

# DILETTANTI

THE ANTIC AND THE ANTIQUE  
IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND



BRUCE REDFORD





Earl of Sandwich



M. Harris



Sam. Savage  
Esq.



Earl of Holderness



Baron Hobergh



St. James  
Gray



S. Brownlow Sherard



L. Barrington



Duke of  
Dorset









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THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM | LOS ANGELES  
THE GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE | LOS ANGELES

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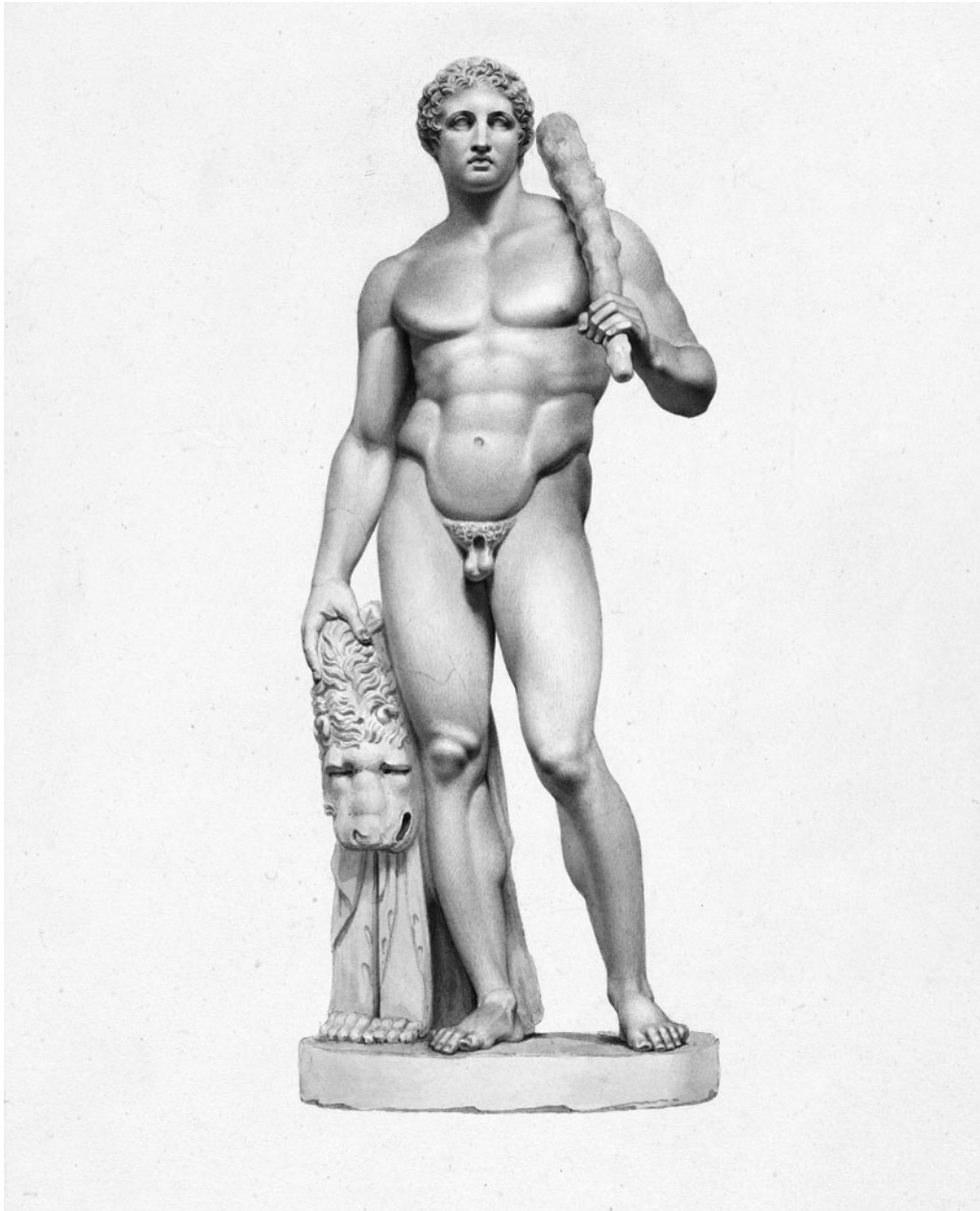
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*For Dennis Crowley*









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# CONTENTS

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ix ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

xi ABBREVIATIONS

i INTRODUCTION

The Amateur Moment

13 CHAPTER 1

George Knapton's "Pictures in Oil Colours"

44 CHAPTER 2

The *Antiquities of Athens* and *Ionian Antiquities*

83 CHAPTER 3

Richard Payne Knight's "Expedition into Sicily"

97 CHAPTER 4

Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Star and Garter" Pictures

113 CHAPTER 5

Richard Payne Knight's *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus*

129 CHAPTER 6

James Gillray's "Cognoscenti" Caricatures

143 CHAPTER 7

*Specimens of Antient Sculpture* (1809)

173 CONCLUSION

The Amateur Dethroned

183 NOTES

193 BIOGRAPHIC GLOSSARY

206 BIBLIOGRAPHIC ABBREVIATIONS

207 BIBLIOGRAPHY

211 INDEX





See figure 2.35.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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In tune with the rituals of the Society of Dilettanti, I lift my “Bumper Glass” and “vociferate with loud Acclamation” the names of those who, by making this enterprise both possible and pleasurable, gave new meaning to *seria ludo*.

In the beginning, Alan Bell, St. John Gore, and Graham Snell opened doors at the Society of Dilettanti and at Brooks’s. Charles Sebag-Montefiore kept these doors open with extraordinary graciousness. Bernard Nurse made me welcome at the Library of the Society of Antiquaries, and Andrew Wilton guided me toward the holdings of William Pars at the British Museum.

This book began to take shape during my year as Samuel H. Kress Senior Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. At the National Gallery I am especially indebted to Faya Causey, Philip Conisbee, Lamia Doumato, Gregory Most, Peter Parshall, and Nicholas Penny. Among the community of CASVA scholars who helped guide the project during its early stages I would like to single out Bjoern Ewald, Graham Larkin, and Juergen Schulz.

*Dilettanti* drew close to completion at the National Humanities Center, whose congenial cloisters I inhabited thanks to a fellowship endowed by the Allen W. Clowes Foundation. At the NHC I benefitted from many conversations, especially those with Kent Mullikin, Deborah Harkness, and the members of the Sexuality Reading Group.

Work on two Dilettanti exhibitions has greatly enriched the project. The first of these, held at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, was the brainchild of William P. Stoneman, who also invited me to deliver the 2002 Hofer Lecture at the Houghton. The second exhibition, to which this book serves as a companion, developed from a lecture at the Getty Villa. The invitation came from Kenneth Lapatin, whose friendship and learning have been indispensable. At the Getty Research Institute I have been welcomed and enlightened by an extraordinary group of scholar-curators, chief among them Claire Lyons. At Getty Publications, Benedicte Gilman and Louise Barber exemplify the highest standards of editorial acumen. With elegance and wit, Catherine Lorenz brought the book visually to life; the Dilettanti would have recognized in Anita Keys a kindred commitment to “the greatest accuracy” and “the utmost attention.”

Miranda Constant Marvin, whose middle name aptly describes the quality of her friendship, has been a source of inspiration for over three decades. Her example has helped me understand the full significance of “Grecian Taste and Roman Spirit.”



An early version of chapter 1 appeared as “‘*Seria Ludo*’: George Knapp’s Portraits of the Society of Dilettanti,” *The British Art Journal* 3 (Autumn 2001): 56–68. I am grateful to the editor, Robin Simon, for permission to make use of this essay.

Chapter 2 draws upon my Hofer Lecture and a related essay, “The Measure of Ruins: Dilettanti in the Levant, 1750–1770,” *Harvard Library Bulletin* 13 (Spring 2002): 5–36. I am grateful to the editor, William Stoneman, for permitting me to incorporate material from both lecture and essay. Topics discussed in chapters 3 and 5 form part of my contribution to the Festschrift for Michael C. J. Putnam, *Being There Together*, ed. Philip Thibodeau and Harry Haskell (Afton, Minn., 2003), 258–74.

My profoundest debt is recorded in the dedication.

B.R.

August 2007

#### NOTE TO READERS

The spelling of proper names has been regularized following the practice of John Ingamells in *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701–1800* (New Haven and London, 1997).

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# ABBREVIATIONS

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abr.	abridged by
act.	active
attr.	attributed
ca.	circa
cat.	catalogue
cent.	century
cf.	compare
chap./chaps.	chapter/chapters
cm	centimeter
coll.	collection
det.	detail
ed.	editor/edited by
edn.	edition
f./ff.	folio/folios
fig./figs.	figure/figures
GRI	The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
in.	inch(es)
JPGM	The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
l./ll./	line/lines
MS	manuscript
n./nn.	note/notes
neg.	negative
no./nos.	number/numbers
p./pp.	page/pages
par.	paragraph
pl./pls.	plate/plates
r.	ruled
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects, London
trans.	translator/translated by
viz.	namely
vol./vols.	volume/volumes





See figure 6.3.

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE AMATEUR MOMENT

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“You are dilettantish and amateurish,” the ardent young artist Naumann says dismissively to the irresolute Ladislaw in *Middlemarch*.<sup>1</sup> A century later, Jan Morris is even more severe:

Widows, childless divorcees, elderly unmarried ladies, *dilettantes*, pensioners, the retired—Bath is full of lonely people without occupations, counting the days until their grandchildren come to call, killing the evening with television, gin or marijuana, plotting another bridge party, waiting for Bingo, or setting off down the hill for an hour with the Pump Room trio. Every city has its share of the purposeless, but by the nature of things Bath has more than most.<sup>2</sup>

Dabbling in Rome, drifting in Bath: from the early nineteenth century to the present, “dilettante” has been a deprecatory or even pejorative term, connoting the sloppy, the second-rate, the superficial. Its opposite is the encomiastic “professional.” Yet throughout eighteenth-century Europe, “dilettante” and its cognate “amateur” defined a cultural ideal. The etymology of both words epitomizes their significance: “dilettante” derives from the Italian *dilettare* (“to delight”), itself descended from the Latin *delectare*; “amateur” comes from the French *aimer* (“to love”) and ultimately from the Latin *amare*. To be a dilettante is to exhibit *diletto*—pleasure, delight—just as being an amateur is to act out of love. Implied in both terms is the idea of energetic, enjoyable, wide-ranging curiosity—curiosity that crosses what would now be called “disciplinary boundaries.” The rapid fall from grace of the dilettante or amateur that occurs during the period of the Napoleonic wars (1803–15) helps to mark the great divide separating us from the Enlightenment, when all fields of knowledge seemed to compose “an interlacing pattern.”<sup>3</sup>

The word “dilettante” enters the English language with the formation of the Society called after it in the 1730s. Though nothing like a charter or a declaration of purpose has been recovered, the preface to the first volume of *Ionian Antiquities*, published by the Dilettanti in 1769, allows us to reconstruct their origins, models, and guiding principles. The author of this preface is Robert Wood (1717?–1771), a pioneering student of classical history and architecture, who describes the Society’s foundation with playful eloquence:

In the year 1734, some gentlemen who had travelled in Italy, desirous of encouraging, *at home*, a taste for those objects which had contributed so much to their entertainment *abroad*,



formed themselves into a Society, under the name of the *DILETTANTI*, and agreed upon such regulations as they thought necessary to keep up the spirit of their scheme. . . . It would be disingenuous to insinuate, that a serious plan for the promotion of Arts was the only motive for forming this Society: friendly and social intercourse was, undoubtedly, the first great object in view; but while, in this respect, no set of men ever kept up more religiously to their original institution, it is hoped this work will show that they have not, for that reason, abandoned the cause of *virtù*, in which they are also engaged, or forfeited their pretensions to that character which is implied in the name they have assumed.<sup>4</sup>

Wood, an accomplished stylist as well as a formidable scholar, chose his words with care. His retrospective account begins by making it clear, quietly but emphatically, that the travelers in question were “gentlemen,” whose social standing and financial backing had enabled them to undertake the Grand Tour. This group of patrician founders, most of whom were under thirty, stipulated from the outset that new members could only be proposed by those “who had been personally acquainted with [them] in Italy.”<sup>5</sup> The regulation was flexible enough to make room for those who had traveled on the Continent for professional reasons, although the Society included only a handful of painters and architects during the first decades of its existence.

#### “AN ASSOCIATIONAL WORLD”

The youthful alumni of the Tour who “formed themselves into a Society” were joining a crowded field: in his *Journey through England* (1724), John Macky found in London “an infinity of clubs or societies for the improvement of learning and keeping up good humour and mirth.”<sup>6</sup> Macky’s contemporary observation is corroborated by the modern scholar Peter Clark, who has charted the new forms of urban sociability that arose after the Glorious Revolution and described the burgeoning of “an associational world.” According to Clark, this world “provided an important bridge to modernity” while perpetuating “many traditional features of preindustrial society—heavy drinking, ceremonies and ritual, old-style masculinity, client-patron relationships, and selectivity.”<sup>7</sup> All five of these features were characteristic of the Society of Dilettanti. The first of them struck contemporaries most forcibly, as Horace Walpole’s caustic comment suggests: “The nominal qualification [for membership] is having been in Italy, and the real one, being drunk.”<sup>8</sup> For at least half a century the Dilettanti gave ample proof of their attachment to a dictum that might well have served as their motto: *nunc est bibendum* (“now is the time for drinking”). Appropriately enough, the Society held its first regular meetings at a tavern—the Bedford Head in Covent Garden. During the next two decades it moved several times, settling in approximately 1757 at the Star and Garter Tavern in Pall Mall.

Though Wood’s phrase, “friendly and social intercourse,” ironically understates the bacchic cast of the Society’s meetings, his emphasis on “the promotion of Arts” and

“the cause of *virtù*” does justice to the aesthetic allegiances of the Dilettanti. As Wood knew well, the Society’s mottoes included *Viva la Virtù* and “Grecian Taste and Roman Spirit.” Although the Dilettanti would not commit themselves until mid-century to collecting and to fostering knowledge of the Graeco-Roman past, they set out to combine the antic and the antiquarian in eclectic, innovative, and versatile ways. Their primary motto, *Seria Ludo*, reflects both the substance and the tone of this undertaking, conflating as it does the opening speech of Virgil’s seventh eclogue with the first satire of Horace’s first book. In Virgil’s pastoral, the shepherd Meliboeus sets his work aside in order to listen to a singing contest: “my serious business gave way to their playing” (*posthabui tamen illorum mea seria ludo*).<sup>9</sup> In Horace’s satire, the speaker asks Maecenas: “What is to prevent one from telling truth as he laughs, even as teachers sometimes give cookies to children to coax them into learning their ABC?—still, putting jesting aside, let us turn to serious thoughts” (*sed tamen amoto quaeramus seria ludo*).<sup>10</sup> Interpreted in its Virgilian context, the motto calls for “serious business” (*seria*) to be set aside completely. Horace, on the other hand, asks his reader to imagine laughter as a vehicle for truth. This Horatian sentiment is reinforced by the epigraph to the first volume of the Society’s Minute Books: *Hae Nugae, in Seria ducant* (“May these trifles lead to serious matters”).

Wood’s preface, evocative as it is, contains no clue to the precedents that guided the founders of the Dilettanti. However, the work of such historians as Peter Clark allows us to sift the “infinity of clubs and societies” in early Georgian London and to discern the relevance of two groups in particular: the Virtuosi of St. Luke and the Society of Antiquaries. The Virtuosi began to meet at a public tavern in approximately 1689. “Drinking and socializing were clearly an important part of the proceedings, but a fund was established to buy paintings. In 1711 several members were involved in establishing the Academy of Painting.”<sup>11</sup> The interest of the Virtuosi in promoting painting and sculpture is amply documented by Gawen Hamilton’s conversation-piece (1735): all of Hamilton’s sitters are artists or architects, whose hands communicate more expressively than their faces (Fig. 1). Indeed the painting itself is a kind of self-advertisement: Hamilton includes himself in the right background, with his “two trademarks, a dog and a rucked carpet,” dominating the foreground.<sup>12</sup> The Society of Antiquaries, by contrast, advocated the study of the past, not the embellishment of the present: as its first set of minutes makes clear, “the Business of this Society shall be limited to the subject of Antiquities; and more particularly, to such things as may Illustrate and Relate to the History of Great Britain.”<sup>13</sup> Like the Dilettanti, the Antiquaries originated as a tavern society. Ultimately their official motto became the sober *Non Extinguetur*, applied to the lamp of learning, but the surviving records of the Society’s early years (1707–17) suggest that *Seria Ludo* might have been more appropriate.<sup>14</sup>

Although they shared certain features with the Dilettanti, these two groups do not account for the Society’s distinctive character and constitution. Both the Virtuosi and the Antiquaries, for example, were dominated by working professionals who lacked the resources for the Grand Tour; moreover, both were ideologically neutral, whereas the Dilettanti flaunted a republican political genealogy that looked back through Venice to Rome.



FIGURE 1  
Gawen Hamilton (1697?–1737),  
*A Conversation of Virtuosi of St. Luke  
at... the Kings Arms, 1735*. Oil on  
canvas, 87.6 × 111.5 cm. London,  
National Portrait Gallery reg.  
no. 1384.

A sheet preserved among the Society's correspondence records trial ideas for the official seal, most of them a variant of the motto *Auctoritate Reipublicæ* in tandem with "a Consular Figure in the Chair with the Fasces" (Fig. 2). The same allegiance explains the stipulation "That Roman dress is thought necessary for the President of the Society" (Minute Books, 1 February 1741). Accordingly, he wore a scarlet toga and sat in a mahogany armchair covered with crimson velvet, called the *sella curulis* after the official chair occupied by Roman consuls and other magistrates. Unlike the Whiggish Kit-Kat Club, however, the Society was free of partisan political maneuvering and any commitment to what John Barrell has called "that ethic of manly abstinence which was so crucial a constituent of the discourse of civic humanism."<sup>15</sup> The original Dilettanti slighted or even flouted public duties and values: instead, they turned inward, to a private realm of ritual, recollection, and gratification.



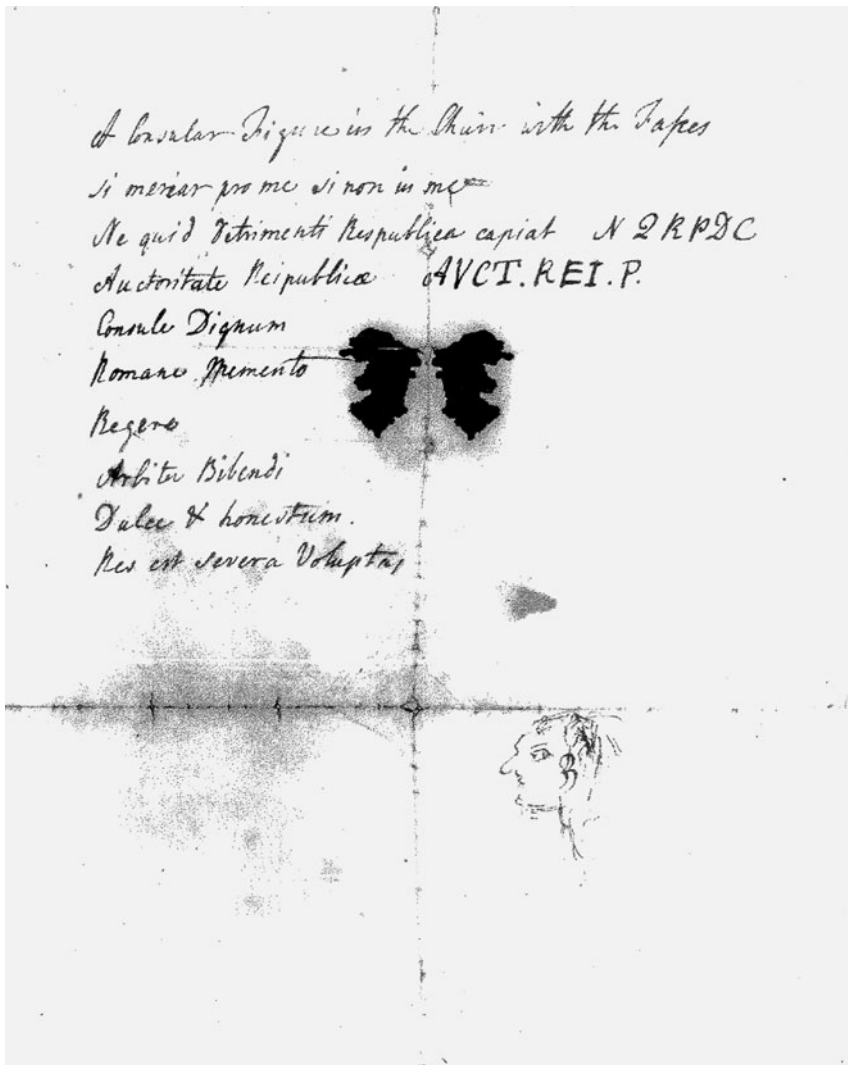


FIGURE 2  
Society of Dilettanti, Correspondence, vol. 1 (1736–1800), f. 90r. London, Society of Antiquaries.

## RULES AND REGALIA

Where then to look for pertinent and illuminating models? The models exist, but first it is instructive to note that Robert Wood's adverb "religiously" points in a helpful direction, as do the Society's rules, regalia, and ceremonial objects. The "Procedure for introducing a newly-elected member" provides a rewarding point of departure, for it illustrates the roles of the figures called "the Archmaster" and "the Imp":

That Great and most respectable Officer The Arch-Master of the Ceremonies is to be invested, with the Superb Robes of Office. Viz. the long Crimson, taffeta, tassell'd Robe, The Magnificent Embroider'd, and Emboss'd Baudrier, the long Spanish Toledo, and the Grand Hungarian Furr'd Cap; and then to take his Place.... The President, to order every Member to fill a Bumper, the bottom of the Table to be clear'd, and the Arch-Master to go

FIGURE 3

Thomas Adye (active first half of the eighteenth century), *Balloting box*, 1737–38. Honduras mahogany and gilded ormolu, 42.5 cm high, 40.4 cm wide, 21 cm deep. London, by permission of the Society of Dilettanti. Photographer: Jeremy Butler.

FIGURE 4

Thomas Adye (active first half of the eighteenth century) and Christopher Fuhrloh (1740–after 1787), *“The Tomb of Bacchus,”* 1736. Mahogany (Adye) and ivory (Fuhrloh), 41.4 cm high, 45.7 cm wide, 33.6 cm deep. London, by permission of the Society of Dilettanti. Photographer: Jeremy Butler.

out, in order to introduce the New elected. A most profound Silence, to be kept, during the whole Ceremony. (Primo) The Imp, with two lighted Tapers. (Secondo) The Arch Master, in his Robes of Office. (Terzo) The New elected Member, between the two introducing Members. A very profound Obeisance, is then to be made to the Chair, by all five at the same time. The President, to take up his Bumper Glass, and to drink to the new elected, by his name. Every Member is to keep his hand on his Glass, and the instant, the Foot of the President’s Glass, after he has drank, touches the Table. The whole Society, with one Universal loud Acclamation, vociferates the name of the New elected Member. All drink off their Bumpers; the Silence is broke.<sup>16</sup>

To visualize this initiation ceremony in full detail, one needs to know that the legs of the President’s chair were carved to resemble those of a satyr, and that the candle-bearing Imp sported a red cape and a tail. Other rituals, such as the election of new members, involved a balloting box and a casket called the “Tomb of Bacchus.” The box took the form of a classical temple front, to which was attached a female figure of justice (Fig. 3). Into the circular aperture between her splayed legs the Dilettanti deposited their “Balloting Balls” (*Minute Books*, 1 April 1739). The “Tomb of Bacchus” appears to have been inspired by a Roman sarcophagus, illustrated and described in Antoine Desgodetz’s *Les Edifices Antiques de Rome* as the “Tombeau vulgairement dit de Bacchus.”<sup>17</sup> The influence of Desgodetz receives greater attention in chapter 2.

The principal ornament of the “Tomb” was an ivory statuette of the naked god in a reclining position. Several decades later the Society decided “That as Bacchus’s backside appear’d bare, there should be some covering provided for it” (*Minute Books*, 7 December 1767). Though a design for this “covering” was prepared and approved, Bacchus’s genitalia (for it is they that are “bare”) remained uncovered (Fig. 4). When one of the Dilettanti



presented the Society with “a Bas Relievo in Ivory of Perseus and Andromeda,” it was resolved, in even more suggestive language, to incorporate the plaque into the casket’s decorative scheme: “A motion was made that Sr John Tayler’s benefaction seeming to be nine inches long be proper to be applied to Bacchus’s back” (Minute Books, April 1780). Dionysiac ornamentation appeared on another important artifact as well: in 1744 the Dilettanti resolved “That it is the Opinion of this Society that a small Bacchus bestriding a Tun with a Silver Chain be wore by the Very High Steward” (Minute Books, 5 February 1744).

Not only decorative but functional, the “Tomb of Bacchus” served as an unusual kind of finance box:

Dinner over, and the Wine plac’d on the Table, the President puts on the Toga, The officiating Secretary, his Cloak and Band, and the Tomb of Bacchus, to be plac’d on the Table, before the President. The Book of Forfeitures and Dinner money, to be then taken out, and also the Minute Book, with the Box containing the money for the current Services.<sup>18</sup>

Even the Society’s financial *seria*, however, were handled in a ludic way: a regulation dating to February 1745 stipulates that “every member who has any increase of Income either by Inheritance Legacy Marriage or preferment do pay half of one p. ct. of the first year of his additional income to the Genll. Fund.” This rule was supplemented by a serio-comic entry signed in a staggering hand by Sir Francis Dashwood, who had clearly been rejoicing in multiple “Bumpers.” The entry is headed: “Resolv’d... That all Preferment shall be valued according to the Subsequent Rates” (Minute Books, May 1745). The hierarchical list begins with “An Archbishop,” who is taxed with a “Blessing,” and goes on to “A Duke,” who is required to give “his Grace.” Halfway down, specific sums come into play: a newly minted baron, for example, is assessed sixpence, a Knight of the Garter, thirteen shillings four pence. The *nugae* (trifles) resume with references to “His Majestys Ratcatcher” (assessed eight pounds) and “A Trumpeter” (ten pounds).

## MODELS FOR THE SOCIETY

Taken as a whole, such props and practices point toward three specific models, one international (the Freemasons), one British (the Hell Fire Clubs), and one Italian (the Accademia dell’Arcadia). Of these three the most influential were the Freemasons. “By 1740 the order could boast over a hundred London lodges, several score more in the provinces, and just over a dozen abroad (nine in the colonies, the rest on the continent).”<sup>19</sup> One of the Continental lodges was founded by a Grand Tourist who also shaped the course of the Dilettanti: during his stay in Florence, Charles Sackville (Earl of Middlesex, subsequently second Duke of Dorset) made such a success of his Masonic enterprise that membership rose rapidly to sixty. At least two more future members of the Dilettanti were initiated into this Florentine lodge.<sup>20</sup> Several characteristic features of eighteenth-century freemasonry offered patterns



for and justifications of the practices of the Dilettanti. The first was bibulousness. The second was devotion to music and to the theater: Masonic lodges regularly sponsored plays, some of which were written specially for them. The third was patronage by the gentry and the aristocracy. The fourth was nomenclature and ceremonial: the Society's Archmaster and its ceremony for introducing new members, described above, resemble what we know of Masonic ritual.

The Archmaster's impish attendant, with his tapers and tail, signals a contrasting affiliation: those clubs, loosely called "Hell Fire," that celebrated a daring combination of sacrilege and sex. These clubs flourished throughout the British Isles during the first two decades of the eighteenth century. One of the most prominent, which was animated by the rakish Duke of Wharton, met for blasphemous dinners including such dishes as "Holy Ghost Pye" and "Breast of Venus."<sup>21</sup> The absence of reliable evidence, however, makes it impossible to reconstruct the hell-fire rituals in any detail. Perhaps the most revealing summary of what was believed about them is contained in the royal edict that denounced "certain scandalous Clubs or Societies of young persons who meet together, and in the most impious and blasphemous manner insult the most sacred principles of our Holy Religion, affront Almighty God himself, and corrupt the minds and morals of one another."<sup>22</sup> In their rules, portraits, and publications, the Dilettanti consistently courted similar charges and cultivated an anticlerical bent—resolving, for example, "That all Publick pious Charities are private Impious abuses" (Minutes and Reports, 7 February 1746/47).

During their time in Rome, the Grand Tourists who went on to found the Dilettanti encountered a much more decorous but comparably theatrical model: the Accademia dell'Arcadia, founded in 1690 and dedicated to promulgating, after its own fashion, "Greco-Taste and Roman Spirit."<sup>23</sup> Upon election to the Academy, each new member was given a name borrowed from bucolic literature and the right to take part in poetic contests held in the "Bosco Parrasio"—the specially designed park and amphitheatre on the slopes of the Janiculum where the Arcadians still hold their meetings. In the Bosco a *seria ludo* atmosphere prevailed: "Statues of Pan and Syrinx faced Pallas and Hermes on the portico, recumbent figures of Tiber, Arno, and Alpheus poured water from their urns, and on the top of the skene Pegasus pranced against a background of shrubbery."<sup>24</sup> By the 1720s the Academy had begun to elect prominent Grand Tourists: James Boswell, for example, became an Arcadian shepherd with the name of "Icaro Tarsense."<sup>25</sup> Although it began as a literary society, the Academy steadily broadened its scope to include the visual arts, fostering "a mode of painting that flourished in small, intimate cabinet pictures, both sacred and profane, that allowed painters a greater degree of freedom than in large-scale, public works of art."<sup>26</sup> As we will discover in Chapter 1, the Society of Dilettanti—in its preferred painterly mode as well as its ethos and organization—owed a substantial debt to the Accademia dell'Arcadia.

