

THE BIRKBECK  
*EARLY MODERN*  
SOCIETY  
**BULLETIN**

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Early Modernists,

Welcome to the tenth edition of our bulletin. We've had a busy spring term at the society, and our events have covered new ground for us: we have had a paper on music and William Byrd in January, philosophy and Spinoza in February, and this month, the letters of Madame Palatine. The events have been well attended and the papers generated lots of good comments and discussion.

Looking to the immediate future, we have planned trips to see various exhibitions and plays (Palladio at the RA, Van Dyck at Tate Britain etc), and details will be sent out to members a few weeks before each visit. We also have news of an alteration in our programme: Roger Mettam was due to speak to us about Louis XIV on 13 May, but this now coincides with Julian Swan's inaugural lecture and so Roger Mettam has kindly agreed to speak to us in October instead. We will book another speaker for the end of May, and the details of this new event, and Julian's inaugural lecture, will be posted on the school web-site very shortly; we'll also notify you by e-mail.

Please don't forget that the committee is always happy to hear suggestions from members, be they connected to a speaker that you have in mind that you'd like us to book, or another type of event such as a trip to the theatre or a gallery etc. Suggestions can be e-mailed to our secretary Laura Jacobs at [l.jacobs@english.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:l.jacobs@english.bbk.ac.uk)

Finally, I wish to thank the committee members for their hard work, and the staff in the Students' Union and History offices for their help in promoting our events.

With best wishes,

Stephen Brogan

President, Birkbeck Early Modern Society

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hca/current/societies/#earlymodern>

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/susocieties/earlymodern/index.htm>

## THE BULLETIN: EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to Issue Ten of the *Birkbeck Early Modern Society Bulletin*. This edition continues with the usual mix of a wide and lively range of articles, reviews and forthcoming events.

I am always delighted to receive a review or an article from a non-committee member, so if any particular topics interest you then why not write something for the *Bulletin*? Our 'Visits' section is an ideal opportunity for an article, or what about a review of a play, opera, ballet, film, concert or art exhibition? Is there a book, fiction or non-fiction, which has caught your imagination that you would like to write a review about? Perhaps the present economic crisis sets you thinking about similar past events such as when the Spinelli Bank ran into serious difficulties when Pope Calixtus III defaulted on a loan for a proposed crusade against the Turks. If you feel that you would like to submit something for inclusion in the next edition then send it to me at the e-mail address below, the only real criteria being that it deals with a subject within our date range of 1450-1815.

Despite the economic gloom, as a society we still have plenty to look forward to over the coming months. Our membership has risen to over one hundred and we continue to stage great events, be they lectures, guided walks, film nights or visits to art exhibitions. In the same vein I trust that the *Bulletin* continues to entertain and inform you. I hope that you enjoy this issue and I look forward to seeing you at one of our events in the near future. The next issue will be out in the summer of 2009.

John Croxon  
Editor  
[johnmcroxon@googlemail.com](mailto:johnmcroxon@googlemail.com)



## RECENT EVENTS

**Dr. Mike Smith on 'William Byrd's "Why do I vse my paper incke & pen": a song and its context',  
16th January 2009, Clore Building Room 101**



This was a first for our Society, we had never staged a musical event previously and Dr Mike Smith provided us with a stimulating and highly enjoyable evening. The subject of Dr Smith's talk was William Byrd, the Elizabethan and early Jacobean composer and musician. Dr Smith used the composition '*Why do I vse my paper incke and pen*' to demonstrate the subtlety in Byrd's music and how the use of certain notes resonates through a large amount of his compositions, providing emphasis and provoking strong emotional responses to his work.

Byrd was a convinced lifelong Catholic and pro-Jesuit and much of his work reflected and celebrated an English Catholicism that was barely tolerated during the harsh years of the latter part of Elizabeth's reign. However, one must not forget that Byrd also wrote a large amount of music for the Church of England and the court, and the beauty and passion that these works displayed led the authorities to ignore his Catholic sympathies.

There is no doubt though that Byrd's deeply held Catholic faith was central to much of his musical output. Following the excommunication of Elizabeth by Pope Pius V in 1570, the Throckmorton Plot, and the execution of Edward Campion, English Catholics were increasingly identified with sedition in the eyes of the Tudor authorities. The

execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587 and the launching of the Spanish Armada one year later further increased the paranoia felt against Catholicism and the principal Catholic country, Spain. English Catholics suffered increasing repression and Byrd himself, because of his connection with Thomas Paget, suspected of involvement in the Throckmorton Plot, was temporarily suspended from membership of the Chapel Royal and had restrictions placed upon his movements.

Yet Byrd continued to express his commitment to the Catholic cause through his work, particularly his motets. Whilst the texts possess a High Anglican doctrinal tone, there is a persistent emphasis upon themes such as the persecution of the chosen people and the long-awaited coming of deliverance, perhaps suggesting that Byrd was reinterpreting biblical and liturgical texts in the context of Elizabethan England and composing laments and petitions on behalf of the persecuted Catholic community. Certainly these compositions found an enthusiastic audience amongst English Catholics, bringing comfort, hope and endurance, and strength to continue their struggle, whilst also expressing a certain nostalgia for a Catholic England before the Reformation.

From the early 1590's Byrd largely abandoned the motets for the madrigal, a stylistic form of composition that increasingly found favour amongst Catholic patrons. His huge output of close to five hundred compositions and the way he managed to take many of the main musical forms of his day and transforming them into products of his own identity, confirms his reputation as one of the great masters of European Renaissance music.

Dr Smith, an accomplished musician himself, accompanied his talk with use of recorded material and by playing an electric organ and by singing, which helped to illustrate how Byrd stressed particular notes in his compositions, how there existed certain continuity in his works, and how specific notes came to be viewed as reflecting a Catholic composition.

The audience consisted of both historians and musicians, reflecting the wide interest in William Byrd and his work. Dr Smith's lecture received an enthusiastic response and the variety of backgrounds of the audience resulted in a diverse series of questions, ranging from those interested in William Byrd the Elizabethan to Byrd the Catholic, to intricate queries upon musical compositions and structures.

The committee are really pleased to have staged this event and thank Dr Smith for agreeing to talk and play to us.

John Croxon

The review of the lecture by Professor Susan James on Spinoza will now be included in the summer edition of *The Bulletin*

# VISITS



## Ightham Mote

Ightham Mote is one of England's oldest and most beautiful medieval manor houses to survive into the twenty-first century. Built in the fourteenth century, the building has never been grand, nor has it received the attention of any one great architect, or has been owned by some great person. Instead, buildings have been retained and others added at different times over the centuries, resulting in a feeling of solid self-sufficiency and generations of care, with any new building always sympathetic to the medieval origins of the house.

Situated deep in the Kentish Weald, the house must have been almost unapproachable in the winter before the advent of modern roads. Occasionally, perhaps this remoteness was of benefit as when Cromwell's forces sought to loot the house, lost their way in the wooded countryside and ransacked another house instead.

During the period covered by this Society, the house was largely owned by just four families, The Hautes, the Clements, the Allens and the Selbys. It was acquired by the National Trust in 1985.

The first impression of the house is provided by the east and north sides. Consisting mainly of half-timbered buildings jutting out on stone foundations above the moat. With the sun shining down on the water the house is a glorious sight. Much of the north side was built by the Haute family in the late-fifteenth century with a few eighteenth-century additions.

The interior of the house is full of interest but I will describe just a few of these rooms starting with The Great Hall. This spacious room dates from the fourteenth century and thoughtful building has meant that it is still at the heart of the house. It has a clay floor which would have been strewn with rushes, a stone Elizabethan fireplace, and lovely fourteenth-and fifteenth-century windows bearing the Tudor coat of arms. However, it is the magnificent wooden arched roof that pulls ones gaze upwards.

The Oriel Room, named from the great oriel window installed in the sixteenth century by Richard Clement, contains seventeenth-century furniture and eighteenth-century ceramics.

The New Chapel was built in the late-fifteenth century as a grand guest chamber. The Old Chapel was still in use when, in 1585, Sir Christopher Allen was accused of keeping '*a vile and papistical house*' for the sake of his Catholic wife. The New Chapel was probably first consecrated in October 1633 when Dorothy Selby asked permission to worship at home because her husband was unwell. The furniture and fittings are of different dates from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century and suggest that the Chapel was fitted out gradually. There is stained glass and a lovely oak door. The real glory of the chapel is the barrel-vaulted roof. The boards which were fitted in to the ceiling are Tudor and commemorate the union of Henry VIII with Katherine of Aragon and are decorated with pomegranate of Aragon, white, red and Tudor roses, the French fleur-de-lis and the Beaufort portcullis.

The Drawing Room has a ceiling dating from the early-seventeenth century and the venetian window replaced an earlier Jacobean window in the eighteenth century. The Jacobean fireplace bears the arms of William Selby II and his wife Dorothy, while the hand-painted Chinese wallpaper dates from about 1800.

Outside the house there are a number of gardens, a formal lawn, a kitchen garden and a cottage garden, an orchard, and a woodland walk.

Ightham Mote is a wonderful example of a well preserved English manor house. It is situated about six miles from Sevenoaks. Pick a sunny weekend and drive down the M20 to Kent and spend a day there.

John Croxon

## **A Visit to the Burrell Collection, Glasgow**

The Burrell Collection is one of the many excellent museums run by Glasgow City Council. It is located outside the city centre in a country setting (despite the looming council blocks currently being refurbished nearby) in a 1980's bespoke building designed to incorporate and display some 9,000 objects collected by Glaswegian businessman Sir William Burrell and his wife Constance, who left their collection to the city in 1944. Amazingly this treasure trove is free to visit. While perhaps best known for a stunning collection of French artists of the 19th century, the collection holds much to delight the early modernist.

The Burrells were clearly captivated by the past. They decorated rooms in their home, Hutton Castle, in gothic style complete with panelled walls, huge stone fireplaces, tapestries, and solid dark oak furniture. Three of their rooms (Drawing Room, Dining Room, and Hall) have been built into the fabric of the gallery and the effect is quite magical. It's a bit like walking into two interpretations of the past: the one originally inhabited by the objects and the second layer of the time of the Burrells. This effect, combined with other gallery features, such as medieval doors and portals to pass through, makes a visit to the gallery a different experience from other museums. The visitor feels a part of the displays and has the feeling of visiting a country house rather than a museum.

The Burrell Collection is full of medieval and early modern treasures to discover. No mention is made in the gallery guide leaflet of the Rembrandt self-portrait in the 16th-and 17th-century room (a space which also features some fine English portraits of the period), the Cranach paintings displayed on the mezzanine floor (not just a rather fine example of a Venus and Cupid but also a stag hunt), or the examples of late-seventeenth century costume in the needlework room. Some of my favourite things in the gallery were the silk embroidered sewing boxes from the late-seventeenth century with their vivid colours and elaborate patterns. Medievalists will appreciate the two displays each of stained glass and tapestries. Even the overcast day could not diminish the medieval colours of the glass displayed on the glass wall of the 'corridor route' of the gallery. The tapestry collections are displayed with period furniture in spaces large enough to let them be seen properly. They can also be viewed from above on the mezzanine level.

Other collection highlights include a selection of ancient art from Egypt, Greece, and Rome, collections of Chinese and Islamic art, European armour, and Impressionist paintings by Degas and Cézanne.

The Burrell Collection is to the south of Glasgow at  
2060 Pollokshaws Road  
Glasgow, G43 1AT  
Website: [www.glasgowmuseums.com](http://www.glasgowmuseums.com)  
Admission free  
Open daily 10am-5pm except Friday and Sunday 11am-5pm

KAREN BASTON

# ARTS REPORT



## THEATRE

### Elizabeth and the Image Makers:

#### 'Role and Rule: History and Power on Stage'

#### Globe Education in Shakespeare's Globe

The weekend conference 'Role and Rule: History and Power on Stage', hosted by Globe Education in Shakespeare's Globe from 6th – 8th February and initiated by Alessandra Petrina of the Università degli Studi di Padova, drew academics largely from Great Britain and Italy. There was also a sizeable contingent from the States, including Stephen Orgel from Stanford University, a keynote speaker, and delegates from elsewhere in Europe and wider afield.

Orgel opened the conference with a paper considering Elizabeth's promotion of herself as a monarch whose roots lay in the Plantagenet dynasty, whose last and undisputed monarch was Richard II. Orgel's comparison of the stylistic similarities between Richard's coronation portrait and Elizabeth's own illuminated her famous claim "I am Richard II, know ye not that?" reported by William Lambarde after the prohibition of a performance of *Richard II* arranged with the players at the original Globe by the Earl of Essex just before his rebellion.

By invoking Richard II in order to legitimise both herself and her claim to the throne of England Elizabeth appropriated the royal portrait as an instrument of royal propaganda. There followed a series of portraits, with distribution of permitted copies strictly controlled, demonstrating Elizabeth's self-appointed role of virgin queen chaste married to the country she protected. Orgel showed how the older Elizabeth became trapped within the self-image she had created – painted, bewigged and doll-like.

Much attention was given by speakers during the three days, to Elizabeth's presentation of her role as ruler. Laura Tosi of the Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia contrasted the use or prohibition of mirrors by the reigning Elizabeth with the dramatic use of mirroring in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. Tosi noted that the fashion for crystal mirrors followed the invention of a method for applying molten metal to glass on the Venetian island of Murano, and conferred a desirable display of wealth and prestige for those who could afford them. Crystal mirrors not only reflected more accurately than the burnished, usually convex metal mirrors they

replaced but, suitably tinted, more flattering. Unfortunately for Elizabeth, they also accurately reflected the ageing process. As a consequence, later in her reign as she became more image-obsessed, she barred them from her court, preferring to find herself reflected in the flatteries of her ladies and courtiers.

Reflections have a fascination which has created some mirror-related myths. Vampires and ghosts, for example, have no reflection, but the devil can appear over the viewer's shoulder. Tosi demonstrated Webster's use of this significance in Act III scene II of *The Duchess of Malfi*. The scene starts in cosy domesticity as the Duchess chats intimately with Antonio, to whom she is secretly married, and her maid, Cariola. She calls for a mirror and later peers into it for the first signs of ageing, continuing to talk to the others, unaware that they have left the room and her brother has entered. She sees his reflection in the mirror as he steals up behind her, her twin and her malevolent male 'other', who will command Bosola to pursue her and destroy her.

In a lighter vein, Sunday afternoon was set aside for two excerpts from plays by John Lyly, performed in a rehearsal room at the theatre, which was arranged to make the space resemble, as near as possible, the Tudor halls where plays and Interludes were often performed. Leah Scragg provided an introduction illustrating how Elizabeth assumed a pre-determined role in the presentation of such performances. She would, of course, be seated in the 'State', the most prominent position in the hall occupied by the most elaborate chair, while the rest of the audience were ranged around her and the performance space, the most important, influential and favoured being closest to the presence.

Each of the plays selected, *Sapho and Phao* and *Endymion*, was performed on special occasions before her and both are complete with the prologues for court performance and epilogues. Scragg showed how these opening and closing speeches, addressed directly to the queen, 'transferred the responsibility of meaning' to Elizabeth herself. *Sapho and Phao* was performed for her on Shrove Tuesday according to the title page of the first quarto published in 1584.

'The Prologue at the Court' after expressing the customary fears that the play may not please such a discerning auditor continues:

Whatsoever we present, whether it be tedious (which we fear) or toyish (which we doubt) sweet or sour, absolute or imperfect, or whatsoever, in all humbleness we all, and I on knee for all, entreat, that your Highness imagine yourself to be in a deep dream, that staying the conclusion, in your rising your Majesty vouchsafe but to say, *And so you awake.*<sup>i</sup>

The Epilogue describes the play as 'a Labyrinth of conceits' and wishes for those accepting this dance of a Fairy in a circle [ . . . ] a thread to lead you out of the doubts, wherewith we leave you entangled.'(Epilogue. p. 51)

Lyly's 'labyrinth of conceits' is exactly that, with a riddling sibyl, witty ladies-in-waiting, verbally dextrous scholars and courtiers, and a greedy little Cupid, all providing the aural twists and turns. Venus decides that Sapho, the unattainable queen whose beauty matches her own, must fall in love, so she makes Phao, a

ferryman, 'passing fair' and Cupid obediently directs his arrows on both. Consequently, Sapho is in love with a subject, a man beneath her attention, as some were rash enough to remind Elizabeth regarding her own attachment for such as Leicester and her politic acceptance of the attentions of the Duc d'Alencon.

