20). The Chatsworth and Thoresby sphinxes clearly share a common design, which is indicative of Cibber being responsible for the design of his statuary. The disposition of the poses are nearly identical in the crossed placement of the forepaws, and they are of comparative size to each other. However, there are notable differences between the two examples.

Both sculptures show a great deal of sculptural detail along the seated limbs and tails that comprise the bases of the sculptures⁶⁹⁷. Here, the fur curling along the forearms and the paws are particularly enunciated. In the Chatsworth examples, the design of the earlier sphinx has been expanded to consider the relationship between the figure and the plinth with greater attention. Specifically, the mane-like locks of hair cascade along the forearms and respond to the arm locations – as resting upon a plinth – with a clarity that is absent at Thoresby (fig. 3.21). Fur is allowed to splay either side of the plinth, and overreach the confined location of the statue. The paws similarly rest beyond the plinth edge. In all areas in fact, around each side of the statue, wings, paws, tails, and fur make the sphinxes more responsive to their location, and less constrained by it. This heightened flamboyance is echoed in the additional ornaments added to the Chatsworth sphinxes. The epaulettes are larger, and reach further down the upper arms, and finely feathered wings spring from the centre of the sculptures and reach out beyond the confines of the plinth on either side. Cibber's consideration of the relationship between the sensory detailing and the plinth implies that the sphinxes were originally created to be viewed at a closer range than their final location on gateposts several metres above the ground, where such detailed elements could have been appreciated (fig. 3.22).⁶⁹⁸

The first two payments to Cibber for work at Chatsworth, each for £10, in December 1687 and March 1688, were during the period that the Earl was making his initial

⁶⁹⁷ The earlier Thoresby sphinx is lacking its original head, therefore this discussion only considers the bodies of the two examples, where comparisons can be made.

⁶⁹⁸ As the gateposts on which the sphinxes now reside were only completed in 1693, a couple of years after Cibber had left Chatsworth, it seems almost certain that this was the case. They most likely guarded the main entrance, much closer to the to the house. Thoresby's sphinxes may also have been sited adjacent to the main entrance. This might also be how the Thoresby sphinxes had been located. See Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 94.

alterations to the entrance court.⁶⁹⁹ These payments could relate to these two sphinxes, which are similar in size to those listed as costing £10 at Thoresby. Thoresby is roughly thirty miles from Chatsworth, close enough for the Earl of Devonshire to have inspected Cibber's workmanship there before employing him.⁷⁰⁰ These payments, not listed as work under the control of Talman, underline the centrality of the patron – sculptor relationship for Cibber.

Cibber merely listed the sphinxes as a postscript in his letter to the Earl of Devonshire, signifying that he did not consider them to have been highly important aspects of his statuary at Thoresby. However, if they were the first works he was contracted to make at Chatsworth, they would prove to have been highly significant for his career. It is possible that the exaggerated detailing in the sphinxes at Chatsworth was because they were Cibber's first works for the Earl, evidencing the sculptor's efforts to impress his new patron in order to promote a long-term relationship and sustained patronage from a significant employer.

Cibber's position at Chatsworth

Defining exactly whom Cibber considered to be his primary employer at Chatsworth is crucial for understanding how he worked, and the position that he held. While Samuel Watson and the other decorative carvers completed work that ornamented all areas of the estate – across a variety of media – Cibber appears to have held a much more focussed role. The distinction between him and the other carvers highlights the degree to which Cibber had established for himself a role which was otherwise absent in English sculpture. He was not employed to undertake work under the close collaboration – and final control – of an architect. Neither did he produce work from across the decorative and architectural ornamental spectrum. He could work solely as a statuary and maintain a good income with such work.⁷⁰¹ Significantly for

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 39 – 43.

⁷⁰⁰ James Lees-Milne and John Cornforth, "Chatsworth, Home of the Dukes of Devonshire", *Country Life*, Part 1, Vol. CLXIV (1968): 5.

⁷⁰¹ Cibber was not paid for any sculpture that was not statuary while at Chatsworth, or, as far as his letter to the Earl of Devonshire indicated, at Thoresby.

Cibber, whose finances suffered severely in the 1670s, he was not required to bear any upfront costs.⁷⁰²

Cibber's work also appears to have been treated differently. The disagreements between Talman and the Earl of Devonshire have been previously discussed by architectural historians and biographers.⁷⁰³ These accounts have revealed that the Earl wilfully made alterations to the planned projects at all stages, which had ramifications for the fabric of the building, often causing work to be repeated in order to satisfy his changing demands.⁷⁰⁴ Significantly, despite the Earl's notoriously difficult approach to the remodelling process, Cibber seems to have worked with virtually none of the criticisms, or subsequent alterations to his work, that Talman experienced as the architect of the house. Once the Earl had completed one garden his attention moved to the creation of new gardens on another side of the house. Unlike the house, in the gardens there was space for extensive expansion across the grounds, and for new additions that did not always necessitate the destruction of something else to make space. Indeed, in the decades after Cibber's involvement, the largest changes to the gardens included the remodelling of the cascade and pump house, and moving the bowling house.⁷⁰⁵ These constituted the most architectural aspects of the gardens, Cibber's statuary was saved from the demolished sites, and relocated to other areas of the garden.⁷⁰⁶

Cibber only undertook sculpture for one room at Chatsworth, the Chapel. In this internal space, his work has suffered from fewer subsequent alterations than the majority of Talman's additions.⁷⁰⁷ Vertue was the first to record that Cibber had designed the altarpiece for the Chapel, which has been praised for its integration of sculpture and painting, within what has been hailed as the "most complete remaining

⁷⁰² His materials, living, and sustenance costs were all borne by the patron. Therefore, the charges reflected in his bills relate purely to his fees for the design and creation of sculpture.

⁷⁰³ Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 68 – 69; Harris, *Talman*, 20.

⁷⁰⁴ Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 69 – 70.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 85 – 88.

⁷⁰⁶ Cibber's statue of Flora, (fig. 3.23) is an extant example.

⁷⁰⁷ The Earl moved four marble busts, carved by Cibber, from the Chapel to the great stairs in 1692. But, largely, it was not an area that the Earl changed once it had been completed, a fact that has been repeated in Chatsworth guidebooks since the mid-nineteenth century. See Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 124, 134; Sally Ambrose, *Your Guide to Chatsworth*, (Chatsworth: Chatsworth House Trust, 2016), 37.

Baroque interior in England” (fig. 3.24).⁷⁰⁸ The pilasters that line the room are capped with Ionic capitals carved with extreme delicacy. The volutes are strung with fine garlands that are suspended across the width of the shaft and sit apart from the main body, giving the appearance of a fully three-dimensional working of the floral decorations. Exactly the same capitals support the altar, mirroring the woodwork that sits behind, in starkly contrasting pale marble (fig. 3.25). On the attic level, the Corinthian capitals from the altarpiece reappear in the wall painting to either side.

Such a degree of integration across media necessitate a view that Cibber was highly unlikely to have independently designed the altarpiece, as Vertue and successive authors have claimed.⁷⁰⁹ The only extant drawing that was created before the completion of the altarpiece is by Samuel Watson, the carver who led the team that created the majority of the decorative ornaments in the chapel (fig. 3.26).⁷¹⁰ The only noticeable differences between Watson’s drawing and the altarpiece as created are found in the statuary flanking the altarpiece, which have been attributed to Cibber.⁷¹¹ It is likely that they are the only part of the altarpiece that he designed. There is no indication that he had prior experience in designing decorative interiors, and, moreover, it seems unlikely that Talman would have relinquished such a substantial area of the architectural design to another.⁷¹²

Such a view provides a more focussed understanding of the specific professional role that Cibber had developed, one which was almost singularly concerned with statuary, but which could nevertheless be deployed in a variety of settings. The differences in the deportment of the statues sketched by Watson and those that Cibber carved further suggests that he exerted a significant degree of artistic freedom in the creation of his statuary. The consciously classical models from which Cibber’s

⁷⁰⁸ MW, 115; Vertue, MS. 23, 070, in *Vertue I*, 36.