It is the multifaceted encounter with Italy and its many academies that helps to explain the Society's first ventures in artistic patronage. Galvanized by Charles Sackville, Lord Middlesex, the Dilettanti offered their support to the Italian opera company that had begun performing at the Haymarket Theatre in 1740: "Resolved That it is the opinion of

this Society that the scheme for carrying on of Operas is highly worthy of the Countenance of the Society of Dilettanti...and therefore it is most earnestly recommended by the Society the taking the most vigorous measures for the putting this scheme into immediate Execution" (Minute Books, 3 April 1742/43). These "vigorous measures" consisted principally of a subscription that was designed to assist Middlesex as director and impresario. Despite the Society's "much-needed transfusion of support," the enterprise had sputtered out by 1745.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime, the Dilettanti had begun to lay plans for an Academy of the Arts that would do more than teach the rudiments of painting. As this scheme progressed, the Society decided that it should have a royal charter and that "the President of the intended Royal Academy be allways and annually chosen from the Society of the Dilettanti...and...that all the Members of the Dilettanti society be members of the said Academy" (Minute Books, 4 May 1755). At the same time, a group of artists headed by Francis Hayman were mustering support for "a public academy for improvement of painting, sculpture and architecture."<sup>28</sup> Despite protracted negotiations, however, the two groups found themselves unable to collaborate and the entire scheme collapsed. At the beginning of the following decade, the hope for a Royal Academy prompted the Dilettanti to "procure the first and best casts of the principal Statues, Busto's, & Bas Relievo's great or small" (Minute Books, 1 March 1761). The Society intended to house this collection in a building that would have served as their permanent headquarters. Land was acquired on Cavendish Square and plans based on the Temple of Augustus at Pola were drawn up. The significance of this project is reflected in George Knapton's portrait of the Society's first treasurer, Henry Harris, who is holding up a list of those who had contributed "towards erecting or procuring a house for the more honourable and commodious Reception of the Society" (Fig. 5). However, this scheme like so many others came to naught. Yet the project for an imposing club house reflected "some vague notion of meeting needs which [the Dilettanti] had themselves in some measure created. These eventually found fulfilment outside the ritual sphere of the Society."<sup>29</sup> During the 1740s and early 1750s, in short, the Society served as an important catalyst at a time when royal and governmental patronage of the arts scarcely existed.

The Dilettanti did not move decisively center stage, however, until they took the decision first to sponsor the Grecian expedition of James Stuart and Nicholas Revett (1751–54) and then to publish *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762). By the 1770s they had become the foremost advocates of classical art and archaeology in Great Britain, as well as the principal exemplars of "the culture

FIGURE 5.  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
Henry Harris, 1742. London,  
Society of Dilettanti.



of the connoisseur.”<sup>30</sup> This study seeks to assess the Society’s multiple acts of connoisseurship—artistic, sexual, and even religious—by exploring its uniquely inventive blending of two Roman roles, *magister ludorum* (“master of the revels”) and *arbiter elegantiarum* (“judge of refinements”). By focusing on the Society’s period of greatest influence, *Dilettanti* also sets out to recreate the culture of the amateur, whose ideals differ radically from our own. Unquestionably, “We now take it for granted that there should be professionals of thought in every field of endeavour, and professionalism now has such a hold on our various fragmented systems of value that the dilettante has a bad name.”<sup>31</sup> Because of this very fragmentation, we have much to learn from the *Dilettanti* in their prime, when the Society included such members as Sir Joseph Banks, Sir William Hamilton, and Richard Payne Knight. Banks, “Very High Steward” of the Society as well as its Secretary and Treasurer, was also President of the Royal Society and a member of the council of the Society of Antiquaries. His devotion to natural history went hand in hand with his study of Great Britain’s medieval past, his commitment to classical studies, and his fascination with ancient Egypt. Hamilton, an accomplished diplomat and collector whose geological discoveries earned him election to the Royal Society, also laid the foundations for scholarly study of ancient Greek vases. The interests of Richard Payne Knight ranged from Graeco-Roman antiquities through aesthetics and politics to the comparative study of religion. Passionate amateurs such as these flourished in the “associational world” of clubs and societies, which wove an intellectual as well as a social web. This vibrant cultural symposium is “a world we have lost.”<sup>32</sup>

The history of the *Dilettanti* has been narrated in detail by Lionel Cust and Sidney Colvin.<sup>33</sup> Their late Victorian chronicle, “printed for the Society,” exemplifies the importance of being earnest while performing acts of *pietas*—acts that explain the volume’s stately pace, decorous tone, and manifest discomfort with the rakish side of the *Dilettanti*. The present study, by contrast, downplays the chronological and shuns the reverential. It adopts instead the anthropological model of the observer-participant, one who seeks both to inhabit and to interpret a tribal society. Its method, therefore, is to collect, describe, and analyze a set of representative specimens. These include portraits, caricatures, volumes devoted to architecture and sculpture, an illustrated travel diary, and an inquiry into phallic worship. Such evidence, in its vivacity, intricacy, and diversity, vividly conveys what it meant to be an eighteenth-century connoisseur.

Our inquiry begins with a remarkable set of portraits by George Knapton, whom the *Dilettanti* appointed their first official painter or “Limner.” Most of the sitters, who include such influential figures as Francis Dashwood and Charles Sackville, are wearing fancy dress and performing roles associated with their exploits on the Grand Tour. To analyze this alluring example of ensemble portraiture is to recreate the multifaceted conviviality of the early *Dilettanti*. Knapton captures the animating spirit of the Society during its first decades, as well as the norms it both mocked and exalted.

The next set of specimens consists not of allusive portraits but of monumental folios. With its sponsorship of two pioneering investigators of classical architecture, James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, the Society moved decisively from private antics to public endeavors.



Volume 1 of *The Antiquities of Athens*, published by the Dilettanti in 1762, anticipated the modern archaeological site report by striving for clarity, reliability, and precision. An emphasis on objective analysis and transparent presentation informs both text and illustrations, which combine etching and engraving in the service of unfailing accuracy. The Society's more ambitious expedition to Asia Minor (1764–66) yielded *Ionian Antiquities* (1769), whose commitment to empirical exactitude ranged from architecture and topography to epigraphy, ethnography, and natural history. These two publications and their sequels distilled the results of "the quintessential Enlightenment enterprise in the search for antiquity."<sup>34</sup>

The third official "Limner" to the Dilettanti, Sir Joshua Reynolds, best documents the Dilettanti as they consolidate their public achievements and reinvigorate their private rituals. Designed to hang together with Knapton's portraits in the Society's headquarters, Reynolds's allusive pendants both capture and reflect an ambitious commitment to the study of antiquity—a commitment that builds upon the Athenian and Ionian folios. The pictures also mark a generational shift, as figures such as Sir William Hamilton and Richard Payne Knight come to the fore as tastemakers. Out of his expedition to Sicily Knight creates an illustrated journal that pays homage, both in text and image, to "Grecian taste and Roman spirit." These two works, the pendants, and the journal (the subject of chap. 3), allow us to measure both continuity and change during the Society's fifth decade, the 1770s.

A collaboration between Hamilton and Knight provides our next exhibit: *A Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* (1786/87) not only exemplifies the Society's interest in Eros and the antique but also takes it into new territory, the nascent disciplines of cultural anthropology and comparative religion. While remaining a coterie production, the *Discourse* nevertheless participates in a conversation of international scope—a conversation about the relationship between monotheism and polytheism, paganism and Christianity, and eastern and western religious practices. So too the rhetoric of the *Discourse* taps a vein of insider wit in the manner of Knapton and Reynolds, while adapting ironic tactics modeled on the public voice of the historian Edward Gibbon.

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars help to create a climate of growing hostility toward the Dilettanti as a social and intellectual force. The attack is spearheaded by James Gillray, whose caricatures not only deride individual members of the Society but also undermine the standing of the cosmopolitan amateur, collector, and connoisseur. In time of war and change, the Dilettanti respond by reasserting their expertise as interpreters of classical antiquity, as well as the importance of their enterprise to national culture. The first volume of *Specimens of Antient Sculpture . . . selected from Different Collections in Great Britain* (1809), a monumental folio in the tradition of *The Antiquities of Athens*, proclaims the authority of the Dilettanti in every detail of text and image. However, this authority is severely compromised by their role in the controversy surrounding Lord Elgin's Marbles. When the *Report* of the Parliamentary investigation makes public the hostile and self-protective misjudgments of Richard Payne Knight, as well as the pronounced fault lines within the Society, its prestige suffers an irreparable blow. The title of Benjamin Haydon's pro-Elgin polemic, *On the Judgment of Connoisseurs being preferred to that of Professional Men*, summarizes the larger cultural case

against the Dilettanti—as does the rhetorical question Haydon asks in his diary: “Shall the idle, superficial, conceited, vain glance of a dilettante be of more value than the deep investigating principles & practiced search of the Artist?”<sup>35</sup>

We return in conclusion to the roots of “dilettante” and “amateur”: delight (*delectare*) and desire (*amare*). In *The Volcano Lover*, Susan Sontag’s reimagining of Sir William Hamilton’s Neapolitan career, the omniscient narrator observes: “There is no such thing as a monogamous collector. Sight is a promiscuous sense. The avid gaze always wants more.”<sup>36</sup> As these observations emphasize, desiring and acquiring, the erotic and the acquisitive, are profoundly interconnected. No eighteenth-century society understood and exploited these links more fully than the Dilettanti. Over the course of three generations, they reveled in promiscuity—sexual, aesthetic, and intellectual. Through rituals, images, and texts, they mingled, measured, mapped, and ordered. Informing all their activities was a passion for the Mediterranean world they had variously encountered and possessed on the Grand Tour—a Tour that included, for several influential members, an unforgettable experience of the Levant.

The Society not only realized as fully as possible the goals of the Tour and the potential of the amateur; it also exemplified in a uniquely intense and inventive way “a culture of curiosity,” which bears directly on the central concerns of the Dilettanti: “Curiosity is a desire and a passion: a desire to see, learn, or possess rare, new, secret or remarkable things.”<sup>37</sup> The Society’s vivacious attachment to just such activities and objects makes it worthy of our own enlightened curiosity. To re-create this vanished world is to rediscover the importance of *seria ludo*.

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CHAPTER 1

GEORGE KNAPTON'S  
“PICTURES IN OIL COLOURS”

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Soon after the Dilettanti began their regular meetings in London, they elected George Knapton (1698–1778) the Society's official “Limner”—thereby inaugurating a distinguished line that runs through James Stuart and Sir Joshua Reynolds to Sir Thomas Lawrence. Knapton had come to the attention of the Dilettanti during their travels: after an apprenticeship with Jonathan Richardson the Elder, he moved to Rome and remained in Italy for seven years (1725–32). A caricature by Pier Leone Ghezzi and a letter discussing the shipment of plaster casts confirm that Knapton was moving during this Roman period in Grand Tour circles.<sup>1</sup> During Knapton's time in Rome he worked in several genres, including the *veduta* (Italian, “view”), but upon returning to London he began to specialize in portraits.<sup>2</sup> The Dilettanti first took advantage of Knapton's expertise when they commissioned him to design their balloting box and the lid for the “Tomb of Bacchus.”<sup>3</sup> Three years later the commissions became much more ambitious: in January 1740 the Dilettanti decreed that “every member of the Society do make a present of his Picture done by Mr. Geo. Knapton a Member to be hung up in the Room where the said Society meets”; this entry in the Minute Book was altered to read “Picture in Oil Colours.”<sup>4</sup> The order was reinforced by instituting a fine called “Face Money”—a substantial sum levied every year that a member delayed presenting his portrait to the Society. However, the decree could not take effect until Knapton returned from a second trip to Italy, during the course of which he visited the excavations at Herculaneum; his account of the discoveries there was published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society, foreshadowing the more systematic interest in classical archaeology that the Dilettanti would develop during the 1750s with their sponsorship and the resulting folios. In the following year sittings began (1741); they extended over a nine-year period and resulted in twenty-three oil half-lengths of the Society's leading members.

ENSEMBLE PORTRAITURE: *SERIA LUDO* ON CANVAS

Although they challenge comparison with the best-known examples of Georgian portraiture, Knapton's pictures have received remarkably little attention.<sup>5</sup> The principal reason for this neglect is not difficult to understand: the portraits emerge out of, and help to define, a rarified private world, which crystallized on the Grand Tour but consolidated itself along distinctively British lines. As “Limner” of this world, Knapton is free to supply a daringly



eclectic, intensely theatrical, teasingly encoded performance—a performance that blurs the boundaries between public and private, past and present, decorum and license, veneration and subversion. Because Knapton takes so many cues from the Dilettanti themselves, it is crucial to read his portraits in close relation to the group patronage that brought them into being. The most significant clue to their meaning is the *seria ludo* motto, which distills the allusive tactics and the witty tone that pervade the Society’s proceedings.

As we begin our inquiry into the portraits’ composition and their cryptic imagery, it is important to take regretful note of the fact that no preliminary drawings, records of sittings, account books, or correspondence have been recovered. However, the pictures themselves speak eloquently of the Society’s goals, of Knapton’s models, and of the collaboration between patrons and painter. Given the fact that Knapton trained under one of Britain’s most successful native-born portrait painters, Jonathan Richardson (1667–1745), and spent seven years in Rome, it should come as no surprise that he availed himself of both British and Continental traditions in portraiture. The most influential of these traditions is what I call “ensemble portraiture”: a set of individual portraits, identical in format and often in frame, commissioned from a single painter as the collective representation of a group.<sup>6</sup> Ensemble portraits, moreover, are designed from the outset to hang together in the meeting place of the group in question. The rationale and the result might be summed up as *e pluribus unum*. The term “ensemble portraiture” is important because “group portraiture” suggests multiple subjects but a single canvas, as does the term “conversation-piece.” However, the resonance of both “group” and “conversation” is essential to the concept of “ensemble portraiture.” The ensemble portrait talks to other members of the painted group and to the sitter-turned-viewer, who engages with fellow sitter-viewers as they enact their collective rituals.

## ENSEMBLE PORTRAITURE’S LINE OF DESCENT

FIGURE 1.1 (opposite)

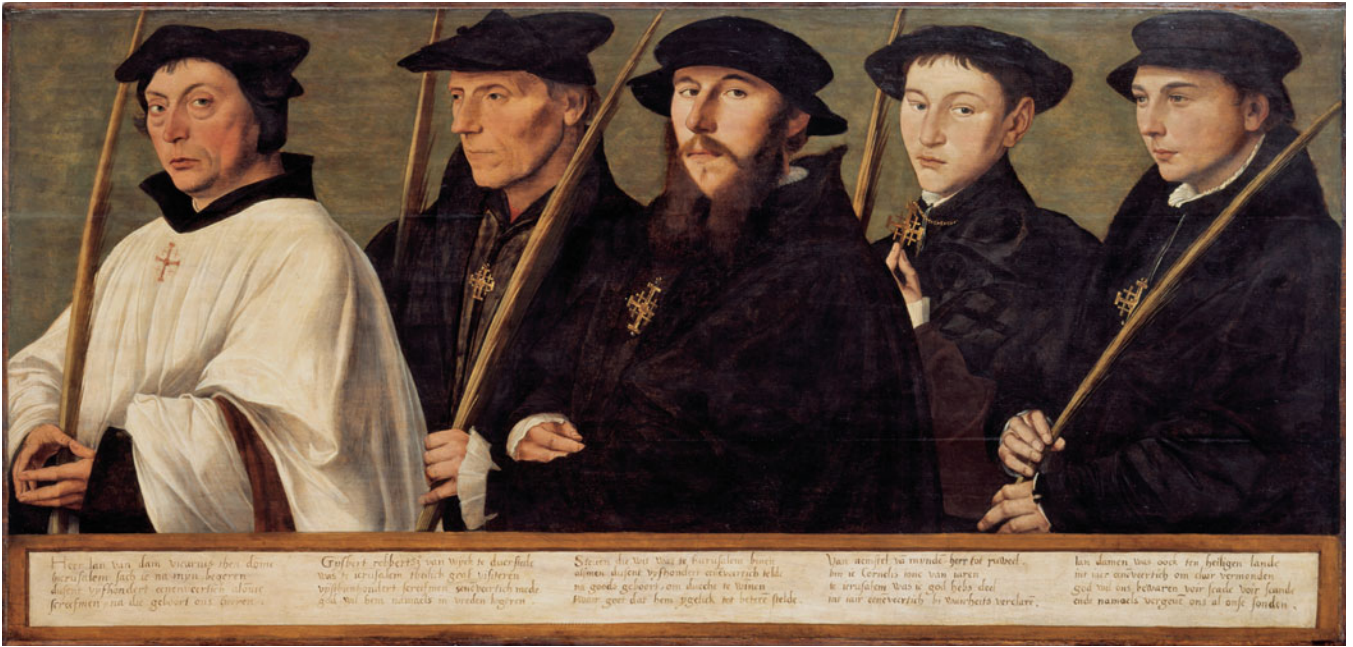
Jan van Scorel (1495–1562), *Portraits of the Five Members of the Utrecht Jerusalem Brotherhood*, ca. 1541. Oil on panel, 78.5 × 164.1 cm. Utrecht, Centraal Museum 2376. © Centraal Museum.

Though there are no exact prototypes for the ensemble portraiture of eighteenth-century England, there is a discernible line of descent, which begins with a group of five panels by Jan van Scorel (1495–1562). These group portraits depict members of Utrecht’s Jerusalem Brotherhood, a confraternity that sponsored pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>7</sup> At their gatherings, the Brothers wore gold crosses and carried palm branches (Fig. 1.1). Van Scorel packs his sitters tightly together, places them close to the picture plane, and turns many of them to face the viewer. Moreover, it “seems very likely the portraits of Utrecht brethren were displayed in the confraternity chapel.”<sup>8</sup> This hang would have emphasized the intimate relationship between documentation and devotion, the confraternity upon the walls and the confraternity within them.

FIGURE 1.2 (opposite)

Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), *Lady Anne Carr, Countess of Bedford*, ca. 1637. Oil on canvas, 136.2 × 109.9 cm. Property of Lord Egremont, Petworth House. Photo: The National Trust, London.

Netherlandish conceptions of group portraiture begin to influence English practice through the work of Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), who painted for the tenth Earl of Northumberland a secular Sisterhood rather than a religious Brotherhood: “The Petworth Beauties,” as they are now called, recreate the allure of the Duke’s most attractive female



relations and friends. Van Dyck's lustrous *Lady Anne Carr, Countess of Bedford* (ca. 1637), for example, assimilates the sitter to a cluster of ripe grapes—witness the purple dress, the pendulous earrings, and the incipient double chin (Fig. 1.2). Though they differ in format and composition, these "Beauties" were designed to hang together in Northumberland House, London. When Peter Lely, Van Dyck's successor as royal favorite, was commissioned by the Duchess of York to create "a gallery of the fairest persons at Court," he turned for inspiration to the Northumberland group.<sup>9</sup> However, Lely's "Windsor Beauties" are more numerous than Van Dyck's (eleven in all) and more consistent in format (three-quarter length). Moreover, they aspire to fulfill a set of goals more complex than those Van Dyck and his patron had in view: "this group of portraits was most likely conceived and assembled by the Duke and Duchess of York not just as a celebration of the physical charms of the reputed 'beauties' of the court but also as a gallery that brought together...friends, lovers and possibly even political allies."<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, many of them include prominent emblematic attributes: in *Elizabeth Hamilton*, for example (Fig. 1.3), the martyr's palm







FIGURE 1.3

Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680), *Eliza-beth Hamilton, Countess of Gramont*, ca. 1663. Oil on canvas, 125.1 × 101.6 cm. The Royal Collection inv. 404960. © 2005 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



FIGURE 1.4

Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680), *Flagmen of Lowestoft: George Monck (1608–1670), First Duke of Albemarle*, 1665–66. Oil on canvas, 127 × 101.5 cm. London, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich Hospital Collection BHC2508. © National Maritime Museum.

and the wheel refer simultaneously to St. Catherine of Alexandria and to Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II.

While working on the “Windsor Beauties” for the Duchess of York, Lely was commissioned by her husband, the King’s brother James (the Duke of York), to paint fourteen of the admirals who had fought with him at the Battle of Lowestoft (1665), a key event in the Second Dutch War. When Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) visited Lely’s studio in 1666, he noted seeing “the heads, some finished, and all begun, of the Flagmen in the late great fight.... The Duke of York hath them done to hang in his chamber, and very finely they are done indeed.”<sup>11</sup> As Pepys’s diary entry makes clear, these “Flagmen of Lowestoft,” as they came to be called, were designed as a set—a group of fourteen portraits of the Duke’s colleagues and friends, “done to hang in his chamber.” In order to emphasize their identity as a group, and as variations on the same naval theme, the format of these pictures is identical: all are three-quarter lengths measuring fifty inches high by forty inches wide (ca. 127 × 102 cm). Lely’s portrait of George Monk, first Duke of Albemarle and Deputy Lord High Admiral, typifies his approach (Fig. 1.4). Monk’s massive body dominates the picture space—his martial impact underlined by sword, baton, and by the anchor upon which the admiral rests his right arm.

Lely’s “Flagmen” create both a precedent and a paradigm for Sir Godfrey Kneller’s portraits of the Kit-Cat Club, an association of prominent Whigs whose initial meetings took place at a tavern specializing in mutton pies called “Kit-Cats.”<sup>12</sup> Over a span of some twenty-three years, from approximately 1697 to 1721, Kneller portrayed forty-two Club members. For his ensemble he chose not Lely’s three-quarter-length format but rather a uniform half-length measuring thirty-six inches high by twenty-eight inches wide (ca. 91 × 71 cm)—a format that itself became known as a “Kit-Cat.” One consequence of this choice is an





increased sense of intimacy: the smaller format focuses attention on the face and draws the sitter closer to the picture plane. Kneller also standardized his sitters' poses, costumes, and countenances: Joseph Addison represents the Club, on canvas as in life, by his full-bottomed wig, his sober velvet suit, and his restrained expression (Fig. 1.5). Both body and face are shown in something very close to a frontal view, which makes the sitter seem fully accessible, fully legible. Addison's right hand rests on a tabletop in a pose suggesting repose, refinement, self-confidence, and unruffled civility. The formula exemplified by *Addison* governs the entire set: only rarely, as in the portrait of Vanbrugh (whose dividers signify his architectural achievement) does Kneller include allusive props (Fig. 1.6).

The striking homogeneity of Kneller's portraits was reinforced by the setting for which they were designed, a room at Tonson's house outside of London where the Kit-Cats held their meetings, and by identical frames in the Kent style made by the King's frame maker.<sup>13</sup> "Tonson's Kit-Cat room brought into being a new kind of portrait gallery: instead of providing an array of likenesses to support the dynastic claims of a family, this was a monument celebrating an entirely different network of social connections."<sup>14</sup> Kneller's legacy to Knapton included the social setting, the intimate half-length format, and the emphasis on collective representation of a group united not by blood but by elective affinities.<sup>15</sup> That the Dilettanti had a Tonsonian milieu in mind is made clear by their directive that the pictures "be hung up in the Room where the said Society meets" (Minute Books, January 1740). Moreover, the Knapton portraits were framed uniformly in the same Kent style that had been chosen for the Knellers.<sup>16</sup> The result, in the case of both the Kit-Cats and the Dilettanti, was a visual correlative to and intensifier of the societies' "associational world."

FIGURE 1.5

Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646/49–1723), *Joseph Addison*, ca. 1703–12. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, National Portrait Gallery inv. 3193. By courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

FIGURE 1.6

Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646/49–1723), *Sir John Vanbrugh*, ca. 1704–10. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, National Portrait Gallery inv. 3231. By courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

## SOUVENIRS OF THE GRAND TOUR

Though Knapton's approach owes a great deal to Kneller, it enriches and complicates the model of the Kit-Cat group by turning for inspiration to the visual records associated with the Grand Tour. By the mid-1720s, a portrait painted in Rome or Venice or both became an increasingly important visual memento for a milord. Although the Knapton portraits predate Pompeo Batoni's (1708–1787) full-blown swagger formula by almost two decades, such artists as Francesco Trevisani and Andrea Casali (1705–1784), both resident in Rome during Knapton's time there, were establishing the basic conventions of Grand Tour portraiture *alla romana*.<sup>17</sup> In Trevisani's *Sir Edward Gascoigne*, for example, the sitter rests one arm on a volume of Horace while pointing with the other to a window giving onto the Colosseum (Fig. 1.7). The

FIGURE 1.7

Francesco Trevisani (1656–1746), *Sir Edward Gascoigne, Sixth Baronet*, ca. 1724. Oil on canvas, 133.4 × 98.5 cm. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Lotherton Hall). Photo: The Bridgeman Art Library.



sitter's dress (green robe decorated with silver filigree) and surroundings (damask curtain and marble-topped table) proclaim his social standing; the book at his side and the view toward which he gestures testify to his humanistic pursuits. Such Roman portraits both complement and contrast with the Venetian pastels made popular by Rosalba Carriera (1675–1757), whose intimate half-lengths show the sitter in opulent informal dress or in carnival costume. Carriera lavishes her attention on the textures of skin and fabric, creating indelible images of Grand Tourists at play in the most decadent of cities. In the years following his return from Italy, Knapton was instrumental in creating a vogue for such "crayon painting"—a vogue that lasted for over half a century.<sup>18</sup>

## KNAPTON'S HYBRID ART

By tapping into multiple traditions of portraiture, Knapton devises a pictorial analogue to, and embellishment of, the Society's allusive gamesmanship. But it would be a mistake to conclude that he was nothing more than a clever borrower or pasticheur. His most successful Dilettanti portraits turn imitation into a creative act. Knapton could handle paint as skillfully as Carriera could handle pastel. He could capture the complex theatricality of his sitters' poses and costumes. Most important, he could stretch the Knellerian half-length into a richly emblematic celebration of the *seria ludo* motto. By crossing, blurring, and recombining

traditional boundaries—boundaries both generic and geographic—Knapton creates a hybrid portraiture that is all his own.

Any assessment of his hybrid art must begin by registering its connections to masquerading and to masquerade portraiture. The surviving evidence suggests that the Society first began to crystallize in Venice, the center of masquerading par excellence. Furthermore the carnivalesque also colored the experiences of the Dilettanti in Florence and Rome. The prevalence of fancy dress in Knapton's portraits is linked not only to the exhilarating experience of masquerading abroad but also to the Society's costumes and props (see pp. 5–7). Every meeting of the Dilettanti must have resembled a species of masquerade. Moreover, the Society chose on occasion to blur the distinction completely, as when it resolved "that the Arch Master of the Ceremonies has Liberty to go to any Creditable Masquerade in the Robes of his Office" (Minute Books, 1 May 1748).

The Society took decisive shape during the period when masquerades were attaining a pitch of popularity, thanks to the founding of Vauxhall (1732) and Ranelagh (1742), the pleasure palaces of the day. The most important masquerade impresario of the early eighteenth century, "Count" Heidegger, was also a promoter of Italian opera; the Dilettanti ardently supported both enterprises (see pp. 8–9). Heidegger has been compared to "a traditional Lord of Misrule [who] presided over a scene of travesty, folly, and libidinous excess."<sup>19</sup> Travesty was the most important element in producing the atmosphere of excess. Masquerade costume took three forms: the "Venetian" combination of mask and domino, an all-enveloping cloak; mask and character dress; and mask and fancy dress, consisting of "ordinary fashionable dress with a few romantic or pastoral features."<sup>20</sup> All three kinds are exemplified in the Knapton portraits. What the dress worn by his sitters does *not* illustrate is the "logic of symbolic inversion" that has been identified as a defining feature of the eighteenth-century British masquerade. "If one may speak of...a tropology of costume, the controlling feature was the antithesis: one was obliged to impersonate a being opposite, in some essential feature, to oneself."<sup>21</sup> By contrast, Knapton's sitters impersonate beings that stylize, liberate, document, or parody aspects of their authentic selves. As a consequence, theatrical intensification, rather than theatrical inversion, is one of the portraits' most distinctive features.

## KNAPTON'S ENSEMBLE GROUPS

To make sense of Knapton's ensemble we need to think first about the different groups into which it subdivides. Although any kind of typology risks imposing arbitrary categories on protean material, a basic sorting of the portraits yields a minimum of five clusters or groups: "Graeco-Roman," "Venetian," "libertine," "Van Dyck," and "Turkish." Standing apart from these but speaking to all of them is the portrait *Sir Bouchier Wrey*, which functions as a program-piece—an irresistible invitation to participate in the Society's enterprise and a virtuosic illustration of Knapton's allusive method (Fig. 1.8).







Unlike most of the sitters, Sir Bourchier is not wearing masquerade costume: his gray suit with rose-colored lining and his embroidered waistcoat lack any sartorial touches that would convert them into fancy dress.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the setting of the portrait is uncharacteristically naturalistic: Knapton places Sir Bourchier in the cabin of a ship under sail, angles the composition to suggest a tilting deck, and allows us to glimpse a prospect of sea and coastline. The sitter's expressive countenance is brightly lit and doubly framed—first by his curly, unpowdered hair and then by one of the cabin's windows. Knapton's use of emphatic diagonals helps to convey the motion of the ship and the brio of Sir Bourchier's offer to fill our cups from his delftware punch bowl. Two of the ingredients for punch, sugar and oranges, litter the tabletop. Sir Bourchier grasps the bowl firmly so that its contents will not slop over. Between his splayed thumb and index finger, a long strip of orange peel hangs over the rim of the bowl, linking it to a tilted wine glass in the bottom right-hand corner of the picture. This glass is about to topple into the space of the viewer, giving a further comic tilt to the *nunc est bibendum* theme.

For all its seeming transparency, *Sir Bourchier Wrey* invites and repays close attention to the sources from which it quotes. One of these is a conversation-piece by Bartolommeo Nazari (1699–1758), painted in approximately 1731 in Venice for Lord Boyne, one of the most important of the early Dilettanti (Fig. 1.9); Boyne also sat for Carriera, but not for Knapton.

FIGURE 1.8 (opposite)  
George Knapton (1698–1778), *Sir Bourchier Wrey*, 1744. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society of Dilettanti.

FIGURE 1.9  
After Bartolommeo Nazari (1699–1758), *Gustavus Hamilton, Second Viscount Boyne, and Friends in a Ship's Cabin*, 1731–32. Oil on canvas, 66 × 81.5 cm. London, National Maritime Museum BHC2567. © National Maritime Museum.



In the words of an eighteenth-century biography of Nazari, the picture shows four “Cavalieri Inglesi” grouped around a table in the cabin of a ship; three of these four have traditionally been identified as Boyne, Lord Carlisle, and Sir Francis Dashwood.<sup>23</sup> Nazari appears to have copied the picture for Dashwood, who rivaled Boyne for prominence among the first-generation members of the Society. The “Cavalieri” are smoking and drinking punch while the captain explains the use of a compass that hangs from the ceiling. On the tilting tabletop rest a punch bowl and a wineglass. Nazari’s picture, which represents the kind of convivial gathering out of which the Dilettanti grew, is the antecedent for *Sir Bouchier Wrey*—inviting the viewer to recollect the Society’s prehistory and to admire Knapton’s variation on a nautical theme. We will encounter an even richer array of borrowings in the group portraits by Reynolds that are explored in chapter 4.