However, Venus has made Phao so irresistible that she falls in love with him herself and commands Cupid to release Sapho from her love for Phao so that his affections can be re-directed towards the goddess. Sapho, restored to appropriate monarchical sagacity, woos Cupid away from Venus with sweetmeats, and proposes to teach him to fire his arrows with wiser aim. Venus is left raging ineffectually, calling down curses on both Sapho and Cupid.

Lyly could judge his confections for Elizabeth to perfection. In *Endymion* he explored an alternative challenge for majesty by having his mortal fall in love with an anthropomorphized Moon, Cynthia. Endymion spurns his mortal love, Tellus, in favour of devotion to Cynthia and sleeps away his life, requiring some ingenious on-stage ageing, until Cynthia graciously descends from the night sky to sort out the problems of the mortals below. Watching and listening to *Sapho and Phao* Elizabeth would have had no difficulty in recognizing herself in the good and wise queen, while in *Endymion* she could see herself reflected as the chaste and similarly wise personification of the moon.

Where the first excerpt had been given by experienced actors from the Globe Read not Dead series of staged readings directed by James Wallace, *Endymion* was performed by boys from King Edward VI School in Stratford-upon-Avon directed by Perry Mills. The contrasting presentations were illuminating in themselves, the adult team employing the modern practice of having women to play the female roles, and the boys providing a rare opportunity to hear a play written for boys spoken by boys in the register for which it was written. Where Martin Hodgson extracted humour by playing Cupid as a spoiled, if engaging, oversized boy, James Wilkinson as Endymion had to start his performance older than his real years and morph into the aged Endymion, before being transformed to youthfulness again. The audience derived enormous pleasure from both theatrical conundrums.

Barbara Wooding

<sup>1</sup> *Sapho and Phao, 1584*, by John Lyly, reprint prepared by Leah Scragg (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The Malone Society, 2002. p.4. This edition has been used for all quotations, but spelling, other than Sappho's name, has been silently modernised.

# OPERA

## I Capuleti e I Montecchi

Vincenzo Bellini

at the Royal Opera House 7th March 2009



Anna Netrebko and Elina Garanca

The so-called ‘stunning’ pairing of the Russian soprano Anna Netrebko and the Latvian mezzo Elina Garanca had received such advance publicity that it was unsurprising that the news that Netrebko had pulled out of that evening’s performance was not taken well. Her reason – that she had had a baby 6 months ago and was not up to the pressures of a performing schedule – was not considered by the House to be very acceptable particularly as she had not performed the night before and after this evening’s performance was due for two weeks off. The boos gave the impression that this was considered rather diva-ish behaviour – and she certainly could have come up with a better excuse. Some would say, perhaps unkindly, that she was annoyed at the fact that, although widely expected to be the star of the show, Garanca was generally believed to have out-sung her.

Bellini's operatic rendering of Romeo and Juliet was dashed off hurriedly to meet a late deadline for the 1830 Venice carnival and it is certainly not his best work. His skimmed account of the story stands well behind the musical versions composed by Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky, Berlioz, and Gounod. However, Mark Elder conducted superbly and having got off to a cracking start with a fiery account of the overture, he never let the pace sag with the orchestra playing beautifully for him. Pier Luigi Pizzi's traditional production (now over 25 years old) was rather gloomy with vast grey stone halls and ranks columns - and that was even before the mausoleum scene. Although the drama revolves around the two main characters, Eric Owens (Capellio), Giovanni Battista Parodi (Lorenzo) and Dario Schmunck (Tebaldo) were fine in their supporting roles, but none of them were memorable. The chorus was typically good, but perhaps lacked some of the sparkle needed in the big scenes.

Netrebko's replacement was the little known Japanese soprano Eri Nakamura who only joined the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme in September 2008. Her previous roles at the ROH had been the minor ones of the Sandman in Hansel & Gretel and the fifth maid in Elektra. This was therefore an unexpected huge step up for her, but she rose to the occasion magnificently. She sang beautifully and coped well with the near relentless series of impassioned arias and coloratura passages. Physically small, she made a good pair with the tall and athletically built Garanca. It was, of course, Garanca singing with a glowing, sumptuous tone and the presence and passion to really dominate this epic role who truly stole the show. However, it was nice that the two came out together in front of the curtain at the end to take their well deserved and tumultuous applause. Nakamura looked like she was going to pass out with pleasure.

Sue Dale

## ART EXHIBITIONS

### **BIRKBECK EARLY MODERN SOCIETY VISIT TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY, 4th FEBRUARY 2009**

(An expanded version of the notes for the gallery tour)

#### INTRODUCTION

Three paintings, Veronese's "Family of Darius before Alexander", mid 1560s to early 1570s; Saenredam's "The Buurkerk, Utrecht", 1644; and Turner's "Ulysses deriding Polyphemus", 1829 have been chosen because of the importance in them of light. In the Veronese and the Saenredam the illumination is even and un-dramatic. They can both be placed in a tradition of calm clear light that can be traced back to the early Renaissance to Jan van Eyck, Domenico Veneziano, Piero della Francesca and Antonello da Messina. Veronese in most of his work avoids the dark tones of some sixteenth century Italian work while Saenredam sticks to even lighting in contrast to the tonal contrasts of Hals and the Baroque directed light of Rembrandt. I am of course oversimplifying. Hals could almost be put in the Saenredam/Vermeer camp. Hals's portraits of figures in Calvinist black in front of a dark background show infinite gradations of black fabric that only a master with a deep understanding of light could manage and imply light playing over the darkness, while the militia group portraits are brightly lit. Even Rembrandt on occasion escapes from the usual violent tonal contrasts. What matters to Veronese and Saenredam, divided by the advent of the Baroque, is the effect of light on surfaces. Light is a neutral medium separate from the things depicted but they are made visible by it. The story Veronese tells is potentially violent and in the hands of other masters, at other times, might have been set in a dark place having a partial absence of natural light. Saenredam's Baroque effects are achieved by the way his viewpoint manipulates the architecture not by light effects. The Turner is different. Though renowned as a master of light, Turner used it in arbitrary ways. In "Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus" cause and effect are applied to light in that it can be seen streaming in rays from the rising sun. These effects would have been inconceivable without Baroque precedents, but whereas Rembrandt, Claude and Bernini use light to clarify the action Turner follows Poussin who on occasion uses shadow to obscure things and people. At first glance Polyphemus goes unnoticed behind the rays. Art Historians find it very difficult to get back to a "first glance" vision so I was relieved that two people on the tour said they had not seen him. Strictly speaking the Turner is not in the Early Modern period but here will be considered as, in part, the outcome of earlier influences.

“THE FAMILY OF DARIUS BEFORE ALEXANDER”, VERONESE, ca. mid 1560s to early 1570s



This painting brings to mind the bright decorations Veronese did for the great Villa at Maser in the Veneto by Palladio for the Barbaro family. The architecture in the painting is more like that of the older architect Michele Sanmichele. The city gates and three palazzi in Verona by Sanmichele are by this master. Rather ungratefully Palladio, and contrary to his usual practice, fails to mention his artistic collaborator at Maser in his famous book “I Quattro Libri dell’Architettura”. Villa life was often all fresco. Palladio at Maser provided a portico and loggias and at there was a great semi circular Nymphaeum with sculpture by no less a person, it is believed, than Marc Antonio Barbaro himself. The frescoes bring the landscape indoors. The “Family of Darius” episode of classical history took place in the closest proximity to the great outdoors: the buildings should not be there. The other versions have mostly been called the Tent of Darius. Alexander is supposed to have caught up with the Persian great king’s family at their tent in open country. Other versions were, before Veronese, a fresco by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi detto (called) Il Sodoma in the Farnesina in Rome, 1512; and, after him, by Charles Le Brun, also called the “Queens of Persia”, ca. 1660-1, Versailles; and Pierre Mignard, 1689, Hermitage (Allen, *French Painting in the Golden Age*”, ills. respectively for the latter two 11, 152). The story is about one of the great types of princely good behaviour and magnanimity similar to that in the Continece of Scipio, which is more common. The captured Persian royal family in error threw themselves on their knees at the feet of Alexander’s boyfriend Hephaestion. The Macedonian king could, even without this lapse, following the practices of the time, have had them killed and/or the women raped simply for being who they were. Klaus Mahn’s novel on Alexander’s life, for instance, suggests that Darius’s mother had already steeled herself to be raped by at least ten Macedonian officers. The potential victims had made their position yet more precarious by the mistaken identity but Alexander forgave them saying that Hephaestion was another Alexander. What we know about these two Macedonian friends suggests they would not have been interested in raping women. This, however, is a modern gloss on the story and would almost certainly not have influenced Veronese.

What is far more likely to have had some bearing on the portrayal is a far later episode in east west conflict, the ongoing Venetian Turkish struggle, to some extent

interrupting extensive trade between the two parties. Documentation on the painting is sadly lacking. It was first mentioned in 1648. It is usually dated to the late 1560s or early 1570s. On the basis of the political context of the time it would make most sense to date it to the early 1570s. This was the period in which Venice lost Cyprus to the Turks in 1571. The Venetian commander, Marc'Antonio Bragadin, having surrendered on terms, was first horribly mistreated and then flayed alive. His skin has been preserved in the Zanipolo, the Dominican church in Venice, since 1596 (Norwich, "A History of Venice", pp. 479-80). The chivalrous conduct of Alexander to the defeated is in marked contrast to this. This is not to say that the Venetians adopted a policy of turning the other cheek. A largely Venetian Christian fleet at the Battle of Lepanto, fought on St. Justina's Day, 7 October, 1571, triumphed over the Ottomans. Venice and Spain, which had supplied most of the remaining ships, fell out over whether to attempt the re-conquest of Cyprus for the Serenissima or concentrate on holding Tunis for the Spanish monarchy. Venice then concluded a humiliating separate peace, negotiated by Marc'Antonio Barbaro, Palladio's patron, with the Ottomans, renouncing Cyprus but resuming normal commercial relations.

There are two other high quality more explicitly allegorical Lepanto paintings with large foreground figures which perhaps should be considered in context of the "Family of Darius", both by Titian. They are the "Allegory of Lepanto", 1575-6, Prado and "Religion Succoured by Spain", ca. 1570-5. Both Titians have features that can be related to the Veronese. "Religion Succoured" has a figure in the act of kneeling, like Darius's women, being rescued, here by a band of female warriors the foremost of whom brandishes a spear and holds a shield located in a corner of the canvass. There is such a shield in the Veronese and the bent forward middle turban with projecting high crowned hat also has parallels in the younger master's "Family of Darius". The rather secular atmosphere is explained by the fact that the painting was a middle period Titian mythology destined for Alfonso d'Este, until he died and then reworked for Philip II. The other Titian was enlarged in Spain by Vicente Carducho in the early-17th century (Marsilio, "Late Titian and the Sensuality of Painting", pp. 66-7, 288-91 on both Titians). The parallels with Titian cannot be taken too far but the existence of other allegorized Lepanto paintings probably increases the chances that the "Family of Darius" can be related to the battle. Paintings of the battle itself are mostly complex failures.

The composition and the lighting of the "Family of Darius" derive from Veronese's earlier "St. Sebastian before Diocletian", 1557-8, San Sebastiano, Venice. The fresco survives in a rather faded state. So faded did it become that Veronese covered it with a canvass of which only fragments survive (Cocke, "Veronese", p. 53). The fresco is in a less extremely horizontal format than the "Family of Darius" but like it has, in clearly distinct groups, the authority figure and his entourage to the right, the potential victim/s in the middle and a few onlookers to the left. The background arcade with double columns and a balustrade for more onlookers on the entablature is also present in the earlier work. The most obvious difference is that Diocletian is seated on a high altar-like dais round which cluster advisers, a guard and a scribe. Following normal practice the nearest real light source is to the spectator's right. Light also comes from the right in the "Family of Darius", which given its size must have been designed with a specific location in mind. In the church, however the light is used to more dramatic effect. Set against the hanging behind him Diocletian is in a shaded area and receives only reflected not direct light. Moreover unlike Alexander,

Hephaestion and company he is raised above the arcade and so is seen against the sky. In the later work the studied calm on Alexander's face is important. Hephaestion's face is in shadow and his consternation over the mishap expressed by a pose that could suggest that he has taken a step backwards as Alexander reveals himself. Velásquez could well have seen both the Veroneses in Venice before painting "Joseph's Blood-stained Coat brought to Jacob", 1630, El Escorial and in the recent National Gallery exhibition. One of the brothers holding the coat is, in the dark tone of his attire and his pose, very like the, in effect, Venetian senator or procurator of St. Mark's, who presents Daruis's women to Alexander and intercedes for them. The senator/procurator is akin to a patron in an altar piece who draws God's or the Virgin and Child's attention to the donor. The other brother, holding the coat in the Velásquez, has the hesitant bearing, if not the exact pose of St. Sebastian who holds across his breast an arrow from the first attempted martyrdom, as he approaches Diocletian. Some "lucky" saints, including Sebastian, triumphed over their persecutors by not succumbing to the first attempt but achieved the honoured death at a second try. Velásquez, if my guess at a source of inspiration is right, reverses the visibility of faces in the San Sebastiano fresco focusing on the authority figure concealing most of the others: two of the brother's faces are hidden and two others are treated in a *contre jour* manner although they are seen against a wall not the patch of sky, here not strongly illuminated. The brothers, having just committed a great crime, would have wished to hide their faces. Veronese's saint, and the figures behind him, and the lower seated figures around Diocletian's throne alone are well lit but the viewer has to peer at the emperor and his standing advisers cast into the shade by the hanging.

Veronese's handling of light is, among the Mannerist period artists, very advanced and by mid career he could on occasion simulate the effect of the real outdoors, if not strong Proto-Impressionist light, especially on ceiling paintings with sky above. The relatively early ceiling panels in San Sebastiano, mid 1550s, "Esther brought before Ahasuerus", the "Coronation of Esther" and the "Triumph of Mordecai", set the action in shadow presumably from the clouds or the partially indicated buildings, with erratic more brightly lit areas. In the Villa Barbaro, built mid to late 1550s, the landscapes in the Sala dell'Olimpo and the Stanza della Lucerna are again under over cast skies. Clouds it seems account for the erratic light in the Bacchernalian scene in the central panel of the ceiling of the Stanza di Bacco at Maser. There the figures have not only fairly consistent highlights but cast shadows. Perhaps the high point of this type of painting, again with fairly consistent light under relatively cloudy skies, is in Veronese's contribution to the ceiling of the Sala del Collegio in the Doge's Palace, mid to late 1570s. Meekness's face receives raking light but is also shaded by her hand so that a dark toned visage is set against a blue patch of sky suffused with light. Veronese and others had been experimenting with shadow for some time but in these figures, seen against the sky, and without too many complicating structures in the paintings, there begins to be an approximation of *plein air* painting. It is interesting to contrast this to Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling. In the barest of landscapes and with considerable expanses of sky behind pale colouring revealed by the recent cleaning there is not a true outdoor atmosphere, rather a fantasy one. This is especially the case in the "Creation of the Sun and Moon". Here light source is rather preposterously the foreground gilded disc of the sun. Strong *contre jour* effects are employed in the areas that would be in shadow. In his later frescoes Michelangelo was even less interested in natural light. By subsequent standards

Veronese's progress was erratic but it on occasion produced something that approximated modern effects. Success in this area may be why a painter, who is so often described, wrongly, as lacking emotional depth, is so well represented in major museums. Light, to become fully realistic, perhaps had to become separated from the telling of stories. In one strand of the Baroque dramatic lighting would make it still more unrealistic, if in the process using realism to illuminate what was deemed important. By the end of Veronese's life there were signs of an art that was essentially still life often with a peripheral story enacted by tiny figures in the background. Later still lifes would have meaning only through an allegorical interpretation of objects. The depiction of architecture as an end in itself also offered a way forward. The next artist, Saenredam, had small biblical scenes in a few earlier works, just as Michelangelo's late drawing of the "Flagellation" was placed in a chapel interior by one of his followers, possibly Marcello Venusti or Giulio Clovio, in a painting in the National Gallery, London. Saenredam later would have only a few soberly dressed contemporary often Puritan figures to give scale in his interiors.