⁷⁰⁹ Faber, *Cibber*, 52; The Duchess of Devonshire, *Chatsworth*, (Derby: Derbyshire Countryside Ltd, 1989), 18.

⁷¹⁰ Walpole’s claim that Cibber carved “many ornaments in the Chapel” is not borne out in the accounts. Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, 142. For Watson’s involvement see Brighton, “Samuel Watson”, 811 – 818.

⁷¹¹ MW, 115; BDS, 276; Faber, *Cibber*, 52; Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 134 – 135.

⁷¹² Not only are there many extant designs by Talman displaying his ability in interior design, he was “an arrogant and argumentative man with an inflated idea of his own worth”. Such personality traits make it hard to imagine that he would accept the designs of another in one of his most significant projects. Peter Smith, “William Talman”, *ODNB*, 3 January 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/26956>, accessed 1 November 2022.

statuary were derived further indicate the extent to which his early career experiences on the continent continued to shape his working practices into his final decade. Cibber had legitimised his position as an authority on iconological and mythological statuary in London in the 1670s with the creation of the relief for the monument. By the 1680s, he had adapted this legitimacy into a full-time career, which, thanks to his focus on figurative sculpture rather than architectural or decorative ornament, simultaneously provided Cibber with greater autonomy than sculptors tended to exert in the period. Furthermore, as many of Cibber's sculptures were created for gardens, he was often able to work directly for patrons, siting his sculpture outside of an architect's control.

Drawings by Cibber remain from the period that he was working at Chatsworth. One, for the statue of Neptune, stands out in particular (fig. 3.9). This is a very rough sketch that has been quickly scribed in pencil. Long flowing strokes provide the briefest indication of a figure and pose while short hatched shading strokes elaborate the modelling. Despite clearly being only an initial sketch, Cibber has signed this drawing.⁷¹³ It is highly suggestive of his conception of his artistic autonomy and ownership of the *disegno* process that he signed drawings relating to the initial steps of his creative process. A further drawing, more carefully worked, and produced in red chalk, has also been attributed to Cibber (fig. 3.27).⁷¹⁴ This drawing includes designs for both a Neptune and a Jupiter and, as Physick first identified, shares the characteristic shading as described in the previous sketch.⁷¹⁵ The use of red chalk to create initial designs is a further indication of Cibber's working practices conforming to Italian artistic models.⁷¹⁶ Since at least the fifteenth century, as Alberti's writings attest, sketches had been considered a vital aspect of the design process, which

⁷¹³ The signature is clearly from the same hand as the letter signed by Cibber relating to Lamport Hall. The G, B's and L's all share open looping strokes. See fig. 3.7.

⁷¹⁴ The mount is inscribed with a historical attribution. See The Victoria and Albert Museum, *Neptune and Jupiter*, June 30, 2009, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O597574/neptune-and-jupiter-drawing-cibber-caius-gabriel/>, accessed 24 November 2021.

⁷¹⁵ Physick, *Designs for English Sculpture*, 26.

⁷¹⁶ A trait that he shared with Nicholas Stone the younger who recalled that while travelling in Italy he was counselled by Bernini to continue drawing in chalk. See Victoria Potts, "The Education of the Sculptor Outside the Workshop and Academy", in *Children of Mercury, The Education of Artists in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey Muller (Rhode Island: Brown University, 1984), 69; Andrew Moore (ed.) *The Paston Treasure*, 462.

should be shared with others.⁷¹⁷ High Renaissance sketches can be typified by several commonalities: “drawing swiftly, drawing from the nude, making multiple sketches of a similar pose, and drawing in chalk.”⁷¹⁸ Such sketches may have been used by Cibber in the discussion phase with his educated patrons, who would have acknowledged that he was working in a form that hugely celebrated artists, such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, had cemented as a manifestation of the process of artistic invention.⁷¹⁹ Such drawings were constructed prior to the creation of so-called “*ben finito*” drawings of final designs.⁷²⁰ However, they increasingly came to be valued in their own right. Cibber’s drawing was formerly held in the collection of Randall Davies, a collector of old master drawings, which further attests to his sketched style of design-making being appreciated and understood in accordance with Renaissance ideals.⁷²¹

Chatsworth after Cibber

By 1690, Cibber was no longer based at Chatsworth. All recorded payments from April to July of that year were received by him in London.⁷²² By 1691, he had permanently returned to his London workshop. However, he left men to finish the statuary at Chatsworth on his departure.⁷²³ It is possible that Cibber’s involvement continued from London into the following year, as in November 1692 a payment of £16 is recorded as being made “at London for ye figure of Diana”, which was

⁷¹⁷ Bambach notes that this was a Renaissance revival of classical ideals of design first outlined in Pliny the Elder’s writings. Bambach, *Drawing and Painting*, 257. For the spread of this idea across Europe see Warwick, *The Arts of Collecting*, 172.

⁷¹⁸ Cammy Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2008), 10.

⁷¹⁹ A concept that only increased in the seventeenth century. See Robert Harbison, *Reflections on Baroque*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 40. Bernini was also understood to be “a master of chalk studies from the nude model”. Eisler, *Sculptors’ Drawings*, n.p.

⁷²⁰ Joost Keizer, “Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Subject of Art”, *The Art Bulletin*, 93:3 (2011): 310. Significantly, this practice also emphasised Cibber’s similarities with artists that had risen “above the artisan class” and secured friendships with aristocrats and royalty. See William Wallace, “The Artist as Genius”, in *A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art*, ed. Babette Bohn and James Saslow (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2013), 156 - 157.

⁷²¹ The British Museum, “Randall Davies”, (1866 – 1946)

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG24619> accessed 24 November 2021.

⁷²² Reproduced in Faber, *Cibber*, 50.

⁷²³ The final payments mainly relate to the completion of the seahorse fountain in the Great Parterre, the final formal garden to be completed with Cibber’s involvement. Faber, *Cibber*, 51; Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 86.

created for the grotto.⁷²⁴ Given the exclusive contract that Cibber had enjoyed prior to this date for statues at Chatsworth, he may have also been responsible for this later work. He continued to provide statues from London until 1694, when he sculpted the statue of Flora, which was originally created as the centrepiece of Flora's Garden, as described in Fiennes' description of the approach to Chatsworth.⁷²⁵ Cibber's involvement at Chatsworth into the mid 1690s is significant. It displays that he maintained good relationships at Chatsworth during the period that the Earl (now first Duke of Devonshire) was becoming increasingly sceptical of the quality, and cost, of the work he was receiving from Talman and his workers.⁷²⁶ His work dating from this period reinforces the fact that he was not directly employed by Talman, and should instead be understood as having independently developed a patron – artist relationship with the Duke.

Whereas much of the work that Talman created was remodelled – or changed entirely – during the construction period, Cibber's work was not treated in the same manner. No bills to relate to alterations to any of the statuary that he created. Later changes are restricted to moving statues from their original locations. For example, the statue of Flora was relocated when the garden it had been situated in was demolished to make way for the canal pond.⁷²⁷ Moreover, Cibber's work at Chatsworth may even have gained significance in the final years of the seventeenth century. When the decorations for the Great Stairs were initially planned, a fresco cycle would have decorated the entire wall space.⁷²⁸ These plans changed in around 1692, after Cibber had left Chatsworth. When the decision was made to include sculptural decorations for this space it was ornamented with his pre-existing sculptures, which were rehoused from other locations. Several busts were relocated from the Chapel and were joined by three full figures from the gardens (fig. 3.28).⁷²⁹ This relocation ensured that any visitor of note to the property would be offered an opportunity to admire Cibber's statuary. It is notable that the statues of Apollo and

⁷²⁴ Reproduced in Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 47.