Even more significant is a textual rather than a visual quotation: Knapton has decorated the rim of the punch bowl with a line of Latin verse, *Dulce est Desipere in Loco* (“Tis sweet at the fitting time to cast serious thoughts aside”). This line concludes, condenses, and brings to a climax the twelfth ode of Horace’s fourth book—an invitation to Virgil, now that the thirst-inducing season of spring has arrived, “to quaff a wine pressed at Cales” and thereby “to wash away the bitterness of care.”<sup>24</sup> The ode opens with an evocation of spring, when “breezes . . . are swelling the sails of ships” and shepherds are playing their pipes amidst “Arcadia’s flocks and sombre hills.” Knapton responds to Horace’s descriptive details by including a view of hills and swelling sails in the background of his picture, by decorating Sir Bouchier’s waistcoat and punch bowl with flowers, and by turning the sitter into a contemporary Horace, who appeals to the viewer/reader to join him in a convivial symposium. This appeal is enhanced by a jauntily appropriate bilingual pun—the “sip” in *desipere*.

The size of the bowl and the placement of the Horatian tag imply a second inscription, the penultimate line of the ode, which prepares for the clinching *dulce est desipere in loco*. This line is *misce stultitiam consiliis brevem* (“mingle brief folly with thy wisdom”)—a sentiment that clinches the connection to the Society’s *seria ludo* motto and gestures as well to its Arcadian affiliations. In short, the more one analyzes the portrait, the more one realizes the degree to which it engages the Horatian text and connects it to the Society’s taste for nostalgic potation.

#### THE “GRAECO-ROMAN” GROUP

The single most important purpose of the Grand Tour was to bring the young patrician into direct and sustained contact with what Joseph Addison (see fig. 1.5), in his influential *Letter from Italy*, called “Classick ground.” By reading, looking, discussing, and collecting, the milord could assimilate those models that both formed and marked the complete gentleman (the activities of the connoisseur and collector will be discussed in chap. 7). During their travels certain Dilettanti went even further: in order to signal their allegiance to “Grecian Taste and Roman Spirit,” they enacted it. Such performances take imitation to the verge of camp—witness the most extravagant of all Grand Tour portraits, in which Colonel William



Gordon, draped in toga-like tartan, strikes an heroic attitude before the Colosseum (Fig. 1.10).<sup>25</sup> Albeit on a smaller scale, the portraits in Knapton's group also exhibit the transformative effects of the Tour in a highly theatrical vein.

Knapton's portrait of Charles Sackville (1711–1769) inaugurates the "Graeco-Roman" group (Fig. 1.11). Knapton pays homage to Titian's portrait of Julius Caesar—one of a series of eleven *Roman Emperors* that were painted in 1537–39 for Federico Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (Fig. 1.12). These eleven portraits hung together in a special "Gabinetto dei Cesari" within the ducal palace. In 1628 they migrated, together with almost all the Gonzaga Collection, to the court of Charles I, where Van Dyck restored them. After the execution of Charles, the pictures passed to the king of Spain; in 1734 they were destroyed by fire. Knapton, however, could have known the *Emperors* either through the engravings of Aegidius Sadeler (ca. 1570–1629) or through the copies by Bernardino Campi (1522–ca. 1590), which replaced the originals in the "Gabinetto."<sup>26</sup> If Knapton visited Mantua during his years in Italy, then the installation of the *Emperors* may well have influenced his conception of ensemble portraiture.

In adopting the Titian as a model, Knapton took one of his cues from the sitter's continental exploits. Charles Sackville, a latter-day Restoration rake, cultivated during his Grand Tour a taste for women and opera, as well as for Freemasonry. In addition to founding a Masonic lodge in Florence, he staged during the carnival season, and performed in as well, what a contemporary observer calls "a superb masque representing a Roman general or consul returning from battle in triumph...the entire spectacle was a great success and set all Italy talking."<sup>27</sup> The Latin inscription in the background of the portrait, painted as if carved in stone, commemorates this event in terms that affiliate modern carnival with ancient Saturnalia: "Charles Sackville, Earl of Middlesex, during the Florentine Saturnalia of 1738 [represented] in the guise of a Roman consul returning from a campaign."<sup>28</sup> Knapton responds to the Saturnalian context by removing Titian's laurel wreath, adding a gold fringe to the cloak, substituting an elaborate brooch for the knot on the right shoulder, and decorating the cuirass with vegetal and animal reliefs.



FIGURE 1.10  
Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787),  
Colonel William Gordon of Fyvie,  
1766. Oil on canvas, 258.2 ×  
186.1 cm. Fyvie Castle. Repro-  
duced by kind permission of  
The National Trust for Scotland.



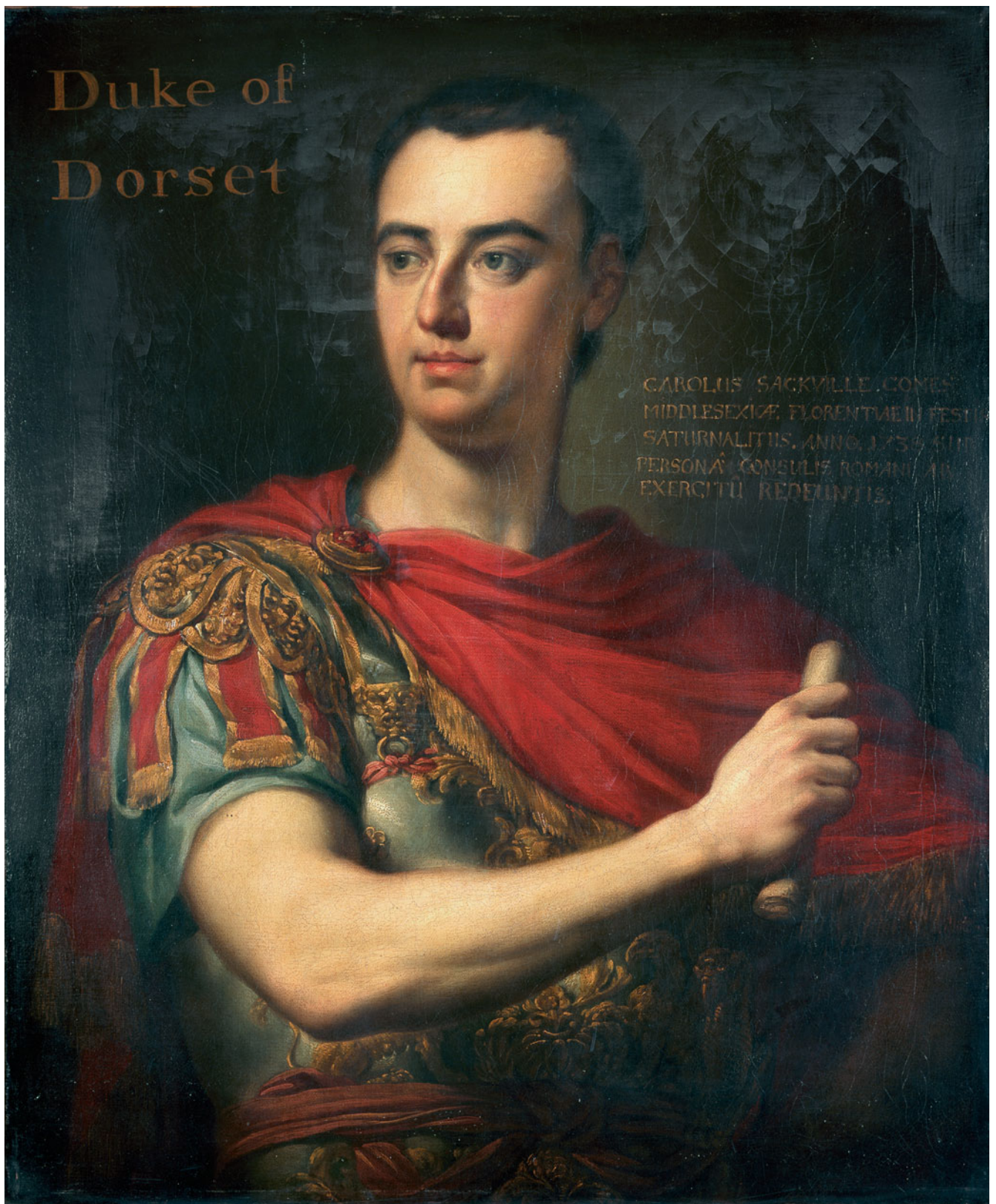






FIGURE 1.11 (opposite)  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Charles Sackville, 2nd Duke of Dorset*,  
1741. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm.  
London, Society of Dilettanti.

FIGURE 1.12  
Aegidius Sadeler (ca. 1570–1629),  
after Titian, *Julius Caesar*,  
ca. 1595–97. Engraving. Private  
collection.

Knapton also evokes a second Titian portrait, as mediated by Rosalba Carriera. During his Grand Tour Sackville was painted by Carriera, who seems to have combined the role of portraitist with that of romantic go-between (Fig. 1.13).<sup>29</sup> Brilliantly exploiting the resources of the pastel medium, Carriera captures her amorous sitter in between sessions of the Venetian carnival. The light that falls from the left emphasizes his delicate profile, his masquerade costume, and the right sleeve of his richly brocaded robe.<sup>30</sup> This pastel conjures up Titian's *Man with a Quilted Sleeve* (Fig. 1.14), which Sackville and Carriera could have known either through a copy in a Venetian collection or through a seventeenth-century engraving.<sup>31</sup> Some ten years later, Knapton responds to Carriera's portrait by devising an equivalent to the extravagant sleeve and by lighting the sitter from the left. The result is a portrait that, like the "superb masque" it remembers, challenges the viewer to decode its visual referents—a Titian based on ancient portraits of Julius Caesar, and a Carriera that intensifies its aura of Venetian opulence by adapting one of Titian's most arresting images.



FIGURE 1.13  
Rosalba Carriera (1675–1757),  
*Charles Sackville, 2nd Duke of Dorset*,  
1730. Pastel on paper, 57 × 49 cm.  
Private collection.



FIGURE 1.14  
Titian (Tiziano Vecelli,  
1488/90–1576), *A Man with a  
Quilted Sleeve*, ca. 1510. Oil on  
canvas, 81.2 × 66.3 cm. London,  
National Gallery NG1944.

Lord Barrington likewise took part in the Romano-Florentine masque, and his portrait, though it includes no inscription, must have been intended to evoke the same event (Fig. 1.15). The relationship to Titian's *Emperors* is not as exact as in *Sackville*, but Knapton does derive aspects of pose and costume from at least two portraits in the set.<sup>32</sup> The portrait of William Denny, a career army officer who rose to become deputy governor of Pennsylvania, identifies him as a “VEX[ILLARIUS],” or standard-bearer (Fig. 1.16). Once again the composition harks back to Titian's *Emperors*.<sup>33</sup> Although there is no record of Denny's participation in the masque, he may well have decided, given his profession, to follow Sackville's martial lead. His expression suggests, even more emphatically than those of Sackville and Barrington, the knowingness of a masquerader.

The portrait of Sir Brownlow Sherard turns to a different classical prototype, that of the Greek man of letters (Fig. 1.17). Dressed in a pale green chiton and a gray himation, Sir Brownlow makes with his left hand a rhetorical gesture (possibly signifying *pronus*, or willingness) and displays on his right what appears to be a carnelian intaglio made into a seal ring.<sup>34</sup> The pose, the cropped hair, the folds of tunic and cloak, the ring, the cushioned chair—all these details suggest that Knapton may have been remembering a statue he could have seen in the Villa Montalto in Rome (Fig. 1.18). During the eighteenth-century this statue was thought to portray the comic playwright Poseidippos, whose dramatic representations of extravagant eating and drinking provide apt parallels to the Society's activities.<sup>35</sup>





FIGURE 1.15  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Lord Barrington*, 1745. Oil on  
canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London,  
Society of Dilettanti.



FIGURE 1.16  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*William Denny*, 1744. Oil on canvas,  
91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society  
of Dilettanti.



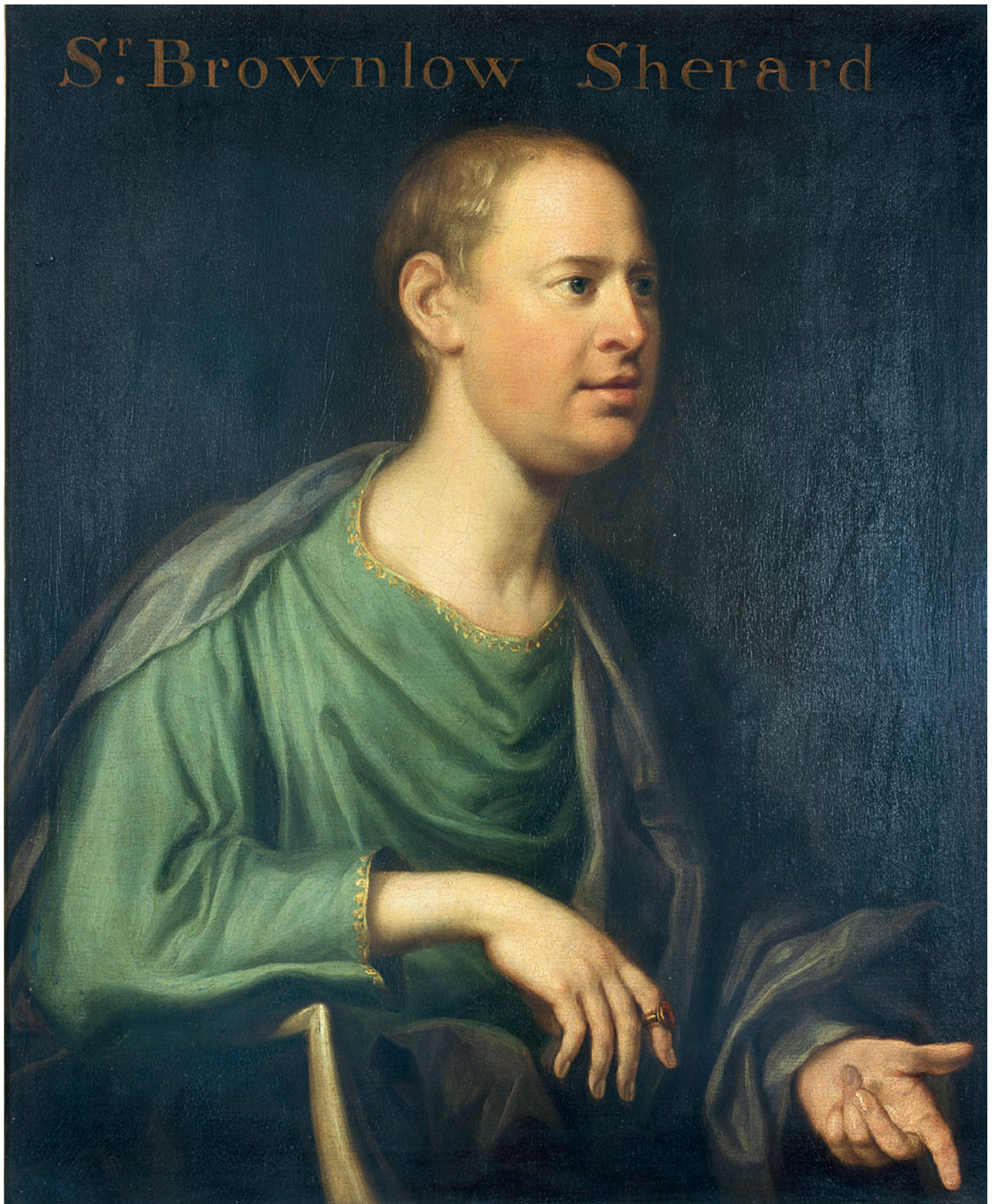






FIGURE 1.17 (opposite)  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Sir Brownlow Sherrard*, 1742.  
Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm.  
London, Society of Dilettanti.

FIGURE 1.18  
*Poseidippos*, ca. 250 B.C., with  
head reworked after ca. 50 B.C.  
Rome, Musei Vaticani,  
Galleria delle Statue. Photo:  
German Archaeological Institute,  
Rome, neg. no. 1983.1634.  
Photographer: Schwanke.

## THE “VENETIAN” GROUP

Venice offered the Grand Tourist the most intense experience of masquerading and sexual experimentation. It also taught political lessons: the island republic exemplified, at least in theory, a form of mixed government that might help Great Britain to achieve stability at home and empire abroad. A sheet of trial mottoes suggests how Venetian liberty and Venetian license were intertwined in the imagination of the Dilettanti: these mottoes include *Auctoritate Reipublicæ* and *Res est severa Voluptas* (see fig. 2).<sup>36</sup> It is this intertwining of public virtue and private pleasure that informs the “Venetian” group.

In the same year as the portrait of Sackville, Knapton painted Thomas Villiers, later first Baron Hyde (Fig. 1.19). Villiers sports a fur-trimmed cap, a tight-fitting red velvet doublet with slashed sleeves, a brocade waistcoat, and a scarlet sash; a large silver clasp decorates his shirt. This costume is an unusually eclectic and theatrical example of “composite fancy dress—vaguely oriental [with] a touch of Hungarian hussar” and a suggestion of the “Renaissance” as well.<sup>37</sup> The oriental touches may reflect the fact that Villiers served as envoy to Poland from 1738 to 1743. With his right hand Villiers raises a goblet made of Venetian glass and inscribed “RES PUBLICA.”<sup>38</sup> The arch-bacchanalian atmosphere of the portrait is mirrored by a letter that Villiers wrote the Society from Warsaw:

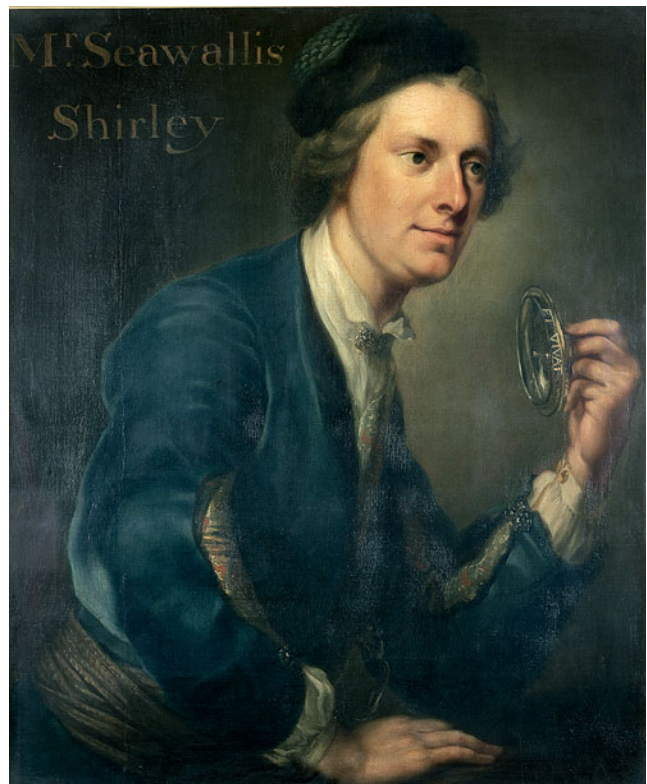
Tho’ I am sensible that from the wise indulgence of our Laws a Member, who has the misfortune of being out of England during our solemn but jovial Sessions, is not obliged to

FIGURE 1.19

George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Thomas Villiers, Lord Hyde*, 1741.  
Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm.  
London, Society of Dilettanti.

FIGURE 1.20

George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Seawallis Shirley*, 1743. Oil on  
canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London,  
Society of Dilettanti.





excuse his Absence by writing; Yet I hope he may be allowed to express his concern; mine is full of regret, and would be inconsolable was I not convinced that the mirth of the Whole is not affected by it, and had not I the alleviating Expedient of drinking a Bumper of old Tokay to the publick joy and each individuals prosperity...<sup>39</sup>

The companion portrait of Seawallis Shirley responds to and completes this toast (Fig. 1.20). Wearing a blue version of the same fancy dress, Shirley holds up the lid of Villiers's goblet; this lid is inscribed "ET VIVAT."<sup>40</sup> The composite toast activates the myth of La Serenissima as ideal commonwealth. A passage from James Howell's *S.P.Q.V.: A Survey of the Signorie of Venice* encapsulates the political allegiance signaled by these two portraits: "Were it within the reach of humane brain to prescribe Rules for fixing a Society and Succession of people under the same Species of Government as long as the World lasts, the Republic of Venice were the fittest pattern on Earth both for direction and imitation."<sup>41</sup> As Howell's title indicates, Venice was considered to have inherited and perfected the pattern of Roman republicanism that the Dilettanti admired as well—witness their proposal that "the Device of the Great Seal of the Society be a Consular Figure in the Chair with the Fasces and the inscription Auctoritate Reipublicae" (Minute Books, 7 March 1742).

A different myth of Venice, that of the "città galante," underpins Knapton's portraits of Lord Holderness and Samuel Savage (Figs. 1.21–22). The portrait of Holderness alludes playfully to his time in Venice as British ambassador extraordinary (1744–46). Sir James Gray, who served as Holderness's secretary before succeeding him as resident, reported to the Dilettanti in 1745 that the ambassador had given "a magnificent entertainment in Honour of the Society."<sup>42</sup> Since this "magnificent entertainment" occurred during the carnival season, it is plausible to conjecture that it included or led to masquerading. It is certainly the case that in the portrait painted four years later, Holderness is wearing a fancy-dress version of a gondolier's costume as he poles his way across the Grand Canal. In the background appears a glimpse of the Rialto—a location that had declined in the eighteenth century from commercial center to trysting spot.

Samuel Savage, who visited Venice twice during his Grand Tour, is wearing standard masquerade costume: tricorne hat, black lace bautta (hooded cloak), and black silk domino.<sup>43</sup> His elbows rest on a table covered in white damask. Knapton makes skilled use of Carriera's Grand Tour formula, paying special attention to the texture of fabrics and to the apparatus of pleasure: the mask, the glass, the two wine bottles, and the green velvet bag with a pink drawstring and two scallop shells.<sup>44</sup> Like Carriera's sitters, Savage is captured in mid-

FIGURE 1.21

George Knapton (1698–1778), *Lord Holderness*, 1749. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society of Dilettanti.





FIGURE 1.22  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Samuel Savage*, 1744. Oil on canvas,  
91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society  
of Dilettanti.

carnival—witness the glass and the two wine bottles (one empty and tipped on its side, the other almost completely empty). With a knowing expression on his florid face, he reaches his right hand inside his scarlet, fur-trimmed robe, as if to suggest something just concealed or about to be revealed. Sitter and painter collaborate in turning the viewer into a fellow masquerader, who is invited to join in the revels and revel in the secret.

## THE "LIBERTINE" GROUP

"Intrigu'd with glory, and with spirit whor'd": this line from the fourth book of Pope's *Dunciad* both documents and satirizes the sexual swaggering that formed part of the Society's Grand Tour inheritance. Onto it was grafted the delight in sacrilege that the Dilettanti adopted from their hell-fire predecessors. Both in Italy and in England, a coterie centering on Sir Francis Dashwood delighted in devising outrageous and possibly orgiastic parodies of the Christian sacraments and specifically of Catholic prayers, rituals, and institutions.

Knapton's portrait of Dashwood, for example, depicts a mock-Communion rite (Fig. 1.23). Dashwood wears the habit of a Franciscan friar. His tonsured head is surrounded by a halo, around whose perimeter runs an inscription in golden letters, "SAN FRANCESCO DI WYCOMBO" (a reference to Dashwood's country seat, West Wycombe Park). His right hand holds the base and his left the stem of a golden chalice, which is inscribed "MATRI SANCTORUM" ("to the mother of the saints"). The object of Dashwood's worship is the pudenda of the Venus de' Medici, which Knapton has exposed by eliminating the statue's left hand and emphasized by altering the position of the right leg. Rays of light connect the groin of this *Venus impudica* to the celebrant's adoring eyes. Perhaps the picture's most daring suggestion is that "San Francesco," chalice in hand, is moving toward the goddess's genitalia in order to complete the rites of Communion.<sup>45</sup>

For understandable reasons, this portrait has been linked to the Monks of Medmenham Abbey, a group led by Dashwood that revived the proceedings of the Hell Fire Clubs.<sup>46</sup> However, the relationship between blasphemous picture and notorious confraternity must remain conjectural: the surviving testimony is fragmentary and tainted by personal and political rancor.<sup>47</sup> A careful sifting of the evidence suggests that the Monks cannot have been founded before the early to middle 1750s; moreover, the lurid exposés of John Wilkes and Charles Churchill, which appeared in the early 1760s, must be treated with extreme caution (Wilkes is discussed at greater length in chap. 5, pp. 121–22). The likelihood is that Knapton's daring portrait not only predates the Monks by a decade, but also that it influenced rather than imitated their rituals.

Just as a classical text provides a key to *Sir Bourchier Wrey*, so a late medieval literary source lies behind Dashwood's portrait of 1742 and the mock-monastic brotherhood of the 1750s. One of Dashwood's favorite books was Rabelais' *Gargantua*, which he took with him on his Grand Tour and kept in his library at West Wycombe. Part 1 of Rabelais's satire includes several chapters devoted to the abbey of Thélème, which Gargantua founds "after [his] own mind and fancy" on the banks of the Loire. The monks and nuns who inhabit this abbey follow "a religious order contrary to all others." There are no clocks at Thélème, "for, said Gargantua, the greatest loss of time that I know, is to count the hours." A further regulation dictates that "into this religious order should be admitted no women that were not fair, well-featured, and of a sweet disposition; nor men that were not comely, personable, and well conditioned."<sup>48</sup> Governing the order is one inviolable commandment, "Do what thou wilt." This is the commandment (*Fay ce que voudras*) that Dashwood had inscribed over the entrance to Medmenham Abbey—an especially provocative gesture because the words not only echo







Rabelais but also parody St. Augustine's injunction, "Love God and do what thou wilt." His conception of "a religious order contrary to all others" receives its first visible expression in Knapton's portrait.

In Knapton's portrait of Viscount Galway, the sitter is dressed as a cardinal in a beretta, white rochet, and scarlet mozzetta (Fig. 1.24). Galway makes a gesture of benediction from a seated position; the finial of the chair on which he sits takes the form of a leering head of Pan.<sup>49</sup> This picture, painted in 1743, a year after *Dashwood*, responds to it by conflating the sacred and the profane and by parodying a specific ceremony—this time not the celebration of Holy Communion but the election of a pope. The most persuasive interpretation of *Galway* is that it harks back to an event that took place in Rome soon after the death of

FIGURE 1.23 (opposite)  
George Knapton (1698–1778), *Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord LeDespencer*, 1742. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society of Dilettanti.

FIGURE 1.24  
George Knapton (1698–1778), *Lord Galway*, 1743. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society of Dilettanti.



FIGURE 1.25

George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Lord Moyra*, 1745. Oil on canvas,  
 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society  
 of Dilettanti.



Clement XII in 1740. In one of his engaging *Lettres familières sur l'Italie*, Charles de Brosses describes this event, an elaborate dinner party given by English milordi at which a mock papal conclave was enacted:

Ashewd [viz. Dashwood], one of the most comical men in the world, took off his wig and dressed up as a Cardinal.... Mimicking with uncanny accuracy the intonation of Cardinal Ottoboni, he began to chant prayers that are certainly not in the approved liturgy.... This damned Huguenot has stored up a repertoire of libertine songs directed against the Papacy. In short, it is all a genuine scandal of the first order.<sup>50</sup>

The prelate whom Dashwood impersonated so effectively was described by de Brosses in the same letter as “a Venetian... without morals, without credit, debauched, ruined, a lover of the arts.”<sup>51</sup> A better fit could not be imagined. And though de Brosses does not mention Galway, the viscount belonged to the same rakish circle that included Lord Boyne and Lord Sandwich—witness Galway’s appearance in a picture commissioned from Hogarth, *Charity in the Cellar*, which centers on the same kind of licentious parody we find in Knapton’s portraits.<sup>52</sup>





FIGURE 1.26

*Callipygian Venus*, ca. 200 B.C.  
Marble. Naples, Museo  
Archeologico Nazionale.

A third member of these Grand Tour libertines was Sir John Rawdon, later first Earl Moyra (Fig. 1.25), whom the bear leader and Dilettante Joseph Spence described as “pretty much of a rake”—“a combustible gentleman” fired by “a very amorous complexion.”<sup>53</sup> (“Bear leader” was the term given to the tutor responsible for overseeing the conduct of the young man making his Grand Tour.) Rawdon is richly dressed in a scarlet robe embroidered with gold and trimmed with fur; on his head he wears a fur cap ornamented with an elaborate brooch consisting of a ruby set in gold and three pendant pearls. With a knowing expression on his face, Moyra points to a bronze copy of the *Callipygian Venus*, known in the eighteenth century as the *Vénus aux belles fesses* or “Venus of the beautiful buttocks” (Fig. 1.26).<sup>54</sup> Moyra and his fellow milordi would have encountered the statue in the Palazzo Farnese, Rome, where it was displayed in the Sala dei Filosofi, “surrounded by eighteen ancient sages.”<sup>55</sup> The humorous incongruity of that setting, and its parallels to the mock “Sala dei Filosofi” of the Dilettanti, may well form part of Knapton’s allusive intent. The result is a portrait that captures one of the defining features of the Grand Tour, its conflation of artistic and sexual connoisseurship.

## THE “VAN DYCK” GROUP

As we have seen, Van Dyck’s portraits for the Stuart court form part of the prehistory of Knapton’s ensemble. They also supply him with a memorable way of counterbalancing the “libertine” group (see pp. 14–15). These images of refinement suggest that gust as well as lust defined the early Dilettanti—gust that expressed itself in the practice and patronage of the fine arts. Moreover, it became fashionable in the late 1730s for both men and women to wear “Van Dyck” costume as masquerade dress and to be painted in it as well; Thomas Hudson (1701–1779) in particular made such portraits one of his specialities.<sup>56</sup> This vogue may help to explain the fact that Knapton turned to Van Dyck’s *Iconography* when he came to paint *Sir James Gray*, *Lord Blessington*, *Thomas Brand*, and *Baron Hobberg*.

FIGURE 1.27

George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Sir James Gray*, 1741. Oil on canvas,  
91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society  
of Dilettanti.

FIGURE 1.28 (opposite)

Paulus Pontius (1603–1658),  
after Van Dyck, *Peter Paul Rubens*,  
ca. 1635. Etching. Private  
collection.

FIGURE 1.29 (opposite)

Pieter de Jode (1570–1634), after  
Van Dyck, *Adam de Coster*, ca. 1635.  
Etching. Private collection.

FIGURE 1.30 (opposite)

Robert van Voerst (1597–  
ca. 1636), after Van Dyck,  
*Sir Kenelm Digby*, ca. 1635. Etching.  
Private collection.