There is a related Veronese in the current R.A. Palladio exhibition, a "Susana and the Elders", ca. 1555-85, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, a scene like "The Family of Darius" fraught with potential sexual menace in this case ostensibly actual, not potential, if hardly shown realistically. It has been suggested that the elders are Palladio's patrons the Barbaro brothers Daniele and Marc'Antonio in which case there is a degree of play acting. All three figures, Susanna and the "Elders" are on a raised platform parallel to the picture plane as in the "Family of Darius". Instead of a background courtyard there is, again on a lower level, the façade of the brothers' house, the Villa Barbaro at Maser. It is only a façade as sky can be seen through the two little oval oculi and the window. The pedimental sculpture has been reduced making space for the oculi and the central window has been altered to make it like those on the external top floor of the Palazzo Farnese in Rome. This could be Veronese's critique of the deceased Palladio's architecture, making it more lavish. The execution of the painting is less subtle than the "Family of Darius". Workshop participation cannot be ruled out. The casting of the brothers in a rather questionable role sheds light on sixteenth century use of allegory. When Michelangelo made a sexualized allusions to Vittoria Colonna in a drawing or the written word or Thomaso Cavallieri an apparent reference to sex with Michelangelo perhaps it should not necessarily be taken too literally. For instance Compton writes in "Homosexuality and Civilization" (p. 274) "Frederick Hartt has noted that on August 2, 1533, Cabvalieri wrote to Michelangelo, 'I flee from evil deeds (male practice) and wish to flee them, for I cannot make love (practica) with you'. One could hardly imagine a more direct avowel". Perhaps it was merely meant allegorically, much as when, I would suggest Marc'Antonnio had himself and his deceased brother portrayed play acting as notorious wrong doers in order, so the catalogue suggests, to seduce "Architecture" or "Wisdom" ("Palladio", R.A. cat. p. 129). Sixteenth century people in art, painting or the artfully articulate letter, assumed various guises, as malefactors or, in other paintings, as saints, impossibly better than they were. We cannot assume in these two instances that Cavallieri and Michelangelo were lovers or that the Barbaro brothers made a collaborative attempt on the virtue of a young woman.

“THE BUURGKERK, UTRECHT”, SAENREDAM, 1644



Saenredam, 1597-1665, can almost be considered as a Vermeer of architecture. (The works of Saeredam, a less well known painter than Veronese or Turner, are virtually all to be found in Schwartz and Bok's "Pieter Saenredam: The Painter and his Time".) Some Dutch artists defy the dramatic contrasts best known in Rembrandt and bathe their subjects in light. The school of extreme tonal contrasts was reinforced in its early days by the work of the Dutch Caravaggisti in Utrecht who disseminated the methods of the master, but on their return to the north themselves came increasingly under the spell of diffuse northern light. A disciple of Saenredam was Gerard Houkgeest (ca.1600-61), who was represented in a fairly recent National Gallery exhibition about Delft with paintings of the part of the Nieuwe Kerk, Delft around William the Silent's tomb. The hang of the Mauritshuis in the Hague when I saw it in 2007 showed an awareness of the affinity between Vermeer and Saenredam. It is not just the approach to light that is the same. Somewhat like Vermeer, who often manipulates the spatial context by relatively huge pieces of furniture in the foreground, Saenredam defines space by the way he chooses his view point for the townscapes, occasional Roman monuments (which he had never seen) and, in the overwhelming number of paintings, Dutch church interiors. His are not the archetypal Dutch churches by de Emanuel de Witte because they are just too suffused with light to be believable. When I use the word manipulate it is no exaggeration. In single point perspective the vanishing point is always in line with where we stand but artists can move it from the centre of a picture to avoid dull symmetry. This takes an extreme form with Saenredam's four, probably originally five, paintings of the Buurkerk in Utrecht. They all, paintings and intermediate drawings, derive from two meticulous drawings both in the Municipal Archives of Utrecht. Two and possibly three paintings, one lost, were taken from a drawing of 2 August 1636 and the National Gallery's and another painting from a drawing of 16 August 1636. Saenredam often did the drawings years before the executed painting which should dispel the idea that the light and colour have a "photographic" correspondence to reality. There are often considerable adjustments to what is shown in a drawing in the final painting. Aside from some trimming at top and bottom and

the middle the large drawing for the London painting was, as a composition not literally, divided in two for the finished works. The other large drawing, again with subtractions and possible slight additions on the dividing lines, was in a similar way divided in three. There is a source for the missing painting, a drawing of a smaller area, taken from one of the wide drawings. This procedure was very odd as the artist's drawings usually correspond more or less exactly with the paintings. The drawing leading to three works has the vanishing point off two of the proposed, and one of the actual, finished works and off the derivative drawing for the missing work. Both the works from the other wide drawing have vanishing points off their edges in the dividing strip, left off both paintings, as a result of careful visual trimming.

A point about Saenredam, seemingly unrelated to the games he played with perspective, is his alleged Catholicism, as much a problem in Dutch society as it was for the English composer Byrd, the subject of the 16 January, 2009 E.M.S. event, in his. There is a certain amount of surviving popish furnishing in the church interiors such as a very obviously Catholic altar, that wasn't there, in the "Chapel in the North Aisle of the St. Laurenskerk, Alkmaar", 1635, Rijksmuseum Het Catharinijconvent, Utrecht; or the non-existent bishop's tomb in the "View across the Choir of the St. Bavokerk, Haarlem, from the north to south", 1630, Louvre. Significantly the huge Calvinist pulpit with sounding board and cupola in the drawing, 1633 (Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam) related to, but from a slightly different vantage point from, the "North Transept and adjoining areas of the Choir and Nave of the St. Odulphekerk, Assendelft", and a painting of a wider view of the same church, 1649 (Rijksmuseum on loan from the City of Amsterdam), is demoted to a minimalist pulpit with nothing above it in a less prominent location in the north transept painting, unusually undated (Galleria Sabauda, Turin). The more elaborate versions of the pulpit are not identical. The basis in reality of Saenredam's paintings, as with Turner's topographical works, has led Art Historians to give them the most accurate titles.

It seems to me that Saenredam's often strange perspective, without resolving the question of his personal faith, can be related very directly to a trend in Dutch Calvinist architecture. Calvinists went to extraordinary lengths to break up the hierarchy of formerly Catholic churches in ways more profound than a good dose of iconoclasm. It is no accident that the tombs of two Golden Age admirals take the place of high altars in at least two important Dutch churches. Newly commissioned churches de-sacralized the traditional altar area. The Westerkerk, 1631, and the Zuiderkerk, ca. 1611, both by Hendrick de Keyser, in Amsterdam (Kuyper, "Dutch Classical Architecture", figs. respectively 1,2, ills. respectively 20-2,24-7) had two sets of identical transepts, at equal distances from the ends, as though the churches were reversible. In both the pulpit, the anti-ritualistic centre of Calvinist attention was on the middle pier of that part of the nave between the transepts. Both were only slightly compromised by a liturgical west tower on axis, entirely external, at the Westerkerk and occupying the end of one aisle in the Zuiderkerk. The latter edifice was very imperfectly oriented to the compass. The Nieuwe Kerk in the Hague, 1656, by Noorwits and van Bassen (Kuyper, "Dutch Classical Architecture", figs. 7A&B, ills. 60, 61) amalgamates the short double transepts in east and west tri-conches and has a central cupola on a barn-like central, roof, achieving total reversibility. In Haarlem, the town whose churches are most frequently depicted by Saenredam, was St. Anne's Nieuwe Kerk, 1649, by van Campen (Kuyper, "Dutch Classical

Architecture”, figs. 4-5, ill. 36-40) drawn and painted by the artist several times. This was a Greek cross church with an older west tower by Lieven de Key. The pulpit was across the entrance to one of the transepts from the crossing. Thus the architecturally significant listening area in front of the pulpit was a “T” shaped area in front of the pulpit. The transept roofs have different ends than those in the other arms so reversibility applies within the two main axes not between them.

Calvinist architects could have introduced new forms as did their Catholic counterparts like Borromini but seem to have preferred to retain the old forms but subvert them by a rearrangement of the furnishings. Not until the church, probably designed by s’Gravesande at Woubrugge, 1653 (Kuyper, “Dutch Classical Architecture”, fig. 18, ill. 203), too late in Saenredam’s life and to have influenced his fundamental thinking about space, did Calvinists come up with a spatially innovative plan that had later parallels in the Spanish Netherlands. At Woubrugge the edges of the central space protrude as part octagons from the stretched lateral sides of the elongated octagon of the main structure and roof. There is a central spire the bottom of which obscures the tops of the lateral part octagon roofs which would have died into the middle of the main roof ridge rather than the ends of it as do the unstretched ends of the main octagon. In the Spanish Netherlands the Onze Lieve Vrouwe van Hanswijk by Lucas Faydherbe in Mechelen, begun 1663 (Gerson and ter Kuile, “Art and Architecture in Belgium”, fig. 6) repeats the central bulge out from a long rectangle as at Woubrugge but does not make the internal layout reversible and adds colonnades and aisles. Italian Catholics, with the talents of Borromini and Longhena at their disposal, were more daring. The Onze Lieve Vrouwe in contrast to the barn-like Woubrugge has a dynamic Baroque external profile. Christopher Wren used this type’s interior in his St. Benet Fink, 1670-3 (destroyed), but reduced the Onze Lieve Vrouwe’s four aisle bays, per side, around the central rounded space, to two. The nave and choir bays were one a side and their aisle bays triangular as in the Norderkerk, Amsterdam (see below). Wren’s church was one elongated octagon so it lacks the bulges out from the main roof as in Woubrugge and the Hague. It could be argued that St. Stephen’s Walbrook was another variant on the Woubrugge/Onze Lieve Vrouwe type.

Perhaps the most daring early Dutch church was the Noorderkerk, Amsterdam, 1620-2, attributed to de Keyser by Salmon de Bray in “Architectura” (Kuyper, “Dutch Classical Architecture”, fig. 3, ill. 28-30). This was a Greek cross with fragments of an aisle around the crossing isolating the crossing piers. The fragmentary aisle bays were entered by normal arches but had rear walls diagonal to the main axes at its back so positioned that the aisle bays were half normal square bays lopped off from opposite corner to opposite corner to produce a triangle. This was a truncation of normal spatial expectations still achieved by subverting the old rather than creating something new. The triangular crossing piers are of a fused pillar and two columns, reminiscent of the tri-lobbed columned piers in the arcade of the Westerkerk. One of them carries the pulpit and sounding board placed so that the orientation of the congregation would have been diagonally across the crossing. Later the organ was placed on the pier opposite the pulpit. An unexpected parallel case can be found in those Ottoman mosques of Istanbul, which were former churches. The orientation of the mirhab to Mecca and the church to the east did not coincide so there was a tension between the Muslim furnishings and the main lines of the building diagonal to them. It is possible that sketches or prints of Orthodox churches converted to

Islamic use presented Dutch architects with a blueprint for cleansing architectural forms of bad, in this case popish, associations. At about the time independence of the Northern Netherlands became secure Dutch merchants broke into the trading monopoly of the local powers in the eastern Mediterranean so some knowledge of Ottoman culture would have found its way to Holland. What was good for both the Dutch and the Ottomans was bad for the former Hapsburg oppressors of the Netherlands. Moreover, over the name of Selim II, the Sot, reigned 1566-74, a document had been issued pointing out that Muslims and Calvinists alike rejected the papacy and religious imagery.

These various attempts (and the list is not exhaustive) to redirect a congregation's perception of de-ritualized space, some dating from when Saenredam was a teenager or young man, seem to me to be fairly exact parallels to the odd way in which he arranges his church interiors which fall into much more of a pattern than would result from mere avoidance of dull symmetry. What in his most creative works he usually achieves is an "accidentally" contrived symmetry of motifs running counter to that of the architecture. This playing off of one symmetry against another is akin to Claude Lorrain's near but never exact conflation of the rays of a low sun (as so often also employed by Turner) with lines of single point perspective. Saenredam must have spent hours fixing on the very best position from which to make his drawing. He made what use he could of the architecture. The deepest or nearly deepest space, often terminated by a diagonal plane is often glimpsed through a narrow gap created by a contrived series of arches and piers on an oblique axis. This formula applies to paintings of parts of churches and cannot be applied to unobstructed views of central vessels, though these have compositional oddities comparable to the type just described. Diagonal alignments of piers often mimic those that in a more normal painting would define a rectilinear space. The National Gallery painting could almost represent an aligned sequence of bays across a church, following its grid pattern. It is in fact a series of alignments of the vaults and window embrasures diagonal to the main lines of the architecture. The floor, in an extraordinary anticipation of a Mondrian painting, plays a part in the distortions. On many occasion Saenredam seems intent on obfuscating the physical layout as much as elucidating it. For this reason a very high proportion of his works are of strange fragments of church interiors.

The National Gallery painting is one of two out of the five in the Buurkerk series in which the apparent rationality of the ceiling is refuted not just by the artist but the medieval architect. The bays of the outer wall, and where it applies, the outer aisle are aligned with the main nave arcade in this hall church except in the two or three eastern bays of the nave. In this special area there are three aisle bays for the two nave bays. In the absence of true transepts, or a crossing, it is difficult to be precise about the extent of the nave. The central vessel bay west of the line at which the eastern part widens to encompass outer aisles is not the usual rectangle but almost square. The one west of it widens somewhat from the norm in anticipation. Thus the church has a sort of crossing but disconnected from the widening of the church. To accommodate the irregularity in the central vessel there are odd triangular vault sections or webs in the relevant area of the single nave aisle. These enable the vaulting system to contract from having three to two responds. The motif was taken on all probability from the ambulatory systems devised to deal with wider and narrower sides such as that in Notre-Dame-de-Paris. Two of the Buurkerk paintings,

including the National Gallery example, include both the pseudo-crossing and the triangular vault webs, though obstructions reduce our ability to analyse what we see. In the painting of this type not in the National Gallery both the foreground piers in the row between the aisles have been moved considerable distances so the artist can show two apparently regular near nave arcade arches while he inverts the dimensional relationship between them. The National Gallery painting is the only one of the four of the *Buurkerk* in which the shadows, perhaps because they do not diverge that much from the perspective of the floor, seem to contradict it. There is even a sense in which those shadows in the nave and the further aisle imply an upward slope of the pavement beyond the more delineated paving stones, somewhat like the disharmonies between Claude's cast shadows and his perspective. Both effects are limited revivals, by design or accident, of inverted perspective. This is a tendency, hardly a system, characteristic of Byzantine art in which receding parallel lines diverge rather than converge in the distance. Single point perspective never entirely suppressed the inverted type so that it plays against the new method as in the columns in the great temple in Signorelli's frescoes in Orvieto.

It may seem rather fanciful to accuse a highly accomplished perspectivist of subverting his own speciality. Three rather egregious examples seem to me to offer possible confirmation. In the "Transept of the *Mariakerk*, Utrecht, from north to south", 1637, Rijksmuseum, the squinch clearly and entirely shown in the drawing (Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbestz, Berlin) is depicted in the resulting painting as partly behind the further west crossing pier making it look, in spite of the evidence of the lower mouldings, as though the pier with space carved out behind it under the vault of the squinch is a more nearly freestanding object than is the case. It is arguable that both architects and the more gifted architectural painters try to expand space beyond structural prudence, if at the same time, like Saenredam, they also teasingly block space with solids. Another detail of interest in the Berlin drawing is the foremost range of tomb stones which seem to tilt the floor downwards as in the later National Gallery painting the shadows tip the background floor up. In another depiction of the same church, the "Nave and Choir of the *Mariakerk*, Utrecht", 1641, Rijksmuseum, the gilded imitation fabric panels on the piers, elided by radical foreshortening, and emphasized by the shaded masonry, run together, as would a pattern in abstract art, in defiance of spatial reality. The compositional sketch (Royal Scottish Academy) again shows disruptive foreground grave stones in this case indicating a non-alignment on the surface rather than an incline in the paved surface. The choir was considerably heightened between drawing and painting. In the "Nave and Choir of the *St. Janskerk*, Utrecht", mid 1640s?, the frame of an armorial device is visually connected with the underside of the beam, while its lit upper side all but merges with a bracket above and behind it. Saenredam seems to undermine his mastery of perspective by running objects together in defiance of physical reality. Like all good painters he is intensely interested in the picture surface. Improbably merged objects embody the flat painted surface more accurately than perspective effects of deep space.

“ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS”, TURNER, 1829



Turner is most usually thought of in the popular imagination as a follower of Claude in part as a result of his request that two works he left to the nation should be hung next to specified Claudes. Yet he also took ideas from Poussin, including the practice of identifying figures, such as his cyclops, Polyphemus, in “Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus” with massive features in the landscape. There are many instances of Turner being influenced by Poussin. For instance the composition of Turner’s “Bonneville”, finished watercolour, 1802, private collection (“Paths to Fame: Turner Watercolours from the Courtauld Gallery”, Courtauld exhibition cat., 2008-9, entry 10) in the recent exhibition; and the finished oil “Château de Saint-Michael, Bonneville”, 1803, Yale Centre for British Art (Wilton, “Turner in His Time”, ill. p. 58), is thought to have been based on the “Landscape with a Roman Road”, 1648, Dulwich Picture Gallery. This Poussin is probably one of a pair with “Landscape with a Man Washing his Feet at a Fountain” or “Landscape with a Greek Road”, National Gallery, London. Interestingly the finished Turner also has a pair, also having a more freely composed foreground, “Bonneville with Mont Blanc”, 1803, Dallas Museum of Art (Wilton, “Turner in His Time”, ill. p. 59).