⁷²⁵ Ambrose, *Guide to Chatsworth*, 81.

⁷²⁶ *BDBA*, 1009; Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 67.

⁷²⁷ Ambrose, *Guide to Chatsworth* 93.

⁷²⁸ Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 123 – 124.

⁷²⁹ The busts at Chatsworth are another example of statuary that Cibber had advertised as having previously completed at Thoresby when writing his introductory letter to the Earl. For the movement of statues, *Ibid.*

Pallas, which were moved into this prime location in the house, were sculptures that had been explicitly listed in the accounts as created by Cibber at the command of the Duke.⁷³⁰

This interior collection of Cibber's sculpture was complemented with contemporaneous Italian busts that were placed in the overdoors (fig. 3.29).⁷³¹ The display of his sculpture alongside Italian examples provides another indication of the way that they were perceived by patrons. In placing an Italian bust of Apollo alongside Cibber's full-length statue of the same character, the Duke encouraged his visitors to compare the works, suggesting that they were considered to be of an equal standing. In terms of Cibber's professional identity, this provides a further example of his patrons endorsing his legitimacy alongside Italian sculptors.⁷³²

The status of Cibber's sculpture at Chatsworth outlived the first Duke. It was only from "the middle of the eighteenth century [that] the essential note or character of the garden was utterly changed" under Capability Brown, leaving little of London and Wise's classical formal terraces where Cibber's statuary had been situated.⁷³³ This was the first major change at Chatsworth following those for the first Duke at the end of the seventeenth century.⁷³⁴

The first step was to clear the West front of its numerous obstructive buildings – the old bridge and mill, the Offices and Stables, the bridge over the central canal, the palisade on the lower side of the Forecourt, and the fountains, gazebos and summerhouses on the smaller ponds. A clean sweep was made of these, with the curious exception of the carved stone pedestals, surmounted by Cibber's sphinxes, at either end of the palisade.⁷³⁵

⁷³⁰ "[F]or making three figures, viz^t Pallas, Apollo & the Triton, by his Lord^{ps} especiall order". Chatsworth accounts, 17 August, 1688. Reproduced in Faber, *Cibber*, 50.

⁷³¹ Ambrose, *Your Guide to Chatsworth*, 38.

⁷³² The placement on the great stairs of these contemporary sculptural works also created an interesting relationship with the only genuinely antique sculpture at Chatsworth, the relief of Diana is sited in the grotto, located directly below the great stairs. Both Cibber's sculpture and the antique example were surrounded by similar decorative ornaments created by Watson to dignify their display.

⁷³³ Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 88.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, 90.

Cibber's sphinxes may have survived, at least in part, due to the recent familial ties between the Devonshires and the Burlingtons.⁷³⁶ Guardian sphinxes provided continuity between the two family's primary residences, Chatsworth and Chiswick House.⁷³⁷ However, other statues by him also survived these large-scale changes to the gardens. When the Bowling House was removed from the west front it was re-sited and renamed as Flora's Temple. Cibber's statue of Flora was repositioned in this recreation of a classical temple.⁷³⁸ Certain aspects of his statuary, therefore, were not incompatible with the changing tastes that dramatically influenced British garden design.⁷³⁹ Instead, his work gained new significance due to the lasting popularity for classical mythological scenes. Such sculptural survivals are inherently economical, but they also highlight an important point about the perceived quality of Cibber's mythological statuary. They continued to be deemed appropriate for display – and redisplay – over the course of centuries.⁷⁴⁰ Such reuse exemplifies the fact that his work largely transcends the typical distinctions between the sculptural tastes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the early nineteenth century a sculpture gallery was added to Chatsworth.⁷⁴¹ None of Cibber's work features in this space, which was created at a similar time to much of his garden statuary finally being discarded due to severe weathering and damage, following over a century of exposure.⁷⁴² It is notable that while his sculpture remained on display in the house, it was not relocated in the specific site for the display of sculpture, which housed an entirely contemporary collection. By the time that a dedicated sculpture gallery was created at Chatsworth, Cibber's figurative work had become ingrained as a part of the ornamental scheme of the Great Stairs, despite their original creation as separate and independent works of sculpture.

⁷³⁶ With the marriage of the fourth Duke of Devonshire to Charlotte Boyle, the only surviving daughter of the third Earl of Burlington. Karl Wolfgang Schweizer, "William Cavendish, fourth Duke of Devonshire", *ODNB*, 10 January 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/4949>, accessed 1 November 2022.

⁷³⁷ As depicted in Jacques Rigaud's print of Chiswick House from 1733 (fig. 3.30).

⁷³⁸ And has been repositioned in this location despite a move in the nineteenth century to the French Garden. See Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 90 – 92.

⁷³⁹ For more in the changing tastes in garden design see Berrall, *The Garden*, 247 – 269.

⁷⁴⁰ Certain surviving works by Cibber, such as those at Belvoir Castle and Chatsworth, continue to be displayed in the gardens to the present day.

⁷⁴¹ Thompson, *Chatsworth*, 198 – 199.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, 220; Ambrose, *Your Guide to Chatsworth*, 68 – 70.

Unlike decorative sculpture of the seventeenth century – which was often determined to be inconsistent with the decorative fashions of the eighteenth century and in need of replacement – Cibber’s statuary, by contrast, maintained popularity throughout the eighteenth century and was amalgamated into the looser and less formalised gardens. His works were removed from parterres and were placed in glades and temples, but they remained popular forms of garden statuary. It was only as a result of such popularity and use, and the wear that one hundred and fifty years outdoors caused, that most of his work was removed at Chatsworth. It is because Cibber was working in a different way to many of his contemporaries, and producing work that followed Continental tastes rather than local ones, that his work outlived that created by many of his peers.

However, such longevity was not matched by his own legacy, as his most replicated garden works, discussed in the following section, were soon separated from his authorship. The final section will move to considering the motivations that led Cibber to leave the profitable security of the patronage he had received at Chatsworth and other country estates and return to the capital. I will position the significance of the opportunities offered by Wren, including working for royal patrons, as the crowning achievement in Cibber’s career, ones that he had been aiming towards for many years.

Part Three: *Cibber’s Return to London*

Cibber had, by his mid-career, secured a sculptural position that provided a high degree of autonomy as he largely produced work that was outside of the oversight of an architect. However, in the final decade of his career, Cibber dramatically changed his working practices and was to be found predominantly undertaking work for Wren. In this section I will argue that the particular role that Cibber was afforded by Wren allowed him to retain a degree of autonomy that was consistent with the sculptural identity that he had already established. Furthermore, I believe that the circumstances of his final decade, working almost exclusively for Wren on major royal projects, and at St. Paul’s Cathedral, represented some of the crowning

achievements of his professional career.⁷⁴³ This section will consider the significance of the projects Cibber conducted with Wren according to this premise, investigating Wren's influence alongside Cibber's longstanding application of Italian modes of patronage, which finally secured him a royal appointment, which I will argue he interpreted as a measure of his reputation.

By the 1690s, Wren had held a favourable opinion of Cibber's sculpture for some time. In 1681, Cibber had created the pedimental figures for Wren at Trinity College Library, Cambridge. Wren had initially intended the figures to be made of plaster, a cost effective material, but Cibber actually created lead statues.⁷⁴⁴ That Wren changed his plans, for a costlier but more hard-wearing material – which involved still-novel technologies in sculpture-casting – indicate that he was both receptive to Cibber's advice, and deferred to his superior knowledge of sculptural production.⁷⁴⁵ In the following year, when the Bishop of Oxford asked Wren for advice in finding a sculptor for the statue of the king for Tom Tower, Wren endorsed Cibber for the role saying “if I can find him [he] will be able to do it & well, or I will enquire farther”.⁷⁴⁶ Wren clearly favoured Cibber when it came to statuary and recommended him to others without hesitation.