However, there are other, more meaningful reasons for quarrying the *Iconography*. In this corpus of engraved portraits, Van Dyck devises a set of masterful variations on the half-length format.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, he lavishes special attention on those sitters who were artists or virtuosi or both—portraying them as “aristocrats of sensibility.”<sup>58</sup> To be affiliated with such sitters was to be endowed with an aura of refined command, of courtly connoisseurship. The four Dilettanti who chose a Van Dyckian template placed themselves at the opposite end of the spectrum from Sir Francis Dashwood’s mode of self-representation.

In his portrait of Sir James Gray, the earliest and subtlest of the “Van Dyck” group (1741), Knapton depicts an “aristocrat of sensibility” by borrowing from several plates in the *Iconography* (Fig. 1.27). The tilted head, seen in three-quarter view, derives from Van Dyck’s portrait of Rubens, as do the half-smile, the graceful disposition of the right hand, and the decorative lace collar and cuffs (Fig. 1.28). The arm-akimbo gesture, left hand bent backward on hip, contributes an aura of bold assurance.<sup>59</sup> This element of the pose harks back to such portraits as Van Dyck’s *Adam de Coster* (Fig. 1.29). Analyzed as a whole, the composition signals a debt to Van Dyck’s *Sir Kenelm Digby*—a perfect prototype for the diplomat and antiquarian Sir James Gray (Fig. 1.30). An especially noteworthy parallel is the use of props to suggest humanistic pursuits: in *Digby*, an armillary sphere on the table; in *Gray*, copies of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* and his *Novelas Ejemplares*.

These two titles invite decoding. One clue is provided by the British representative in Venice, who reported that Gray was planning to visit Spain during his Grand Tour.<sup>60</sup> But if textual allusions to a Spanish trip were desired, why choose the works of Cervantes in particular? One answer is that they correlate to the valences of pose and costume. In early eighteenth-century England, Cervantes was considered a dignified, even grave satirist, a foil to the ribald Rabelais. As is so often the case, Pope distills his culture’s view into a single couplet: “Whether thou chuse Cervantes’ serious air, / Or laugh and shake in Rab’lais easy chair.”<sup>61</sup> In the preface to the translation of *Don Quixote* published in 1700, Cervantes is described as “a Master of all those Great and Rare Qualities, which are requir’d in an Accomplish’d Writer, a perfect Gentleman, and a truly good Man.”<sup>62</sup> Such a view gained support from the “Prologue to the Reader” that Cervantes supplies for his *Novelas*. The allusive subtleties at play in other portraits suggest that Knapton and Gray had this text in mind.

Cervantes’ prologue begins with an ekphrastic passage that draws a portrait of the author and proceeds to compare the experience of reading the *Novelas* with innocent game playing:

My intention has been to set up in the square of our republic a billiard table where each one can come to amuse himself without fear of injury; I mean, without hurt to soul or body, for honest and pleasant exercises bring profit rather than harm. For one is not always in church, places of prayer are not always filled, one is not







FIGURE 1.31  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Baron Hobbergh*, ca. 1745. Oil on  
canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London,  
Society of Dilettanti.



FIGURE 1.32  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Lord Blessington*, 1747. Oil on  
canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London,  
Society of Dilettanti.

FIGURE 1.33  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Thomas Brand*, 1748. Oil on canvas,  
91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society  
of Dilettanti.



always at one's business, however important it may be; there are times of recreation, when the troubled spirit may find rest.<sup>63</sup>

Cervantes' metaphoric language helps to align the portrait of Gray with that of Villiers, painted in the same year (1741): the “*Res publica*” of the one is matched and qualified by the “*nuestra república*” of the other, and the spirit of the Dilettanti is affiliated with Cervantes rather than Rabelais (see fig. 1.19).

The three other portraits in the “Van Dyck” group are connected not only by their pose and dress but also by their references to the patrician pursuit of the fine arts. The painterly game behind *Baron Hobbergh* is that Knapton transforms Van Dyck's image of the great humanist Iustus Lipsius into an image of courtly, romantic music making: Hohberg, who plays an air for the flute, has converted a lady's high-heeled shoe into his music stand (Fig. 1.31). A second musical portrait, of Lord Blessington as guitar player, reworks Van Dyck's *Ioannes Breugel* (Fig. 1.32). Finally, the way in which Thomas Brand holds out a Correggio-like drawing of a Madonna with his left hand, thumb above and fingers below, harks back to Van Dyck's *Inigo Jones* (Fig. 1.33). In contrast to *Baron Hobbergh*, the allusive gesture in this portrait invites us to appreciate not contrast but continuity: like Jones, Brand has traveled in Italy and brought back its artistic fruits to embellish his native land. Knapton is comparing small things to great—but the difference in scale precisely exemplifies the theme of *seria ludo*.

#### THE “TURKISH” GROUP

Though the traditional Grand Tour did not extend east of Italy, Lord Sandwich supplemented his travels by sailing through the Levant for two years (1738–39). His companions included Lord Bessborough and the Swiss artist Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–1789). According to Joseph Spence, one of the first members of the Dilettanti and a former bear leader to Charles Sackville, Sandwich brought to his eastern experiences a well-developed taste for sex-

ual connoisseurship: after sampling the "beauties" of Ionia, he returned with two Circassian mistresses.<sup>64</sup> The rakish Sandwich shared with Dashwood, moreover, a particular admiration for the Venus de' Medici, which served as his touchstone for assessing oriental women.<sup>65</sup>

Like the portraits of Villiers and Shirley, those of Bessborough and Sandwich function as intimate pendants within the larger group (Figs. 1.34–35; cf. figs. 1.19–20). However, the status of dress in these portraits is ambiguous: while evoking the kind of oriental masquerade costume that was popular during the middle decades of the eighteenth century, it also reflects the sitters' Levantine journey and their membership in the short-lived Divan Club, formed by Dashwood and Sandwich for those who had visited the Levant. As in the two Knaptons, members of this club wore turbans and daggers.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, the portraits are closely related to two earlier pictures that show Sandwich and Bessborough in identical Turkish dress. The portrait of Sandwich has been dated to 1740 and attributed to Joseph Highmore (1692–1780); the portrait of Bessborough (1742/43) is the work of Liotard.<sup>67</sup>

After sailing to Constantinople with Sandwich and Bessborough, Liotard remained in Turkey for five years. During this time he painted a wide variety of portraits. His three-quarter-length of Bessborough influenced not only the dress but the lighting and the facial expression of Knapton's portrait.<sup>68</sup> Knapton responded to the Highmore as he responded to the Liotard, reducing its three-quarter-length format while augmenting the importance of gesture. His Sandwich acknowledges the greeting of Bessborough by proposing a toast, presumably that of the Divan Club—"The Harem." In this way the bacchic and the sexual are

FIGURE 1.34  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Lord Sandwich*, 1745. Oil on canvas,  
91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society  
of Dilettanti.

FIGURE 1.35  
George Knapton (1698–1778),  
*Lord Bessborough*, 1743. Oil on  
canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London,  
Society of Dilettanti.



intertwined *alla turca*—but with an Italian touch as well, for the glass that Sandwich raises in his left hand resembles the goblet in the portrait of Villiers (see fig. 1.19), and the bottle he grasps with his right is a straw-covered *fiasco*.

## SITTER AND VIEWER

The highly allusive poses, props, and costumes we have been analyzing underscore the theatricality of the entire ensemble. The import of this pervasive pictorial masquerading will become clearer if we turn to Harry Berger's ambitious study of early modern portraiture, *Fictions of the Pose: Rembrandt Against the Italian Renaissance*.<sup>69</sup> In its theoretical claims and its visual analysis, Berger's work raises two issues of direct relevance to Knapton's project. The first issue concerns the status of portraiture as a representational enterprise, the second concerns its potentially parodic function.

Berger's title emphasizes that "portraits can be viewed as imitations or likenesses, not of individuals only, but also of their acts of posing" (Berger, p. 5). To analyze a portrait from this double vantage point is to investigate cues to the *sitter's* performance, to attend not only to presentation but to self-presentation. As our inquiry has made clear, Knapton's portraits, like Rembrandt's self-portraits, have as their "primary object or referent . . . not the likeness of a person but the likeness of an act, the act of posing" (Berger, p. 7). A further similarity is that the Knaptons perform what Berger calls "a sometimes bumptious and hilarious parody" of a "scopic regime" (Berger, p. 11). For Rembrandt, this "scopic regime" consists of the entire tradition of "mimetic idealism" and the social and political values accruing to it (Berger, p. 80). For Knapton, by contrast, the "scopic regime" in question is much narrower and the critique much less radical. In playing with the models available to him—Knellerian ensemble portraiture (e.g., *Addison* [see fig. 1.5] and *Vanbrugh* [see fig. 1.6]) and two kinds of Grand Tour portraiture (exemplified by Trevisani and Carriera)—Knapton mirrors the stance of his sitters toward the continental travels that formed them (see figs. 1.5–7, 1.13). For all their trappings of mockery, the portraits of the Dilettanti, like the Dilettanti themselves, use parody as a means of affirming rather than subverting the cultural status quo.<sup>70</sup>

In sum, the ultimate purpose behind the parodic, self-referential style of Knapton's portraits is not criticism but consolidation—the consolidation of a coterie. Although his poses and his *poseurs* are different from Kneller's, Knapton does take over from the Kit-Cat portraits a commitment to engaging the viewer and to conjuring up the "associational world" that brought them into being:

Kneller's sitters seem to fashion their muscles and facial expressions in a manner that implicitly acknowledges the presence of an audience. The reason why they pose in this way, which may seem rather affected to modern eyes, is to signify their concern for those unseen spectators (that is to say, the living members of the Kit-Cat Club) to whom they "stand" in such close proximity.<sup>71</sup>



These observations become even more applicable to the Dilettanti portraits if we change “implicitly” to “explicitly”: Knapton’s sitters *explicitly* acknowledge “the presence of an audience.” Sir Bouchier Wrey urges the viewer to drink his punch, Samuel Savage to join his revels, Lord Holderness to enter his gondola, Lord Galway to receive his benediction, Thomas Villiers and Seawallis Shirley to reciprocate their toast (see figs. 1.1–8, 1.19–20, 1.24). These are pictures, after all, that derive from and commune with an intimate, even inbred group of cognoscenti. As such, they blur any distinction that might be made between “ensemble” and “coterie.”

Because we can go only so far toward reconstructing this coterie, we can never uncover all the portraits’ arcana: what, for example, is “Mr Howe” decanting from his terrestrial globe, a globe that gives special prominence to the Mediterranean (Fig. 1.36)? Nor can we determine the precise meaning for those viewers who, engaged in a species of Masonic masquerade, would have looked up at themselves *en travesti* on the walls of the Star and Garter. But one conclusion is sure: these are pictures that act out, both elusively and unmistakably, the spirit of *seria ludo*. Three decades later, this spirit emboldens Sir Joshua Reynolds to undertake the pictures that form the subject of chapter 4.

In the interim, the Dilettanti make an ambitious and influential contribution to the public sphere by turning their attention to “the ancient and present State” of the eastern Mediterranean.

FIGURE 1.36

George Knapton (1698–1778), *John Howe*, 1741. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 cm. London, Society of Dilettanti.



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## CHAPTER 2

# THE *ANTIQUITIES OF ATHENS* AND *IONIAN ANTIQUITIES*

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As they entered their third decade, the Dilettanti came of age, translating ephemeral allegiances into enduring commitments. With liberal “Roman Spirit” the Society promoted accurate “Grecian Taste”: the expeditions it sponsored and the publications it expedited brought into being a new genre, the proto-archaeological folio. This new kind of folio reaches back to seventeenth-century models and forward to the establishment of archaeology as a rigorous scholarly discipline. It appears and thrives between 1753 and 1769, only to be overshadowed by imaginative interpretations of antiquity in the style of Giambattista Piranesi and Robert Adam, and by illustrated *voyages pittoresques*.

Folios associated with the Dilettanti are characterized by three discourses: a quasi-scientific discourse stressing empirical exactitude; a nationalistic discourse contrasting the private British gentleman with the client of the French state; and an anti-picturesque discourse deprecating theatrical exaggeration, both visual and verbal, in favor of clarity and precision. These three discourses often intertwine: for example, the quasi-scientific discourse connects with the nationalistic discourse by invoking and imitating the example of the Royal Society. Nonetheless, they constitute three distinct strands within and three avenues of approach toward the Dilettanti’s pioneering enterprise.

### THE ORDERING OF THE ARTS

The Dilettanti’s new enterprise both gains from and contributes to a larger cultural project, which can best be described by invoking Lawrence Lipking’s term, “the ordering of the arts.”<sup>1</sup> Lipking applies the term to works that discuss and categorize painting, literature, and music—but it might well be extended to lexicography and architecture as well. The mid-century enterprise of ordering begins with Samuel Johnson’s (1709–1784) monumental *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). In the preface Johnson speaks of his *Dictionary* in terms of exploration and cartography: “When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetick without rules.”<sup>2</sup> To introduce “order” and “rules” requires “the rigour of interpretative lexicography,” which values what is “accurate,” “clear,” and “determinate” (Johnson, B2r, C1r). At the end of the preface, Johnson proudly contrasts his solitary English achievement with collective continental lexicography: he has brought his *Dictionary* to completion without benefit of “the aggregated knowledge, and co-

operating diligence of the *Italian* academicians,” or “the embodied criticks of France, [who] when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its oeconomy” (Johnson, c2v).

Seven years later, Horace Walpole (1717–1797) published the first two volumes of his *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, a work that likewise exemplifies a rage for ordering. As part of an aspiration to what he calls “Vasarihood,” Walpole positions biographies of individual artists within a narrative organized in terms of eras and styles—witness the celebrated chapter called “State of Architecture to the end of the Reign of Henry VIII,” which offers a pioneering essay on the Gothic.<sup>3</sup> Like Johnson in his preface, Walpole begins by contrasting his enterprise with continental practices; unlike Johnson, he allows the contrast to remain implicit and to emerge from a tribute to Robert Wood’s *The Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) and its successor, *The Ruins of Balbec* (1757): “But of all the works that distinguish this age, none perhaps excell those beautifull editions of Balbec and Palmyra—not published at the command of a Louis quatorze, or at the expense of a cardinal nephew, but undertaken by private curiosity and good sense, and trusted to the taste of a polished nation.”<sup>4</sup> Walpole goes on to praise the plates in Wood’s two folios and to commend the text that accompanies them: “The modest descriptions prefixed are standards of writing; the exact measure of what should and should not be said, and of what was necessary to be known, was never comprehended in more clear diction, or more elegant stile. The pomp of the buildings has not a nobler air than the simplicity of the narration.” As this tribute indicates, Walpole understands that Wood has devoted himself to “exact measure” in commentary as well as in plates. Both text and image reflect the same priorities (clarity and “simplicity”), derive from the same qualities (“private curiosity and good sense”), and speak to the same audience (“a polished nation”).

Like Johnson and Walpole, Wood had a comprehensive scheme in view—in his case, the ordering of the orders: “The examples of the three Greek orders in architecture, which we met with, might furnish a tolerable history of the rise and progress of that art, at least the changes it underwent, from the time of Pericles to that of Diocletian.”<sup>5</sup> *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762), the first of the proto-archaeological folios underwritten by the Dilettanti, took shape under Wood’s guidance. Although they had hatched the scheme for an expedition before meeting him, James Stuart and Nicholas Revett refined their proposals in light of his expertise. The period of intense planning during the winter and early spring of 1749–50 was also the period when Wood and his companions were organizing their trip to the Levant.<sup>6</sup> Both projects developed not only as the result of conversations in Rome but also as the consequence of a shared admiration for Antoine Desgodetz’s *Les Edifices antiques de Rome* (1682). “The two groups—one destined for the Greek mainland, the other for Asia Minor—formulated a program of archaeological investigation in which accuracy was the *sine qua non*. Desgodetz’s measurements of the buildings of Rome was the method to be followed in all places where the remains of classical buildings were to be found.”<sup>7</sup> In order to understand the ambition that led first to Wood’s *Ruins of Palmyra* and then to Stuart’s and Revett’s *Antiquities of Athens*, a grasp of the distinctive nature of Desgodetz’s achievement is necessary.



## THE FORERUNNERS OF THE DILETTANTI FOLIOS

ANTOINE DESGODETZ (1653–1728)

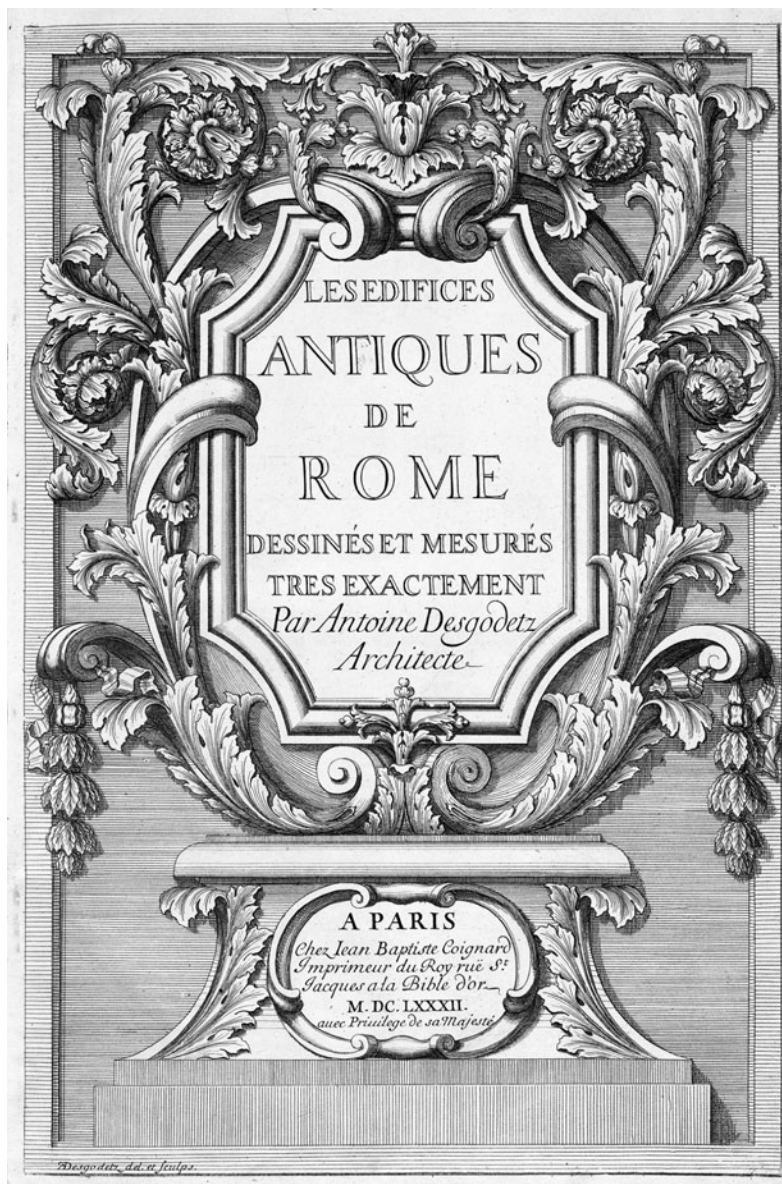
The full title of Desgodetz's volume encapsulates both its goals and its procedures: *Les Edifices antiques de Rome, dessinés et mesurés très exactement* (Fig. 2.1). Thanks to the patronage of Colbert (1619–1683), Desgodetz worked in Rome for sixteen months (1675–77). From the monuments he measured during that period, he chose twenty-five for inclusion in the folio. Each monument is illustrated by a combination of plan, elevation, and multiple details. Colbert arranged for the king's engravers, who included Jean and Pierre Le Pautre, to prepare the plates. Though Desgodetz does supply commentary, the illustrations are his primary means

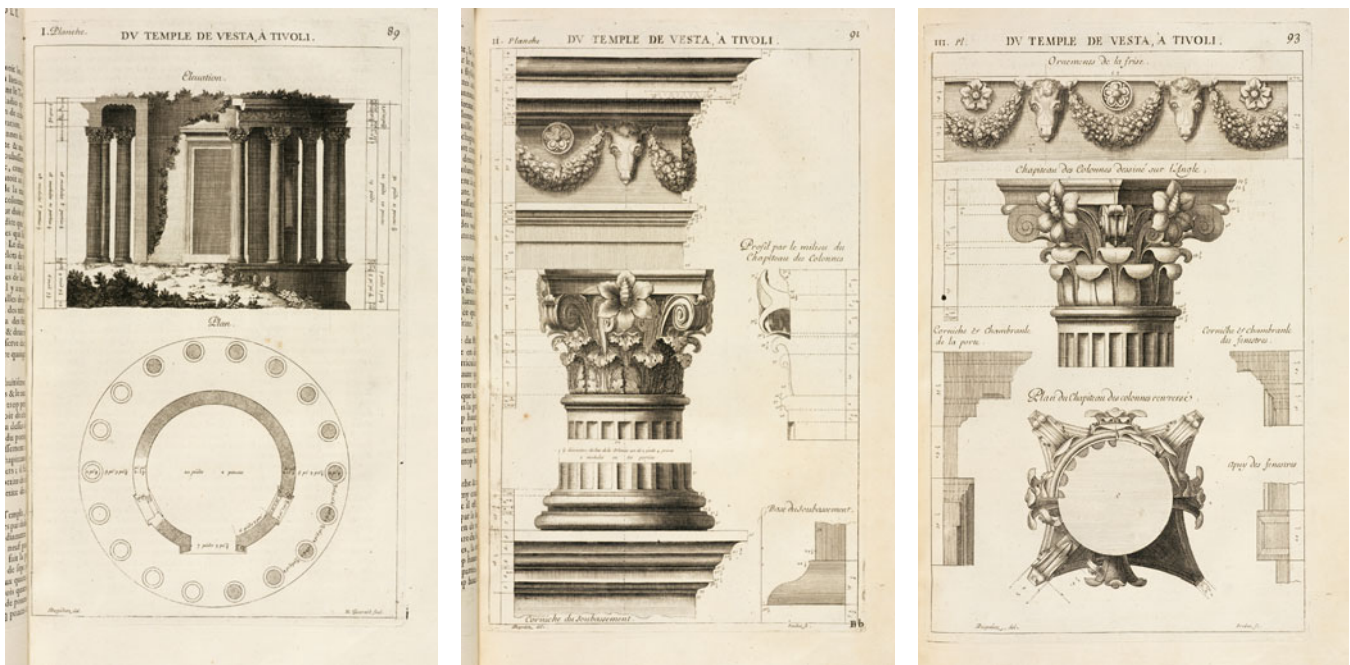
of communicating information and fulfilling his fundamental purpose—to replace or correct unreliable architectural treatises with the results of rigorous empirical inquiry. Accordingly, every plate incorporates multiple measurements: in the elevation of the Temple of Vesta they form a species of scaffolding around the structure; in the plan they bisect the circle; in the details, they infiltrate the image even more emphatically, as in the sandwich-like insertion between capital and base on page 91 or the arithmetical borders of the frieze on page 93 (Figs. 2.2–4). The result is an architectural equivalent to a textbook of anatomy, in which muscles are sectioned and vertebrae laid bare.

The preface to the *Edifices* announces that as magisterial a source as Palladio or Serlio must yield to accurate fieldwork: even “these highly celebrated authors,” Desgodetz maintains, “have neglected the precision and the exactitude that is missing in the descriptions and the drawings they have given the public.”<sup>8</sup> Lest both the problem and the remedy be misunderstood, he goes on to clarify the *raison d'être* of his enterprise: “One might perhaps judge the great precision of the measurements I provide rather useless or too affected... but I did not believe that, in order to avoid the reproach of vainly parading my exactitude, I ought to avoid showing things as I found them—for such exactitude is the sole purpose of my project.” Desgodetz's self-confident stress on “showing things as I found them,” though it met with short-term

FIGURE 2.1

Title page. From Antoine Desgodetz (1653–1728), *Les Edifices antiques de Rome* (Paris, 1682). Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.





neglect and even hostility, inspired in the long term a vital new approach to studying the remains of antiquity.<sup>9</sup>

Stuart and Revett make it clear in their “Proposals” (1751) that the *Edifices* served as both inspiration and model. As with Desgodetz’s volume, the title highlights the essence of their enterprise: “Proposals for publishing a new and accurate Description of the Antiquities, etc. in the Province of Attica.” The second paragraph develops the theme by emphasizing the inadequacy of previous sources and by speaking the language of Lockean empiricism: “Many Authors have mentioned these remains of Antiquity, as Works of great magnificence, and most exquisite taste; but their Descriptions are so confused, and their Measures so inaccurate, that the most expert Architect could not from these Books form an idea distinct enough to make exact Drawings of any one building they describe.”<sup>10</sup> The echoes of the *Enquiry* by Locke (1632–1704) are reinforced by the cadences of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*: “unless exact drawings be made, all her [Athens’] beauteous Fabricks, her Temples, her Theatres, her Palaces will drop into oblivion” (“Proposals,” pp. 77–78). They may conjure up Prospero the master rhetorician but Stuart and Revett, like Desgodetz, prefer the image over the word: “the best verbal Descriptions cannot be supposed to convey so adequate an idea of the magnificence and elegance of Buildings...as may be formed from Drawings made on the spot, measured with the greatest accuracy, and delineated with the utmost attention” (“Proposals,” p. 78). On-site investigation, accurate measurement, and scrupulous delineation: these form the heart of the undertaking.

The term “scrupulous delineation” suggests two factors that governed the production of the proto-archaeological folios. First, all those responsible took unusual pains to translate their data into illustrations that would combine accuracy with clarity. This meant,

FIGURE 2.2

Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, elevation and plan. From Antoine Desgodetz (1653–1728), *Les Edifices antiques de Rome* (Paris, 1682), pl. I, p. 89. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 2.3

Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, details. From Antoine Desgodetz (1653–1728), *Les Edifices antiques de Rome* (Paris, 1682), pl. II, p. 91. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 2.4

Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, details. From Antoine Desgodetz (1653–1728), *Les Edifices antiques de Rome* (Paris, 1682), pl. III, p. 93. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

in practice, careful monitoring of those who etched, engraved, and printed the plates: on-site supervision thereby reinforced on-site exploration. Second, the folios exemplify and promote a distinctive graphic style—a style that uses the subtleties of etching to recreate the effect of engraving. Influencing this stylistic preference are two traditions: on the one hand, an aesthetic associated with John Evelyn (1620–1706) and the Royal Society; on the other, a set of contemporary conventions governing the choice of graphic medium. Printmaking helped to promote the agenda of the “New Science”; moreover, a certain kind of print was endorsed by the Royal Society when it published John Evelyn’s *Sculptura* in 1662. This quasi-scientific print reflected a “preference for cleanly discriminated linear designs, discrete patterns of hatching versus richly burred drypoint or the penumbral effects of dramatic chiaroscuro.”<sup>11</sup> The illustrators of the Dilettanti folios also adopt and exploit a widespread set of graphic conventions, whereby the burin was considered apt for rendering substance, the needle for capturing atmosphere. According to the classic eighteenth-century treatise on the subject, the *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure* by Watelet and Lévesque, engraving is best suited for “a precise imitation of nature.” By contrast, the special province of etching includes “ruined palaces, whose debris is covered with weeds and moss, old trees whose trunks are gnawed by time . . . tormented clouds, foamy waters, rough terraces.” In accordance with the precepts of Watelet and Levesque, the Dilettanti take advantage of both burin and needle to document the clear-cut contours of their architectural subjects, leaving the evocation of “ruined palaces” and “rough terraces” to their continental rivals.<sup>12</sup>

The second section of Stuart’s and Revett’s “Proposals,” which outlines a plan for three volumes, makes explicit the influence of the *Edifices*: “The second Volume will contain the Geometrical Plans and Elevations of the Temples, Theatres, etc. still remaining there, after the manner of Desgodetz, in which will be given, with the greatest accuracy, the measure and proportion of each particular member, as well as the general disposition and ordonance of the whole Building” (“Proposals,” p. 78). Plans and elevations will not stand alone. However, the accompanying text will serve as a gloss upon them and not as an equal partner: “We shall likewise endeavour, though *in the concisest manner possible*, to illustrate each Print with such explanations and descriptions as will be necessary to make them useful, and intelligible” (“Proposals,” p. 80, my emphasis). Latent in this statement is the correlation of visual to verbal style—measured words for measured drawings—that will become explicit in the Dilettanti’s Ionian enterprise of the 1760s.

Crucial to the success of Stuart’s and Revett’s “Proposals” was the assistance of Sir James Gray in Venice and his brother George in London, both of them influential members of the Society of Dilettanti (see fig. 1.27). According to Stuart, Sir James was the “first to set on foot a Subscription for our intended Work,” as well as arranging for their election to the Dilettanti; Colonel George Gray published Stuart’s and Revett’s “Proposals” in London.<sup>13</sup> By contrast, Robert Wood’s expedition to the Levant was liberally funded by James Dawkins, heir to a Jamaican sugar fortune. But Dawkins’ contribution far exceeded that of financial support: as Wood emphasizes in his preface, “if the following specimen of our joint labours should in any degree satisfy publick curiosity, and rescue from oblivion the magnificence of



Palmyra, it is owing entirely to this gentleman, who was so indefatigable in his attention to see every thing done accurately, that there is scarce a measure in this work which he did not take himself.”<sup>14</sup> Accuracy through measurement: the link to Desgodetz is clear.

ROBERT WOOD (1717?–1771)

Unlike the *Edifices*, Wood’s *Palmyra* includes a substantial body of text, as Walpole’s encomium emphasizes (see p. 45). After Wood’s preface comes an historical essay, “An Enquiry into the Antient State of Palmyra,” which is followed by a gathering of inscriptions and a travel narrative, “A Journey through the Desart.” In both these sections we observe how Wood as narrator exemplifies the dictum with which his preface begins: “the principal merit of works of this kind is truth” (“Enquiry,” 11r).

Throughout the “Enquiry” Wood scrupulously collects, sifts, and scrutinizes the written record:

Zenobia makes her appearance under the imputation of a crime, which were it to be credited, would prepare the reader very unfavourably for the rest of her character. She is said to have consented to the murder of her husband, and step-son. All the authority I can find for this heavy accusation is from Trebellius Pollio, who does not positively assert it neither, but gives it as a report. To which if we add, that though the same author has wrote the life of Odenathus and Zenobia, he takes no notice of this remarkable circumstance in either, nay even praises Zenobia for her clemency; it seems at least a compliment we owe her virtues, to believe her innocent. (“Enquiry,” pp. 7–8)

Wood the rigorous historian trains a skeptical eye on the authority, the rhetoric, and the logic of the textual record. He cites with special approval the narrative of “some English merchants from Aleppo [who] visited these ruins” in 1678: “Their account is published in the Philosophical Transactions.... It is wrote with so much candour and regard to truth, that some errors occasioned by haste, and their not being much acquainted with architecture and sculpture, deserve indulgence” (“Enquiry,” p. 14). The *Ruins of Palmyra* preserves the commitment to “candour” and “truth” while aspiring to eliminate the “errors.”