Turner derived the image of Polyphemus as a physical feature from at least some of a series of earlier paintings. His own “The Goddess of Discord Choosing the Apple of Contention in the Garden of the Hesperides”, 1806, Tate, has a crocodile-like monster silhouetted on the top of a lower peak of what look like the Alps. In 1802 Turner had benefitted from the Peace of Amiens by setting foot on the Continent for the first time, seeing both the Louvre’s Poussins and the Alps. Close in time among works by other artists with people as huge landscape objects is Pierre Henri de Valenciennes’s “Mount Athos Carved as a Monument to Alexander the Great”, ca. 1796, Art Institute of Chicago (Spivey, “Greek Art”, ill. 219), a sub-Poussinesque work. In Poussin’s “Landscape with Diana and Orion”, 1658, Met., the giant Orion is huge. Cedalion on his shoulders on the picture plane is almost as large as Diana standing on the distant clouds. Like Polyphemus Orion was blinded, in his case by the father of a woman he had raped, and in the picture walks to the sun to be healed, guided by Cedalion. In this instance the conflation of landscape features and people is to some extent confined to the scale of the later.

Another Poussin, relevant to this chain of connections is the “Landscape with Polyphemus”, Hermitage. It is a rather elegiac, pastoral work, aside from the rapes

that may be going to take place in the foreground, and has Polyphemus playing on huge pan pies with his back to us seated on, or growing out of, the apex of a mountain, of about his skin tone, so he is not immediately spotted. The lit fringes of clouds rise over his head, as though they were smoke from a simmering volcano, as we shall see an appropriate reference. Polyphemus, who was prone to having things taken from him, is simmering. He is thought by some to be lamenting the loss of Galatea, or wooing her with his music (“Poussin and Nature”, Met. cat. 2008, p. 78), as in the one of the two adjoining bays of the episode in the Farnesina in Rome, one by Sebastiano del Piombo. Sebastiano painted Polyphemus with his pipes (Hall, “The Cambridge Companion to Raphael”, ill. 13) and Raphael in the other bay depicted Galatea riding across the sea accompanied by various merfolk. This was a persistent Poussin theme: there is a mildly pornographic drawing “Polyphemus, Acis and Galatea” (Olson, “Poussin and France”, ill. 7) in which the voyeuristic monster watches as the object of his affections has sex with her lover. He will shortly hurl a stone at them crushing Acis but missing Galatea. The mountain in Poussin’s “Landscape with Polyphemus” is appropriate. Hephaestus/Vulcan was believed to have had his forge, staffed by cyclopes, under Mount Etna in Sicily. Poussin liked to place hidden figures in landscapes. Also in the Hermitage is “Landscape with Hercules and Cacus”, ca. 1660. The two giant figures, unlike his Polyphemus, are within the outline of a cliff, representing the Aventine Hill in Rome. They are huge by human standards, as are the oxen of Geryon’s herd. Cacus, slain by Hercules, has turned to the stone colour of the Aventine while Hercules is in earth tones used elsewhere in the image. In Poussin’s “Tancred and Erminia”, Hermitage, early to mid 1630s, the dead warrior has turned to a dehumanized colour and the rough brushwork of his form hints at disintegration, somewhat as does Christ’s body in Titian’s late “Pieta”. A powerful shoulder and head, like that of the St. Petersburg Polyphemus and yet again in the tone of a nearby rock face only gradually emerges from behind a tree after a good look at the “Infancy of Bacchus”, European private collection (Poussin and Nature”, Met. Cat. 2008, entry 18). More generally Poussin has figures lurking in foliage or lost in shadow, exaggerating the effects Veronese had pioneered. A rather different instance of a person assimilated with objects is a cloak suggesting a human form with head draped on the stump of a sawn off branch in the “Landscape with Orpheus and Eurydice”, no later than 1650, Louvre.

The tradition of the depiction of cyclopes was somewhat limited and before Poussin’s cabinet paintings the better known examples are Italian frescoes. With empty sockets where people have eyes and a single eye above the nose, they were after all perfectly hideous. It is interesting that both Tintoretto and Velázquez, when they depicted the forge of Vulcan (respectively now in the Anti Collegio but originally in another space in the Doge’s Palace, ca. 1577, and for Philip IV of Spain, 1630, the latter now in the Prado and in the recent National Gallery exhibition), depicted the forge workers there as normal men. An alternative tradition, with the god’s helpers as men, clearly existed. Yet another example, with a non-cyclopean workforce, is Giorgio Vasari’s “Forge of Vulcan”, 1565, Uffizi; drawing, 1565, Louvre (Cheney, “Giorgio Vasari’s Teachers”, ill. 46-7). As usual the heavy manual labour calls forth the expected muscular men but what they produce is art as well as weaponry. Minerva, as patroness of the arts, equipped with set square and dividers, holds a piece of paper giving the design, in front of Vulcan/Hephaestus as he works on a shield, while in the background a finished statue of the Three Graces can be seen.

There are, however, a few well known renditions of Polyphemus. A relatively early one is Sebastiano del Piombo's in the Farnesina in Rome in a bay next to Raphael's beautiful "Galatea", already mentioned. His head looking towards the nymph is in profile. He appears again on the ceiling of the Palazzo Poggi in Bologna by Pelegrino Pelegrini (1527-96), also known confusingly as Pelegrino Tibaldi. As a representative of the Bolognese School he was a follower of Primaticcio and Nicolo dell'Abate but his style was drastically modified by direct exposure to the works of Michelangelo and Perino del Vaga in Rome from 1549. On his return to Bologna he began frescoing two rooms, in 1554-5?, in the Palazzo Poggi (now the University) with episodes from the "Odessey". In the flat central panel of a vaulted ceiling is a reclining Polyphemus, obviously taken from figures further developed from Michelangelo's Adam in the "Creation of Man". This is a gruesome image of the moment of blinding, an idea taken up by Rembrandt, but without the emphasis on anatomy, in his brutal the "Blinding of Samson", 1636, Städelesches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt (Schwartz, "Rembrandt's Universe", ill. 634) based on an a fallen hero of Polyphemian burliness, Rubens and Frans Snijders's "Prometheus Bound", ca. 1611-2, in turn based on a Titian of a very similar subject, "Tityus", 1547-8, Prado (Marsilio, "Late Titian and the Sensuality of Painting", ill.2 p. 56), and ultimately on Michelangelo. In the Rubens/Snijders, but not the Titian, the attacking eagle's talons are dangerously close to the eyes, perhaps referring to Polyphemus. On the same Palazzo Poggi ceiling in the centre of one side of the coving is another image, earlier in the story, of the cyclops (both figures are illustrated in Linda Murray, "The High Renaissance and Mannerism", ill. 120 & Sewter, "Baroque and Rococo Art", ill. 2). The Polyphemus before the blinding is derived from the Sistine ignudi, as are the corner giants seated on colonnades in the cove corners of the same ceiling. The cyclops in the central image of small men overcoming him probably recalls Giulio Romano's "Fall of the Giants", 1532-4, in the Palazzo del Te in Mantua. Tibaldi's anatomy, though exaggerated, has a kind of elegance missing from Giulio's.

This may all seem far removed from Turner's main interests but Turner did pass through Bologna (I can't yet say for how long) on his return journey from Rome, his second to Italy early in 1829, the year in which the painting was to be executed (Wilton, "Turner in His Time", p. 146). He had been in Bologna on the first Italian tour so at the least his memory may have been jogged. The current Tate Britain caption to their oil sketch for "Ulysses Deriding" suggests that it was made in 1827-8 before the second trip to Italy, a possibility that cannot be excluded. However the sketch shows Polyphemus with blue sky under both his knee and arm pit in other words on his back as in the Adam like figure at the Palazzo Poggi. In the finished version he has apparently been flipped over onto his stomach. His body now forms no arches over the crest of the cliffs and the former knee taken from the sketch can be read as another rock formation. These observations are not absolutely decisive in the question of dating but the similarities of the sketch to the Tibaldi version increase the chances that part of the painting derives from Italian precedents. The Bolognese Anibale Caracci certainly knew the Palazzo Poggi work for he placed "Polyphemus hurling a Stone at Acis" in a short straight vault cove, a similar position to that of the Bologna Polyphemus, who is in a cove, between the male nudes derived from the Sistine ignudi, at one end of the Galleria Farnese, 1697-9 (Sewter, "Baroque and Rococo Art", ill. 3). Here the monster's head is in profile, like Sebastiano's, and the face shaded. At the other end of the Gallery in the facing cove Polyphemus serenades

Galatea in a composition that unites the subjects of the adjoining Farnesina Raphael and Sebastiano paintings just across the river in one scene. The Farnese Gallery is such an important painted room, more highly regarded in Turner's time before the recent adulation of Caravaggio, that Turner is likely to have made sure he saw it. Turner in his own work muffles the impact both of the monstrous head and the damage inflicted on it: a hand covers the face in the misty distance while the other hand claws at the air. We might now regard Turner's efforts with large figures as contrary to the artist's true vocation. Turner did however produce a few canvasses of this type such as "Venus and Adonis", ca. 1804, private collection (Wilton, "Turner in His Time", ill. P. 84). This seems to recall Titian's now destroyed "Death of St. Peter Martyr" (destroyed but known through prints and copies) ca. 1526-30, formerly the Zanipolo, Venice and shows that he did pay attention to sixteenth century figurative painting as well as, in this case, Boucher. The arrangement of the trees and levels of terrain anticipate those of another, later, nineteenth century painting Delacroix's "Jacob Wrestling with the Angel", 1855-61, Saint-Sulpice, Paris.

In spite of these precedents this is not a traditional academic painting based on a few large bodies. It is far more about light and colour, even about areas of light and colour that were in Turner's evolution decreasingly determined by the behaviour of light streaming from its source or by the objects on which it falls. This painting is at the moment of transition. Turner had been moving towards this change for a long time but had hitherto kept the effects more or less tied to reality. Another crucial transitional work was the watercolour and body colour "The Lighthouse at Marseilles from the Sea", 1828, Tate (Wilton, "Turner in His Time", ill. p. 145) made on the outward journey to the second visit to Italy. A red "S" bend of cliffs, fortification, sail, hull and associated splotches is surely almost entirely an artistic contrivance or a more concrete version of a fleeting conjunction of similarly coloured objects. Pink cliffs and buildings and purple sea contribute to what Whistler might have called "Symphony based on Red". The middle and background of the Ulysses painting above the water line can be divided into four tonal quarters, while the shadows on the cliffs look somewhat arbitrary. Later examples of the detachment of light shade and colour from objects include "Juliet and her Nurse", 1836, oil, private collection; and "Venice: looking north from the Hotel Europa, with the Campaniles of San Marco, San Moise and Santo Stefano", 1840, pencil, watercolour and body colour, Tate (Wilton, "Turner in His Time", ill. respectively pp. 166, 186).

Timothy Alves

## **Palladio**

### **The Royal Academy**



Palladio's final (?) version of the facade for San Petronio in Bologna after Ackerman

### **PALLADIO AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY : THE GREATEST ARCHITECT OF THE WESTERN TRADITION AND "PALLADIO PASHA"**

#### **Palladio, Michelangelo and Sinan**

This is an exhibition that every early modernist should see. Andrea di Pietro della Gondola (1508-80), named Palladio by his first significant patron and mentor, Trissino, is perhaps the most widely emulated architect in the Western tradition. Moreover this exhibition has a really splendid collection of models which enable the visitor to make greater sense of the elevations and plans. The catalogue is magnificent with profuse illustrations (about which a few very minor quibbles below). The text has points of emphasis in interesting contrast to those in earlier Palladio publications and incorporates some of the latest thinking. In the latter category is the section on Palladio and his Ottoman contemporary Sinan, or Sinan Pasha (ca. 1490-1588). Palladio's ecclesiastical masterpiece, Il Redentore in Venice, for all practical purposes is endowed with two very specifically Ottoman minarets with sharp conical caps. As we will see not just the vertical feature but its context is Ottoman. For a time during the stage of the erection of St. Peter's in Rome directed by Michelangelo the cylindrical casing of the spiral ramp/s was exposed. Could Michelangelo too have contemplated minarets as church ornaments? An engraving (cat. 93), presumably done while the Michelangelo's ideas were still in flux, treats

with great circumspection the areas where the “minarets” might have emerged from the order, by this stage in front of most of the cylinders’ height, and caused the attic to bulge out. There is an inscription and a papal coat of arms judiciously placed against the relevant parts of the erratically shaded attic but they are frontal, not affixed to it.

Sinan and Palladio played off forms against each other such as pitched, shed (single slope) and domical roofing in almost identical ways. Palladio did this at the Redentore and Sinan, or his office, in, among other examples, the Mihrumah Sultan Camii (Mosque) at Üsküdar or Scutari, 1543/4-48; the Sokollu Mehmed Pasha complex at Lüleburgaz, 1565-69/70; and the Nurbanu Sultan complex at Üsküdar, from 1571 (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ills. respectively 280-1, 336-9 & 342, 262 & 266). The Mihrumah Sultan, dating from early in Palladio’s career, is on the water front, across the Bosphorus from Constantinople and Galata. Water borne Venetian visitors sailing between the parts of greater Constantinople could hardly fail to see it. The projection of the porch, with a pitched roof with a pyramidal front, out from a dome anticipates the relationship of nave and dome at the Redentore. It is possible that the Şemsi Ahmed Pasha complex in Üsküdar, 1579-81 (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ills. 517-20), was in turn influenced by the Redentore. A cubic wing directly in front of the dome has a pyramidal roof with a concave/convex/concave modification directly in front of the dome. In other words the mostly vertical distance between part pyramid and dome in the Mihrumah Sultan Camii and long horizontal gap between the two at the Redentore are dramatically reduced. This little mosque is on the shoreline, just above water level, as is Palladio’s church, and on one side has a porch shed roof akin to one of the Redentore’s aisle roofs. The mosque has a tiny piazza in front of the waterside façade which serves no purpose, there being no entrances but reproduces the Venetian layout. Interestingly the room under the modified pyramid is an unusual asymmetrical annex on only one side of the mosque interior with no counterpart. I would argue it was put there to reproduce an up to date Venetian effect on the Bosphorus. Given the dates it is very likely that the form of the mosque was decided upon before the Redentore had advanced very far, a possibility that suggests very close contacts. The brilliant compositional effects of the two mosques and the Redentore were to reverberate through Western architecture into this century as we shall see. In neither Venice nor Constantinople, so far as I know, were there objections to the use of “infidel architecture” by Palladio or Sinan.

Ottoman architecture had an overriding concern with overall compositional effect, often causing the inner edges semi-domes to slightly over-sail walls (a situation in which little areas of Islamic honeycomb are very useful transitional and masking devices). The focus on the bigger picture, rather than academic correctness in every detail, has parallels in late Palladio and Michelangelo. Palladio and Michelangelo, for instance, both contemplated centralized churches with chapels/transepts in apse form with strangely sharp, un-classical corners. In both cases this was allowed to happen so an inner dome or apse semi dome could be set off against the visibly wide radius of the outer space. The odd corners of the outer areas were relatively unimportant and in any case hidden. The works in question are Michelangelo’s very late Sforza Chapel at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome and a series of drawings by Palladio for a project for San Nicolò dei Tolentini in Venice (R.I.B.A. XIV 13-16, cat. 118) or possibly the Redentore. The Sforza corners are far sharper and weirder and Palladio corrected them in his later proposals. Both these features, and the cut off vault of the

fragmentary second set of transepts in the Redentore (see below) are not visible to someone in the main spaces. Palladio and Michelangelo followed a classical tradition, modified by medieval precedents, in which some awkwardnesses were banned. Ottoman architecture, largely based on Justinianic models, but putting them to the use of a different religion, was in a sense freer. Sinan could, for instance, cut off part of a complete circuit of four pendentives (concave triangles under a dome or apse) leaving part lunettes (less than half circular sections of wall under vaulting) which Palladio, Michelangelo and the Byzantines would never have allowed. Several very good examples of incomplete circuits of pendentives and truncated lunettes are in the Nurbanu Sultan Camii in Üsküdar, 1571-86 (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ill. 271-3).