Entering the royal household

Cibber may have believed that through Wren he could secure a role with the king that was commensurate to the relationship that he had previously established with the Earl of Devonshire: one akin to holding a position in his household.⁷⁴⁷ The projects that Cibber was offered by Wren in the 1690s certainly seem to have

⁷⁴³ The only known works by Cibber from the 1690s that were not created for Wren's buildings were two independent projects, for which he took no charge: the statue of William Wykeham that he presented to Winchester College in order to secure his son's attendance there, and the Danish Church in Wellclose Square, where he was both the architect and the sculptor. Both of these projects supported his family's opportunities, social standing, and emphasised his creative identity.

⁷⁴⁴ W. Douglas Caröe, *Tom Tower*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), 51.

⁷⁴⁵ See Malcolm Baker, “‘Squabby Cupids and Clumsy Graces’: Garden Sculpture and Luxury in Eighteenth-Century England”, *Oxford Art Journal*, 18:1 (1995): 3.

⁷⁴⁶ Letter from Wren to Bishop Fell, 9 September, 1682. Published in Caröe, *Tom Tower*, 33.

⁷⁴⁷ Unfortunately for Cibber, in his case the salary was not forthcoming. He raised several petitions claiming his right to the salary of £50 per year as his forerunner, Peter Besnier had been provided. Faber, *Cibber*, 12 – 13.

furthered his longstanding ambition for such a position.⁷⁴⁸ He secured the role of Sculptor in Ordinary to the King on the 30th May 1693, while working under Wren at Hampton Court Palace.⁷⁴⁹ Significantly, it was the Earl of Dorset, for whom Cibber had created the Sackville monument several years earlier, and who was now Lord Chamberlain, that supported his appointment.⁷⁵⁰ Cibber's longstanding practice of securing courtly allies, according to Italian methods of court patronage, eventually secured his royal approbation.

However Cibber also undertook a commission in the 1690s that stands apart from the rest of his career. He was responsible for the design and building of the Danish Church, Wellclose Square, where he was a parishioner (fig. 3.31). This church acted as a celebration of the close ties between the royal houses of England and Denmark, it was partly funded by sizeable donations from King Christian V of Denmark and from Prince George, husband to the future Queen Anne, also of Denmark.⁷⁵¹ Cibber's securing of the architectural commission for such a building was a significant moment for the sculptor, despite being unpaid. The Danish Church represented the fruition of his decades-long desire to display his abilities as an architect.⁷⁵² Notably, it also provided him with opportunities to claim that he had worked as a royal architect, which he did in a set of self-aggrandising prints.⁷⁵³ It aligned Cibber's career somewhat closer to that of the contemporary sculptural exemplar *par excellence*, Bernini, who exemplified the Italian prototype of the sculptor – architect.⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁴⁸ Faber reproduced the claims Cibber made on his monument, which attested to a successive line of royal patronage from Denmark through the reigns of Charles II and William III. However, he contests Cibber's claim to a position as Sculptor in Ordinary prior to 1693. Indeed, it was not until William's reign that Cibber secured roles on royal works. *BDS*, 275 – 276; Faber, *Cibber*, 12 – 13.

⁷⁴⁹ Faber, *Cibber*, 12 – 13.

⁷⁵⁰ *BDS*, 274 – 275; *Ibid.*

⁷⁵¹ Faber, *Cibber*, 62 – 63.

⁷⁵² Which he had first attempted to establish in the 1660s at the Royal Exchange, discussed in section 1.

⁷⁵³ At least three engravings by Jan Kip detailing the interior and exterior were created shortly after the completion of the church. Each listed Cibber's authorship, often explicitly identifying him as the 'Architectus' and that he created the church for royal patrons. See figure 3.31.

⁷⁵⁴ For more on Bernini's roles across professions see Genevieve Warwick, *Bernini*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 2 – 6.

Wren as a model and teacher

While Bernini provided a model for sculptor – architects in the period, it was Wren – rather than Italian paradigms – who influenced Cibber’s architectural design. The church was built in 1694, close to the completion of Wren’s City churches, and clearly emulated Wren’s architectural models. In a 1711 letter, Wren articulated his philosophy on the design of churches and discussed the appropriate ornament of these buildings in some detail:

Such Fronts as shall happen to lie most open in View should be adorned with Porticoes, both for Beauty and convenience; which, together with handsome Spires, or Lanterns, rising in good Proportion above the neighbouring Houses, may be of sufficient Ornament to the Town, without a great Expence for enriching the outward Walls of the Churches, in which Plainness and Duration ought principally, if not wholly, to be studied.⁷⁵⁵

While there was no portico on the Danish church, a lanterned tower rose above the central doorway on the west end, which was ornamented with stone pilasters and a crowning escutcheon that adorned the full height of the building. In these decorative details, Cibber followed a philosophy of architectural ornament that expressed simple geometric symmetries, as outlined by Wren.⁷⁵⁶ He gave the greatest ornament and significance to the centre of the building fronts, using stone accents on the west front and projecting a central bay of a tripartite series on the north and south fronts. The building also utilised materials according to Wren’s paradigm of including decorative additions with the greatest economy. It followed Wren’s assessment that “[i]n Windows and Doors Portland Stone may be used, with good Bricks, and Stone Quoins”.⁷⁵⁷ Such an ornamental scheme is also found in Wren’s contemporaneous productions at Hampton Court, where Cibber was also working. The roundels and the strongly horizontal line of the roof, emphasised by a balustrade, are also reminiscent of Wren’s Hampton Court design (fig. 3.32). Cibber’s ability to emulate Wren’s architectural work displays his awareness and appreciation of his architectural design.

⁷⁵⁵ Christopher Wren, “Letter to a friend on the Commission for Building Fifty new churches”, 1711, in Lydia Soo, *Wren’s “Tracts” on Architecture and Other Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 113.

⁷⁵⁶ Christopher Wren, “Tract 1”, in Soo, *Wren’s Tracts*, 154 – 155.

⁷⁵⁷ Wren, “Letter to a Friend”, *ibid.*, 114.

A drawing from Wren's office, held at All Souls College, is convincingly believed to be in Cibber's hand (fig. 3.33).⁷⁵⁸ This drawing details a design for a ceiling cove, or possibly a frame, which was most likely created for Hampton Court Palace. It is one of only two extant examples of his drawn designs for architectural ornament.⁷⁵⁹

These drawings introduce a new role for Cibber that emerged while he was working with Wren, which was more architecturally focussed. Significantly, these drawings also place him in a select group who Wren trusted to create designs for his approval. These designs also imply that there were opportunities for Cibber to learn some of Wren's ideas about architecture, and absorb some of his approaches to architectural design, while at Hampton Court. That Cibber secured an architectural position at the Danish Church in the same period highlights the broad range of skills in which he must have proclaimed himself a master, and reinforces the focus that he must have placed upon his role as a designer, which Wren legitimised by utilising his design skills. While documentary evidence for Cibber is, regrettably, rather limited, the scope of the transferable skills between a sculptor and an architect in this period are evident, and his pursuance of both roles cements the degree to which Cibber pronounced his mastery of *disegno* as the foundation of his professional identity.

Furthering a legacy

Indeed, the centrality of design in Cibber's self-presentation can be traced through the ways that he publicised himself and his work. He was involved in creating several prints of his works. These images can be described as the method he employed to shape the narrative of his legacy. The works that he chose for reproduction express a very particular image. The earliest work that Cibber was involved in creating prints for was the Monument to the Great Fire of London, discussed in section one. It was included in the titlepage for the first English version of Ripa's *Iconologia*, published after Cibber's death (fig. 3.35). What is more, he

⁷⁵⁸ His characteristic horizontal pencil lines are visible, and the cherub wings are handled with the same bulbous shape and spiralled delineation of feathers as are found in the *Design for a Vase*, also for Hampton Court Palace, which Cibber is known to have created. See AG, 269.