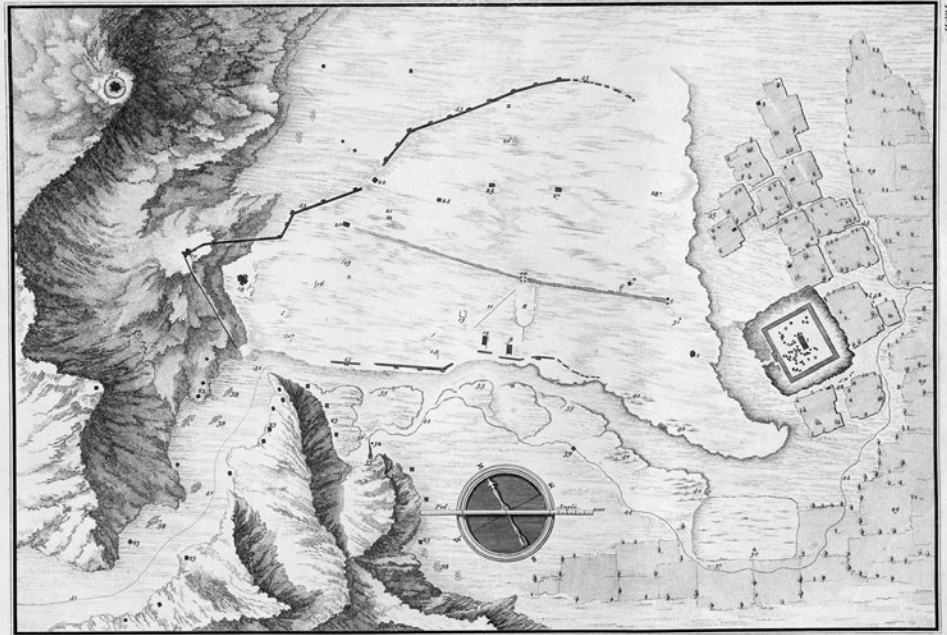
Wood’s commitment to evaluating the visual record is equally keen: “We thought we could easily distinguish, at Palmyra, the ruins of two very different periods of antiquity; the decay of the oldest, which are meer rubbish, and incapable of measurement, looked like the gradual work of time; but the later seemed to bear the marks of violence” (“Enquiry,” p. 15). On rare occasions he will compose a descriptive tableau that appears to evoke more than to evaluate:

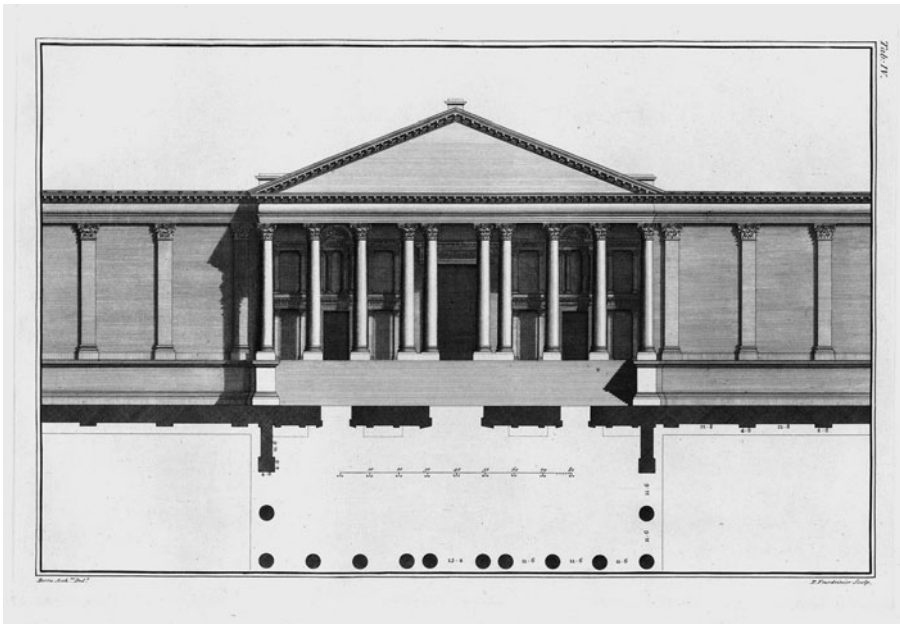
In this vale, to our right and left, were several square towers of a considerable height, which upon a nearer approach we found were the sepulchres of the antient Palmyrenes. We had scarce passed these venerable monuments, when the hills opening discovered to us, all at once, the greatest quantity of ruins we had ever seen, all of white marble, and beyond them



FIGURE 2.5  
Panoramic view of Palmyra  
(detail). From Robert Wood  
(1717?–1771), *The Ruins of Palmyra*  
(London, 1753), pl. i. Los Angeles,  
Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 2.6  
Site plan of Palmyra. From  
Robert Wood (1717?–1771),  
*The Ruins of Palmyra* (London,  
1753), pl. ii. Los Angeles,  
Research Library, GRI.





towards the Euphrates a flat waste, as far as the eye could reach, without any object which shewed either life or motion. It is scarce possible to imagine any thing more striking than this view: So great a number of Corinthian pillars, mixed with so little wall or solid building, afforded a most romantic variety of prospect. But the following plate will convey a juster idea of it than any description. ("Enquiry," p. 35)

Wood ends by subordinating the "romantic" to the analytic, potentially vague words to inescapably precise images in the last sentence. Wood's "just" is a synonym for the adjectives that carry such weight in Stuart's and Revett's "Proposals": "exact" and "distinct."

Wood's belief in the primacy of the truthful image manifests itself in illustrations that reflect the influence of Desgodetz. Panoramas of the city and a comprehensive site plan supply crucial information as to context and condition (Figs. 2.5–6). Omnipresent letters and numbers make it clear that the plates are intended to function primarily as vehicles of instruction rather than as sources of aesthetic pleasure. As Wood stresses, "we not only give the measures of the architecture, but also the views of the ruins from which they are taken. ... For as the first gives an idea of the building, when it was entire, so the last shews its present state of decay, and (which is most important) what authority there is for our measures" ("Enquiry," p. 35). The emphasis on measurement prevails in the presentation of individual monuments, each one of which is illustrated in plan and elevation, along with selected details (Figs. 2.7–8). James Dawkins supervised the etching and engraving of Giovanni Battista Borra's drawings, striving for an ideal combination of precision and vigor, accuracy and legibility.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, lines are strong and regular, shading restrained, scale scrupulously preserved. In all these respects, Wood's *Palmyra* offers an alternative, if not a corrective, to Piranesi's *Vedute di Roma*.



FIGURE 2.7

Temple of the Sun, plan and elevation. From Robert Wood (1717?–1771), *The Ruins of Palmyra* (London, 1753), pl. iv. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 2.8

Temple of the Sun, detail. From Robert Wood (1717?–1771), *The Ruins of Palmyra* (London, 1753), pl. v. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.



STUART AND REVETT AND *THE ANTIQUITIES OF ATHENS*

After visiting Palmyra and Balbec, Wood and Dawkins began their homeward journey by sailing to Athens, where they joined forces briefly with Stuart and Revett. Wood refers to this encounter in the preface to his *Ruins of Palmyra*: “When we arrived at Athens, we found Mr. STEWART and Mr. REVET, two English painters, successfully employed in taking measures of all the architecture there, and making drawings of all the bas reliefs, with a view to publish them, according to a scheme they had communicated to us at Rome” (*Ruins of Palmyra*, B1r, note a). Wood goes on graciously to publicize their project: “We...did no more at Athens than satisfy our own curiosity, leaving it to Mr. STEWART and Mr. REVET to satisfy that of the publick. We hope they may meet with that encouragement which so useful a work deserves.” The spirit of shared enterprise is captured in a plate from *The Antiquities of Athens* that shows the four men inspecting the Monument of Philopappus (Fig. 2.9). Stuart’s caption constitutes a verbal vignette of its own:

FIGURE 2.9

Monument of Philopappus.  
From James Stuart (1713–1788)  
and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804),  
*The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 3  
(London, 1794), following p. 39.  
Los Angeles, Research Library,  
GRI.

A view of this monument in its present state. On the foreground Mr. Revett and myself are introduced with our friends Mr. James Dawkins and Mr. Robert Wood; the last of whom is occupied in copying the inscription on the pilaster. Our Janizary is making coffee, which we drank here; the boy, sitting down with his hand in a basket, attends with our cups and saucers. A goatherd with his goats and dogs is also represented. In the distance is seen part of the gulph of Athens, anciently the sinus Saronicus...<sup>16</sup>



Stuart's use of the present tense and the precision of his commentary ("our Janizary is making coffee, which we drank here") draw us into what is arguably the primal scene of modern archaeology, in which the four protagonists engage in the innovative activities of firsthand observation and scrupulous recording. British empiricism comes to the Levant and takes its measure.

Wood could not have anticipated in 1753 that almost a decade would pass before volume one of the Stuart's and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens* appeared. The causes of this long delay included tensions between the two authors and Stuart's dilatory habits. But the most significant reason was the appearance in 1758 of Julien David Le Roy's *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce*. Stuart, who by this time had bought out Revett, delayed publication even further in order to demolish his rival. The result was a volume that, in every key respect, defined itself in opposition to Le Roy. To understand the most important contrasts between the two is to grasp the essential nature of the *Antiquities of Athens* and to take stock of its innovative achievements.

#### ACCURATE DOCUMENTATION VERSUS SUBJECTIVE EVOCATION

Le Roy's etching of the monument of Philopappus provides an ideal starting point for comparative analysis (Fig. 2.10; cf. fig. 2.9). Le Roy tells us that he selected "the point of view that seemed to me most agreeable, from which one discovers Piraeus and the sea" (*Ruines*, p. 33). As this caption indicates, Le Roy's priority is not accurate documentation but subjective evocation. Accordingly, his view of the monument is dominated by a dramatic sky,

FIGURE 2.10

Monument of Philopappus. From Julien David Le Roy (1724?–1803), *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* (Paris, 1758), pl. 20. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.



FIGURE 2.11

View of the West end of the Temple of Minerva Polias, and of the Pandrosium. From James Stuart (1713–1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804), *The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 2 (London, 1787), chap. 2, pl. II. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.



by atmospheric crosshatching (witness the shadow angling across the structure), and by irregularity of line and texture—a key feature of the picturesque. Le Roy roughens the stone, introduces vegetation, and deepens and widens the niches on the upper tier, thereby creating more possibilities for chiaroscuro. In addition, he alters the bas-reliefs on the lower tier, thereby emphasizing the movement of the four horses and the charioteer. The gesticulating human figures to left and right, all of whom ignore these remnants of the past, intensify the dynamism of the composition. Yet their self-absorption and their elaborate ethnic costume help to reduce the monument to the status of generic ruin and to convert the illustration into an exotic, orientalizing tableau.

By contrast, the exotic elements in Stuart's view of the monument are handled as if they were notations in an anthropologist's notebook: "the boy, sitting down with his hand in a basket, attends with our cups and saucers. A goatherd with his goats and dogs is also represented." Unlike Le Roy, Stuart lights the monument evenly, delineates it crisply, and banishes picturesque vegetation. The most animated element in the composition is the quartet of European travelers, who engage with the monument by looking, drawing, and discussing. This posture of active engagement and assimilation recurs throughout the *Antiquities of Athens*—as in the view of the Erechtheion, with Stuart drawing in the right-hand corner, and what he calls the "Theatre of Bacchus," which shows "Mr. Revet, who from hence did, with great patience and accuracy, mark all the masonry in the front of the Scene" (Figs. 2.11–12).

Juxtaposition of the two title pages will allow us to develop this contrast (Figs. 2.13–14). The design of the title page to Le Roy's *Ruines* emphasizes decorative profusion: the rococo effect of multiple typefaces and type sizes is enhanced by the woodcut vignette.





FIGURE 2.12

View of the front of the Scene [of the "Theatre of Bacchus"]. From James Stuart (1713–1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804), *The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 2 (London, 1787), chap. 3, pl. 1. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 2.13

Title page. From Julien David Le Roy (1724?–1803), *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* (Paris, 1758). Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 2.14

Title page. From James Stuart (1713–1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804), *The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 1 (London, 1762).

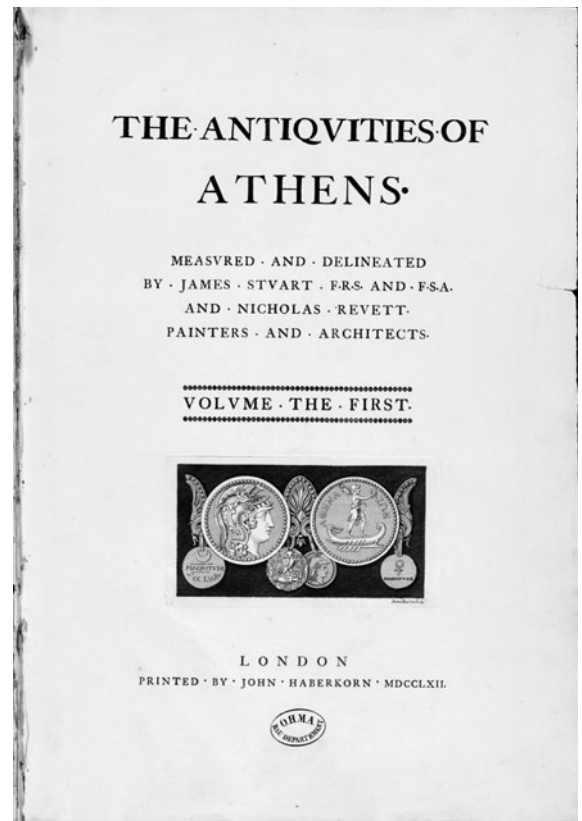
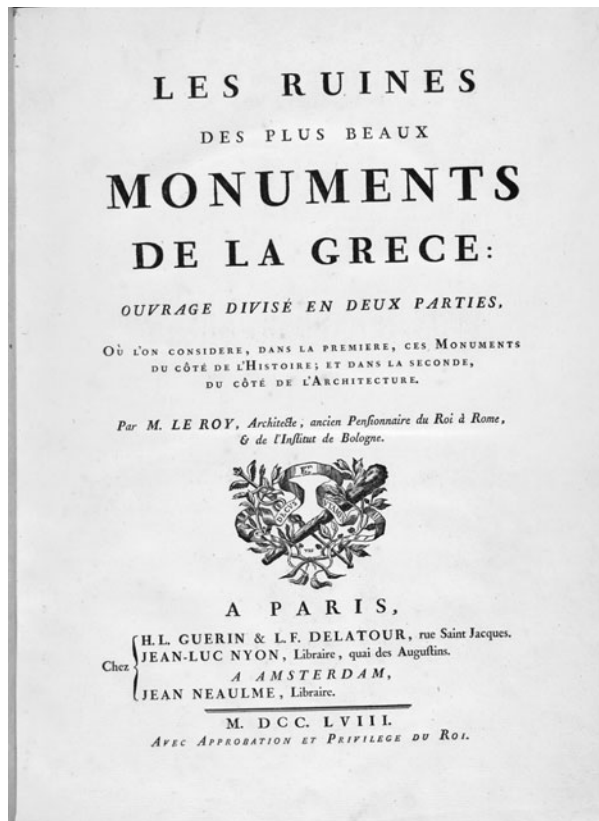




FIGURE 2.15

"Vue du Stade d'Athènes." From Julien David Le Roy (1724?–1803), *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* (Paris, 1758), pl. 23. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

The author styles himself "Architecte, ancien Pensionnaire du Roi à Rome, et de l'Institut de Bologne"; the importance of state support and impressive institutional affiliation also resounds through the dedication to the Marquis de Marigny, "Conseiller du Roi en ses Conseils, Commandeur de ses Ordres, Directeur et Ordonnateur Général de ses Bâtiments, Jardins, Arts, Académies et Manufactures." In marked contrast, the style of Stuart's title page is crisp, restrained, rectilinear. There is only one typeface, a sober Caslon. The vignette offers a symmetrical assemblage of Greek and Roman coins, whose decorative function is subordinated to their archaeological interest. Interpreted as a whole, the title page proclaims the achievement, not of "pensionnaires," but of professionals who have benefited from enlightened private support.

But it is the titles themselves that tell us the most about the contrasting nature of the two enterprises: on the one hand, *The Antiquities Of Athens Measured And Delineated*, on the other *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce*. "Antiquities" suggests a serious, disciplined commitment to studying the remnants of the past, a commitment emphasized by "measured and delineated." "Ruines" points to an aesthetic, emotive pleasure in the fragment qua fragment, a pleasure emphasized by "plus beaux."<sup>17</sup> If the *Antiquities* adumbrates the modern archaeological report, then the *Ruines* culminates in "the expansive *Voyages pittoresques*" of the 1780s.<sup>18</sup>





Le Roy is at heart a *rovinista* (a specialist in rendering ruins), whose views take their primary inspiration from the landscapes of Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin—witness his “Vue du Stade d’Athènes,” which turns the Attic plain into a version of the Roman Campagna and the stadium itself into a blurred architectural prop (Fig. 2.15). Le Roy also responds to the work of his contemporaries Charles-Louis Clérissieu (1721–1820) and Hubert Robert (1733–1808), both of whom cultivated the picturesque fragment. Le Roy’s view in Figure 2.16 of the Temple of Augustus at Pola in Istria treats the monument as an excuse for the atmospheric interplay of present and past—witness the cottage that sprouts, like the surrounding vegetation, from gaps between the ruins. Key features of the temple, such as the inscription beneath the pediment, take second place to the play of light and shade and of contrasting textures—fluted column juxtaposed to ashlar masonry juxtaposed to flaking plaster juxtaposed to the very “debris covered with weeds and moss” that Watelet and Lévesque had singled out (see p. 48).

These differences in approach will come even more sharply into focus if we turn to the plates that illustrate a structure called “the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates” by Stuart and Revett and “La Lanterne de Démosthène” by Le Roy (Figs. 2.17–18). Stuart chooses as his vantage point the garden of the Capuchin hospice, within which a monk meditates upon

FIGURE 2.16  
“Vue d’un Temple de Pola en Istrie.” From Julien David Le Roy (1724?–1803), *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* (Paris, 1758), pl. 1. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.





FIGURE 2.17  
Choragic Monument of  
Lysicrates. From James Stuart  
(1713–1788) and Nicholas Revett  
(1720–1804), *The Antiquities of  
Athens*, vol. 1 (London, 1762),  
chap. 4, pl. 1. Los Angeles,  
Research Library, GRI.

a skull. The lines of the composition converge upon the hospice itself and the monument incorporated within the central block. Diagonal shadows help to articulate the profile of the monument, to highlight its principal parts, and to establish its dimensions. Etching is used to create the strong contrasts and the architectonic starkness associated with engraving. Le Roy adopts a much different approach: he depicts the monument from the street outside the hospice, a vantage point that allows him to represent “a rather curious Greek dance that I saw during carnival time, when I was drawing this building” (*Ruines*, p. 25). Le Roy exaggerates the height of the monument, alters its proportions, and blurs such details as the fluting of the columns. Surrogate viewers in the lower left-hand corner direct our attention along the diagonal line of the garden wall to the dancers in the street, thereby reducing the monument to the status of picturesque backdrop.<sup>19</sup>

The anti-picturesque element of the *Antiquities* comes to the fore in the numerous explicit attacks on the *Ruines*—attacks that center on Le Roy’s inaccuracy. Stuart launches his offensive by noting that, although Le Roy acknowledges the influence of Wood’s *Palmyra*, he omits any reference to Stuart’s and Revett’s “Proposals.” These predate Le Roy’s trip to Athens by several years: “So that whatever motives of improvement to himself, or glory to his Country, Mons. Le Roy has thought proper to assign, for his resolution of visiting Greece, and designing the Antiquities there; he seems to have formed it, in consequence of our having



FIGURE 2.18

"Vue de la Lanterne de Démosthène à Athènes." From Julien David Le Roy (1724?–1803), *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* (Paris, 1758), pl. 13. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

first undertaken the same Task."<sup>20</sup> The conviction of unacknowledged indebtedness gives a special polemical fervor to Stuart's reckoning of Le Roy's distortions and mistakes. Thanks to private English liberality, Stuart and Revett were able to stay in Athens for three years; despite royal French support, Le Roy felt that a mere three months were sufficient for his purpose. That purpose, Stuart maintains, is superficial at best and reprehensible at worst: "[I]f we consider the View before us, as the Representation of a Place really existing, we shall find that it is extremely inaccurate and licentious.... But as Accuracy is not universally thought to be necessary in this kind of Pictoresque Representation, we shall wave any farther Remarks on this Plate" (*Antiquities of Athens*, p. 5).

Stuart's charges of "pictoresque" distortion, moreover, extend from Le Roy's plates to his commentary: "In his View of [the Tower of the Winds] are seen three of the Figures representing the Winds; here we shall find, that his Delineations of them are as inaccurate, as his Descriptions" (*Antiquities of Athens*, p. 24). What Stuart will not or cannot acknowledge is that Le Roy's prose style is intended to mirror his pictorial aesthetic: the prevailing voice of the *Ruines* is that of the attentive cicerone, who takes pains not to overload his audience with information that might prove "tiresome" or "monotonous."<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, Le Roy adopts what has been called "the ornamented style *touriste*."<sup>22</sup> *The Antiquities of Athens*, on the other hand, exemplifies and upholds an aesthetic of the austere.



## HARKING BACK TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY

This aesthetic of the austere has its roots in the goals and the methods of the Royal Society. Stuart and Revett think of themselves as practicing a species of empirical, quasi-scientific investigation: *Nullius in Verba* (“On No One’s Authority”) might have been their motto as well.<sup>23</sup> In the preface to the *Antiquities*, they carefully identify the equipment they had used: “we were provided with Instruments made in London, by the best Artists, one of which was a Rod of Brass, three feet long, most accurately divided by Mr. BIRD” (*Antiquities of Athens*, p. vii). On occasion, moreover, measurement depends upon excavation, which they describe in terms that adumbrate a twentieth-century archaeological report:

FIGURE 2.19

Tower of the Winds, general view.  
From James Stuart (1713–1788)  
and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804),  
*The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 1  
(London, 1762), chap. 3, pl. 1. Los  
Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

To trace the original Form of this Building it was necessary to make several considerable Excavations. The first was a Trench along the South-East side; where at the Depth of about fourteen Feet the upper Step appeared, and after that two others, and at length the Pavement. The Trench was then carried round the Angle at the southern Extremity of this Side, with an Intent to continue it likewise along that Side which fronts the South; but here the Workmen were soon stopped by a Wall which projected from it, and which appeared evidently to be an





original Part of the Building; for not only the same Ranges of Masonry are continued here, but many of the Blocks of Marble are so wrought, as to be placed partly in the Face of the Octogon, and partly in this new discovered Wall... (*Antiquities of Athens*, p. 14)

This is precisely the kind of prose that Thomas Sprat (1635–1713) urged as an antidote to “luxury and redundance of speech”: it exemplifies the virtues of “Mathematical plainness” by aspiring to “the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver’d so many *things*, almost in an equal number of *words*.”<sup>24</sup> That Stuart and Revett were committed to speaking the language of the Royal Society is confirmed by Stuart’s references to Francis Vernon (1637–1677), a seventeenth-century astronomer and mathematician who traveled to Athens, measured several monuments, and published his observations in the Society’s *Philosophical Transactions*.<sup>25</sup> Stuart praises Vernon as an “earnest and diligent enquirer” and reprints Vernon’s letter, whose clipped, precise, paratactic style embodies his commitment to “exactness.”<sup>26</sup> It is such a fit between matter and manner that Stuart strives to achieve.

The passage we have just been considering describes the excavations necessary to measure, draw, and reconstruct the Tower of the Winds. More than any other section of the *Antiquities*, the chapter devoted to this monument allows us to “measure and delineate” the authors’ achievement. The sequence of illustrations begins with a plate that combines archaeology with ethnography (Fig. 2.19):

A View of the Tower of the Winds in its present Condition, taken from a Window in the House of the *Mudeeress Effendi*. Over the Door-Way of this Building and on each Side of it, are evident Traces of the Entablature and Pediment which formerly adorned it.... The distant Rock with the Buildings on it, represents Part of the Acropolis or Fortress of Athens. The Turk with long Hair, whose Back is turned to the Spectator, is the *Sheih Mustapha*; chief of those Dervishes who perform the circular Dance in the Tower of the Winds.... The Female Figures represent a Christian Matron of distinction, accompanied by three of her Daughters and her Servant Maid; the Matron is in the Habit proper to her Age and Station; it is extremely short-waisted, and is generally made of Scarlet Cloth: two of her daughters, who are marriageable, are veiled, and walk behind her; the third, who is very young, is under the Care of the Servant-Maid. In the white Wall which is immediately behind these Figures, may be observed a darkish horizontal Line from which some Herbs or Weeds are growing: The Darkness of that Line and the Growth of the Weeds, is occasioned by Leakage from the Water-pipes which are inserted in that Part of the Wall; by these Pipes, the brackish Stream whose Sources are at the Foot of the Acropolis, is conveyed towards the principal *Moschea*. (*Antiquities of Athens*, p. 17)

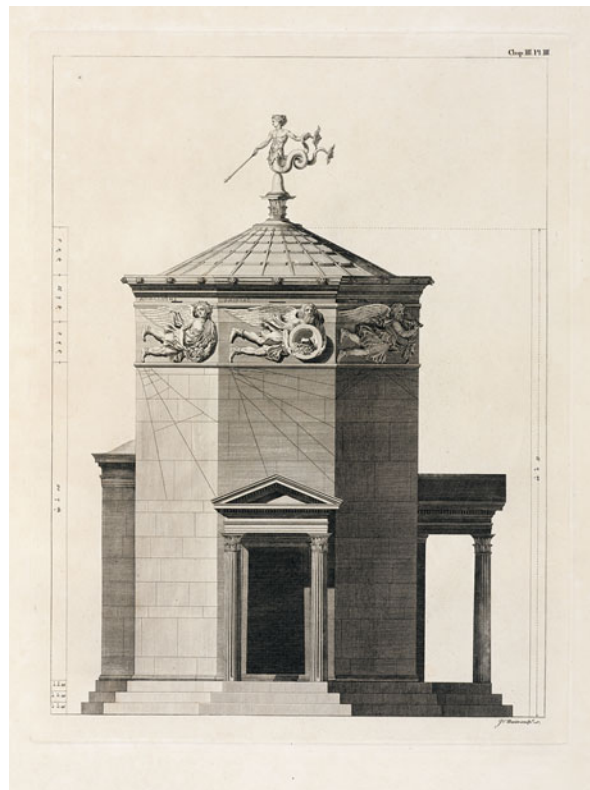
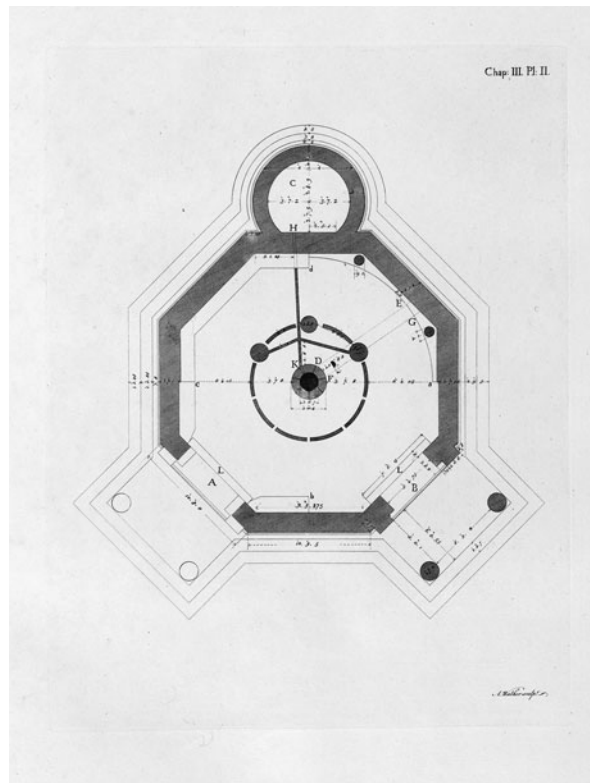
This precise yet wide-ranging commentary insures the didactic effect of a plate that is calculated for maximum legibility. It moves us first from foreground to background, then zeroes in on the middle ground and the figures in the vicinity of the tower. Finally, it returns us to the foreground, only to move us beyond the picture space, as we trace in our imagination the

FIGURE 2.20

Tower of the Winds, plan. From James Stuart (1713–1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804), *The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 1 (London, 1762), chap. 3, pl. II. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 2.21

Tower of the Winds, elevation. From James Stuart (1713–1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804), *The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 1 (London, 1762), chap. 3, pl. III. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.



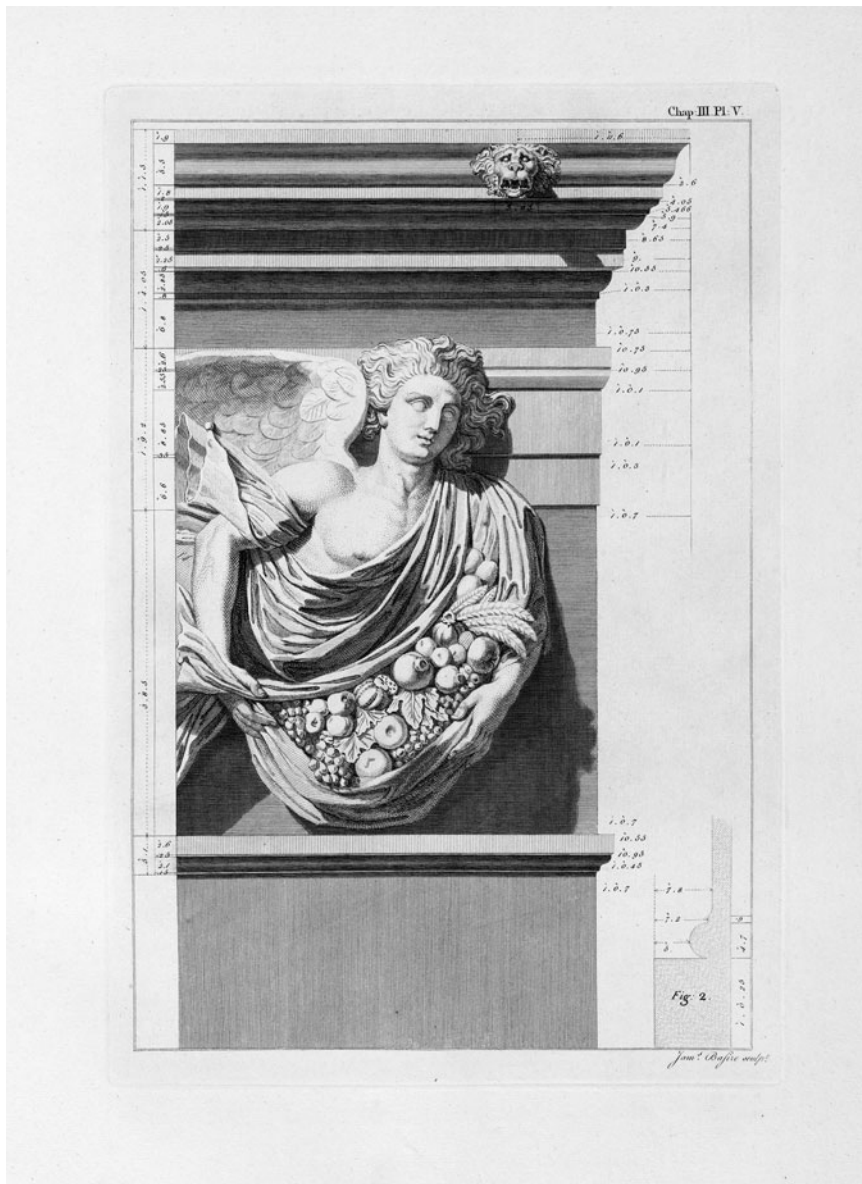


FIGURE 2.22

Tower of the Winds, detail of bas relief. From James Stuart (1713–1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804), *The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 1 (London, 1762), chap. 3, pl. v. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

line of the water pipe. By the time we have finished collating text with image, we have come to understand the contemporary state of the Tower and thereby to appreciate the difficulties that have been faced and surmounted by Stuart and Revett.