Interaction among Palladio, Sinan and Michelangelo required only a few books or sketches to fall into the right hands. Later some of the motifs that appear to have travelled between east and west will be discussed in connection with the Redentore. Sinan repeatedly seems to have been on the brink of using a Western entablature and even its crowning pediment. This is particularly noticeable in Sinan’s early large masterpiece the Süleymaniye Camii, a vast sultanic foundation in Istanbul, 1547-59. The main gate (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ill. 177) has what looks like an entablature with modillion frieze on two admittedly spindly half columns and above an incised decorative band in the shape of a pediment and where it should be. Slightly higher is another near entablature that turns corners to run around the “pediment” and set it in an attic. Its concave corners with the lower horizontal part have small versions of the volute buttresses that were in a similar place on the façade of a Western church type established by Alberti. Atop the central horizontal over the “pediment” are a further near pediment and, flanking it, two half pediments in a continuous zig-zag. In western architecture this zig-zag is generally avoided, but was known to and used by Palladio. On two sides of the two high symmetrical ranges of the Baths of Agrippa, as he reconstructs them in an elevation (cat. 141; R. I. B. A. sc212/vii/3r). There are four pediment cornices over arches, only the inner two of which touch each other. There is also a drawing of a Palladian villa elevation, if not necessarily by Palladio (cat. ill. 8, p.377; R. I. B. A. xvii/5r), in which three pediment cornices are continuous and rest, as in the Baths reconstruction, on discontinuous horizontal cornice sections. Cut off the outer half pediments and there is an echo of the climax of the Süleymaniye portal.

Surrounding the mirhab (prayer niche) of both the Süleymaniye (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ill.182) and later Selimiye Camii in Edirne, Sinan’s later large masterpiece, 1568-74 (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ill. 224), there are again engaged columns and a “pediment” gable with concave diagonals. The Selimiye’s gable may be too steep to really qualify but that in the İsmihan Sultan Camii, designed before 1568 (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ill. 330, 332) has a straight sided gable on half columns. A further westernizing feature of the Selimiye and the Muradiye Camii in Manisa, 1583-86 (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ill.258-44) is a virtual Cappella Maggiore as in an Italian church, but containing the mirhab not an altar. In plan the Muradiye Camii is a Christian church without a nave. Considerable controversy surrounds Sinan’s origins. It is plausible that he can from a Christian, possibly Greek, background in Anatolia, was conscripted into the imperial service and became a Muslim at a relatively late age for a conscript, such as over twenty. He and El Greco may be regarded as figures from sub-Byzantine environments, El Greco’s in Venetian ruled Crete, who went on to serve the two greatest partly European states of the time, the Ottoman and Spanish

empires. Sinan may have understood the Christian churches he encountered on his extensive travels and in Constantinople as more than feats of technology. The catalogue mentions the straight entablature on the porch of the Rüstem Pasha mausoleum, used instead of arches (p. 239). The Selim II mausoleum at the Hagia Sophia has between its porch, here arcaded, and the rotunda a projection with an attic that must be derived from that of the Pantheon (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ill. 201).

To a limited extent in their final phases, which do not coincide chronologically, Michelangelo and Palladio converge. Palladio used the giant order and other truly sculptural elements, as on the Loggia del Capitaniato in Vicenza, while Michelangelo gave up redesigning every element afresh, as in the New Sacristy in San Lorenzo, or the vestibule to the Laurenziana, both in Florence. Late in life, by contrast, in Santa Maria degli Angeli e Martyri in Rome or the Sforza Chapel Michelangelo accepted essentially unaltered components, respectively Late Roman or Severan (from the period of the dynasty of Septimius Severus) more or less as established in Antiquity. The model (cat. 83 – no photograph, ills. 16.4-11 plan, section and photographs of the building) of Palladio’s Refectory of San Giorgio Maggiore can be used to establish that this was Palladio’s correction of the Laurentian Library (Laurenziana) in Florence. A vestibule, square in plan, with a staircase in the middle, is in front of a long rectangular room in both complexes. Unusually it is the Venetian spaces that are vaulted. Palladio hives off the near end of the rectangle for an inner vestibule and on the far wall only of this small space executes his own condensed version of the decorative devices of Michelangelo’s vestibule. There are actually brackets, blind window aedicules and space that leaks up out of the aedicules into what is above it, all variations on the wild Mannerism of the Laurenziana vestibule and, so far as the leaking space is concerned, more forcefully present in the New Sacristy, also at San Lorenzo. Palladio’s version is so much less complicated that it amounts to a profound critique of Michelangelo but in effect makes its points within the context established by the older man. The aedicules have the blank frame between the order and the interior of a bay that Michelangelo introduced in the Palazzo Conservatore in Rome and St. Peter’s. The origins of the form go back at least as far as the Bramante and Raphael proposed, but un-built, elevations for St. Peter’s, but only entered the actually constructed architectural mainstream with Michelangelo. This Michelangelesque form on a truly monumental scale is also present as a substitute for the arch in Palladio’s interior façade proposal, probably for San Francesco della Vigna, Venice (cat. 77), otherwise based on a Roman triumphal arch; and in the lateral altar in a design for a centralized version of the Redentore or possibly San Nicola dei Tolentino (cat. 118).

All three architects, Palladio, Michelangelo and Sinan, at their best were concerned with the broader picture not with petty adherence to rules of grammar. One of Palladio’s greatest and most consistent patrons was Marc’Antonio Barbaro. Barbaro is shown in a painting, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, on long term loan to the Schloss Ambras, Innsbrück (cat. 119, ill. p. 236) partly in Ottoman dress. As the Venetian bailo, or ambassador, in Constantinople, he had extensive personal dealings with the Ottoman Grand Vizier, Sokollu Mehmet Pasha who made possible some of Sinan’s finest work. It is not inconceivable that Marc’Antonio could have met Sinan. Thinking on this question has advanced to the point that the catalogue suggests such an encounter was likely (pp. 236-8). There is no documentary evidence for this, despite Marc’Antonio’s voluminous correspondence (sometimes two dispatches a

day) with his government, reporting on Sinan's buildings among other things. Perhaps this silence is not surprising. Both men were fortifications experts and aware that both the Ottoman state and the Serenissima might deal with suspected "leaks" by prompt garrotting and ask questions later.

Marc'Antonio's brother Daniele was also very interested in architecture and is represented by a Veronese portrait, ca. 1565-70 (cat, 60), in which two volumes are open to show pages, not quite as printed or bound, from his published translation with commentary of Vitruvius of 1556 (cat. 64). Vitruvius was the only ancient writer on architecture whose text survived more or less intact, if in places in a confused form. Sixteenth century practices of binding and interleaving took place in an era in which book production was somewhere between the total customization of the one off manuscript and modern mass production. Adam Smyth mentioned such practises in seventeenth century England in an Early Modern Society lecture on 21/10/08 and Stephen Brogan in a Senate House seminar of 5/3/09. The conclusions of the catalogue, I would very tentatively suggest, may not be the last word on pages shown. The painting could show something that actually existed rather than revealing Veronese's, or the sitter's, creativity. Might an extra proof of the title page, blank on the back as was usual, have been bound into a volume of architectural material with the image on the left rather than being an adjustment made by Veronese? Could Daniele have put material for a revision in a bound form? The portrait is at least ten years after the publication date. Vasari's now dismembered book of other artists' drawings in his own drawn paper frames comes to mind. One of the exhibits, cat. 162, a Palladio drawing has a paper frame by Vasari, though the catalogue does not tell us if it was once bound into the book. There is an admirable discussion of the complex evolution of the final form of Daniel's book as published in the catalogue (cat. 64).

The splendid catalogue could have been marginally improved by two things. The first could have been more and larger photographs of the models, as is provided for cat. 123, of the Tempietto Barbaro, and especially views of them from the side and back, views which are seldom published. Several reference books have to be searched to discover part of what the models reveal instantly. For instance the lopsided, towered end walls of the wings of the Villa Emo, ca. 1559-65 (model cat. 70 – no illustration), in isolation look like unfinished secondary façades, which we might think Palladio hoped would go largely unnoticed. When, however, this area is considered as the foreground of a distant lateral view of the ramp (a horse stair denoting the high status of the owners) up to the main block, a complex composition of related, parallel diagonals and two arches variably related to the slanting lines, suddenly comes into sharp focus. This quite spectacular feat of design is, in a freer way, as good as the late church façades.

These church frontages of Palladio's are, leaving aside his sources in the work of Bramante and Peruzzi, the only alternative basilican façade type ever devised to rival the form applied to Santa Maria Novella in Florence by the earlier Renaissance architect Leon Battista Alberti. The unfinished looking parts in Palladio's works, such as the end façades of the Villa Emo nearly always are a vital component of a larger picture. Another instance of the rich seam of architectural treasures hidden at the back of the monuments is in the enclosed terrace excavated out of a hillside between the Villa Barbaro at Maser, ca. 1549/51-58 (model cat. 65, with small

photograph), and its Nymphaeum. The retaining walls against the rising terrain on either side of the Nymphaeum are of different heights and on slight diagonals in plan, incidentally not as depicted in the most influential of Palladio's many publications "I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura". In the woodblocks Palladio "tidied up" what, to those unfamiliar with the sites, looked like random irregularities. Another case in point is in the two short alleyways at the Villa Emo between the main accommodation block and the wider standard width parts of the service wings which in the book are much broader than alleys. The treatment of the roof on the part of the wings closing off the short alley in the executed building also diverges from the elevation in "I Quattro Libri".

Slightly oblique walls, such as those next to the Barbaro Nymphaeum, are rare in the most prestigious architecture of the Mannerist period. Other examples include the relationships in the destroyed pavilions atop the stairs to the Farnese Gardens overlooking the Forum in Rome by Vignola; the relationships of the lateral palaces on the Capitoline Hill, the Campodoglio, planned by Michelangelo; and the relationship of the two longer sides of the Campo di San Rocco in Venice. The two Roman examples are on the edges of the Forum, transformed by centuries of neglect and vandalism into a field, while the Venetian campi (literally fields which elsewhere in Italy would be called piazzzi) over centuries were transformed from grassy little plots to paved, hemmed in urban spaces. Here too then there is a rural connection. The slightly oblique relationships of walls, was arguably more acceptable as a component of a design in an environment with rustic, or semi-rustic aspects. The curved pediment of the Maser Nymphaeum, too low on the ground by normal standards, has a possible connection to the pediment-like stairs, also too low for such a form, on Michelangelo's central Campodoglio palazzo, the Senatore. The approximate shape of these stairs recalls the vanished pediments of the Roman Forum below the Capitoline Hill behind the palazzo.

The second feature that is sadly missing from the catalogue is the computer generated reconstruction of Palladio's unrealized last(?) scheme for a new façade for the vast church of San Petronio in Bologna. Like so much of the best architecture this came only at the end of a series of proposals. The earlier Palladio designs are discussed and illustrated in Wittkower's "Gothic versus Classic" (ills. 106-9, pp.75-77). San Petronio, like so many major Italian churches, still displays the rubble core of its frontage to the piazza it dominates. This church is a major monument. The Late Gothic portal has sculpture by Jacopo della Quercia (Jacob Oak, a truly Hardy-esque name) which inspired Michelangelo's Adam in the "Creation of Man" on the Sistine ceiling. Michelangelo got to know della Quercia's work while working in Bologna on the bronze "Julius II", mounted on the lunette/tympanum of the portal, before its destruction when Julius's enemies retook the city and melted the statue down to make a cannon, inevitably named "la Giulia". Later, after the Papacy's fortunes took an even more serious turn for the worse, Rome, after the Sack of 1527, was not fit a fit place to stage such an event as Charles V's coronation. Therefore Charles was crowned emperor in San Petronio, internally re-fitted in temporary structures to look like the emerging New St. Peter's. The reconstruction of Palladio's final façade project is only available in a tiny caption illustration in the exhibition and is not in the catalogue and therefore is included as the illustration to this article in the form of a sketch from the caption illustration. This caption image was created under the auspices of the architectural historian James Ackerman, author of readable Penguin

books “Palladio” and “The Architecture of Michelangelo”. It demonstrates that the huge Palladian project was so finely adjusted to the heights of the neighbouring monuments, and the multi directional impulses of the corner of the piazza, that, despite its size and the projection of its all’antica, fully three dimensional portico, it would not have ruined the piazza but rather enhanced it.

San Petronio was so large that if it had been finished it would have surpassed Old St. Peter’s in magnificence. The popes had discouraged its completion when they grasped its pretensions. Palladio’s project, evolved from earlier ones by him and by others would have rivalled Michelangelo’s projected and unexecuted portico for the New St. Peter’s also attached to an older structure. Had both façades been built, rather than neither, the two architects would have been more easily understood in relation to each other. As it is, they tend to be seen as inhabitants of segregated architectural cultures of Central Italy and the Veneto. Palladio’s works are physically diminished being mere country retreats, or in constricted sites in Vicenza, or structurally limited by the exigencies of building on salty mud flats in Venice. The reconstruction demonstrates that his version of monumentality was equal to, if distinct from, Michelangelo’s. The Ackerman re-creation has to be approximate because of a few errors in Palladio’s measurements (cat. 150).

#### The Redentore

What the exhibition has to offer is perhaps best understood by a thorough examination of one model, that of il Redentore (cat. no. 117), the Church of the Redeemer in Venice, vowed by the Senate in 1576 at the height of a terrible plague. This article is offered to the reader in the spirit of Palladio’s guide book to the Roman antiquities, “L’ antichità di Roma raccolta brevemente degli auttori antiche e moderni”, 1554. The finer points of the design will be more apparent with this section of the article in hand. Palladio seems to have thought of the centre of the Redentore, under the dome, from which everything radiates, as an area rather than as a point. Until Brunelleschi’s discoveries, painters depicting buildings or townscapes thought in terms of a “vanishing area” instead of a single “vanishing point” with a “vanishing axis” as an intermediate possibility. John White developed these ideas in “The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space” (pp. 74-5, 258-62, 266-7). At the centre of the Redentore’s dome we might imagine a “radiating area” or a series of “radiating points” on a “radiating axis” coinciding with the longitudinal axis of the building. This imprecision may have recalled the odd Ottoman incongruities, the edges of squinches and semi-domes over-sailing supporting walls, communicated to Palladio through Marc’Antonio Barbaro. These motifs had a long history in Ottoman architecture, but persisted in Sinan’s much more focused and, in other respects, exactly composed mosques. Marc’Antonio had some claim to be a hands-on practitioner of the arts. The stucco sculpture in the Maser Nymphaeum has been plausibly attributed to him (Holberton, “Palladio’s Villas”, pp. 94, 149 ill. caption). Palladio, even in early works, employed the odd pseudo-Ottoman detail such as the arabesque grills under the piano nobile (first floor or floor for the nobles) of the Palazzo Civena, Vicenza, 1539/40-42 (cat. ill. p. 30), which is too dense to be Mannerist strap work. The grill in the piano nobile rotunda floor of the Rocca Pisani, a villa, by his pupil Scamozzi, is a similar motif. Both can be compared to the ground floor lunettes on the Mesih Pasha Camii in Yenibahçe by the Sinan school or the stone grills in the enclosure of Sinan’s own tomb in Istanbul.

The sacristies of the Redentore, thanks to the modulations caused by the corners of higher structures into which they are wedged, have what look like north European “hipped” roofs (mansards in layman’s terms), but they are only visible from a high vantage point in another building and from an angle oblique to the main axes of the church. The hipped effect can be traced along the floating moulding at the bottom of the higher structures which is just clear of the ridges of the leads. The moulding runs in a continuous sequence over the sacristies but at four angles. The roof, in two planes, escapes from the moulding and the backing walls at the Ottoman minaret/bell tower end of the sequence. There are four upper defining lines if the changes of angle are produced by the alterations in the angle of the wall are counted not the two planes in the roof. The roof itself a partial pyramid. It has, however, a shed edge at the transept end, that is, its diagonal slant terminates the wall. Palladio clearly felt that it was acceptable to let such shed edges occur in the less finished parts of buildings. Such roofs are present on the outer ends of the wings of the Villa Emo (cat. 70, no photograph, the model opposite the Redentore model in Room 2) and on one side of the alleys between the main house and the wings of the same villa. Smaller scale but quite visible shed roofs can be found in the thin sides of the slightly different Cappella Maggiore and transept projections of the Tempietto at Maser, another Barbaro commission (cat. 123, the Pantheon type model in Room 3). The less than half pediment fragments of the basilican church façades (San Francesco alle Vigna, Venice; San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice; Il Redentore itself; San Petronio and other projects) are a more monumental versions of the same type in which pediments and part pediments are compressed into a single plane.