⁷⁵⁹ The other, held at Sir John Soane's museum, is also believed to be for Hampton Court Palace (fig. 3.34). Its depiction of a herm amongst vines blurs the distinctions between architecture and sculpture to a greater extent than surviving works of the period in England and displays that even in architectural settings Cibber's distinctive skills as a statuary continued to be in demand.

was evidently closely involved in the creation of this book. Several of the illustrations are signed “C.G.C deli”, or simply “C.G.C” (fig. 3.36).⁷⁶⁰ Cibber’s involvement in the first English publication of an iconic artist’s handbook positions his reputation as an expert in allegorical depictions at its publication.

Other prints remain for the Danish Church, which were created by Johannes Kip, who also engraved the *Iconologia*, in the year after the church was completed (figs. 3.31 and 3.37). These detail the church interior and exterior and all proudly proclaim Cibber’s role as the architect, describing him as “C: Gabriel Cibber, Flensburg Architectus”. These also highlight that he was working for a royal patron. One print details the altar, again proclaiming Cibber’s sole agency as the creator (fig. 3.38). The prints have inscriptions in both Latin and Danish, and were clearly created with an international audience in mind, for whom he could sculpt his own legacy. His wife’s tomb, located in the church, repeated the same message.⁷⁶¹ The image he presented is one that allowed him to align himself with the great sculptor-designer-architects whose model he had witnessed in Italy, and aspired to thereafter.

Case Study: *Cibber at Hampton Court Palace*

Cibber’s appearance as a major sculptor at Hampton Court Palace reveals that, by the early 1690s, he had reached a level of accomplishment and renown that placed him at the apex of sculptors then active in England. He arrived at a time that coincided with changes in Wren’s approach to architectural ornament, producing the first narrative and figurative scene to be placed on a tympanum in a Wren building. This case study considers the significance of their relationship in the period that Wren was establishing new decorative expressions in English architecture, one which aided in the construction of a visual identity for the new royals, William and Mary.

⁷⁶⁰ Ward Jackson, *Public Sculpture of The City of London*, 268.

⁷⁶¹ It declared Cibber as a sculptor for King Frederick of Denmark and Norway, then for Charles II, and finally for William III. Reproduced in Faber, *Cibber*, 12.

The Hampton Court gardens

It is highly significant that at Hampton Court Palace Cibber first worked on statuary for the gardens, in a replication of his role at Chatsworth, amongst other country houses. The first commissions, for an urn and a vase, were not insignificant works. These were considerable pieces, the urn stands at over six feet tall, they were individually designed, highly decorated, and Cibber was paid over £750 for the two sculptures, a sum for which there is no comparison in his previous garden sculptures (figs. 3.39 and 3.40).⁷⁶² Helen Lawrence has identified that the reign of William III established a new style of garden design, one which had been imported – like the king – from the Netherlands:

In the Netherlands, the relationship between landscape design and national politics had long been engrained, and consequently garden-making in England became associated with support of the king, Protestantism and Whig policy. In turn, specifically Dutch influences crept into landscapes and common iconographical themes were used, including that of Neptune, symbolising the King as the saviour of Protestant freedom from across the sea.⁷⁶³

Therefore, Cibber's unconventional approach to gaining sculptural commissions in the early 1680s, which saw him travelling the country using the local freestone to produce garden statuary for the landed elite, had, by the outset of the 1690s, positioned him as the leading creator of statuary that was favoured by courtiers who were keen to emphasise their support for William. As his first works at Hampton Court attest, this specialism seems to have also secured the support of the King.⁷⁶⁴

Hampton Court was remodelled for William and Mary, providing them with a principal residence – away from the capital – that was suitable for receiving international visitors that were accustomed to a new form of court architecture, inspired by Versailles.⁷⁶⁵ The sculptures that Cibber was commissioned to produce

⁷⁶² The National Archives, *Declared Accounts*, AO/1/2482/298, folio 8. His entire recorded charges for all the statues he made at Thoresby, 25 in all, totalled £536, which is similar to the sums he received at Chatsworth. For the reproduction of his bills see Faber, *Cibber*, 48 – 56.

⁷⁶³ Helen Lawrence, 'New Light on Thomas Archer as Garden-Maker', *Garden History*, 38:1 (2010): 52.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁷⁶⁵ Matthew Sturgis, *Hampton Court Palace*, (London: Macmillan, 1998), 117.

were created to represent the status of the inhabitants, and by extension of the country, via contemporary European notions of modernity and taste. As Manolo Guerci has recently discussed, the conspicuous display of power via ostentatious displays had become a well-understood mode of expression in England before the outset of the seventeenth century.⁷⁶⁶ However, the use of modes of display that had a cogency in a wider European context became increasingly prevalent throughout the seventeenth century.⁷⁶⁷ By the 1690s, Cibber's experience in producing statuary that resonated with continental garden fashions gave him a distinct advantage, one that allowed him to present himself as a master of garden ornaments that were inspired by classical precedents. His work at Hampton Court is filled with classical references, displaying the extent to which his classical sculptural knowledge had been legitimised by both the leading architect and his royal patrons.

Cibber's Vase at Hampton Court unquestionably takes its form from the revered *Medici Vase*, which had, by the 1690s, been widely reproduced as an ornament for gardens across Europe (fig. 3.41).⁷⁶⁸ However, it is striking that neither Cibber's vase, nor its companion by Edward Pearce, were commissioned to be direct copies of the *Medici Vase*. In these, the most elaborate examples of the period's expansive replication of urns and vases, two of the most respected sculptors of the period were contracted to create their own designs, *inspired* by the classical paradigm.⁷⁶⁹ As such, they showcase the individual sculptors' design skills as much as they stand as testaments to the construction of a visual identity for the new royals.

Leonard Knyff's *A View of Hampton Court* shows the earliest reproduction of these garden sculptures, depicting the vases on the terrace at either side of Wren's central stone-fronted bay, where they demarcate and reply to the emphasis and ornament of the central bay of Wren's palace front (fig. 3.42). The urns had, by the turn of the eighteenth century, been sited at the conclusion of this central axis of the east

⁷⁶⁶ Guerci, *London's Golden Mile*, 219 – 225.

⁷⁶⁷ A trend that continued into the eighteenth century. See Baker, "'Squabby Cupids and Clumsy Graces'", 4 – 6.

⁷⁶⁸ The replications at palaces across Europe, including Versailles, may have inspired the commission at Hampton Court. See Frances Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 316.

⁷⁶⁹ Which were also displayed in the same ways that copies of the *Medici* and *Borghese* vases often were, as companion pieces. *Ibid.*, 167.

garden, completing the symmetry Wren had established in the new front (fig. 3.43). These marble sculptures were prominently incorporated into Knyff's painting, their white marble gleaming against the landscape. Knyff provides a sense of their high decorative relief and heavy ornamentation. The vases were widely reproduced in English gardens throughout the eighteenth century.⁷⁷⁰ As Daniel Defoe recorded in 1724:

the King began with the Gardens at Hampton Court and Kensington, and the Gentlemen followed every where, with such a Gust that the alteration is in indeed wonderful thro' the whole Kingdom.⁷⁷¹

Cibber's contribution at the gardens of Hampton Court represents the establishment of a canon of garden statuary in England, one which encompassed contemporary English paradigms rather than solely replicating the authority of classical antiquities. Despite his central role in the creation of this canon, his name was swiftly separated from the works he created. John Nost made copies of the Hampton Court vases at the turn of the century.⁷⁷² It was these copies, and engravings of the gardens, that made it possible for Cibber's garden works to have such reach in English gardens through the eighteenth century, but Nost's copies simultaneously severed the link between Cibber's name and his most reproduced creations.⁷⁷³ This undoubtedly reduced his legacy in the eighteenth century – even as his works continued to be widely reproduced.