The plan and elevation of the Tower—diagrams made possible by laborious excavation—likewise reflect the authors' commitment to imparting the maximum information in the clearest possible way (Figs. 2.20–21). The shading of the elevation in particular helps the viewer to grasp the Tower's twin function, as clock and as weathervane; so, too, the plates that illustrate the eight bas-reliefs use shadow to enhance rather than obscure the salient iconographic details (Fig. 2.22). These plates were etched and engraved by James Basire (ca. 1730–1802), whom Stuart admired for a precision of line that those with a taste for the pic-



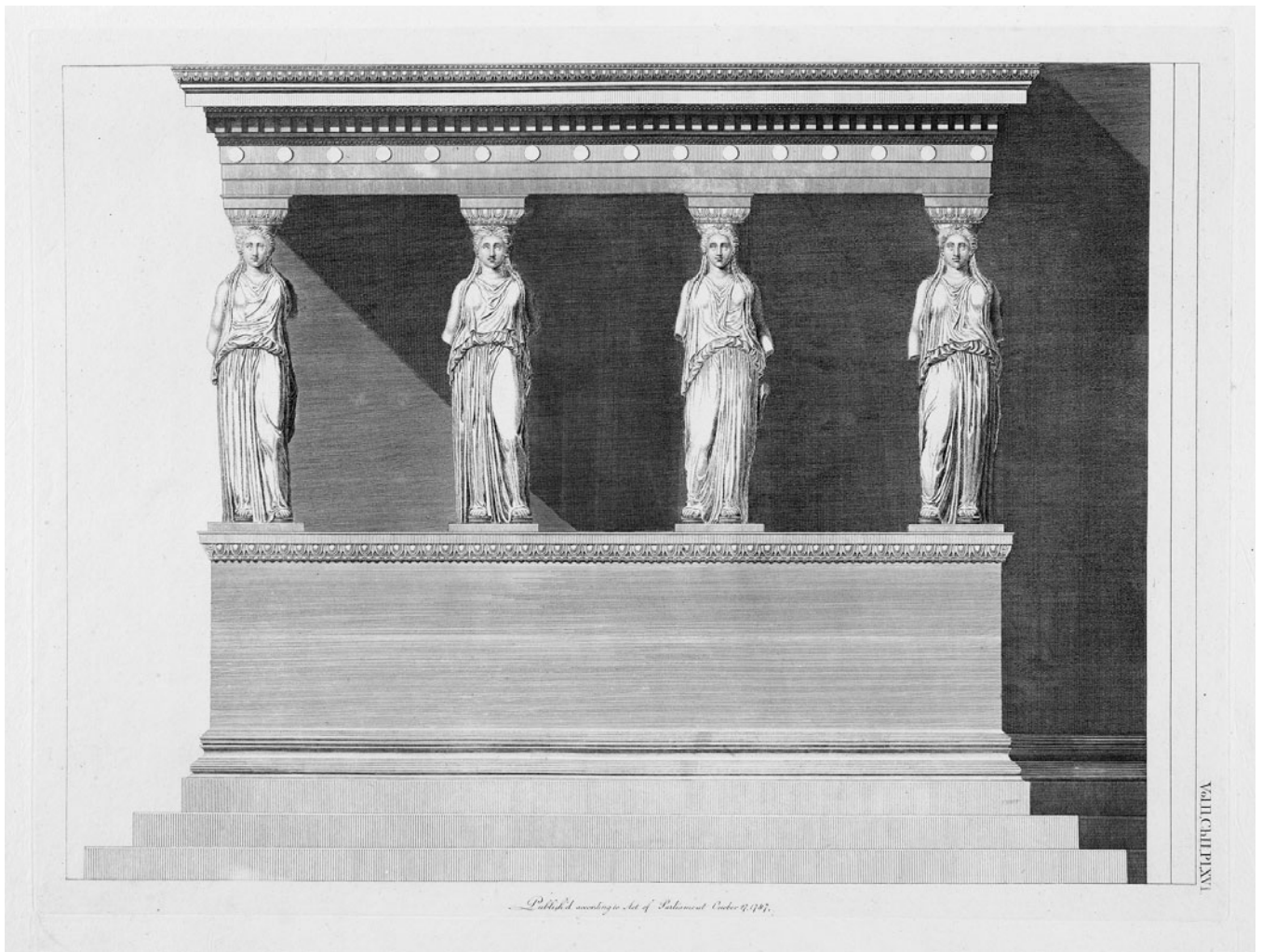


FIGURE 2.23  
Caryatids. From James Stuart  
(1713–1788) and Nicholas Revett  
(1720–1804), *The Antiquities of  
Athens*, vol. 2 (London, 1787),  
chap. 2, pl. xvi. Los Angeles,  
Research Library, GRI.

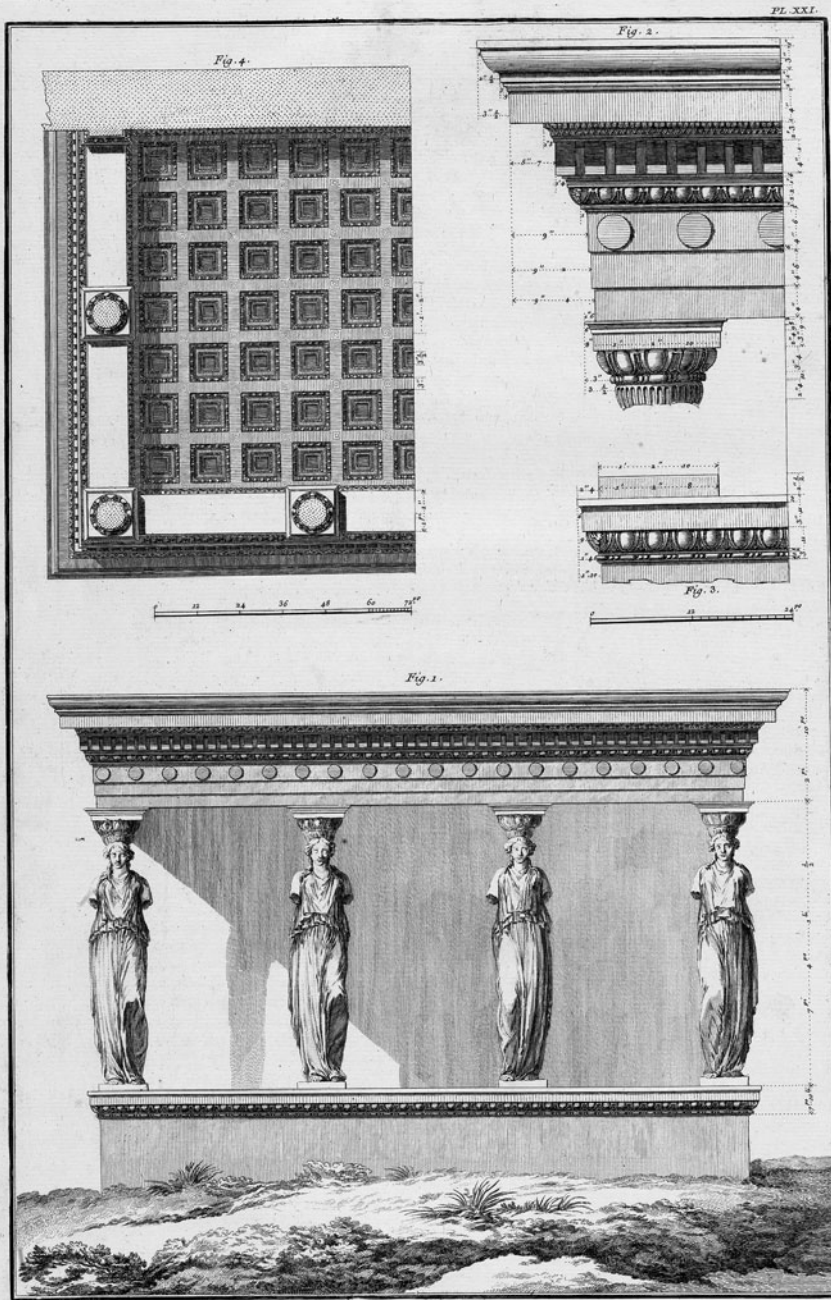
turesque found, in the words of Robert Adam, “hard as Iron, & as false as Hell.”<sup>27</sup> The defining attributes of the graphic style prized by Wood, Stuart, and Revett—firm contours and restricted, schematic use of shadow—give to these and other plates the incisiveness of a textbook diagram. For example, in the illustrations of the Erechtheion’s porch, the caryatids display their anatomy, their drapery, and their architectural setting in a raking light that reveals every salient detail (Fig. 2.23). Le Roy, on the other hand, concocts a quartet of elegant, attenuated maidens who are softly modeled by the play of light and shadow (Fig. 2.24).

#### STUART’S DRAWINGS: PRIORITIES AND PRACTICES

“Hard as iron”: the same might be said, if one championed the picturesque, of Stuart’s original drawings—topographical *vedute* (“views”) far removed from those of Clérissieu or Piranesi. The preface to volume one of the *Antiquities of Athens* suggests how directly the medium of these drawings, gouache, promotes Stuart’s documentary goals: “The Views

FIGURE 2.24

Caryatids. From Julien David Le Roy (1724?–1803), *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* (Paris, 1758), pl. XXI. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.





were all finished on the spot; and in these, preferring Truth to every other consideration, I have taken none of the Liberties with which Painters are apt to indulge themselves, from a desire of rendering their representations of Places more agreeable to the Eye and better Pictures.... The Figures that are introduced in these views are from Nature, and represent the Dress and Appearance of the present Inhabitants of Athens" (*Antiquities of Athens*, p. viii). This declaration draws attention to the fact that the drawings are all *plein air* ("finished on the spot," "from Nature") and that they reliably capture both "Places" and "Inhabitants."<sup>28</sup> Gouache is essential to Stuart's enterprise: the emphatic massing, crisp contours, and saturated colors assist the making of plates that "prefer Truth to every other consideration."<sup>29</sup>

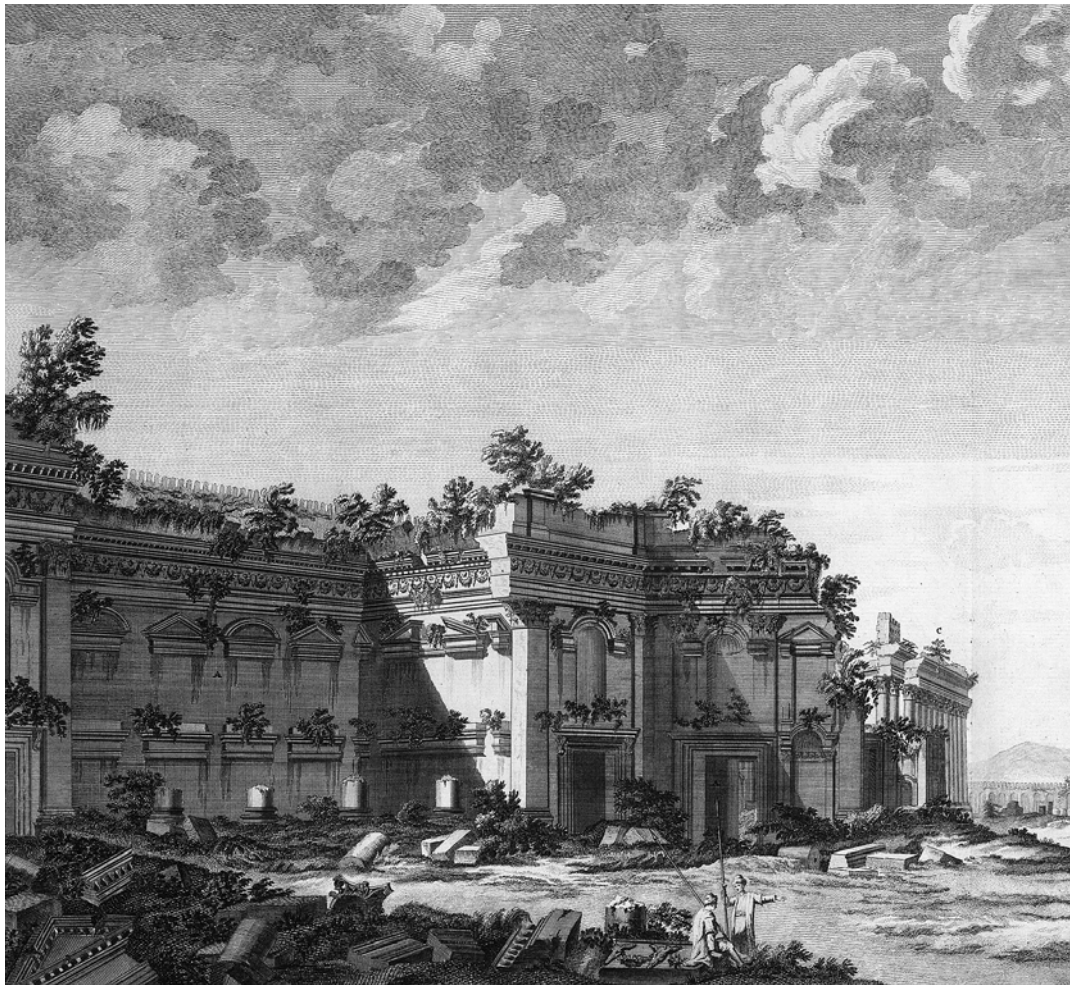
Stuart's drawing of the "Gate of Athene Archegetis" exemplifies the many kinds of information that he was concerned to impart (Fig. 2.25). In this view he divides his attention between past and present, the architectural and the anthropological. Giovanni Battista Borra, the artist who accompanied Wood and Dawkins to the Levant, had used "present inhabitants" as nothing more than staffage (Fig. 2.26). By contrast, Stuart's street scene documents with loving detail the rituals of daily life in Athens in approximately 1752: in the left foreground, a girl wearing a red cap fills her jars at a fountain, while a horseman, dagger in sash, waters his mount. In the middle distance, two Turks—one wearing a turban, the other a fez—take the sun while conversing with a European. These human activities are complemented by the feeding rituals of storks on the pediment of the portico, rituals that Stuart captures with quasi-ornithological exactitude.

FIGURE 2.25

James Stuart (1713–1788), "Gate of Athene Archegetis," ca. 1752. RIBA Drawings Collection.







The composition centers on the portico, whose architectural features—triglyphs and guttae in particular—are carefully documented. But Stuart has chosen to mark the vanishing point with a minaret, to include the Venetian lion on the fountain, and to study the Islamic latticework covering the window of the house behind it. He pays attention as well to the half-buried portico incorporated into the house on the right-hand side of the street. As Stuart says in the preface, he is not interested in creating “better Pictures”—a phrase that implies the scorn for picturesque effects that surfaces elsewhere in the volume. Instead, he documents a complex urban palimpsest, attending to its many layers with scrupulous and impartial craftsmanship.

Close comparison of two of the gouache drawings with the plates based upon them makes Stuart’s priorities and practices even clearer. In its original form, the view of the Erechtheion teems with significant details: the scrupulous rendering of the temple, which had been converted by the Ottoman garrison into a harem, and its relationship to the modern fortifications; the interplay between a varied cast of characters and the captions commenting upon them; and the prominence of the artist, who documents himself documenting the scene

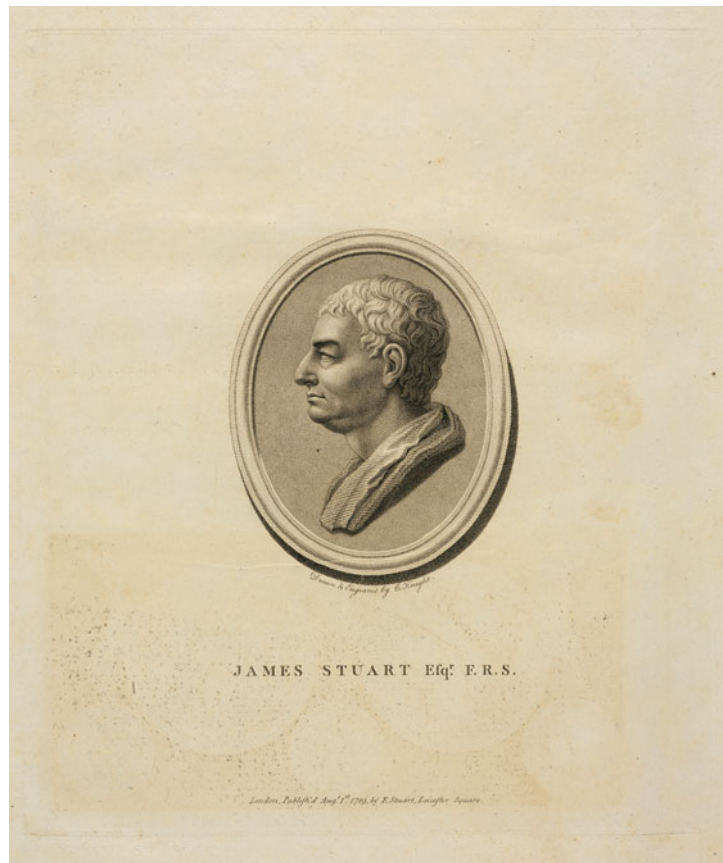
FIGURE 2.26  
Giovanni Battista Borra  
(1712–1786), “View of the  
hexagonal court, in its present  
ruinous state” (detail). From  
Robert Wood (1717?–1771),  
*Les Ruines de Balbec* (London, 1757),  
pl. ix.

FIGURE 2.27

James Stuart (1713–1788),  
 “A View of the West end of the  
 Temple of Minerva Polias, and  
 of the Pandrosium,” ca. 1752.  
 RIBA Drawings Collection.

FIGURE 2.28

Charles Knight (1743–1827?),  
 Portrait medallion depicting  
 James Stuart. Engraving. From  
 James Stuart (1713–1788) and  
 Nicholas Revett (1720–1804),  
*The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 2  
 (1789), frontispiece.



(Fig. 2.27; see fig. 2.11). Stuart's crimson robes form an intense triangle of color in the lower right-hand corner. This triangle is accentuated by the white paper on which he draws—a metonymic detail that emphasizes the reflexive quality of the image. The self-portrait in profile further mediates and authenticates the tableau by echoing the frontispiece (Fig. 2.28).

The colors and contours of the figures at the center of the scene, whose visual impact is somewhat diminished in the engraving, heighten the role of drawing as a vehicle for vivid reportage. Stuart's caption both interprets and enhances the narrative impact of the gouache:

The Turkish Gentleman smoaking a long pipe, is the Disdár-Agá, he leans on the shoulder of his son-in-law, Ibrahim Agá, and is looking at our labourers, who are digging to discover the Base, and the steps of the basement under the Caryatides. He was accustomed to visit us from time to time, to see that we did no mischief to the Building; but in reality, to see that we did not carry off any treasure; for he did not conceive, any other motive could have induced us, to examine so eagerly what was under ground in his Castle. The two Turks in the Pandrosium were placed there by him to watch our proceedings; and give him an account of our discoveries. The little girl leading a lamb, and attended by a negro slave, is the daughter of Ibrahim Agá. The lamb is fatted to be eaten at the feast of the Beiram, which was not far off at the time this view was taken.<sup>30</sup>

The astute intertwining of multiple perspectives—temporal, cultural, and architectural—is enacted visually by the adroit mingling of blues and reds. Stuart plays these colors off the whites and grays of the temple, thereby counterpointing Periclean sanctuary to Ottoman fort.

Stuart's gouache view of the Tower of the Winds likewise shows off local color of various kinds (Fig. 2.29; cf. fig. 2.19). The caption begins by situating and framing the view in such a way that we look through the window of the present into a layered past: "A View of the Tower of the Winds in its present Condition, taken from a Window in the House of the *Mudeeress Effendi*." Through its mingling of materials (brick, tile, stone, and fragments of classical architecture) the wall in the left foreground epitomizes the collage that is Athens. Much more emphatically than in the plate, this wall functions as a separate vignette—an intense polychromatic cluster and a metaphor for Stuart's encounter with the city's embedded antiquities. The gouache also converses with the caption in ways that the engraving cannot: "... The Female Figures represent a Christian Matron of distinction, accompanied by three of her Daughters and her Servant Maid; the Matron is in the Habit proper to her Age and Station; it is extremely short-waisted, and is generally made of Scarlet Cloth; two of her daughters, who are marriageable, are veiled, and walk behind her."<sup>31</sup> The three women, dressed in scarlet, rose, and blue, focus our attention and guide us, via the outstretched arm of "the Matron," down the lane to the partially submerged Tower. This trio, like the "Window in the House of the *Mudeeress Effendi*," situates the ancient within the context of the modern—a synecdochic example of the work's prevailing ambition.





FIGURE 2.29  
James Stuart (1713–1788),  
“The Tower of the Winds,”  
ca. 1752. London, RIBA  
Drawings Collection.

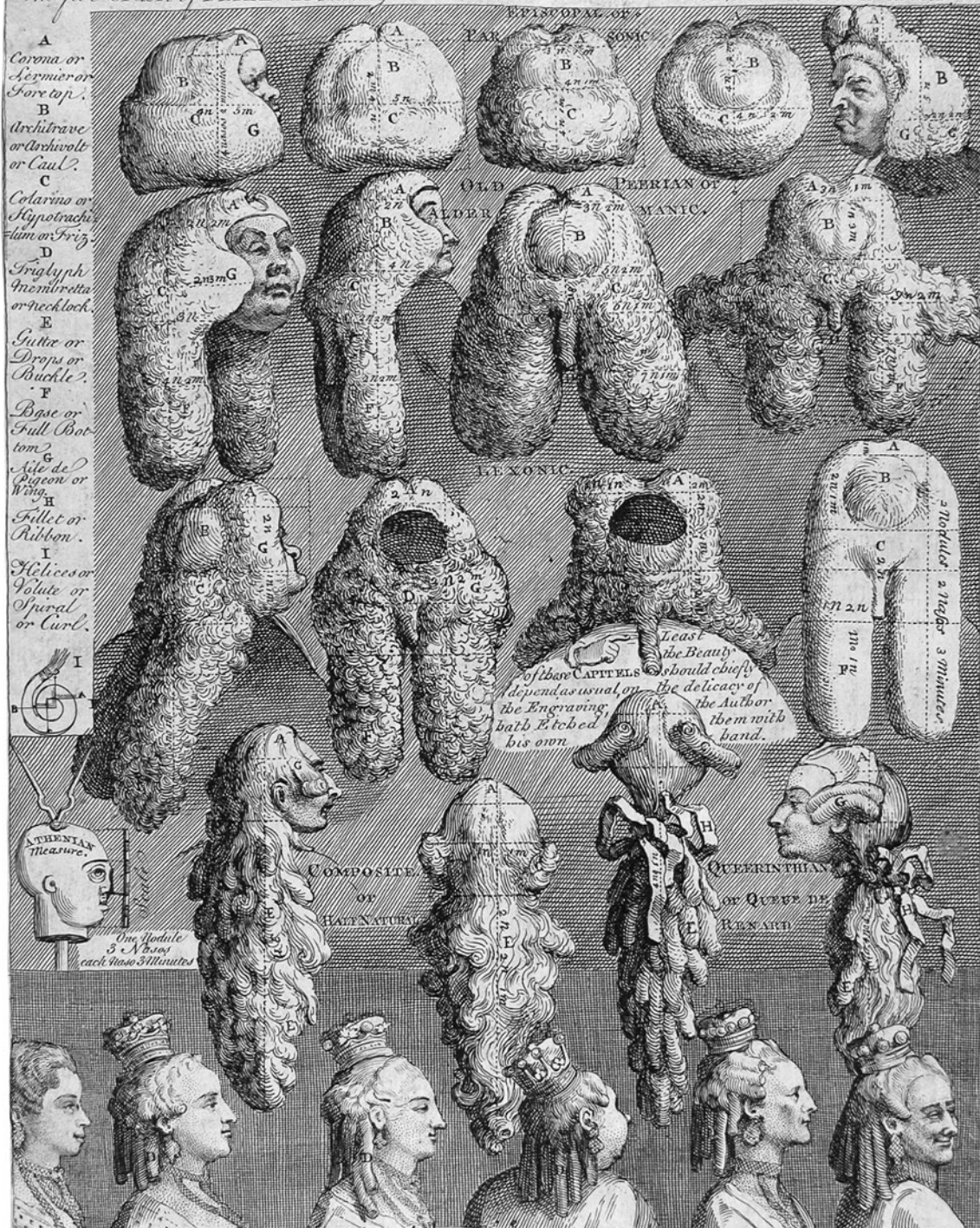
FIGURE 2.30 (opposite)  
William Hogarth (1697–1764),  
“The Five Orders of Perriwigs,”  
1761. Engraving, 29.8 × 21.6 cm.  
Private collection. Photo:  
Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole  
Library, Yale University.

This ambition was acknowledged and anatomized by none other than William Hogarth, who paid Stuart and Revett the tacit compliment of an inspired satiric response: Hogarth’s *The Five Orders of Perriwigs* (1761), while mocking the pomp and circumstance of the recent coronation, reserves its most sustained and penetrating attack for the *Antiquities of Athens* (Fig. 2.30).<sup>32</sup> The etching turns on a surreal comparison between wigs and capitals, the formal adornment of heads and the formal adornment of columns, the five orders of the aristocracy (baron, viscount, earl, marquis, and duke) and the five architectural orders (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tuscan, and Composite). With puns on “taking orders” and “law and order,” Hogarth also takes aim at clergymen and lawyers.

The caption to *The Five Orders* alludes to the long-delayed publication of the *Antiquities of Athens*, to its imposing format and price, and to its derivation from Desgodetz and Wood: “In about Seventeen Years will be completed, in Six Volumns, folio, price Fifteen Guineas, the exact measurements of the Perriwigs of the ancients; taken from the Statues, Bustos & Baso-Relievos, of Athens, Palmira, Balbec, and Rome.” Each “order” of perriwig is “measured Architectonically” in the style of the *Antiquities*, with explanations keyed by letter running down the left-hand side of the plate. These explanations are inscribed on a plaque or signboard, from which dangles a blockhead (literally a stand for wigs) in the likeness of Stuart.<sup>33</sup> Lest the viewer mistake the target, the blockhead is labeled “Athenian Measure.” Throughout the etching, Hogarth plays brilliantly on the language of architecture: Wig E, for example is equipped with “Guttae or Drops or Buckle,” while Wig G is labeled “Queer-inthian or Queue de Renard” (the “cor” of Corinthian displaced by the eighteenth-century



The five orders of PERRIWIGS as they were worn at the late CORONATION (measured Architectonically.)



#### Advertisement.

In about Seventeen Years will be completed, in Six Volumes, folio, price, Fifteen Guineas, the exact Measurements of the PERRIWIGS of the ancients; taken from the Statues, Bustos & Baso-Relievos, of Athens, Palmira, Balbec, and Rome, by MODESTO Perriwig-meter from Lagado. NB. None will be Sold but to Subscribers. Published as the Act directs Oct. 15. 1761 by W. Hogarth.



slang word for “worthless” or “counterfeit,” the implication of trickery reinforced by “Reynard,” or “fox’s tail”). He even holds up to ridicule the blend of etching and engraving, as well as Stuart’s proud claim that the plates do full justice to the unprecedented accuracy of the drawings: “Least the Beauty of these Capitels should chiefly depend, as usual, on the delicacy of the Engraving, the Author hath Etched them with his own hand.” For all its mockery of the Dilettanti’s publication, Hogarth’s etching pays implicit tribute to *The Antiquities of Athens* as a cultural event of a royal order of magnitude.

#### BUILDING ON SUCCESS:

#### THE IONIAN EXPEDITION OF CHANDLER, REVETT, AND PARS

In both plates and commentary, *The Antiquities of Athens* bespeaks a commitment to neo-Baconian empiricism. However, the link between method of inquiry and style of reportage was not made explicit until the Society of Dilettanti launched an expedition to Ionia in 1764. From the outset the Dilettanti took pains to emphasize rigorous measurement and prescribe the correct language for archaeological narrative. Accordingly, a committee headed by Robert Wood drew up a detailed set of directives for the three leaders of the expedition, whose overlapping areas of expertise made them an ideal team:

Mr. Chandler, of Magdalen College, Oxford, Editor of the *Marmora Oxoniensia*, was appointed to execute the Classical part of the Plan. The Province of Architecture was assigned to Mr. Revett, who had already given a satisfactory Specimen of his Accuracy and Diligence, in his Measures of the Remains of Antiquity at Athens. The Choice of a proper Person for taking Views, and copying Bas Reliefs, fell upon Mr. Pars, a young Painter of promising Talents.<sup>34</sup>

The Society’s mandate begins by instructing these three to fan out from Smyrna and to conduct a comprehensive survey:

[Y]ou do procure the exactest Plans and Measures possible of the Buildings You shall find, making accurate Drawings of the Bass-Reliefs and Ornaments, and taking such Views as you shall judge proper; copying all the Inscriptions you shall meet with, and remarking every Circumstance which can contribute towards giving the best Idea of the ancient and present State of those Places.<sup>35</sup>

Like surveyors or navigators, the trio is instructed to “be exact in marking Distances, and the Direction in which you travel, by frequently observing your Watches and Pocket Compasses, and you will take the Variation as often as you can” (Chandler 1775, p. ix). Like modern archaeologists, whose field records include not only site plans and locus sheets but a daily diary, the travelers are enjoined as well to “keep a very minute Journal of every Day’s



Occurrences and Observations, representing Things exactly in the light they strike you, in the plainest Manner, and without any regard to Style or Language, except that of being intelligible" (Chandler 1775, p. ix). In these instructions the Dilettanti speak the language of the "New Science," with its distrust of rhetorical elaboration and its corresponding stress on clarity and concision. Like the "Plans and Measures" themselves, the linguistic record of the expedition should be as "exact" and "accurate" as possible.