Significantly the Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Camii at Azapkapi, 1572/4-78 (cat. ill. 25.5; Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ills. 352-60), by Sinan or his school, has a huge exposed shed roof. Similar if less prominent sheds are on the Semiz Ali Pasha Camii, Babaesk; the Pertev Mehmed Pasha Camii, İzmi; the Ferhad Pasha Camii, Çatalca and the Mesih Mehmed Pasha Camii, Yenibahçe (Necipoğlu, “Sinan”, ills. respectively 381-2, 395, 401-2, 404-5). This list is not meant to be exhaustive. In all cases the shed roof is at the end of the porch or porches and, on one side of the building, associated with the single minaret, bringing minaret and shed together as at the Redentore. In other words Palladio did not just use Ottoman minarets he put them in their proper context. The Sokollu is especially interesting in that shed part of the roof is not, as usual, hidden at the back of the porch, at right angles to the lateral façades of the mosque itself, but, except for a minor variation in plane, part of the lateral façade. Asymmetrical variations in the sequence of bays in this façade make it inevitable that the shed section is visually taken into account, making the composition more daring than that of the corresponding parts of the other mosques or the Redentore. Palladio’s ends of the Villa Emo bear comparison with the Sokollu sheds.

The Sokollu Mosque, under construction as the Redentore was planned and started, has, as the catalogue rightly points out (p. 239), a greater concern for the façades than had been usual in Ottoman architecture while the tall pepper pot dome buttresses can be related to the angular buttresses along the nave of the Redentore. There are internally exposed, Western thermal or Diocletian windows concealed on the exterior by rectangular fenestration, or so the catalogue says. On the basis of photographs I could find this claim (p. 239) could be wrong. The word thermal is for some reason placed in quotation marks in the text. The effect of a thermal is created by arches in front of the windows not by the shape of the lights. The full thermal feature hidden

on the exterior, which the catalogue mistakenly locates in the Sokollu Camii was to appear more nearly in canonical form in the next century in the Oosterkerk in Amsterdam, 1671 (Kuyper, "Dutch Classical Architecture", ill. 43-4), where the Calvinist religion, trying to avoid local Catholic forms drew on Ottoman and Palladian sources, Calvinism and Islam having much in common including an aversion to religious images. Not just tulips found their way to the Netherlands from Turkey. Elsewhere real thermal widows appear on at least one mosque by the elderly Sinan or his entourage, notably in the Mesih Pasha Camii, Yenibahçe, 1584-8 (Necipoglu, "Sinan", ill. 405, 407-8, 411-2). A strange postscript to these features of a hybrid architecture is found in the New Delhi, where Lutyens and Baker added the odd Indian Islamic motif to essentially Western buildings. This is especially noticeable in the Durbar Hall of the former Viceroy's House as planned with its huge apses under a densely patterned dome painting (never executed) or the grills in the clerestories of the legislative chambers and transverse arches in the inner colonnades of the Legislative Block.

The shape and size of the sacristies were probably determined by the monks of the Redentore. There would have been very little free space in them if the sacristies projected so little they did not protrude beyond the minarets and in doing so expose a bit the meeting of shed roof and the wall under it. In designing the exterior form of the sacristies the architect had to avoid a pitched roof of say three sides of a pyramid that would have tipped rain water run-off against the walls of the higher structures above and behind it. In Venice water in the form of rising damp was already a problem and buildings needed no avoidable, additional, descending damp. The viewer can try all the permutations of a three-sided pyramid and see that inevitably this problem of water not being drained from the upper walls results. Palladio allowed such a water trap on the inner little wings of the main wings of the Villa Barbaro at Maser. It is almost a relief to find that he could make a mistake – or could this area have been connected with the intentional collection of water? The Ottoman precedents may have emboldened him to use the exposed shed roof.

The question, seemingly more limited in its implications, of the orientation of the ridge joining the two planes of the sacristy roof is also interesting. This ridge could, at its uppermost point, in the interests of tidiness have hit the vertical line of the angle of the join of the monk's choir and the diagonal wall between the choir and the minaret, or the join of the diagonal wall and the minaret. It does neither. The hipped effect is not even symmetrical. The receding diagonal ridge where the two roof planes meet also does not take what might seem to be the other obvious option of aiming itself at the central vertical line in the middle of the dome. This non-alignment is but one. There are curious little pitched roofs, converging slightly from the width of that part of the minaret where it intrudes on the central vessel roofs to the dome. They lie between the shed roof (with no diagonal wall visible below it in this case) over the wall diagonal in plan and the conical roof over the transept. It is hard to tell from the model if the little converging roofs point to the vertical centre line of the dome. The shed roof over the diagonal wall even more completely ignores the centre of the dome for it has ridges on the leads that diverge outwards, slightly, from the drum. On the upper side, the ridges are nowhere near actually meeting where they touch the drum as do those on the apsidal transept roofs. The roofs above the walls diagonal in plan make this single point of convergence on the apses possible, but the Byzantine inverted perspective of their own ridges has its own

contribution to make to the overall composition. Inverted perspective is a term usually applied to pictorial art only but here operates in the third dimension. The minarets are not to the exact liturgical south-east and north east of the dome as we might expect so the little pitched roofs between them and the dome could not be centred on a uniform pattern radiating out from the dome.

Three and possibly four convergences or divergences to varying degrees ignore the exact centre of the great centralizing feature, the dome. This recalls Michelangelo's early designs for San Giovanni Fiorentini in Rome, in which, as Ackerman points out in "The Architecture of Michelangelo" (pp. 223-4, ills. 108, 110, 111), broad corridors of space with parallel lines criss-cross the centre of the dome rather than tapering to a single point like wedges of a cake. It is worth quoting Ackerman "Michelangelo persistently sought to avoid focusing on a central point. He was so little concerned with the radial concept of his predecessors that in his first drawing, those lines ... that should be radial are not ... His axes are not lines, but channels of space that converge in an area rather than at a point".

Michelangelo's design is more forceful than Palladio's but none of the San Giovanni peripheral components actually are diverted from a relationship with the exact centre; they merely widen the concept of the centre from a point to a symmetrical area around the centre. To an extent Palladio ignores the single point in the external features around the dome in favour of several points along an axis. The result is not, as in the Early Renaissance, an architecture based on lines and points but one of jostling volumes which alter each other where they meet. The jostling volumes may be an Italian feature stretching over centuries and could include de Chirico's architectural paintings of his most famous period. Localized disharmony is allowed in the sixteenth century, as in the colour in Mannerist painting or the music of Gesualdo, within a not too specific but wider harmonization of a staggering diversity of elements. The strange little vaults between the edges of the open apse colonnade and the monk's choir are another oddity of the Redentore, which is almost never reproduced in old prints or modern photography. They might have appealed to the quirky imagination of the seventeenth century Dutch architectural painter, Saenredam. These vaults are groins in the main choir vault but are cut off by presbytery colonnade so that only part of them is present. They are aligned with the sacristies. In more normal architecture the vault and walled off sacristies would be aligned with the point in the colonnade that curved closest to, or furthest into, them. Instead the relationship is curiously tangential and a second "radiating area" is established well to the liturgical east of the main "radiating area" under the dome. The centre point of the colonnaded apse is within this second area separated from the cross axis implied by the groins. The sacristies and cut off groins recall the second sets of transepts of the Benedictine tradition in an almost repressed form. Extremely short second transepts are to be found in the part of the Benedictine San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice executed after Palladio's death. The architecture of the Redentore is to some degree organic as well as mathematical. The parts modify each other as they interact, a characteristic in common with the parts of the sculpted and painted bodies of Michelangelo. Not every one of these details, especially the diverging ridges on the leads, are necessarily Palladio's as he died before the monument was finished. However the outward fanning shape of the roof on which the divergence takes place asks for such a treatment.

## Palladianism and Influence on Other Architects: Palladio Inside and Outside his Context

Palladio is rightly seen as the founder of Palladianism, a movement traceable through, but not confined to, readily identifiable motifs, in which he was followed by such major figures as Vincenzo Scamozzi, Inigo Jones, John Webb, Colen Cambell, Lord Burlington, William Kent, Giacomo Quarenghi, to some extent van Campen and innumerable lesser figures. Neo-Classicists and would be Neo-Classicists, among them Nicholas Ledoux, Robert Adam, James Wyatt and Thomas Jefferson found it almost impossible to shake off his influence, not just in quotations of detail but in an approach to composition in which a basic integrity of the parts resists distortion, but does allow selective omission. Other architects were ever conscious of his work including Wren and, as Wittkower points out in brilliant essay in "Palladio and Palladianism", Bernini. Palladio's influence is however more profound. He composed in space in a way that has nothing to do with style. He corrected one of the greatest solecisms in Western architecture that had been introduced at the Pantheon in Rome, where a low wide gable looks incongruous in front of a dome. The method used to correct this mistake was to take on a life of its own. At the Redentore there is a part pyramidal roof atop the façade, which looks flat from a distance, with linear decoration, when viewed from the opposite side of the Giudecca. The diagonal plane of the pyramid mediates between the flat façade and the full rotundity of the dome to the rear of the nave. No less a person than the enfant terrible of Modernism, Le Corbusier, resurrected and adapted this great prototype. The young Le Corbusier's Pre-Modernist Cinema La Scala, La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1916 (Jencks, "Le Corbusier and the Continual Revolution in Architecture", ill. 58-9) surely reflects the archetypal Palladian church façade. The cinema anticipates the Vana Venturi House, at the beginnings of Post Modernism. Styles, in this case Modernism, often begin and end with similar phenomena.

Le Corbusier was not the only architect to modulate and control the transition from two dimensions to the most complete three dimensionality by following the procedure of the Redentore. Other examples in the guise of the Baroque and Neo-Baroque include: François Mansart's Church of the Visitation in the Marais in Paris; Jules Hardoin-Mansart's reuse of existing buildings to create a spectacle culminating in his high gilded dome of Les Invalides in Paris; Lemercier's church at the town of Richelieu; and Charles Garnier's Opéra in Paris on which a semi-dome is placed between the street façade and a preposterously high façade to the stage superstructure.

Surprisingly it is Garnier's magnificent monstrosity on the Style Napoléon III which comes closest to Le Corbusier's Modernist Legislative Block in Chandigarh in the Punjab. Both architects subvert the Palladian format but in doing so show a profound understanding of how it works. Le Corbusier relates the more distant three dimensional objects on the main roof not to a single flat façade but to the corner between two. A vast asymmetrical inverted barrel vault crashes into the loggia on one façade, linking its sculptural form to the objects on the roof, but the façades themselves are rectilinear. From certain angles the jumble of objects on Le Corbusier's roof look as random as those on the roof of St. Peter's along with young Le Corbusier captured in a photograph possibly taken by Amédée Ozenfont (eds. Moos & Rüegg, "Le Corbusier Before Le Corbusier"). From one angle the

Chandigarh forms appear intensely purposeful (Curtis, "Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms", ill. 151; Arts Council exhib. cat. "Le Corbusier: Architect of the Century", ill. 292). This sight line is related to the principle line of approach from the city to the Capitol area in its abstract isolated space. As one enters the precinct, the Palace of Assembly is seen obliquely at almost 45° to its sides as one comes level with the leading edge of the Secretariat.

This is a return to the planning of the Ancient Greek sacred precinct in which the important links are between angles not walls and is aided by the ramp tower protruding from the Secretariat parallel to the significant sight line. Not only is the approach oblique but so is the alignment, from this point of view, of the features on the flat roof. The form, pyramidal from this end of the sequence slopes back to a point directing the eye to the "cooling tower" with a diagonal lid which is the top of the debating chamber. The tower's lid, where Palladio would have had a dome has various objects on it such as an arc taken from a Mughal observatory, lid and arc being related to the sight line. Palladio has clearly entered the main stream of Western architecture, parts of which have very little to do with his very own "ism". Palladio in a small way anticipates the Chandigarh corner effect on the Villa Emo. The scenographic diagonals of the wings and ramp are echoed on the lateral planes of roof of the main house, on each of which two chimneys and a dormer diverge from the diagonal at the meeting of the front and sides of the roof. The chimneys appear to be on a diverging less steep diagonal, as though related to the side wall, but the dormer turns the alignment into a motive curving up to the apex of the roof. This is all on a very timid scale and lacks the force of the Redentore and Chandigarh creations. Corbusier sketched the Redentore but, I would provisionally suggest, is probably unlikely to have known much about the Villa Emo. The catalogue, commendably, has a short chapter on Palladio and Le Corbusier (chapter. 40).

As every early modernist will know the relevance of figures from the past to creative activities in, what to them would have been the distant future, does not mean that they were not tied to the attitudes of their own time. Neither this nor the 1975, far larger, Hayward exhibition paid much attention to Palladio's other Roman guide book, published, according to the author in the same year as "L'antichità di Roma...", his "Descrizione de le chiese, stationi, indulgenze & relique de Corpi Santi, che sono in la città de Roma", recently translated by Hart and Hicks and published with a selection of interpolated illustrations. It is worth quoting from this to disabuse those who saw the wonderful black and white photograph of the Villa Poiana, 1555? and its statue of an aging, camp Neptune(?), on the publicity flier, suggesting architecture of stark Proto-Neo-Classicism, and who might focus on certain parts of the exhibition in an unhistorical way. At St. Peter's, writes Palladio "...From the throne of St. Peter's there is plenary indulgence. On Quinquagesima Sunday there are 28 thousand years of plenary indulgence and the same number of quarentines ... Every day there are 6,048 years of indulgence and the same number of quarentines and remission of a third of all sins ... In this church are ... the heads of Saints Luke the Evangelist, Sebastian, James the Lesser, Thomas Bishop of Conturba and Martyr, and Amand; one of St. Christopher's shoulders, one of St. Stephen's shoulders ... half of the body of St. Peter and half that of St. Paul ...". Later on: "Sant'Anastasio. This church is outside Rome on the Via Ostiense ... They have a pillar against which against which St. Paul, Apostle, was beheaded. Once his head was separated from his body, it bounced three times, from which points the three fountains that can still be

seen today miraculously sprang. On the feast of St. Anastasius there is plenary indulgence and every day six thousand years of indulgence.” This sounds like the work of a thoroughly medieval person. All this was written up by a man some of whose Vicentine patron’s, or at least their close associates and relatives, were serious Protestants, while Marc’Antonio’s brother Daniele, by contrast, was a major ecclesiastical office holder, who possibly never became a priest, but was a significant figure at the Council of Trent. Did Palladio believe all that went into “Descriptione...” or was he deftly positioning his book in relation to the market?

### Shifting views of Palladio

Aside from a new awareness of the relationship at a distance between “Palladio Pasha” and Sinan Pasha, no doubt ultimately inspired by current alarming turmoil in the Middle East, there are other interesting shifts of emphasis from the 1975 Hayward exhibition. In the Post- Thatcher Post-Blair world the young Palladio’s breaking of his articles with an early master is glossed over in the R.A. catalogue. As unfortunate people default on loans and mortgages would it not do to celebrate the breaking of an economic contract by a revered cultural icon? In the 1975 catalogue, “Andrea Palladio, 1508-1580: The Portico and the Farmyard” we are told (p. 69), “Andrea and his father however left Padua for Vicenza, thus breaking the agreement, which was renegotiated in April 1523. Either the attraction of Vicenza was great, or Cavazza an intolerable master, because a year later, in April 1524, Andrea was formally inscribed in the guild of stone masons of Vicenza...”. Ackerman put it in similar terms in “Palladio”, 1966, (p. 20) “...in 1524 he broke his contract, fled to nearby Vicenza and settled there” as does Constant in “The Palladio Guide”, 1985, “Andrea broke his contract by 1524 and moved to Vicenza ...”. The shifting date hints at something more complex, while Puppi in “Andrea Palladio”, 1973, glosses over the illegality (pp. 8-9) in rather a rambling piece of writing originally in academic Italian which emphasizes the creative status of all Palladio’s early masters.

The current catalogue seems to have been influenced by subsequent less dramatic interpretations, of which one by Holberton ca. 1990 is an example. “Having fulfilled only three years of his apprenticeship, Andrea left Cavazza and Padua for Vicenza and some alternative position, though it is not known what it was. It is not known, either, why he left Cavazza, except that it was not the headstrong straining of a great talent at petty bonds, since he was accompanied to Vicenza by his father, with whom during his time with Cavazza, he had continued to lodge. Impulsiveness and the ‘Bizarre behaviour due to excess of melancholy typical of artists’ (as it was diagnosed at the time), were anyway not part of Palladio’s style. According to the deposition when he sued for breach of contract, Andrea fled; but Vicenza was the nearest town, it was not like running off to sea. A possible explanation is that Andrea and his father came to consider the six years’ apprenticeship stipulated by the guild in Padua unfavourably long, knowing that the guild in Vicenza had no such rule. At first Cavazza’s suit was successful, and in 1524 Andrea returned to his service, but within the year he left for Vicenza again, where he now remained, as an assistant in the shop of the sculptors Giovanni da Porlezza and Girólamo Pittoni. Since Giovanni da Polezza was guarantor in 1524 for his inscription in the masons’ guild, Cavazza was unable to claim him back this time around for the further two he was still due” (Holberton, “Palladio’s Villas”, pp. 16-7).