The tympanum relief

Cibber was successful in securing further commissions at Hampton Court. He went on to create the most elaborate aspects of the architectural ornament on the palace, especially the figurative relief of Hercules carved for the tympanum overlooking the park (fig. 3.44). This work is particularly curious as it represents a shift in both the working practices of Cibber and Wren. For Wren, it was the first example of a

⁷⁷⁰ Versions of the reliefs from Cibber's vase appear at Drayton House, Chatsworth, and Anglesey Abbey, to name a few examples. John Davis, *Antique Garden Ornament*, (Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 1991), 45.

⁷⁷¹ Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, Vol. 1, (London: G. Strahan, 1724.), 124.

⁷⁷² Davis, *Garden Ornament*, 45.

⁷⁷³ The market for prints of famous garden views increased markedly in the mid-eighteenth century. For more see Roy Strong, *The Artist and the Garden*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 259 – 261.

figurative scene appearing within the central decorative design of his architectural ornament. Tympanums had become increasingly prevalent in English architecture over the course of the seventeenth century, and were frequently included in Wren's late designs.⁷⁷⁴ However, the inclusion of narrative reliefs, as Cibber produced for Hampton Court, was a novel departure from the heraldic symbols and escutcheons that comprise the decoration in earlier examples. For Cibber, this was a continuation of the type of work he had created in the 1670s on the monument to the Fire, but which he had not repeated for almost twenty years.

The example at Hampton Court foreshadows an increase in figurative sculptural reliefs in Wren's later architectural schemes. Reliefs on the pediments at St. Paul's Cathedral and Greenwich Palace soon followed, indicating that the heightened degree of figurative sculpture as the centrepiece of a building's design can be classified as a late phenomenon in Wren's architectural development. That this new decoration appeared in the central bay of Wren's "most important commission [. . .] as official Court Architect" signifies Wren's confidence in Cibber.⁷⁷⁵ Moreover, at Hampton Court and St. Paul's, a more narrative style of ornament had not originally been planned during the main design phase.⁷⁷⁶

A significant number of drawings, now held at Sir John Soane's Museum, chart the development of Wren's designs for the park front at Hampton Court Palace. These drawings show that while Wren was finalising the other decorative aspects of the central bay, such as the frieze, and when the major architectural elements had been finalised, Wren still conceived of a different relief for the tympanum. In a half elevation of the central bay, a military trophy is depicted for the tympanum relief (fig. 3.45). This drawing, dated to 1689, has significant similarities with the final design of the central bay, highlighting that the relief was not finalised until well into the building phase. This is in contrast to other elements of the sculptural ornament. For example, the panels between the capitals were carved with two floral garlands

⁷⁷⁴ Including at Hampton Court, Greenwich Hospital, and St. Paul's Cathedral.

⁷⁷⁵ Bryan Little, *Sir Christopher Wren, a Historical Biography*, (London: Robert Hale, 1975), 163.

⁷⁷⁶ Of the early designs for St Paul's Cathedral, until the Revised Design of 1685-87, there was no elaboration of the ornament for the tympanum, despite other sculptural details being well-developed in the drawings.

hanging from a central vase of flowers, and the overall disposition of the portico is as depicted in early presentation drawings (figs. 3.46 and 3.47).⁷⁷⁷

Another preliminary drawing for the park front, also drawn by Hawksmoor and datable to the same period, emphasises the extent to which the relief was not designed in tandem with the building (fig. 3.48). In this drawing, ornamental aspects – such as the flaming urns and statues for the roof – have been clearly expressed; however, the tympanum relief has not. In contrast to the rest of the drawing, the relief is only vaguely indicated with softly sketched pencil lines that do not provide a coherent illustration of the intended design. Indeed, it is only in later presentation drawings, datable to 1691, that the final design for the relief becomes apparent (fig. 3.49). Significantly, this indicates that the design of the relief was finalised in the period that Cibber was present at Hampton Court.⁷⁷⁸

There is another documented example of Cibber’s influence causing Wren to alter his original plans for a tympanum relief. When Cibber was contracted to undertake the relief for the south side of St. Paul’s Cathedral, Wren had intended an escutcheon design, which would have complemented the north tympanum relief as carved by Gibbons. However, Cibber presented two designs to Wren; one, for a carving that matched his specifications, and another completely deviating from this, comprising of a phoenix, the design that Wren ultimately chose.⁷⁷⁹ This evidences that Cibber was able to show alternative designs to Wren, and that Wren was amenable to his proposals.

It is significant that the declared accounts at Hampton Court describe payments to Cibber for “Iconologicall figures”, a description that recalls his contemporaneous

⁷⁷⁷ Elevation of the Park Front. Christopher Wren. Held in Sir John Soane’s museum, Vol 111/11.

⁷⁷⁸ The final payment that Cibber signed for in person at Chatsworth was in December 1690, the indicating that he returned to London before the following payment in March 1690/1. Reproduced in Faber, *Cibber*, 51. Extant accounts for Hampton Court are limited, but the audited accounts confirm that Cibber was certainly receiving payments prior to the end of 1691. The National Archives, *Declared Accounts*, AO/1/2482/298, folio 7.

⁷⁷⁹ Wren had been keen to introduce a phoenix to the London skyline from at least the 1670s, when he proposed one to top the Monument. Given Cibber’s involvement at the Monument, he must have been aware that this was likely to appeal to Wren. Phillip Ward-Jackson has outlined that the payments to Cibber at St. Paul’s clearly indicate that he was paid for two models, and has highlighted that one design, for “2 ffigures and emblems” would have correlated with Gibbons’ north pediment relief. See Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture of the City of London*, 372.

contributions to the first English edition of Ripa's *Iconologia* and his earlier work on the monument.⁷⁸⁰ It seems highly likely that his sculpture for the monument to the fire was fundamental to his employment on the relief at Hampton Court, as the previous example provided Cibber with a legitimate claim to expertise in this area.⁷⁸¹ Indeed, it seems likely that Wren's inclusion of narrative reliefs as architectural ornament only emerged because he had access to a sculptor that had already proven their ability for producing reliefs of the style and quality required for such a significant aspect of a building's façade.

The flat planes in Cibber's reliefs have long been noted.⁷⁸² The result is that his reliefs create a sense that the central, and foregrounded, figures are virtually freestanding fully-worked statues on an otherwise 'flat' background, as there is no graduation between foreground and background. This combination essentially creates a paradoxically very deep relief which portrays an essentially two-dimensional image. It also makes the central figure of Hercules singularly prominent within the scene, gleaming as he protrudes in the sunlight while ringed by the shadow of the deeply recessed carving of the background plane. The benefit of such a style of carving is that it aids the legibility of the image from a significant distance. Moreover, this style of relief design is not limited to Cibber's work in England in this period.⁷⁸³ It is possible that the positive reception of Cibber's reliefs inspired other sculptors to adopt his style, the same planar approach is certainly visible in the Conversion of St. Paul relief at St. Paul's Cathedral, by Francis Bird, the most substantial relief to be created in England in the years directly following Cibber's death. His presentation as a sculptor whose expertise in classically inspired sculptural themes was more easily attested to than most, and the replication of his style by other artists furthers my proposal that his monumental and classical

⁷⁸⁰ As discussed in case study 1. See The National Archives, *Audit Office Declared Accounts*, bundle 2482 rolls 297 and 298, quoted in Faber, *Cibber*, 58.

⁷⁸¹ Indeed, there seems to have been no immediate replacement in England to undertake this kind of carving work following Cibber's death. The reliefs by Robert Jones at Greenwich, undertaken in 1701, are more crowded than Cibber's examples. The design returns to a heraldic motif, centralised around a lion and a unicorn. Furthermore, the relief follows a similar depth of carving throughout the entire scene which means that the central figures are easily lost within a confusion of sea creatures.