In his narrative of the two-year expedition, Richard Chandler finds several significant ways of "representing Things exactly in the light they strike you." His descriptions of architecture respond to the double meaning of this phrase, the objective (which links "exactly" with "representing") and the subjective (which throws the weight of the adverb on "in the light they strike you"). Throughout both volumes of *Travels* he combines the severely documentary with the cautiously conjectural, writing always in a version of the curt Senecan style:

The portico was marble, of the corinthian order. This was a temple in Antis or of the Eustyle species, and had four columns between the antae. Their diameter is four feet and about six inches; their length thirty-nine feet two inches, but including the base and capital forty-six feet and more than seven inches. The shafts are fluted, and, though their dimensions are so great, each of one stone.... This perhaps was the temple erected at Ephesus by permission of Augustus Caesar to the God Julius, or that dedicated to Claudius Caesar on his Apotheosis. (Chandler 1775, p. 124)

This chiseled, pointillist prose also lends itself to analyzing topography and natural history:

The site is a wilderness; and the low grounds, which are wet, produce the iris or flag, blue and white. This flower is stamped on the money of Teos. We saw cranes here stalking singly in the corn and grass, and picking up and gorging insects and reptiles; or flying heavily with long sticks in their mouths to the tops of trees, and of the remoter houses and chimnies, on which they had agreed to fix their habitation. (Chandler 1775, pp. 98–99)

The precision of such accounts does not rule out the lyrical and the narrative, although Chandler's descriptive powers always serve a documentary purpose. Given his scholarly training, the entries devoted to epigraphy take pride of place. Chandler's account of "the celebrated inscription" at the temple of Sigeum, for instance, combines an archaeologist's eye for construction with a textual scholar's expertise:

The... inscription is on part of a pilaster, eight feet seven inches long; one foot and something more than six inches wide, and above ten inches thick. It is broken at the bottom. In the top is a hole three inches and a half long, three wide, and above two deep. This served to unite it firmly with the upper portion, or the capital, by receiving a bar of metal, a customary mode of construction, which rendered the fabric as solid as the materials were durable.

FIGURE 2.31

William Pars (1742–1782), “The Theatre at Miletus,” ca. 1765. London, The British Museum, P&D. © The Trustees of The British Museum.

FIGURE 2.32 (opposite)

James Stuart (1713–1788), “An Ionic Temple on the Illysus,” ca. 1752. London, RIBA Drawings Collection.

FIGURE 2.33 (opposite)

William Pars (1742–1782), “Ruins of the Temple of Apollo Didymaeus,” ca. 1765. London, The British Museum, P&D Mm,11.65. © The Trustees of The British Museum.

... The lines in both inscriptions range from the left to the right, and from the right to the left, alternately. This mode of disposition was called *Boustrophedon*, the lines turning on the marble as oxen do in ploughing. (Chandler 1775, pp. 37–38)

Through such analytic records, Chandler the travel writer completes and extends the goal set forth in the Society’s instructions, to remark “every Circumstance which can contribute toward giving the best Idea of the ancient and present State [of Ionia]” (Chandler 1775, p. viii). In collaboration with his companions, he takes care to delineate the past under the aspect of the present: “Instead of the stately piles which once impressed ideas of opulence and grandeur, we saw a marsh, a field of barley in ear, buffaloes ploughing heavily by defaced heaps and prostrate edifices, high trees supporting aged vines, and fences of stones and rubbish, with illegible inscriptions, and time-worn fragments” (Chandler 1775, p. 97). For all the picturesque potential of such scenes, however, Chandler keeps the elegiac or meditative treatment of decay firmly in check.

This narrative account is calculated to match and amplify the visual record supplied by William Pars, whose Ionian views reflect in turn a careful study of Stuart’s Athenian gouaches. Pars’s “Theatre at Miletus,” for example, takes several cues from Stuart’s “Ionic Temple on the Illysus” (Figs. 2.31–32). Pars adopts his predecessor’s banded composition, his massing of figures in the left foreground, and his close attention to native custom and costume: both artists pay almost as much attention to modern inhabitants as they do to ancient structures. In “Ruins of the Temple of Apollo Didymaeus,” Pars includes Turks praying, herding, and guarding (Fig. 2.33). He also imitates Stuart’s use of gouache to study the terrain and to enliven a muted palette with patches of intense color.









Stuart's influence manifests itself in other ways as well. Taking his cue from *The Antiquities of Athens*, Pars repeatedly documents the act of documentation. In "The Gymnasium at Ephesus," for example, he shows the travelers in a tent; one of the three, probably Chandler, is writing in a notebook (Fig. 2.34). In "Ruins of the Temple of Apollo Didymaeus," Revett measures a block that has wedged itself between two upright columns (see fig. 2.33). In "An Arch at Mylasa," he takes the measure of the left-hand pier, T square at the ready (Fig. 2.35). The same drawing, moreover, emulates the complexity of Stuart's Athenian gouaches. Like the view of the Erechtheion in Figure 2.27, it illustrates a narrative:

Beneath the hill, on the east side of the town, is an arch or gate-way of marble, of the Corinthian order. On the key-stone of the exterior front, which is eastward, we observed a double-hatchet, as on the two marbles near Myus. It was with difficulty we procured ladders to reach the top; and some were broken, before we could find three sufficiently long and strong for our purpose. The going up, when these were united, was not without danger. The aga had expressed some wonder at our employment, as described to him; and seeing one of my companions on the arch, from a window of his house, which was opposite, pronounced him, as we were told, a brave fellow, but without brains. We desired him to accept our umbrella, on his sending to purchase it for a present to a lady of his Haram, who was going into the country. By the arch was a fountain, to which women came with earthen pitchers for water, and with their faces muffled. (Chandler 1775, p. 189)

FIGURE 2.34

William Pars (1742–1782),  
"The Gymnasium at Ephesus,"  
ca. 1765. London, The British  
Museum, P&D Mm,11.64.  
© The Trustees of The British  
Museum.





FIGURE 2.35

William Pars (1742–1782),  
 “An Arch at Mylasa,” ca. 1765.  
 London, The British Museum,  
 P&D. © The Trustees of  
 The British Museum.

This extended caption invites us to view the scene as if from the aga’s window, much as Stuart framed his prospect of the Tower of the Winds (see fig. 2.29). As in several of Stuart’s drawings, moreover, Pars’s “Arch at Mylasa” juxtaposes Ottoman present to classical past: under one arch, a village girl fills her jug; under another, a youth leads a camel.

For all his debts to Stuart, however, Pars rapidly developed a distinctive style, which he perfected but never modified for the rest of his career. On the Ionian expedition Pars’s “function was, in a sense, purely scientific...but [he] brought to many of these views a delicacy of perception and atmospheric subtlety which may have been stimulated by the novelty of his surroundings, and which make them among the finest works of topography to have been produced in the eighteenth century.”<sup>36</sup> It is likely that this combination of the “scientific” and the “atmospheric” helps to explain the Society’s unflagging support for Pars, who enjoyed patronage from the Dilettanti for the rest of his career.<sup>37</sup>

The hallmark of Pars’s topographical drawings is a subtle amalgam of pen and ink, watercolor, gouache, and gum arabic. Of all his Ionian views, it is “The Sepulchral Monument at Mylasa” that best illustrates the wedding of varied means to multiple ends (Fig. 2.36). Essential to the goal of documentation is a line both delicate and bold—one that will record, accurately and unambiguously, the monument’s defining features. Pars makes use of watercolor washes to evoke the monument’s current condition, especially the pitting and erosion of stone. Touches of gouache (blue, brown, and reddish brown) emphasize the





FIGURE 2.36  
William Pars (1742–1782),  
“Sepulchral Monument at  
Mylasa,” ca. 1765. London,  
The British Museum, P&D.  
© The Trustees of The British  
Museum.



FIGURE 2.37  
William Pars (1742–1782),  
“Capital of a Pilaster from the  
Temple of Apollo Didymaeus,”  
ca. 1765. London, The British  
Museum, P&D 1857-1-10-25.  
© The Trustees of The British  
Museum.



costumes of the four Turks, one of whom swaggers between the columns, and the standing figure who points to the monument. The selective application of gum arabic heightens their contours and accentuates the vegetation of the terrain in the foreground. In this way Pars contrives a deft double focus on the tomb as specimen and the tomb as relic—a monument sculpted by time and mediated by figures in a landscape.

The headpieces and tailpieces in *Ionian Antiquities* distill Pars's style to its essence. Of these vignettes the "Capital of a Pilaster from the Temple of Apollo Didymaeus" encapsulates the art he perfected during the expedition (Fig. 2.37; cf. fig. 2.33). Though it appears at first glance to be purely decorative, the tailpiece offers considerable architectural and botanical information. The capital is shown in two views, front and side, and Pars has taken special pains with the rendering of the acanthus design. By including Düreresque botanical studies in the foreground, he creates a sensitive play between carved and living vegetation. Two Turks recline upon the capital as if it were a divan, the tube of their hookah snaking out of the composition; in the distance, a third Turk leads two loaded camels under an umbrella pine. Considered as a whole, Pars's drawing balances design and color, sobriety and whimsy, the oriental and the ornamental.

Thanks to Nicholas Revett, who supervised the etching, engraving, and printing, the plates in *Ionian Antiquities* come close to capturing this distinctive blend of qualities. In the drawing of "The Gymnasium at Ephesus," Pars focuses his attention on three features in particular: the stone and brick construction of the building; the travelers in their tent and the escort camped around them; and the vegetation in the foreground, which is emphasized by the application of gum arabic (see fig. 2.34). All these details are illuminated and unified by "an even bland light characteristic of Pars' watercolours throughout his life."<sup>38</sup> The plate in *Ionian Antiquities* does complete justice to the original drawing, translating color and light into their graphic counterparts (Fig. 2.38). The same is true for the panoramic view of the monument at Mylasa, in which the etched passages capture the effect of watercolor wash as a means of rendering the condition of stone (Fig. 2.39; cf. fig. 2.36). Chandler's description likewise trains the eye relentlessly on the monument's style, structure, and condition:

The roof is remarkable for its construction, but two of the stones are wanting, and some distorted. It is supported by pillars of the Corinthian order, fluted, some of which have suffered from violence, being hewn near the bases, with a view to destroy the fabric for the iron and materials. The shafts are not circular, but elliptical; and in the angular columns, square. The reason is, the sides, which are not open, were closed with marble pannels; and that form was necessary to give them a due projection. The inside has been painted blue. This structure is the first object as you approach from Iasus, and stand by the road. The entrance was on the farther side, the ascent to it probably by a pair of steps, occasionally applied and removed. (Chandler 1775, p. 190)

Like the view it interprets, this passage attends simultaneously to the original construction,



Pearce Delin.

*Gymnasium at Iphesus.*

Brown Sculp.



Pearce Delin.

*Sepulchral monument at Mylasa.*

Brown Sculp.



the present condition, and the topographic context. In short, Pars and Chandler complement one another even more effectively than Stuart and Revett.

The essential characteristics of this “Ionian” style continue through the rest of Pars’s career—witness the drawings from his final, Italian period, when he was supported by a stipend from the Dilettanti. From start to finish, his work for the Society reflects and promotes the Dilettanti aesthetic: the emphasis on accuracy, precision, measurement, and empirical exactitude. Even when working in Naples, the capital of the urban picturesque and the natural sublime, Pars remains true to the instructions that the Society had issued in 1764 (Fig. 2.40; see also pp. 72–73). Pars also made another kind of archaeological contribution when he showed Sir William Hamilton the shards he had picked up in Athens, thereby proving the Greek provenance of what had formerly been thought to be Etruscan vases in Hamilton’s collection.

In their magisterial account of British architectural treatises, Eileen Harris and Nicholas Savage acknowledge that the proto-archaeological folios sponsored by the Dilettanti “made an important contribution to classical scholarship.” However, Harris and Savage complicate their tribute by criticizing their monumental volumes for presenting “information [that is] precise almost to excess.” The result, they conclude, is “not inspiring.”<sup>39</sup> This judgment reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the Society’s “culture of measurement,” to use a term that has been applied to Desgodetz’s *Edifices*.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, “inspiring” is precisely what the folios proved to be. In the short term, granted, the publications sponsored

FIGURE 2.38 (opposite)  
*Gymnasium at Ephesus*. From Society of Dilettanti, *Antiquities of Ionia* (London, 1797), part 2, pl. xxxix. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 2.39 (opposite)  
*Sepulchral monument at Mylasa*. From Society of Dilettanti, *Antiquities of Ionia* (London, 1797), part 2, pl. xxiv. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 2.40  
William Pars (1742–1782), *Grotto at Posilippo*, ca. 1781. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.





by the Dilettanti were overshadowed by Robert Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro* (1764), a work that pays surface homage to Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra*. In fact, Adam aligns himself with the priorities and procedures of Le Roy. Like Le Roy's *Ruines*, Adam's *Ruins* parades its antiquarian zeal yet brims with inaccuracies. These have multiple causes: the fanciful drawings of Clérissseau, Adam's teacher and collaborator; the seductive impact of Piranesi, who had decisively shaped Adam's artistic education in Rome; and Adam's fundamental motive, to use the volume as a beguiling professional calling card.<sup>41</sup> The result is an imaginative reconstruction-cum-scenic display-piece, which cloaks itself as a scrupulous architectural treatise. As John Fleming has observed, the *Ruins of the palace . . . of Diocletian* exhibits Adam's "pictorial, picturesque interpretation of classicism."<sup>42</sup> This fact was not lost upon discerning contemporaries, none shrewder or more learned than Edward Gibbon: "There is room to suspect, that the elegance of his designs and engraving has somewhat flattered the objects which it was their purpose to represent."<sup>43</sup>

In sum, Adam's volume speaks what amounts to an anti-scientific, pro-continental, pro-picturesque language that in every essential respect differs from the proto-archaeological folio we have been considering. In terms of influence on contemporary architecture, Adam wins the day. But with the advent of academic Neoclassicism and the professional study of the Graeco-Roman past, the achievement of the Society receives belated recognition. Ironically, it is a German scholar, Friedrich Kruse, who takes the first accurate measure of what the Dilettanti had accomplished. In his *Hellas* (1825), Professor Kruse observes: "With its foundation begins a new period in the rediscovery of Greece, in which the greatest precision was applied regarding the determination of geographical and topographical relationships, and in particular regarding the measurements of ancient temples."<sup>44</sup>

With their increasingly ambitious commitment to documenting classical antiquity, the Dilettanti take their place, along with such contemporaries as Johnson and Walpole, in a significant cultural endeavor—the ordering of the arts. They also establish a model for connoisseurship based on "private curiosity" and bent on enhancing "the taste of a polished nation." The Society's achievements at mid-century help to inspire a disciple who will go on to excel his masters: Richard Payne Knight, who as a young man sets out to acquire cachet as a traveler, collector, and connoisseur. His preliminary ventures prepare him to lead the Dilettanti in their third generation, to write *A Discourse on the Worship of Priapus*, and to become the moving force behind the Society's ultimate masterpiece, *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*.

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CHAPTER 3

## RICHARD PAYNE KNIGHT'S “EXPEDITION INTO SICILY”

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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On 12 April 1777 the ambitious young polymath Richard Payne Knight “set out from Naples in a Felucca of twelve Oars, with an intention of making the turn of Sicily and visiting Paestum and the Lipari Islands in our way.”<sup>1</sup> Knight had made careful plans to document this “turn” in words and pictures. His primary record took the form of a detailed journal, which he embellished at a later stage with literary quotations and a set of concluding observations. Knight’s companions, the topographical artist Jakob Philipp Hackert (1737–1807) and his pupil Charles Gore (1729–1807), were charged with supplying images that would illustrate and amplify the narrative. After the trip was over, Knight commissioned John Robert Cozens (1752–1797) to rework some of the on-site drawings; at a later stage, he employed Thomas Hearne (1744–1817) to create finished watercolors that would lend themselves to engraving.

Despite these elaborate preparations, the projected volume never appeared. “The best explanation is perhaps the publication of rival accounts of Sicily; in particular, in 1781—the very time when Knight may have been preparing for publication—the Abbé de Saint-Non’s lavishly illustrated folios on southern Italy began to appear” (*Expedition*, p. 15). However, close analysis of the journal and the drawings points toward a likelier explanation: because Knight designed his enterprise as a set of credentials for membership in the Dilettanti, the “turn” had served its turn when he was elected to the Society in 1781.

With the “Expedition into Sicily” Knight began to emulate, and ultimately to rival, the career of Sir William Hamilton, whose achievements he had first encountered during his Grand Tour of 1772–73. By the time of Knight’s trip to the Mezzogiorno, Hamilton’s status as preeminent British amateur had been consolidated by his election to the Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries, and the Society of Dilettanti (Fig. 3.1). In the journal Knight pays tribute to him through the choice of itinerary, the precision of narrative, and the encomium to the Prince of Biscari, Sicily’s best-known virtuoso. Moreover, Knight’s *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* (discussed fully in chap. 5) originated in Hamilton’s report in 1781 on phallic rituals to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society and Secretary-Treasurer of the Dilettanti. While completing work on the *Discourse*, Knight began to

FIGURE 3.1

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *Sir William Hamilton*, 1777. Oil on canvas, 255.3 × 175.2 cm. London, National Portrait Gallery inv. 680. By courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.



FIGURE 3.2

Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830), *Richard Payne Knight*, 1794. The Whitworth Art Gallery, The University of Manchester.



acquire vases, gems, coins, and bronzes—collections that he enhanced a decade later by buying directly from Hamilton. This decades-long *imitatio* came to a climax in 1794, the year in which Knight took possession of Hamilton's second collection of bronzes and commissioned a portrait of himself from Sir Thomas Lawrence. To compare this portrait with its model, Reynolds's full-length of Sir William (1777), is to grasp Knight's will to cultural power and to mark the changing of the guard, as the second generation of Dilettanti gives way to the third (Fig. 3.2).

Reynolds had supplied Hamilton with an icon that would preside over his vase collection in the British Museum. Accordingly, Knight turned to Reynolds's successor as



official painter to the Society for an icon that would preside over his library at Downton Castle, a highly personal temple of culture that drew for inspiration upon the Pantheon in Rome. This country seat, like the museum in Knight's London house, inspired reactions ranging from admiration to ridicule—as we will observe when James Gillray trains his sights on Knight the antiquarian (see chap. 6). Reynolds exhibits and celebrates the achievements of a collector and connoisseur who is also something of a visionary—witness the intense but elusive gaze, which is directed simultaneously upward, outward, and inward. Hamilton rests his left elbow on a table that displays a vase from his collection, while drawing attention to a plate from the folio catalogue. The same pose serves as the basis for Lawrence's composition: Knight rests his left elbow on a table that displays a bronze vessel; the contours of this vessel, which the sitter considered one of his prize pieces, echo those of the red-figured hydria in Reynolds's portrait. Knight holds a folio volume on his lap while gazing upward, outward, and inward; to judge from the appearance of the illustrations, this folio may be an album of Sicilian views.<sup>2</sup> Lawrence's imposing portrait, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy, suggests that Knight has fulfilled, in almost typological fashion, the promise of his predecessor.

As he began to fashion himself into a Hamiltonian Dilettante, Knight turned for inspiration to *Campi Phlegraei, Observations on the Volcanos of the Two Sicilies, As They have been communicated to the Royal Society of London by Sir William Hamilton . . . To which, in Order to convey the most precise idea of each remark, a new and accurate Map is annexed, with 54 Plates illuminated from Drawings taken and colour'd after Nature, under the inspection of the Author, by the Editor Mr Peter Fabris* (1776). Hamilton repeats the key word of this title in his prefatory letter to Sir John Pringle, President of the Royal Society: "Accurate and faithfull observations on the operations of nature, related with simplicity and truth, are not to be met with often, and such only have I had the honor of laying before the Respectable Society, at the head of which, you, Sir, are so worthily placed."<sup>3</sup> The term "Observations" does several kinds of work. It upholds the priorities and standards of the Royal Society: as Hamilton tells Pringle later in the preface, "Here you will see, Sir, each Cone, each crater, and by the sections of them, the very strata of which they are composed. . . . I adopt heartily the motto of our Society NULLIUS IN VERBA" (*Campi Phlegraei*, p. 12). It emphasizes that both kinds of description, the verbal and the visual, are based on "precise" and "accurate" inquiry. Furthermore, it authenticates the illustrations: the observer-writer has exercised careful surveillance over the observer-artist during the course of their investigations. Such authentication is reinforced by the fact that many of the illustrations display Hamilton and Fabris in the act of inspecting volcanic phenomena. The two men (Hamilton in red, Fabris in blue) are portrayed as an harmonious team, although plates that stress reciprocity, such as in Figure 3.3, are balanced by those that show Fabris drawing "under the inspection of Sir William Hamilton" (Fig. 3.4).

The medium of gouache, moreover, helps to create a visual record that unites "exactness" with "taste" (*Campi Phlegraei*, p. 5). The same qualities, Hamilton stresses, inform the etchings as well: "Plates, imitating the original drawings . . . are executed with such delicacy and perfection, as scarcely to be distinguished from the original drawings themselves" (*Campi*





*Phlegraei*, p. 6). Fabris's illustrations "were among the first, of those dedicated to the Neapolitan landscape, to combine the *genre* of topographical 'vedutismo' with gouache technique."<sup>4</sup> The result, as Hamilton proudly tells his nephew Charles Greville, is a volume that sets a new standard for "every book of natural history."<sup>5</sup>

As Knight understood, however, Hamilton and Fabris were emulating goals and methods that had first been established by the Society of Dilettanti. Accordingly, the projected Sicilian volume looks back through the *Campi Phlegraei* to *The Antiquities of Athens* and *Ionian Antiquities*. In every important respect Knight's project fulfills the expectations that were set forth by the Society in its directive to the members of the first Ionian expedition. As we saw in the previous chapter, Chandler, Revett, and Pars were instructed to "procure the exactest plans and measures possible of the buildings you shall find...taking such views as you shall judge proper...and remarking every circumstance which can contribute toward giving the best idea of the ancient and present state of those places."<sup>6</sup> Knight pursues identical goals: the core of the "Expedition into Sicily" consists of entries devoted to the ruins of Segesta, Selinunte, and Agrigento. Each section begins with a topographical overview, moves on to a monument-by-monument description, and ends with a digest of the historical sources. Almost as if he were a modern archaeologist, Knight supplies interlocking sets of data: the equivalent of a top-plan (which disposes and delineates), a locus sheet (which measures and analyzes), and a journal (which narrates and interprets). Though there are no explicit references to the illustrations, the reader is invited to visualize, to cross-check, and then to revisualize.

The "Expedition," in short, is a carefully planned collaborative undertaking—one in which words create pictures and pictures amplify words. Knight's entry for the temple at Segesta establishes the basic formula. After sketching in the location, he moves swiftly to a feature-by-feature account:

It has six columns in front and fourteen deep, all entire with their entablatures. The Architecture is the old Doric, but it appears never to have been finished, the Shafts of the columns being only rough hewn. I could find no foundations of the cell, & am inclined to think that it was never built, as there were a number of square stones near, probably intended for that purpose. The Columns are about 6. Feet diamr. but their being unfinished renders it impossible to tell their just dimensions. The intablature I could not measure, not being able to procure a Ladder & there were no fragments on the Ground. (*Expedition*, p. 39)

As in Richard Chandler's Ionian narrative, the vitality and the authenticity of this description derive from a sense of process: we explore the temple along with Knight, understanding exactly what and how he records. The emphasis on empirical exactitude pervades the entry, witness Knight's record of Segesta's theater: "It is built of hewn Stone without cement, & like all the Greek Theatres upon a declivity, so that the back seats rest upon the ground. As near as I could measure amidst the Shrubs and ruins with which it was cover'd, it was about 200. Feet wide" (*Expedition*, p. 39). Materials, dimensions, state of preservation—all are assessed as accurately as field conditions allow.

FIGURE 3.3

Pietro Fabris (active eighteenth century), "Sir William Hamilton and Pietro Fabris inspecting volcanic phenomena." From William Hamilton, *Campi Phlegraei* (Naples, 1776), pl. xvii. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 3.4

Pietro Fabris (active eighteenth century), "Pietro Fabris drawing under the inspection of Sir William Hamilton." From William Hamilton, *Campi Phlegraei* (Naples, 1776), pl. xxii. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.



FIGURE 3.5

Jakob Philipp Hackert (1737–1807), *View of the temple at Segesta*, 1777. Pen and black ink, with watercolor and bodycolor, 33.4 × 44.6 cm. London, The British Museum, P&D Oo,4.7. © The Trustees of The British Museum.

FIGURE 3.6

Charles Gore (1729–1807), *Temple of Ceres, Segesta*, 1777. Watercolor, 17.4 × 26.3 cm. London, The British Museum, P&D Oo,4.10. © The Trustees of The British Museum.

It is safe to infer, moreover, that Knight had chosen Hackert and Gore for their abilities to provide visual counterparts to his textual record: Hackert was well known, in Goethe's phrase, for preaching and practicing "the supreme importance of accuracy in drawing."<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Hackert had worked for Hamilton on the predecessor to the *Campi Phlegraei*, the *Observations on Mount Vesuvius, Mount Etna and other volcanos* (1772).<sup>8</sup> In their views of Segesta, Hackert and Gore precisely recreate the sensation that Knight describes at the beginning of his diary entry: "On approaching one is struck with a view of a noble temple, which stands alone upon a small Hill surrounded by high Mountains" (*Expedition*, p. 38). In order to capture the solitary position, document the monumental construction, and evoke the "noble" impression, Hackert and Gore choose a vantage point that is low and oblique (Figs. 3.5–6). Both record precisely the architectural features described by Knight: the unbroken entablature, the "rough hewn" shafts of the columns, the absence of a cella. Both pay careful attention to the effects of weathering and encroaching vegetation. But there the resemblances cease. Hackert uses gouache, as Stuart had done, to create marked contrasts in color; he lights the scene emphatically from the left; he chooses to focus attention on the temple by eliminating the hills and by including figures engaged in observing, discussing, and recording. This motif harks back not only to the two Dilettanti folios but also to the *Campi Phlegraei*. By contrast, Gore restricts himself to a muted palette and to an evenly diffused light that resembles Pars's cool illumination. A single figure, his back to the viewer, helps to establish scale and to suggest local dress but not to represent the act of observation.

The next site, Selinunte, offers a more substantial challenge to Knight's descriptive powers. The remains of the "mighty City" include "six magnificent Temples, all prostrate upon the ground, but the parts sufficiently intire to show what they once were" (*Expedition*, p. 39). Of these six, it is the Temple of Jupiter that warrants and receives the closest scrutiny:

It had eight columns in front and seventeen deep, each ten feet diamr. at base & six at the Capital, & about fifty feet high. Each round is a single Stone of which there are seldom more than eight in a Column, & in many less. The Capitals are like those of the great Temple or Basilica at Paestum & the Columns diminished regularly from bottom to top. The Abacus is twelve feet, ten Inches square, & the trigliffs four feet long and every other number of the entablature in proportion. The inter-columniation was a little more than a diametre, but the ruins are tumbled into such confused heaps, that *I could not measure with exactitude.* (*Expedition*, pp. 39–40, my emphasis)

As with his description of the temple at Segesta, Knight marks off what he knows "with exactitude" from what must remain conjectural. Unlike the previous diary entry, however, he moves from the "antiquarian" to the "historical," from the material to the literary, from architecture to politics.<sup>9</sup> The summary of the decline and fall of Selinunte concludes by insinuating a contrast and a claim. The tacit contrast is between ancient vigor and modern torpor; the tacit claim is that autocracy is inimical to artistry:





In what manner soever [the temples] were destroyed it must have been with great labor & difficulty, for the foundations are immensely deep, & the whole built with a greatness & stability that surpass even the noblest works of the Roman Emperors. So much the more wonderful as they were the production of a Republic, that existed but a short time, & which was never much more than a trading Company. While one views them, one cannot but reflect how inestimable is the blessing of Liberty, that enabled so small a State as Selinus, whose dominions extended but a few miles to perform what the mighty Lords of the Earth have scarcely equalled. (*Expedition*, pp. 41–42)

Even at this comparatively early stage of the narrative, the greatness of ancient Sicily (a greatness that can be measured through its ruins) sharpens the traveler's awareness of pervasive contemporary decay.

FIGURE 3.7  
Jakob Philipp Hackert (1737–1807), *Ruins of the Temple of Juno Lacina at Agrigentum*, 1777. Pen and brown ink, with watercolor, 34 × 45.3 cm. London, The British Museum, P&D Oo,4.28. © The Trustees of The British Museum.

The diary's lengthiest archaeological set piece is devoted to the ruins of Agrigento. Knight's account begins with a panorama from the vantage point of the modern town, which "commands a beautiful view to the northwest over the Ground where that famous City stood, which is now planted with Olives & other trees, interspersed with Ruins, of which here are in greater quantities & better preserved than any where else in Sicily" (*Expedition*, p. 42). In the section that surveys the ancient city's fourteen temples, Knight realizes more fully than elsewhere in the diary his ultimate goal, to combine the measure with the pleasure of ruins:





—The first, beginning from the East, is the Temple of Juno Lucina, of which remain the basement, a small part of the Cell, and about half the Portico. The Columns are about 4 ft. 3 In. diamre. at bottom & about 3. ft. 15 In. at top, diminished regularly like those of Selinus. The entablature seemed much the same, as in other Temples of the old Doric order, but it was so much mutilated, that I could not measure it with any exactitude.... The present appearance of the Temple of Juno is the most picturesque that can be imagined. It is situated upon a small Hill, cover'd with trees, among which like the broken Columns etc. that have fallen down, for the material is so coarse that they are not thought worth carrying away. (*Expedition*, pp. 42–43)

This passage and others like it act as cues for and accompaniments to the visual records of Hackert, Gore, and Hearne. In Hackert's view of the Temple of Juno, firm lines and contrasting colors—especially the massing of blue-green cactus against mottled limestone—create a vivid sense of place (Fig. 3.7). In the foreground, touches of gouache emphasize a triangle of earth, stone, and scrub. In the center of the composition, three figures clamber among the ruins; like Stuart in Athens, once again, Hackert is interested in observing observation. Gore records the same scene from a greater distance (Fig. 3.8). Delicately but precisely, he studies the relationship between temple and landscape, choosing a more distant vantage point and a less assertive style. As in the watercolor of Segesta, both light and color are subdued to a sense of geometrical design (cf. fig. 3.6). The nature of Hearne's contribution is suggested by his "'Tomb of Theron,' at Agrigentum," which includes not only elements of the "picturesque" but also the bold outlines and marked tonal contrasts that ultimately assisted the engraver

FIGURE 3.8  
Charles Gore (1729–1807), *Temple of Juno Lucina, Agrigentum*, 1777.  
Watercolor, 22.6 × 42.1 cm.  
London, The British Museum,  
P&D 00,4,31. © The Trustees of  
The British Museum.