One Palladio is a proto-sixties rebel, the next, in Thatcherite style, tests the evils of over-regulation to destruction. The present catalogue sticks to the latter line (p. 19): “Andrea’s legendary flight from the vexations of his first master ... should be reconsidered in light of his father’s possible Vicentine interests and by focusing more closely on a figure who has often remained in the background, the sculptor Vincenzo Gradi (c. 1493-1577/8)”, Palladio’s godfather. An interlocking network of medium scale entrepreneurs now seems to be directing the young man’s career. Anti-social, impulsive behaviour becomes a prolonged difficult negotiation, perhaps not wholly outside the conventions. The later published arguments deploy more facts and become more nuanced but may not be entirely un-effected by the changing social mores of the second half of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. A final point might be made about Palladio’s father, a miller. Another famous miller, perhaps a member of a reasonably, if perhaps often, self educated occupation, kept outside the self censoring elite by the social elite, was the later sixteenth century heresiarch Menocchio, the subject of Ginzberg’s “The Cheese and the Worms”. A little untutored learning gained by a miller, or his son, might have been dangerous or it might be just what a bright young man needed to gain a patron like Trissino

Particular emphasis is placed on Palladio’s first planned use of a fully three dimensional portico on a house as was not done in the Hayward catalogue. The R.A. publication gives it a full chapter (11), as it should, for this was a vital innovation, and says (p. 108), “The Villa Chiericati, 1550-5, is probably the first single story villa in which Palladio presented – at least on paper – his new and immensely successful formula for the country house: the façade with pedimented portico, a form taken from Roman temples. The villa was planned at about the time Palladio did the drawing for the woodcut of a Roman House in Danielle Barbaro’s Vitruvius, 1556, which shows the house, entirely wrongly, with a portico. Palladio did the templates for most of the books lucid illustrations. Daniele and Palladio’s erroneous reconstruction and the Villa Chiericati must be related. “Though the building’s authenticity is established by a drawing (cat. 57) this is one of Palladio’s least known villas, not published in the Quattro Libri, completed summarily, and difficult to visit”. This is very precisely worded but almost definitive on the subject of the portico. The Hayward version merely notes in a standard entry among many in the section on Villas (p. 195), “The importance of the villa in the evolution of Palladio’s villa designs, lies in the early use of the monumental temple front portico, which later became his classic solution for the villa façade”.

A very useful feature is inclusion of a perspective and plan (cat. nos. 9.4, a 1601 engraving; 9.10 a plan in “I Quattro Libri” with a dotted line by Inigo Jones) of the seventeenth century state of the archetypal Palladian urban building, the Palazzo Chiericati in Vicenza, which was less than half finished for a long time, much to the disappointment of the visiting Jones. The ragged end of the weird asymmetrical structure was apparently given extra columns, not planned by Palladio, to confer on it a credible termination. It is always worth remembering that many great buildings for much of their existence were unfinished, a sad fact that may often have influenced the original plan made in the knowledge that plausible stopping points would be advantageous. The enthusiastic endorsement for direct contact between Sinan and Marc’Antonio in the R.A. catalogue is in marked contrast to the caution of Deborah Howard at a conference at Exeter University, 30/4/04-2/5/04, in answering a question I put to her. The physical appearance of the Palladio of previous publications was

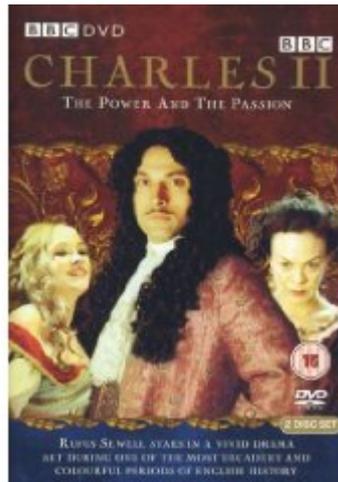
rather tight lipped and reticent in the late credible engraving (“Andrea Palladio, 1508-80: The Portico and the Farmyard”, cat. no. 135) and a seemingly related anonymous portrait hanging in the Villa Rotunda (Holberton, “Palladio’s Villas”, ill. 1). These images of a self-effacing man are now supplemented, or even eclipsed, by a lively alleged portrait by El Greco, ca. 1570-5, Stateas Musuem for Kunst, Copenhagen, formerly in Peter Paul Rubens’s collection at the time of his death (cat. 11.3). Fashions change so that the R.A. Palladio of 2009 is not quite the Palladio of the Hayward in 1975 or of intermediate points since then. He seems to have been self-effacing, as Venetian state officials right up to the Doge were meant to be. As the catalogue points (p.344) out his designs for book illustrations of battles are concerned with lucid layouts of military formations in landscapes of clear contours not with the personal glory of generals as in so many representations of war. He seems to have been opposed to obsessions with personality, while Sinan operated in an Ottoman ethos of anonymity and Michelangelo was the object of an elaborate personality cult. Palladio remains as a person out of reach and his intellect can be understood best through the architecture.

Much of this material has been developed from a lecture given at the Mediterranean Centre of the University of Exeter in 2004. I would like to thank Sunnifa Hope at the Royal Academy and her colleagues at the Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio in Vicenza for answering a question, and Dr. Adam Smyth and Stephen Brogan for bringing to my attention Early Modern publishing practices. They are of course not responsible for my conclusions.

Timothy Alves

## FILM/DVD

*Charles II*, (Dir. Joe Wight, 2003, 235 minutes).  
(alt. title: *Charles II: The Power & The Passion*)



This compact mini-series, originally broadcast by the BBC in 2003, is a fairly straightforward narrative documenting the twenty-five years of Charles II's reign (1660-85). Over the course of four, one-hour episodes, we see Charles, played by Rufus Sewell, recalled from exile in the Netherlands and restored to the crown and kingdom that was formerly the property of his father, Charles I.

Working with the benefit of hindsight, most observers would agree that immediately he was crowned, Charles's problems really began. This mini-series outlines many of the better known episodes of the restoration: the Great Plague in 1665, the Fire of London in 1666, the inconclusive Anglo-Dutch Wars of the mid 1660s and early 1670s, his relationship with his Portuguese wife, Catherine of Braganza, the Popish plot, the eternal problem of the economy, his secret treaty with Louis XIV, and his ambivalent attitude to Catholicism.

There are strong performances in this production: Rufus Sewell is well cast in the title role. Rupert Graves provides energetic support as Charles' close friend, George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham, while Ian McDiarmid is solid as Sir Edward Hyde. Hyde's sense of world weary loyalty, is one of the highlights of this mini-series. Another highlight is Diana Rigg's powerful performance as Queen Henrietta Maria. Shirley Henderson is credible as Catherine of Braganza.

There are historical goofs in this production, notably during the opening credits of the first episode. The serial begins with Charles I's execution in January 1649. We see Charles walking calmly to the scaffold with untied dark hair. Charles had gone grey by mid-1648 and at his execution his hair was covered by a cap.

Most unbelievable is the sight of Prince Charles standing underneath the scaffold, looking up at his father's face the moment the axe fell and being spattered with his blood. A dramatic moment, as director Joe Wright and writer Adrian Hodges probably intended, but highly unlikely. The soldiers guarding the scaffold would not have permitted anyone to stand underneath, for fear of a rescue attempt.

Fortunately, the series recovers somewhat from these flaws. Prospective viewers should also be warned this is quite a talky production, with lots of intense conversations taking place in corridors and chambers. The extras include a thirty minute featurette, *The Making of Charles II*, and a documentary, *The Boy Who Would Be King*, with contributions from Lady Antonia Fraser, Professor Richard Holmes and Professor Ronald Hutton. Episodes one and four include a director's commentary track.

Overall, artistic license and historical goofs notwithstanding, *Charles II* is a reasonable retelling of the events in Charles II's reign, but obviously no substitute for a competent history book.

Robin Rowles

Notes:

[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) for details of cast and production

Graham Edwards. *The Last Days of Charles I*, (Sparkford, 1999)

Antonia Fraser. *King Charles II*, (London, 1979, p.b. 2002)

Tim Harris. *Restoration: Charles II and his Kingdoms*, (London, 2005, p.b. 2006)

# *FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS*

*Events 2008-2009*

*All events start at 6.30p.m. unless otherwise stated, and are followed by refreshments and questions*

- 19th March 2009: Professor William Brooks (University of Bath), 'French, German, and Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of Madame Palatine, Sister-in-Law of Louis XIV; or, The Case of the Shat-Upon Carrot', Birkbeck College, Malet Street
- Palladio Exhibition at The Royal Academy, Piccadilly on Friday 3rd April 2009 at 6.00 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\* **ATTENTION** \*\*\*\*\*

Please note that all tickets have been allocated for this event. For further information contact the secretary, Laura Jacobs. Members without tickets cannot just turn up and expect free entry.

- 24th June 2009: Prof. Peter Burke (Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge), 'The Rhetoric of Autobiography in 17th-century Europe', followed by end of year party, both rooms TBC.

For further information on membership and activities contact the secretary, Laura Jacobs: [l.jacobs@english.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:l.jacobs@english.bbk.ac.uk)

Membership is £5 for the year. Non-members may attend events at a cost of £3 each.

# Film Night

As a Society we are constantly looking at ways of extending our scope and entertaining our membership, one such innovation is a monthly film night, held on a Friday and shown in one of the lecture theatres at Birkbeck.

Film Night has been running for a few months now and has proved a popular event for our members. Why not come along, see a great film and meet other members. We show a variety of British and foreign films, all dealing with subjects associated with the Early Modern era. Film Night is free to members and we also provide wine and snacks.

For March we will be screening 'Artemisia' directed by Agnes Merlet. This will be shown in Room B36 at Birkbeck College in Mallet Street, London on Friday, 27th March 2009.

For further information on Film Night contact the secretary, Laura Jacobs:  
[l.jacobs@english.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:l.jacobs@english.bbk.ac.uk)

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

This section concerns those events staged by other societies which we feel might be of interest to our membership.

## **Society, Culture and Belief, 1400-1800**

The programme for the academic year 2008-9 continues our series on *The Senses*, with the theme:

### **Touch**

Convenors: Laura Gowing (KCL), Kate Hodgkin (University of East London), Michael Hunter (Birkbeck), Miri Rubin (Queen Mary), Adam Sutcliffe (KCL).

Seminars will take place in the Ecclesiastical History Room at the Institute of Historical Research on the following Thursdays at 5.30 p.m. All are welcome!

*19 March 2009*

*Dr Lauren Kassell (Pembroke College, Cambridge)*

**The magical and medical powers of touch in early modern England**

**National Portrait Gallery, London**

**Constable Portraits**

**Telephone 020 73060055**

**5th March to the 14th June 2009**

Although largely known as a landscape artist, John Constable was also a skilled portraitist. The fifty works of art on show reveal many facets of Constable's life, and contain depictions of family, friends and self-portraits as well as several middle-class sitters.

# BOOK REVIEW

## NON-FICTION BOOKS

I hope that many of you will send in your reviews of newly published books and the occasional old book. The only criteria being that it deals with a subject within the Early Modern period, roughly from the Renaissance (the middle of the fifteenth century) through to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and that the book is still in print.

John Croxon

### *The Gunpowder Plot by Antonia Fraser, Phoenix*

In *The Gunpowder Plot* Antonia Fraser brings to life the characters and events of the last years of Elizabethan England and the first few years of the reign of James I. Dramatically, and with forensic skill, she recreates the political and religious conditions that spawned the fateful night of the 5th November 1605.

Related with impressive scholarship and style, the author has produced a beautifully written narrative that is clear, balanced and thoughtful. Antonia Fraser carefully unravels the tangled web of Jacobean religion and politics that led to treason and the attempt to murder the king, government and most of the nobility of the land.

One of the most striking things that emerge from Fraser's book is the leading role that Robert Catesby had. By his charm and persuasive nature, Catesby was able to bring people into the plot and bind them tight to the cause, even when, in some instances, their instinct was to distance themselves from treason. He must have been an extremely charismatic character.

Fraser adopts an even handed approach to her subject, and even if sometimes her Catholic sympathies show through she does not waver from seeing the plotters for what they were, early modern terrorists. However, in the earlier chapters she does suggest the ground for which these people may have felt compelled to act; at first persecuted under Elizabeth, and then had their great hopes dashed or, in their eyes, betrayed under James.

First published in 1996, this well-written and informative book is central to an understanding of the events of 1605.

John Croxon

**Michael F. Graham, *The Blasphemies of Thomas Aikenhead: Boundaries of Belief on the Eve of the Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008)**

On 8 January 1697, Thomas Aikenhead, a student of the University of Edinburgh, was taken down the Leith Road to the place where the most notorious criminals of the town were executed. He was hanged for blasphemy.

Michael F. Graham tackles the infamous Aikenhead case with a microhistorical approach. For the full intellectual history of the case he rightly cites Michael Hunter's comprehensive "'Aikenhead the Atheist": The context and consequences of articulate irreligion in the late-seventeenth century', in Michael Hunter and David Wootton (eds.), *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 221-254. Graham's approach is different. He examines Aikenhead's case in the context of the social history of 1690s Edinburgh and explains how a student became a scapegoat.

In the 1690s, Edinburgh was a lively urban centre with as many as 47,000 residents depending on the time of year. It was a busy place and a sociable one with high levels of literacy and chances for conversation. But it was also a divided city dominated by lawyers and clergymen who were excluded from taxation and therefore politics. These were resented by the merchant class who ran the city's government.

The town's college also courted controversy with professors and regents sometimes on the wrong side of religio-political debates. A visitation to the college in 1690 resulted in several academics, including the principal Dr Alexander Monro, the mathematician David Gregory, and the physician Archibald Pitcairne, being fired for refusing to support William and Mary. The latter two and others were also accused of atheism or deism but their social connections meant they were able to escape and to find new posts at other universities.

The visitors wanted to uproot recent new teaching which included the ideas of Descartes and Newton and return to having Presbyterian theology at the centre of the curriculum. Acts were passed in Parliament to suppress blasphemy and 'Atheistical Opinions' in 1695 and 1696. The Privy Council sought to control books containing dangerous ideas with authors such as John Toland, Charles Blount, Thomas Hobbes, and Rene Descartes especially attacked. Books by all of these authors were stocked in the University Library, the Advocates' Library, and in private collections of professional Edinburgh residents. The best efforts of the Edinburgh government seemed to have little effect on the spread of freethinking in the town and by 1696 atheism and deism were freely discussed in intellectual circles and not least in the University.

By the end of 1696 the godly in Edinburgh knew that they were being punished for their sins and their lapses in faith. The year was marked by famine, unemployment, fear of a French invasion, a fire in the Canongate which left fifty families homeless, and a general atmosphere of distress. The authorities linked these misfortunes to God's wrath which doubtless was increased by the spread of freethinking ideas. They knew they had to take action to placate their angry God. The Privy Council ordered days of fasting and prayer to try and resolve the situation. They also began to take an interest in the titles sold in the town's bookshops. As early as May, the Privy Council

was ordering the burning of unsuitable books. On 9 October 1696, an Act was passed in Parliamentary session which explicitly forbade 'drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, swearing, fornication, uncleanness, mocking and reproaching Religion and the exercises thereof'. This Act also reminded citizens of the Blasphemy Act of 1661 which called for the death penalty for anyone who cursed God and the Blasphemy Act of 1695 which restated the provisions of the 1661 Act and added that even denying God was a capital offense. The bad state of Edinburgh and the powerful Acts set the stage for the trial of Thomas Aikenhead.

Aikenhead was not the first to be called to trial after the new Act was passed. John Fraser, a well-connected merchant's apprentice, successfully defended himself by saying that he was unaware of the new statute at the time of his allegedly blasphemous conversation with his landlords. He came from a respectable Presbyterian family and was let off as a first offender but had to serve time in the Tolbooth Prison and to atone in sackcloth.

Aikenhead was not so well connected. His parents were both dead and he relied on family charity. He had been a student since October 1692 and studied the standard curriculum which at the time included the ideas of Descartes and natural philosophy. He was accused of blasphemy on 10 November 1696 and Graham argues that this date is significant as it was just three days after the disastrous Canongate fire and the day before the Privy Council's most recent list of banned books took effect. Aikenhead's blasphemous activities had been going on long before the 9 October Act. His offences included saying that the Old Testament should be called 'Ezra's fables', calling Jesus and Moses magicians, rejecting the Trinity, denying that spirits existed, saying that Muhammad was better than Jesus, and predicting that Christianity's days were numbered. He also wished on a cold day that hell was real so he could go there and warm up. The witnesses in Aikenhead's trial were his fellow students. His particular accuser was Mungo Craig who probably wanted to make his name as a minister. Aikenhead said Craig was trying to frame him and to hide his own inclinations to atheism.