⁷⁸² MW, 112.

⁷⁸³ Contemporaneous examples include Grinling Gibbons' *Neptune and Galatea* at Dalkeith Palace and his relief panels for the altarpiece in the Roman Catholic Chapel, Whitehall Palace.

allegorical scenes were a benchmark for English art, one which other sculptors in England sought to imitate.

The commissions at Hampton Court Palace were evidently central to Cibber's career ambitions, allowing the sculptor, in his final years, to present himself as a royal sculptor. I have argued that he primarily sought these accolades for their prestige, but also that he continued to believe that they would provide him with security. As a result of the prominence of these commissions – and their novelty for English audiences – these final works by Cibber had discernible influences on English sculpture: they contributed to the establishment of an English style of classically inspired sculpture, and introduced figurative reliefs as a prestigious decorative form in architectural settings.

Conclusions

Cibber provided a new model for practising sculptors in England. Travel to Rome in his foundational years equipped him with advanced technical skills, including an awareness of the centrality of drawing and design. It also exposed him to different paradigms for cultivating an artistic identity, and pursuing a sculptural career, than those that were practised in England. Alongside the importation of these Italian modes of patronage and presentation, he capitalised on the contemporaneous interest in classical mythology. He created statuary that recalled classical sculpture, cultivating a coterie of aristocratic patrons – who also wished to present themselves according to classically-inspired precedents of taste and cultivation – endorsing Cibber's presentation as a statuary through their consumption of his luxury artistic items, which aggrandised their estates.

Meanwhile, Wren's establishment of an increasingly professional architectural practice, which was founded upon *disegno* and the reclamation of Vitruvian ideals, meant that Cibber also met with receptive skilled professionals who were

appreciative of the knowledge and skills that he provided to architectural projects.⁷⁸⁴ Due to their shared foundation in *disegno*, architects such as Wren were predisposed to legitimise Cibber's presentation as an artist.

Cibber clearly desired to be a sculptor – architect, an aspiration which must have been inspired by Italian precedents. While this was only achieved in the closing years of his life, and with only one building, the Danish Church nevertheless reinforces the scale of Cibber's achievements in the late seventeenth century. Unlike virtually all his peers, he maintained a sculptural career that focussed on figurative statuary – cementing his distinction from the masonic trades – while also securing a role as an architect and working on substantial architectural projects.

⁷⁸⁴ For more information on Wren's changes to the architectural profession see Anthony Geraghty, "New Light on the Wren City Churches; The Evidence of the All Souls and Bute Collections" PhD Thesis (Clare College, Cambridge 1999), 3 – 5.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to re-examine the practice of sculpture in the late seventeenth century in order to shine new light on changes that emerged prior to the establishment of formal art institutions in the eighteenth century. As such, it also sought to explore the role of sculptors in the development of sculptural practices in England that had previously emerged in other European countries, namely Italy, France, and the Netherlands. The thesis was inspired by the shortage of literature that addressed the sculpture of the period, and a desire to critically examine the pejorative assessments that many canonical texts provided of seventeenth-century sculpture. I further sought to give scholarly attention to sculptors who, despite having substantial reputations in their lifetimes, have not been the focus of recent or substantial academic research, and sculptural works that have also fallen outside of academic attention. By reviving these sculptors' careers and works, I aimed to draw attention to the vibrant sculptural market that existed in seventeenth-century England, moving beyond anachronistic interpretations that have settled on the period. I have also sought to bring scholarship closer to seeing the sculpture of the seventeenth century as it was seen when it was created. To what extent have I succeeded in these aims?

In chapter one, I focussed on the career of Pearce. He was situated as emerging from a circle of influential artistic figures that Inigo Jones had brought together in the first half of the seventeenth century. As such, the conditions for his career arose through the collaborative working practices that Jones had initiated with other artists, a mode of working that would shape Pearce's relationships with architects. Pearce first emerged as a practising sculptor during the Interregnum. His training and influences provide access to the hitherto under-explored continuities in artistic practice across the early and late Stuart periods.

I considered Pearce's training as an essential foreground to his subsequent career. In particular, I drew attention to how central the skill of *disegno* was for him, highlighting that his exceptional training in this area allowed him to present himself as providing a superior offering compared to the other masons and sculptors that

were active in England in 1660. Indeed, through his relationships with architects such as Robert Hooke, I traced how drawings provided Pearce with social and professional positions that were at one step removed from the mechanical trades of other creators.

Moreover, through his drawings, Pearce exemplified an understanding of classical architecture that is particularly striking for the period. Prevailing perceptions have categorised workers in the City as introducing classical forms somewhat haphazardly, due to the use of prints and pattern books without any understanding of the geometric principles that governed its application. Pearce displays a different use of classical forms. I drew on his design for the Thames Street entrance to the Fishmongers' Hall to display his knowledgeable application of complex classical design features, evidencing his thorough understanding of how classical architecture should be designed according to Vitruvian ideals, which were widely disseminated in printed books in the period. This is an important distinction. Pearce's practice as both a designer – according to intellectualised architectural ideals – and a practical sculptor destabilises the distinctions between learned comprehension and practical imitation that has for so long characterised binary conceptions of creators in the seventeenth century.

My study of Pearce's career has also revealed a pattern of working that emerged between him and Wren; one that involved a more collaborative approach when creating architectural ornament than has previously been acknowledged. Wren's endorsement – and utilisation – of Pearce's design skills for sculptural decoration on parish churches and St. Paul's Cathedral substantiate my argument that Pearce had developed a level of expertise as a designer that was recognised at the highest levels of English architectural practice. This working relationship establishes the value of sculptural specialisms in the period, repositioning such skills as highly sought after and respected, as well as contributing to a broader scholarly understanding of the collaborative processes that were employed by architects in the late seventeenth century.

On a social level, Pearce also evidenced that sculptors were moving into new spheres. His position in the Painter-Stainers' Company provided him with a

substantial status. Through the formal framework of the guild hierarchy, Pearce was offered a position as an arbiter of artistic production in the City – producing the rare occurrence of a sculptor determining the quality of painters’ work. He would also assess the quality and value of masonry productions, a role he undertook on Wren’s behalf at Chatsworth. Indeed, Pearce’s high reputation was not limited to the City. Through his relationship with the Talmans he was hailed as a sculptor of supreme capability to an international audience. Pearce’s knowledge of different skills to those that sculptors traditionally learned had provided him with a pathway to privileged company, enhanced social status, and opportunities to establish a new career-type that was largely supported – rather than constrained – by the architects he worked with.

Chapter two focussed on the entirely different sculptural career of Grinling Gibbons. He is remarkable in this thesis – and indeed for all seventeenth-century sculptors in England – for having a reputation that has stood the test of time. He has enjoyed a substantial and sustained amount of scholarly and public interest up to the present day. However, this interest has been limited to a small area of Gibbons’ sculptural production. As such he has predominantly been categorised solely as an exceptional craftsman of decorative limewood carvings. In this thesis I have revised this narrow representation of Gibbons, broadening the discussion by reconsidering his career according to the values that were placed on sculpture in the seventeenth century. I have also considered his works in stone alongside his woodwork.

Sculpture in the seventeenth century was not necessarily categorised in the same ways that it has been since. I have questioned the perceived supremacy of figurative sculpture, instead indicating that until the end of the seventeenth century the location of sculpture, its complexity, and its function could be more significant indicators of its importance than was the type of sculpture being created. Indeed, the prices paid for sculpture in the period indicate that architectural sculpture may have been the most highly prized. Materials, rather than subject matter, were also more significant in determining the cost-value of sculpture in the period.