Much of what Aikenhead said or was alleged to have said was part of the standard scepticism of the time. Many people underwent a spiritual crisis which they wrote about in their journals and maybe even later published. These were able to have a process of regaining their faith. Whether Aikenhead would have done this, or if he repented before his execution is unknown. Less than two months after he was officially accused of blasphemy, he was dead.

Graham makes a convincing case that social factors influenced the fate of Thomas Aikenhead. The lack of understanding between the social classes of Edinburgh and the need for the government to be seen to be placating an angry God caused the death of Aitkenhead. But the sceptical ideas the Privy Council tried to suppress lived on to inspire the Scottish Enlightenment. Just a few decades later David Hume could be and was known as 'the atheist' in the very same town without the fear of being dragged to the Gallowlee for a final punishment.

KAREN BASTON

## FICTION BOOKS

The criteria for fiction books is the same as that for non-fiction book reviews; that it deals with a subject within the Early Modern period, roughly from the Renaissance (the middle of the fifteenth century) through to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and that the book is still in print.

John Croxon

### **Kathleen Winsor, *Forever Amber* (1944; new edition, 2002)**

Imagine my embarrassment. There I was, all the way down from Edinburgh to London to hear Lady Antonia Fraser give a talk on historical biography. By good fortune I had a chance to chat with the lady herself with a group of fellow early modernists. They were all praising Fraser's masterful biography of Mary, Queen of Scots as the first history book they remembered reading. Did I say something clever about studying on the site of Kirk o'Fields, an important location in the Mary story? No. I was lost for words since I didn't come into history via real history. I found my way by way of historical romances like *Forever Amber*.

A few weeks later I happened upon the fairly recent reprint of the classic 1944 romance *Forever Amber* in my local library and decided it was time to put historical romance to the test. Could the novel withstand the years of rigorous historical training I'd completed since my teenage years? Was it fair to ask it to do so? What would it be like to look at the adventures of Amber St. Clair in 2009?

At nearly 1,000 pages this is a novel which asks for commitment. Amazingly despite its size the book is hard to put down. Amber's story is a series of interconnected vignettes. She goes from country lass to king's mistress via Newgate, the London stage, the City, and the court. The short introduction by Barbara Bradford Taylor gives some useful, and reassuring, background. Winsor worked on the book while her then boyfriend was working on a PhD on early modern England. She got interested in the history and decided to write a novel using the material. So it is fair to judge this as a work of history after all.

We meet Amber as a teenager in an Essex village. The farm boys all fancy her and the village girls hate her. She's the most beautiful girl for miles around and she knows it. When Lord Bruce Carlton and his Cavalier friends pass through the village green on their way to London to welcome Charles II's Restoration, Amber's fate is sealed. She's in love with Carlton at first sight and wastes no time in seducing him and forcing him to take her to London. She is ultimately of 'Quality' birth although illegitimate so luckily looks the part. We read quite a lot about Amber's golden looks throughout the book but it's an essential plot point. If she were plain, she wouldn't be able to use her wiles to achieve her goals.

Whatever her faults – among them vanity, selfishness, jealousy – Amber remains loyal in thought (if definitely not in body) to Bruce Carlton. Given the date of the novel it's no mistake to compare their relationship to the more famous Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler. Amber loves Carlton and he loves her; but not enough to marry her. And this is the main problem in Amber's life. Carlton is never dishonest about his feelings but Amber is fond of building castles in the air and believes that she'll win him over in the end. If Amber's life were a Smith's lyric it would be 'I want the one I can't have, and it's driving me mad' and if she could have ever made a real friend, that friend would say, in the words of a recent film title, 'He's just not that into you'.

But luckily for us, lots of other Restoration men are. Amber's conquests include a highwayman, a student at the inns of court, a Welsh guard, a wealthy City merchant, a slimy earl (who, as it happens, also pursued her unfortunate mother), and King Charles II himself.

So, what about the history? Amber's story takes place during the first ten years of the Restoration. She witnesses or participates in London life during this time and, I have to say, Winsor does a very good job in recreating the key events of this undeniably exciting place and time. I don't want to go through the entire plot here since there is a lot of it. Amber packs a lot into a mere ten years and does so at breakneck speed. So here are some historical highlights.

### **The Plague of 1665**

Amber is recently widowed and has a huge fortune. She takes a plush new house and, as always, waits for Carlton to return from his travels. This time when he does, he's not well at all. He fails to pay Amber compliments and does not enjoy the special meal she's arranged to have sent in. (Amber is not a cook.) This is one of the truly memorable sections of the story. I remembered this bit vividly from the earlier reading. Amber is forced to cope with nursing her be-plagued lover. She goes from lady of means to full-time carer while coping with the most vile disease ever. Vomit, sweat, puss, and dead rotting bodies replace her world of silk and satin as Amber has to try to save Carlton's life. She does this despite the interference of a trio of hideous plague nurses – the wonderfully named Spong, Sykes, and Maggot. As the novel was written well before the rat-flea vector theory was invented, there are no rats and no fleas involved. Vanessa Harding would approve! Carlton returns the favour of his life being saved by nursing Amber's bout of plague in turn. While this does increase the bond between them, he still won't marry her.

### **The Great Fire of London**

Amber and Carlton visit a friend in the country to recuperate from the plague. Amber doesn't realise that Carlton is planning to leave England again to return to the New World as soon as he's able. When he leaves, she marries an elderly earl for his title without bargaining on just how repulsive he is to her. She wants to be presented at Court. He wants to stay in the country. Amber decides to amuse herself by seducing his married son. This has tragic consequences. The earl finds out – he's a voyeur – and sets out to poison them before he sets out for London. Amber, fortunately, is too upset to eat. (She desperately wanted to go to London to be presented at Court). The

son dies but Amber survives to take revenge. She sets out with trusted servants and, dressed as a boy, makes for the earl's London home. When they are nearly there, they see the flames of the Great Fire. The fire is well realised with actual events like the King and duke of York trying to help. But for Amber, this event is a chance to kill her hated husband and to blame the Fire. As a widow at Court, she can do what she likes.

### **Royal Mistress**

Amber becomes a duchess by being a royal mistress. Her relationship with Charles II is plausible. She first meets him when she's one of the first actresses on the London stage and her beauty ensures that she's not forgotten. She spars with the other members of the harem, especially Barbara Villiers, whose background and machinations are well-recounted here, but eventually Amber gets everything she ever wanted (except Lord Carlton) from the king. But throughout the politics and pregnancies of Court life she makes enemies and this leads to the end of the book. The plots and counter-plots of the Court are handled well and Amber serves as a focus for the sort of activities that really went on at the time. George Villiers takes the action which convinces Amber to clear off out of the Court. He sends her a false message that the now married Carlton's wife has died in a shipwreck and Amber doesn't think twice before packing her bags and going off to find her man. We know it's a lie and that's one of the things that makes this novel so enjoyable. We are always a few steps ahead of the heroine and can shout at her in exasperation. The effect of this is much like that of historical biography. ('Don't marry him! He only wants your crown, Mary!')

The only real problem with *Forever Amber* is that it sometimes reads like a Hollywood film script. There are lots of 'O Bruce's' and there's even a character called 'Rex', which seems unlikely in the late-seventeenth century. It's no surprise to note that a film was made in 1947 but quite what the scriptwriters did about all the bodice ripping, abortions, and other sexy behaviour is something I have yet to find out.

The novel may not have a particularly likeable character at its centre but try as I may I am unable to criticise the history overmuch. Reading it again made me think of some of my biases – soft-spot for Charles II and the royalists, fondness for the late-seventeenth century, a love of London – and wonder just how influential reading this so long ago actually was.

KAREN BASTON

**Sir Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818); new edition, ed. Tony Inglis (Penguin Classics, 2006)**



*Effie Deans contemplates her future with her lover.  
The dog knows this future is not bright and from Effie's expression, she has her doubts, too...*

It would be hard to imagine a heroine more different than Kathleen Winsor's Amber St. Clair than Walter Scott's Jeanie Deans. Jeanie is a dairymaid who has grown up near Edinburgh under the watchful eye of her deeply religious father. She is practical, plain, and loyal to her friends and family. She is content to work on the farm while looking after her father and trying to save enough money to marry her childhood sweetheart. Jeanie has the sense in the family. But things change when her half-sister Effie – who has a proto-romantic sensibility - is arrested and held in the Tolbooth Prison, aka, the Heart of Midlothian, for child murder. With a single word, Jeanie could save her sister's life. Effie is not in trouble for having a child with no apparent husband. She's on trial for concealing her pregnancy with the intent of murdering the baby when it is born. If Jeanie would say that her sister had told her of her pregnancy, Effie would be spared the noose. But Jeanie is a good Christian Cameronian and cannot tell a lie.

Jeanie's story takes place against the background of Edinburgh's Porteous Riot of 1736. Scott gives an excellent description of this momentous event in Edinburgh's history. The riot was inspired by the pardon of Captain Porteous who fired into a crowd of civilians at an execution he was managing. Outraged Edinburgh citizens took matters into their own hands by becoming a mob, extracting Porteous from the Tolbooth, and lynching him. A main character, no less than Effie Deans' lover, George Staunton, known as 'Robertson' leads this brutal mob disguised as local madgirl Madge Wildfire. Needless to say, the government in London is not impressed by this act and determines that the city should be punished.

Meanwhile, Effie is condemned to death (in the first courtroom scene in fiction, as the introduction tells me) and Jeanie hatches a bizarre plan to save her sister's life. She'll walk to London and plead for Effie's life at the Court. This plan is exactly what she does. Jeanie's tale is based on the real life walk of the aptly named Helen Walker which was known to Scott. Along the way Jeanie meets various characters, including the insane Madge Wildfire and her sinister mother, falls in with robbers, and stays at inns making friends. Strangely enough, when her own life is in danger, Jeanie can overcome her conscience to tell mistruths. Despite this, everyone she meets is taken by her simple charm and she finds allies all the way from Edinburgh to London.

Luckily, Jeanie's fiancée's ancestors helped the dukes of Argyll in the Covenanting times, so she's able to recruit the current duke to help in her cause. John Campbell, Duke of Argyll, ruled Scotland in the 1730s. In the story, he arranges for Jeanie, in her charming Scottish costume, to meet Queen Caroline in the gardens of Richmond Palace. A pardon is secured for the errant sister and Jeanie returns to Scotland in triumph with the favour of Argyll for herself and her father secure. Effie runs off with her Englishman. Jeanie marries her reverend and lives on a model farm created by the Duke in the Highlands. Thereafter we get glimpses of the sisters' lives. Following an exile in France (and with more than a hint of Catholicism and Jacobitism added to her accomplishments), Effie passes for a lady and eventually reaches the London court. Her life, however, is unhappy. Her husband is bad-tempered and, probably because of their earlier liaison and Staunton's venereal disease from his wild youth, they are unable to have children. Jeanie and her brood, on the other hand, flourish in their Highland idyll.

So much for the plot. Scott's descriptions and characters are really what make the first three quarters of this very long novel worth reading. The atmosphere Scott creates of a city on edge is well done. The descriptions of locations such as Hunter's Bog and Muschet's Cairn (the scene of a notorious wife-murder in 1720) on Arthur's Seat and in Holyrood Park are recognisable to this day. Most of the characters are quite likeable. Laird Dumbiedikes, for example, a simple man inexplicably in love with Jeanie Deans, comes up trumps at a useful time and manages to have a happy end. His Highland pony is a scene-stealer, too. Others, however, are exasperating. Madge Wildfire should be an object of pity but comes across as a nuisance. Jeanie herself can be annoying with her constant 'goodness' and her father is even worse. His religious pride is surely the foulest sin in a book full of death, execution, and riot. Fortunately, the Argyll influence seems to loosen Jeanie and her father up a bit and by they end Jeanie is known for making the best rum punch in the village. Scott's world is full of smugglers, thieves, and the darkness of urban life as well as the joys of the country.

The only real problem with *The Heart of Midlothian* is that it goes on a bit too long. The Duke's improvements to his estate are historically accurate as these were indeed the concerns of men of his status but they don't make for exciting plotting. The fates of the Deans sisters could have been tied up fully by letter as is done in part. What happened to Effie's child? He survived and somewhat predictably becomes the agent of his worthless father's demise. It's all a bit contrived at the end and I think the novel would have been stronger by ending with Jeanie's triumphant return to Scotland.

For me, as a recent convert to the cause of Scottish legal history, the court scene is one of the highlights of the book. I have been able to verify that Scott's portrayal is

accurate by following it up by reading John Louthian's *The form of process before the Court of Justiciary in Scotland; Containing the constitution of the Sovereign Criminal Court* (Edinburgh, 1732). By accident, when looking for something else, I also found the details of the Nicol Muschet case in John Maclaurin, *Arguments, and Decisions, In Remarkable Cases, Before the High Court of Justiciary, and other Supreme Courts, in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1774). Interestingly, for me at least, the pursuing advocate in this capital case so effectively used by Scott to create a sinister mood was none other than Charles Erskine whose library I am researching. Erskine also spoke out as an MP in Parliament against punishing Edinburgh in the aftermath of the Porteous Riot. So reading an enjoyable novel has also helped me to advance my research. The introduction and notes in the Penguin Classic edition also proved to be invaluable in providing historical, social, and linguistic details which enhanced my reading.

KAREN BASTON

## Problem Page

### Aunt Agonistes, Birkbeck's own early modern agony aunt.

Dear Aunt Agonistes

**My children have lice. What should I do?**

Alice

Dear Alice,

To prevent lice comb and keep children's heads clean , let them eat no figs , but meats of good juice, and purge them with hot, drying, thin medicaments. Use no mercury nor arsenick to children's heads but use this lotion, take part alike of round birthwort, lupines, pine and cypress leaves, boil them in water, then anoint the head with powder of staves-acre three drams, of lupines half an ounce, of agarick two drams, quick brimstone one dram and a half, ox gall half an ounce, all made up with oil of wormwood.

That should work a treat.

Agonistes

## THE SPRING QUIZ

1. Which great British naval commander was born in Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk on the 29th September 1758?
2. Which capital city and its great empire was tragically lost to invading Muslims in May 1453?
3. Which ill-fated queen was born in Vienna on the 2nd November 1755?
4. Who was elected as Commander-in-Chief of the New Model Army in January 1645?
5. Which great philosopher was born in Amsterdam on the 24th November 1632?
6. Which great British naturalist was born on the 13th February 1743?
7. Who was created the first Poet Laureate in 1668?
8. Which great composer was born in Halle in 1685?
9. Which statesman and inventor was born in Boston on the 17th January 1706?
10. Who wrote *'The Reformed Commonwealth of Bees'* published in 1655?
11. What was written for the first time on the 16th February 1659?
12. Who acceded to the English throne in 1685?
13. Which great landscape gardener died on the 6th February 1783?
14. Who discovered oxygen on the 1st August 1774?
15. Which famous eighteenth-century publisher was born on 27th February 1691?
16. Which physician, mathematician and wit died on the 27th February 1691?
17. Which composer published *Vespers of the Blessed Virgin* in 1610?
18. Which composer's 1742 collection of 'keyboard exercises' became known as the *Goldberg Variations*?
19. Which composer published *'Laudibus in sanctis'* in 1591?
20. Which piece of classical music received its premiere in February 1814?

Answers on the following page

## ANSWERS TO THE SPRING QUIZ

1. Horatio Nelson
2. Constantinople, capital of Byzantium
3. Marie Antoinette
4. Sir Thomas Fairfax
5. Baruch de Spinoza
6. Sir Joseph Banks
7. John Dryden
8. George Frederic Handel
9. Benjamin Franklin
10. Samuel Hartlib
11. The first known British cheque (for £10) by Nicholas Vanacker
12. James II
13. Lancelot (Capability) Brown
14. Joseph Priestley
15. Edward Cave
16. John Arbuthnot
17. Claudio Monteverdi
18. Johann Sebastian Bach
19. William Byrd
20. Beethoven's 8th Symphony

# **THE BIRKBECK EARLY MODERN SOCIETY**

**FOUNDED 2006**

This society was founded in the belief that more study, discussion and interest in the Early Modern period is required. The society aims to promote, encourage and stimulate new research and discussion into a wide range of themes, including art and images, consumption, gender roles, literature, magic, politics, religion, science, music, sexuality and, travel and exploration.

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