However, these values were in flux. Classical influences permeated the styles of sculpture that were becoming more celebrated, across all sculptural forms. I

positioned Gibbons' career as one that was predominantly concerned with responding to this change in values. His adaptive responses appear most clearly in the areas of his work that have been least studied in the past, as shown in the chapter's case studies dedicated subsequently to his monumental works and to his architectural ornament. These revealed the time it took Gibbons to develop an understanding of sculpture that was not focussed on the ornamental excess that had constituted sculptural excellence, but which instead applied classical geometric harmony as a leading principle. The lengthy process of change in his work further revealed that, in contrast to Pearce, Gibbons was not originally trained in architecture.

These new skills only emerged in Gibbons' practice after he had begun working in a sustained way with Wren, and especially after he had developed a close working relationship with Hawksmoor, as evidenced by several preparatory drawings that they jointly composed for St. Paul's Cathedral. As such, I posited that Gibbons' close working relationship with these architects was fundamental to his changing conception of sculptural ornament: that he was strongly influenced by Wren's ideals as described in his *Tracts*, and that his privileged access to Wren and Hawksmoor facilitated the late changes in his style. Moreover, these changes provided him with access to more prestigious contracts. He predominantly moved to working in stone and augmented his business to produce sculpture for large-scale architectural facades, an area of work that was entirely absent from his early and mid-career. These works had more substantial financial rewards, were more prevalent in England, and placed Gibbons into close working relationships with architects, who then constituted the most socially-elevated – and intellectualised – branch of the arts in England.

Gibbons also displayed a further remove from the traditional structures that governed sculptural production in England than had Pearce. His training in the Netherlands meant that he was introduced to a different placement for sculpture than had then emerged in England, one which was much more closely aligned with the other arts. This was facilitated through guilds that were dedicated to artistic production, identifying professions that relied on drawing as conceptually linked, and through the emergence of drawing schools that catered to artists across a range of

professions, reinforcing the intellectual process from which sculptural production emerges. As such, Gibbons' success – coupled with this conception of sculpture's intellectual roots – provided him with a platform to present a different social position than sculptors had tended to inhabit in England. He eschewed traditional guild structures that had facilitated business in the City and instead built a network of supporters that was intellectually based, particularly through the support of Evelyn. He is not known to have maintained relationships with any masons or sculptors, but had close social ties to the leading painter of the day, Peter Lely, as well as other leading artistic figures through his membership of the exclusive club, the Society of the Virtuosi of St. Luke. As such, Gibbons achieved a newly elevated social position for a sculptor in England.

In chapter three, I charted how Caius Gabriel Cibber moved the social presentation of the sculptor in England even further from the model that had prevailed at the outset of the seventeenth century. In contrast to Pearce and Gibbons, he had travelled to Italy. Therefore he had direct experience of a sculptural tradition that did have clearly defined hierarchies, and which also offered stratospheric levels of fame, artistic freedom, and social standing to the most successful sculptors. I positioned Cibber's experiences in Italy as foundational to his sculptural identity, exploring the ways that Italian examples influenced his sculptural production, his artistic identity, and the routes that he took in search of success.

In particular, Cibber introduced a new form of patronage for sculpture in England, applying an Italian model that appealed to educated and well-travelled patrons who understood the cultural caché that artistic patronage could provide to their reputations. He provided sculptures to these patrons that highlighted his (and their) knowledge of classical mythology and of contemporary continental fashions in garden design. He was rewarded by patronage that extended beyond the contract system that characterised most English sculptural production. Cibber and his family were offered the endorsement and support of his wealthy and influential patrons, who offered to assist with securing his children's education and supported his attempts to secure positions he desired in the royal household and on highly sought-after projects, including the Royal Exchange.

Indeed, Cibber evidences an overriding concern with his personal legacy, and with marketing himself in order to establish an international reputation. This reputation seems to have been inspired by the peerless reputation that the leading sculptor of the period, Bernini, had achieved. I outlined that Cibber's desire for a position as a royal sculptor should be understood in the same terms as should his use of printed media and limited experience as an architect. All were used to cement a reputation according to an artistic identity that was enjoyed by the most successful sculptors that emerged from Italy.

Cibber is notable for mainly producing figurative sculpture. He evidently accorded to Italian ideals of sculptural prestige, which placed figurative sculpture at the pinnacle. It is likely that his example of following such a career in England assisted in the dissemination of such hierarchies in English art. However, his figurative sculpture was also endorsed by some of the most significant artistic voices in England. Wren, in particular, used Cibber to incorporate figurative sculpture into his architectural ornament, suggesting that the architect endorsed his continental artistic expertise, and was keen to employ figurative sculpture in his own works for similar reasons to Cibber: the desire for his work to be comprehended according to continental ideals of fashion and taste.

In this thesis I have also considered the failures for sculpture in this period. Despite the substantial successes enjoyed by the three individuals discussed, they did not establish any formal organisation for the profession past their deaths, nor establish workshops that continued after they had ceased working. Despite working alongside each other on a number of the most significant projects of the age, collectively they did little to promote the profession as a whole. While they progressed from their predecessors, who had lacked "a distinct professional identity; [being] part of a workshop organisation whose membership ranged from the simple stonemason at the bottom to the master architect at the top", they only cultivated their own professional identities, meaning many sculptors working under them in their workshops did not

benefit from their advances.⁷⁸⁵ The late seventeenth century can be aptly summarised as a period of individual success but collective failure for sculptors.

Their individualised approaches to the profession is also apparent in the idiosyncratic routes that each sculptor took to securing a successful sculptural identity. The three sculptors could be assigned to different specialisms: Pearce as an architectural sculptor, Gibbons a decorative sculptor, and Cibber a statuary. However, these distinctions only highlight the areas in which each man secured the greatest acclaim. Defined sculptural specialisms and limited professional domains were still to gain widespread comprehension in England, and any attempt to limit each sculptor's output to one specialism would veer towards anachronistic conceptions of the way specialisms were comprehended in the period.

They also increased their social standing in ways that were removed from their roles as makers of sculpture, being established instead through links with painters, architects, aristocrats, and antiquarians. These relationships were forged through their skills in design and drawing, or knowledge of art, and enacted in polite spaces rather than workshops. Indeed, they seem to have had little influence on social attitudes to the undignified, dirty, and physical act of producing sculpture, being more concerned with attitudes towards their own individual genius. However, it is significant that their artistry was recognised by receptive patrons and influential architects – society's tastemakers. By revealing the ways that opportunities for sculptors changed at the end of the seventeenth century, this thesis has provided sculptural scholarship with a greater understanding of how the conditions were set for the emergence of sculpture alongside painting and architecture in artistic societies and schools in the eighteenth century. It has further placed the most successful sculptural careers of the following decades, such as those of Roubiliac, Rysbrack, and Cheere, into greater context. In particular, I have explored how the profession, at the elite level, separated from the control of the guilds. Most importantly, I have shed new light on the sculpture of the period, which has not been determined according to anachronistic values. I have encouraged a new way of

⁷⁸⁵ Gabriel Weisberg and H. W. Janson, *Traditions and Revisions, Themes from the History of Sculpture*, (Ohio: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975), 2.

looking at these sculptures, one which more closely aligns with the values that a contemporary audience would have viewed them with when they were first cut.

Almost a century ago, Douglas Knoop and G.P Jones showed that in the late seventeenth century:

the environment of the [masons'] craft changed greatly and that new divisions and differences appear and disturb the relatively simple organisation of medieval times.⁷⁸⁶

This thesis has investigated one of these “divisions”: the emergence of the sculptural profession, revealing the great volume of change that this alone brought about. These changes span professional areas, such as their training, modes of working, and professional networks, and personal ones, including sculptors’ social capital and their creation of artistic identities. Cumulatively, they speak to the vibrant and diverse opportunities that were emerging for sculptors in the disruption of the status quo.

⁷⁸⁶ *LM*, 3.