(Fig. 3.9).<sup>10</sup> It is likely that the same graphic concerns also influenced watercolorist Hackert, who had considerable experience as an engraver and publisher. Indeed his monochrome Sicilian views, executed in pen and brown wash, are themselves halfway to prints (Fig. 3.10). By the time Knight had prepared the fair copy of the diary and assembled the views by the four artists involved, he had fashioned the virtual equivalent of a folio that might have been called "Sicilian Antiquities."

The "turn of Sicily" is plotted, verbally and visually, to highlight classical sites. But with Hamilton and other Dilettanti in mind, Knight also shows off his skills as geologist and connoisseur. Accordingly, volcanic vignettes and aesthetic aperçus are interspersed among the archaeological entries. As the travelers set sail, Knight trains his gaze first on Vesuvius and then on the Bay of Naples, whose "pearly hue" he compares to the "Tint" that "very particularly marks Claude Lorraine's Coloring" (*Expedition*, p. 26). On the island of Lipari, he climbs to the summit in order to observe "the Crater of the Volcano . . . surrounded by porous Rocks" (*Expedition*, p. 31). In Palermo, he assesses "two Rams of Brass, brought from Syracuse":

It is astonishing what an Air of dignity & grandeur the Artist has given to so humble an Animal, & yet preserved the exactitude of a portrait. The finishing is in that bold masterly Stile, which is peculiar to the best ages of Greece. Even in the turn of the Horns there is Grace & elegance, & the Wool tho' seemingly neglected has all the softness & lightness of Nature. Upon the whole these Bronzes are equal if not superior to any thing I have seen at Rome, Portici, or Florence, & may be ranked among the few genuine Works that exist of the fine Greek artists. (*Expedition*, p. 38)

This passage is calculated to display Knight's taste and learning—his ability to look carefully, respond keenly, and evaluate judiciously. So too the long diary entry that describes the travelers' ascent of Mount Aetna testifies to his volcanic expertise:

[I]n examining into the deep vallees that have been worn by torrents, one sees that it is all composed of different Strata of Lava which have run one over another at long intervals of time being interlay'd with Soil of all depths from six Inches to ten feet, according to the time that elapsed between the eruptions. . . . I resolved however to look into the Crater before I descended. . . . From hence I looked into this tremendous Gulf of fire, and saw immense projecting rocks with vast volumes of Smoke, issuing from between them, mixed with a dim glimmering light. (*Expedition*, p. 57)

Here Knight acts out scenes, both verbal and pictorial, from the *Campi Phlegraei*—especially Hamilton's bravura account of Vesuvius in action:

In the midst of this very white smoke, an immense quantity of stones, Scoriae, and ashes were shot up to a wonderfull height, certainly not less than two thousand feet: I could also

FIGURE 3.9

Thomas Hearne (1744–1817), "Tomb of Theron," Agrigentum, ca. 1780. Watercolor, with gray ink, over graphite, 27 × 44.7 cm. London, The British Museum. © The Trustees of The British Museum.

FIGURE 3.10

Jakob Philipp Hackert (1737–1807), *Ruins of the Temple of Hercules at Agrigento*, 1777. London, The British Museum, P&D Oo,4.27. © The Trustees of The British Museum.



perceive by the help of one of Ramsden's most excellent refracting Telescopes, at times, a quantity of liquid lava seemingly very weighty, just heaved up high enough to clear the rim of the crater, and then take its course impetuously down the steep side of Vesuvius, opposite to Somma: Soon after a Lava broke out on the same side from about the middle of the conical part of the Volcano, and having ran with violence some hours ceased suddenly.<sup>11</sup>

Such records of and tributes to the volcanic sublime register even more vividly in the gouaches of Hamilton's partner Fabris, which served as the basis for those spectacular hand-colored plates that formed the frontispiece of the *Campi Phlegraei* (Fig. 3.11). Both writer and artist "endeavour to convey...clearly and distinctly...the impression it made...at the time, without aiming in the least at a flowery Stile."<sup>12</sup> To avoid luxuriant rhetoric while creating an indelible impact: this goal inspired Knight as well.

If the implicit model for Knight's virtuosic investigations is Hamilton, then the explicit exemplar is the Prince of Biscari. In paying detailed homage to him, Knight becomes a connoisseur of connoisseurs. Like Pompeii, the ancient city of Catania is "all under the Lava," but the Prince "has made great researches, and found a Theatre, Baths, Amphitheatre & some other buildings of less importance" (*Expedition*, p. 54). His private "Museum" includes "a noble collection of Bronzes, Etruscan Vases, & natural curiosities and more particularly of Medals" (*Expedition*, p. 54). The parallels with Hamilton are consolidated at the end of Knight's tribute: "He is also about publishing a large work upon the Antiquities of Catania, which from the Drawings I saw, promises much" (*Expedition*, p. 55). This concluding sentence also suggests a parallel to, and self-endorsement of, Knight's Sicilian enterprise.

The Prince is not only a model dilettante but also an enlightened ruler, who has taken pains to make his garden grow:

At Biscari we perceived an agreeable change in the Country. The fields were richly cultivated and newly enclosed; the banks planted with Vines & Mulberries; & every thing wore the face of prosperity and improvement...the moment we were out of his estate, the signs of misery & idleness again appeared, and continued all the Way to Syracuse. (*Expedition*, p. 47)

In contrasting this Edenic microcosm with the fallen macrocosm, Knight begins to sound the polemical note that dominates the diary's concluding pages: "Bigotry and oppression and a false system of political economy have done more in laying waste Sicily, than the worst effects of War & tumult could have produced" (*Expedition*, p. 47). By "bigotry" Knight means Roman Catholicism in general and the priesthood in particular. Two anticlerical fables epitomize his critique. The first concerns Catania's response to the eruption of 1669, when lava from Mount Aetna inundated the city:

Instead of making Walls or trenches to avert its fury, the People of Catania, brought out St. Agatha's Veil, & a whole Legion of Saints each of whom, the Priests assured them, was

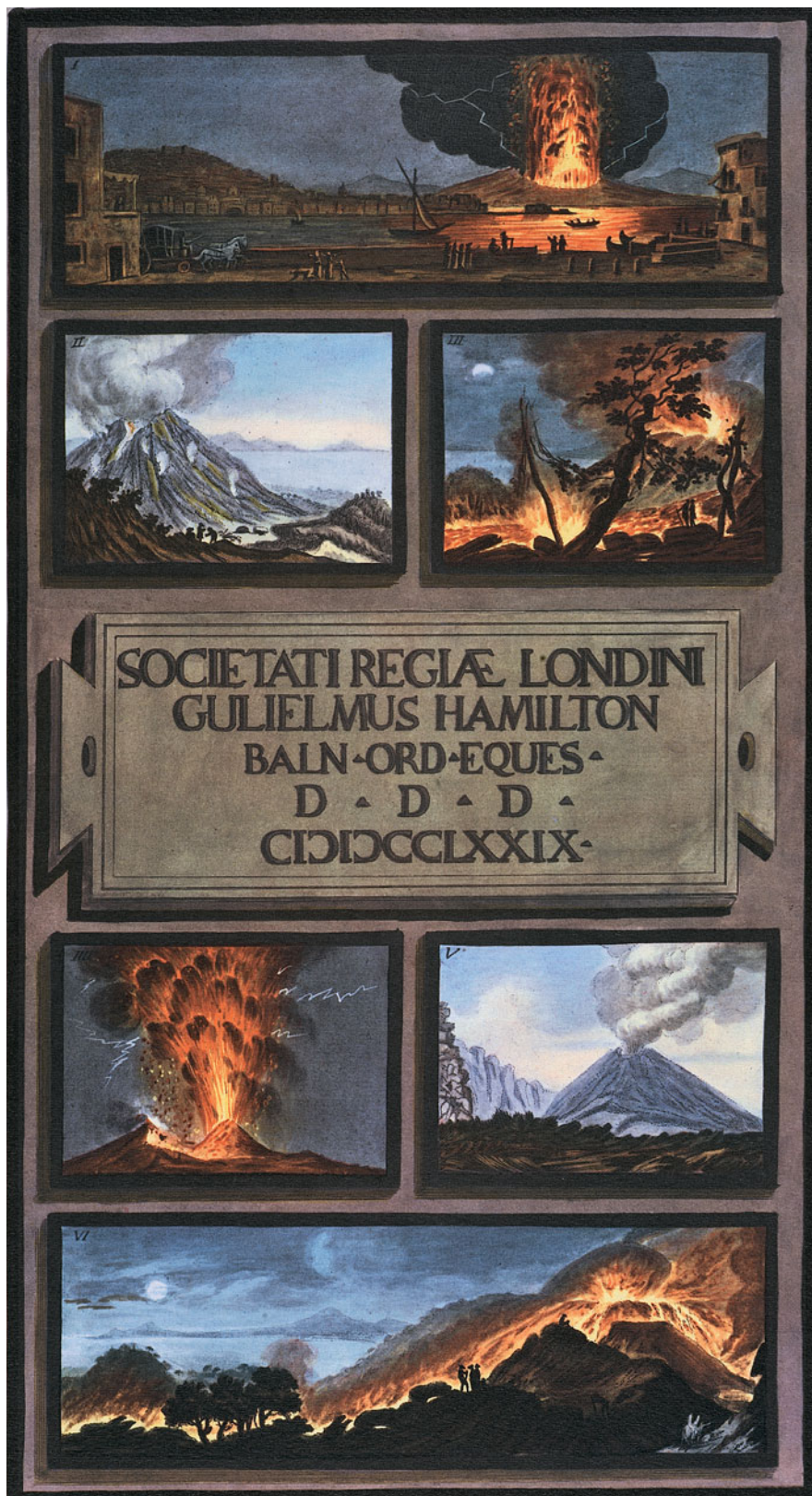


FIGURE 3.11  
Pietro Fabris (active eighteenth century), Frontispiece. From William Hamilton, *Supplement to the Campi Phlegraei* (Naples, 1779). Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

sufficient to perform much greater Miracles. The consequence of this was as usual. A great part of the City was destroyed, its Port filled up and the Inhabitants ruined... (*Expedition*, p. 53)

The second fable creates an eighteenth-century version of Galileo's conflict with the Roman Catholic hierarchy:

Weak as human reason is, it would be sufficient in its lowest state to penetrate the thin veil of Priestcraft, if People only dared think.... The Ecclesiasticks in Sicily, as well as every where else, are perfectly sensible of this, & therefore oppose every thing, that can possibly imploy the mind. The trifling Indiscretion of a British Traveller, in publishing part of a private conversation had like to have ruined the learned Canon Recupero of Catania, & will probably prevent his valuable Work upon Mount Aetna from ever appearing to the World. The Bishop gave him a very severe admonition, & an absolute injunction, not to mention any thing for the future, that could possibly invalidate the Authority of Moses. (*Expedition*, p. 61)

Both tales pit clear-sighted empiricism against blind superstition: instead of digging trenches, the citizens of Catania put their trust in relics; instead of rewarding a pioneering contribution to geology, the Church silences one of its most learned members. This tragic state of affairs originates in "the sour mythology of the Christians," which ended a pagan golden age: "Beauty & elegance of every kind were not only despised, but any attention to them condemned as impious & profane. The Temples were demolished & the Statues broken in pieces by these fierce Enthusiasts" (*Expedition*, p. 66). Such grafting of anticlerical rhetoric onto precise description departs from Knight's models while anticipating his collaboration with Hamilton during the following decade—a collaboration that forms the subject of chapter 5.

To interpret the materials created and coordinated by Knight for his projected "Sicilian Antiquities" is to witness the education of an amateur. This education, which honed his knowledge of ancient art and architecture, inspired Knight's formidable collections and such interpretive ventures as the *Discourse* and *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*. It also inspired no less a polymath than Goethe, who translated and published part of Knight's diary several decades later. The manuscript then disappeared from view until 1980. Knight bequeathed the watercolors to the British Museum, along with his bronzes and gems—a legacy obscured by his high-handed dismissal of Lord Elgin's Parthenon sculptures.



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## CHAPTER 4

# SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS'S “STAR AND GARTER” PICTURES

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These paintings dramatize ardent acts of connoisseurship: Greek vases in one, gems in the other, wine and women in both. The allusive range of these paintings both captures and reflects an ambitious commitment to the study of antiquity.

In 1766 Reynolds was elected to the Society of Dilettanti; his sponsor was Lord Charlemont, a prominent Grand Tourist whom he had known in Rome. Soon after his election, Reynolds ingeniously evaded “Face Money” by presenting the Dilettanti with a self-portrait whose format (half-length) and dimensions (ca. 25 × 30 in.; ca. 64 × 76 cm) are identical to those of the Knapton ensemble (Fig. 4.1; cf. chap. 1). Reynolds affiliates himself tactfully but unmistakably with the more dignified “Van Dyck” group: the turn of the head, the intent gaze, the rufflike white stock, the subdued brown cloak and the emblematic portfolio—all call to mind Knapton’s *Thomas Brand* and a serious commitment to connoisseurship (see fig. 1.33).<sup>1</sup> With this subtle self-portrait Reynolds begins his engagement with and enrichment of the Society’s iconographic traditions.

Three years later (1769) Reynolds succeeded James Stuart as limner; Stuart’s work on *The Antiquities of Athens* for the better part of a dozen years may help to account for his failure to paint any portraits of the Dilettanti. In 1777 Reynolds embarked on an ambitious pair of conversation pieces to adorn the Society’s new headquarters—a specially designed room in the Star and Garter Tavern (Figs. 4.2–3).<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Lord Grantham, a former patron and fellow Dilettante, Reynolds describes both the pictures and their effect:

I am now drawing two Pictures for the two ends of the room.

In one of them are the Portraits of Sir Wm Hamilton Sir Watkin Williams Mr Smith Mr Taylor Mr Thomson & Mr Gallway. In the other

FIGURE 4.1

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1766. Oil on canvas, 76 × 63 cm. London, Society of Dilettanti. Photo: Courtauld Institute, London, no. zo4588p.

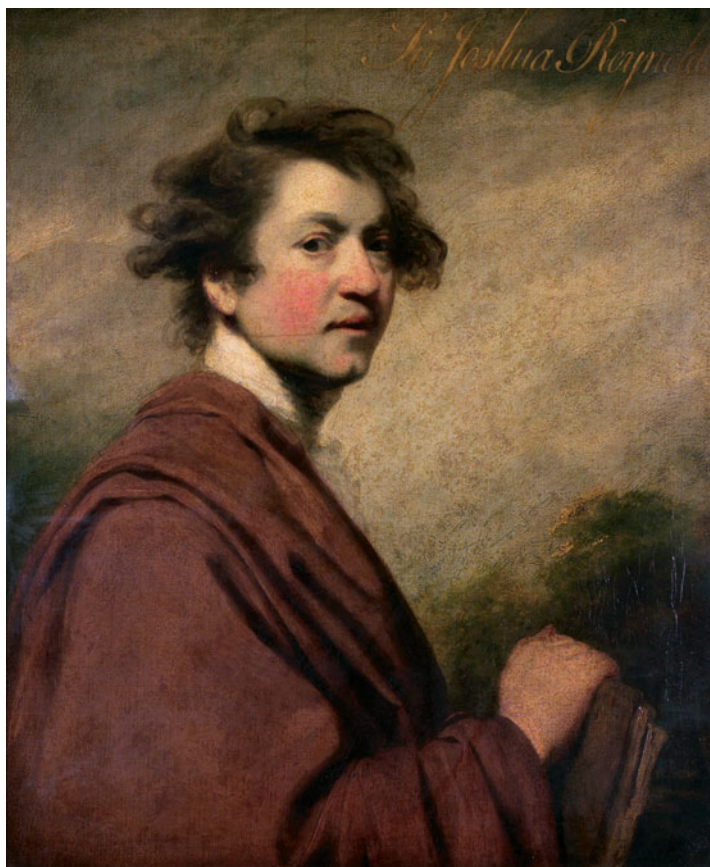










FIGURE 4.2 (page 98)  
 Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792),  
*Members of the Society of Dilettanti,*  
*“Vases,”* 1777–79. Oil on canvas,  
 196.8 × 142.2 cm. By permission  
 of the Society of Dilettanti.  
 Photo: Photographic Survey,  
 Courtauld Institute of Art.  
 Photographer: Prudence  
 Cuming Associates, Ltd.

FIGURE 4.3 (page 99)  
 Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792),  
*Members of the Society of Dilettanti,*  
*“Gems,”* 1777–79. Oil on canvas,  
 196.8 × 142.2 cm. By permission  
 of the Society of Dilettanti.  
 Photo: Photographic Survey,  
 Courtauld Institute of Art.  
 Photographer: Prudence  
 Cuming Associates, Ltd.

is Lord Carmarthen Lord Seaforth Lord Mulgrave Mr Greville Mr Dundass Mr Banks & Mr Crowle. They are employed according to the intent of the Society in drinking and Virtù. The new Room and these Pictures have given something of a reviving spirit to the Society.<sup>3</sup>

This report, though informative, leaves much unsaid. The pictures themselves tell a fuller tale, which makes it clear that Reynolds was continuing to honor the legacy of Knapton by combining the bacchic, the sexual, the classical, and the sacrilegious. At the same time, competition enlivens imitation: Reynolds gives “something of a reviving spirit to the Society” by expressing its new maturity through a new formal complexity and allusive sophistication. In doing so he reinterprets and extends *seria ludo* for a new generation of Dilettanti.

This view of Reynolds’s project, which emphasizes its continuities with Knapton’s group, runs counter to the arguments of Dror Wahrman in his adventurous recent study, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*. Wahrman’s interpretation of the period turns on a sweeping contrast between “the *ancien régime* of identity” and a culture marked by the emergence of “a new, alternative identity regime.”<sup>4</sup> By the late eighteenth century, Wahrman claims, identity that derived from generic categories and social performances had given way to conceptions of selfhood based upon “psychological depth, or interiority” (Wahrman, p. xi). This radical shift explains the differences between Knapton’s portraits and Reynolds’s: the former betray “an absence of commitment to the depths of selfhood” (Wahrman, p. 181), while the latter revel in “immediately recognizable differences between the individualized likenesses of the members” (Wahrman, p. 269). Though Wahrman ignores or misunderstands vital questions of genre, composition, and setting, his analysis does challenge us to rethink the multifaceted relationship between the Society’s third official “Limner” and its first.

As Reynolds’s letter to Grantham implies, the pictures were designed as pendants: in one, seven Dilettanti, wine glasses in hand, gather around a table to admire ancient vases; in the other, seven Dilettanti, wine glasses in hand, gather around a table to admire ancient gems.<sup>5</sup> The letter also reveals that the pictures were meant to hang at opposite ends of the room—a fact that explains why “the two paintings are lit from opposite directions.”<sup>6</sup> The most plausible reconstruction of the room’s appearance, therefore, places the pendants on axis with each other—“Vases” on the left as one faced the window wall, and “Gems” on the right. As the frame maker’s bill testifies, the pair of pictures was displayed over a pair of chimney-pieces. This hang suggests that the Knaptons were grouped across from the window-wall. It is possible, moreover, that the room’s adornments included a statue of a female nude—a devotional image that would have supplied “the missing complementary element of both compositions.”<sup>7</sup>

By virtue of their design and their placement, Reynolds’s “two Pictures for the two ends of the room” stage antiphonal acts of connoisseurship. In “Vases” Sir William Hamilton, recently inducted into the Society, proudly displays the first volume of *Antiquités Etrusques, Grecques et Romaines*, the sumptuous catalogue of his vase collection (see fig. 4.2). The volume

is open to Plate 60, which illustrates a black-figure oinochoe, or wine jug. In the opinion of Hamilton and his collaborator Baron d'Hancarville (1719–1805), the appeal of this pot derived from the contrast between its tragic subject matter (the combat of Eteocles and Polyneices before Thebes) and its diminutive size and sprightly decorative manner: *rien n'est plus piquant que ce petit morceau dont le stile quoique très singulier est plein d'esprit et d'intelligence* ("nothing is more piquant than this little piece, whose style, although highly unusual, is full of spirit and intelligence").<sup>8</sup> The adjective *piquant* perfectly describes the *esprit* on display and the *intelligence* with which Reynolds represents it. As Hamilton draws attention to the illustration of the oinochoe, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn acts out "Grecian Taste and Roman Spirit": draped in the scarlet toga of the Society's president, he points to a red-figure pelike, or storage jar, which has been placed on the table next to the catalogue. This vase is turned to exhibit what appears to be a winged Nike garlanding a victorious athlete—a subject illustrated in the second volume of Hamilton's catalogue.<sup>9</sup>

Instead of paying attention to the antiquarian show-and-tell, the other Dilettanti in "Vases" perform their allegiance to Eros and Dionysos, venereal conquests and vintage claret. Behind Wynn and Hamilton, John Taylor holds up a lady's garter—an undergarment that, taken together with the star of the Order of the Bath worn by Sir William, puns on the name of the tavern in which the Society met. Richard Thompson, dressed in the embroidered robe of the Archmaster, raises high a glass of wine with his right hand and points to the garter with his left; his lips are parted as if he were about to propose a toast. Pose, expression, and activity—all mirror Knapton's *Lord Sandwich* (see fig. 1.35). The other three, comparatively nondescript Dilettanti (Stephen Payne-Gallway, Walter Spencer-Stanhope, and John Lewin Smyth) are variously "employed in drinking" but not "in Virtù."

At the center of "Gems" is Sir William Hamilton's nephew, Charles Greville. The family resemblance between the two men is underlined by position, pose, and dress. Greville clinks glasses with John Crowle (wearing the robe and bands of the Secretary) and Joseph Banks. The antiquarians in this picture are holding gems up to the light with thumb and forefinger. The resulting circles replicate the ancient *figus* gesture that signifies female genitalia; these circles also pun on "jewel" and echo the dangling garter in "Vases." In the left foreground, Lord Mulgrave responds to the display of this garter with a half-leer and a knowing gesture. Both smirk and gesture evoke Knapton's portrait of Lord Moyra, who invites the viewer to ogle the "*belles fesses*" of the *Callipygian Venus* (see fig. 1.25).<sup>10</sup>

Vases and vaginas are counterpointed by Reynolds's thoroughgoing imitation of Veronese—an imitation that, given the thematic content of the pendants, verges on sacrilegious parody à la Knapton. In the biography prefixed to his edition of Reynolds's works, Edmond Malone records: "Sir George Beaumont...discovered, that in the two [Dilettanti] groups mentioned in a former page, our author had Paul Veronese in view; which, on the remark being made, he said was the case."<sup>11</sup> Just as Reynolds's cryptic remarks to Grantham about enlivening *seria ludo* open up one line of inquiry, so this brief anecdote suggests another: not only did Reynolds have "Paul Veronese in view," but he trained his sights on two specific pictures, the *Wedding at Cana* (1562–63) and the *Feast in the House of Levi* (1573). Reynolds had

FIGURE 4.4

Paolo Veronese (1528–1588), *The Wedding at Cana*, 1562–63. Oil on canvas, 66.6 × 99 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre 142. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

FIGURE 4.5

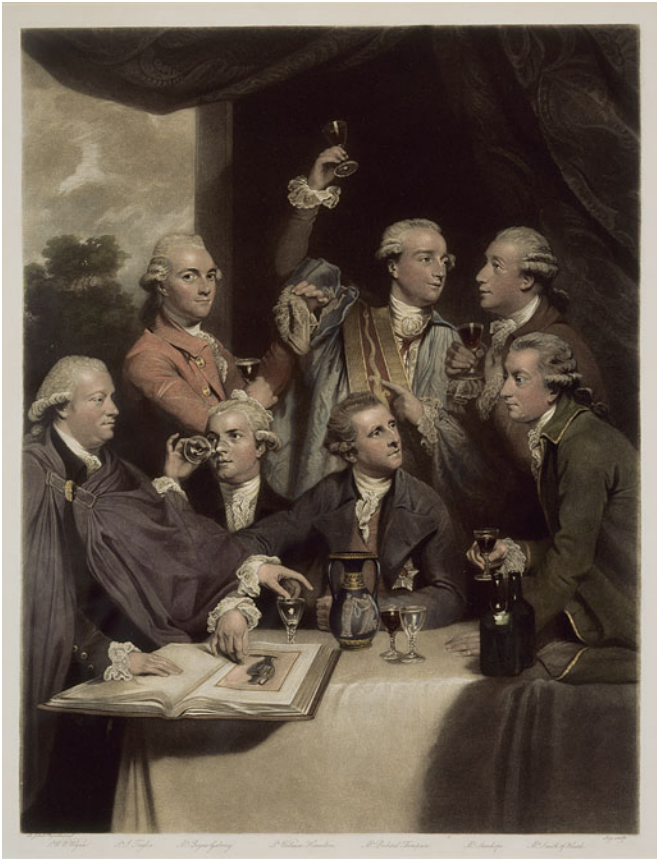
Paolo Veronese (1528–1588), *The Feast in the House of Levi*, 1573. Oil on canvas, 55.5 × 128 cm. Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia. Photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY.



studied both pictures in situ during his time in Venice: until the end of the eighteenth century, the *Wedding* hung in the refectory of the monastery of S. Giorgio Maggiore and the *Feast* (conceived originally as a Last Supper and retitled at the behest of the Venetian Inquisition) in the refectory of SS. Giovanni e Paolo (Figs. 4.4–5).

Here as elsewhere in Reynolds's oeuvre, practice differs markedly from theory. In his *Discourses*, Reynolds consistently belittles the Venetian school: pedagogically committed to the rational over the sensual, *disegno* over *colore*, Reynolds describes the drawings of such masters as Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto as “slight and undetermined.... Their sketches





on paper are as rude as their pictures are excellent in regard to harmony of colouring.”<sup>12</sup> *Discourse VI* includes the most equivocal combination of praise and depreciation:

Though I can by no means allow them to hold any rank with the nobler Schools of painting, they accomplished perfectly the thing they attempted. But as mere elegance is their principal object, as they seem more willing to dazzle than to affect, it can be no injury to them to suppose that their practice is useful only to its proper end. But what may heighten the elegant may degrade the sublime. . . . Tintoret, Paul Veronese, and others of the Venetian school, seem to have painted with no other purpose than to be admired for their skill and expertness in the mechanism of painting, and to make a parade of that art, which as I have before observed, the higher stile requires its followers to conceal.<sup>13</sup>

The apparent discrepancy between condescension and imitation diminishes or even disappears if we conclude that Reynolds is seeking in his Dilettanti pendants precisely that “elegance” and “parade” of artifice he ascribes to the Venetian school. This passionate advocate of the Michelangesque sublime is also an astute judge of decorum: to find an apt vehicle for the Society’s lively tenor, he must turn to a model that will allow him maximum scope for witty gamesmanship—Veronese’s *Wedding* and *Feast*.

FIGURE 4.6

William Say (1768–1834), after Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *Members of the Society of Dilettanti*, 1817–21. Mezzotint, 50.8 × 39.4 cm. Private collection. Photographer: Bernard C. Meyers.

FIGURE 4.7

Charles Turner (1774–1857), after Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *Members of the Society of Dilettanti*, 1817–21. Mezzotint, 50.8 × 39.4 cm. Private collection. Photographer: Bernard C. Meyers.

FIGURE 4.8

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *Peter Ludlow of Ardsallagh and Great Stoughton*, 1755. Oil on canvas, 231 × 146 cm. Woburn Abbey inv. 1353. By kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Bedford and the Trustees of the Bedford Estates. © The Duke of Bedford and the Trustees of the Bedford Estates.



Significant parallels between the two Veroneses and the Reynolds pendants begin with setting—in all three cases the refectory of a brotherhood, where architecture, iconography, and ritual reinforce each other. Both Venetian and English pictures create illusionistic views through a loggia or beyond a balustrade—views that amplify the rooms in question by appearing to open up the end walls. The contemporary hand-colored mezzotints capture more faithfully than the now-faded Reynolds originals the implied movement from interior to exterior space (Figs. 4.6–7). In the case of the *Wedding* and the *Feast*, fictive columns seem to support the actual cornice; in the case of the *Dilettanti* pendants, light from the windows doubles the painted illumination.<sup>14</sup> Reynolds also finds an apt analogue to the theatricality of Veronese's Palladian architecture in the swags of crimson drapery that enhance the stage-like atmosphere of his pendants. This effect would have been reinforced by the projecting

chimneypieces below. The result might be compared to the bas-reliefs on either side of Bernini's Cornaro chapel, which depict members of the donor's family observing and commenting as if from boxes at a theater. Indeed it would not be misleading to say that Reynolds creates, albeit on a more modest scale, the kind of coextensive space that Veronese and Bernini so cunningly manipulate. In doing so, moreover, he both continues and intensifies Knapton's commitment to blurring distinctions between celebrants on canvas and celebrants in the flesh.

Reynolds also learned from his Venetian models how to exploit the theatricality of exotic costume. The regalia of the *Dilettanti*—the President's scarlet toga, the Archmaster's "Crimson, taffeta, tassell'd Robe," the Secretary's "dress of Machiavelli"—assist him in evoking what he calls "the luxuriant style of Paul Veronese."<sup>15</sup> Reynolds enhances the luxuriance of the Society's official costume by dressing both Lord Seaforth and Joseph Banks in red. Such sartorial debts to Veronese go back to the beginning of Reynolds's London career, when in 1755 he portrayed Peter Ludlow in a masquerade version of a husar's uniform (Fig. 4.8). This picture's combination of the sumptuous with the self-conscious provides an important precedent for the *Dilettanti* pendants.<sup>16</sup>

It is in his use of chiaroscuro and his massing of forms, however, that Reynolds borrows most tellingly from Veronese. The entry from Reynolds's notebook describing his response to the *Wedding at Cana* helps us to grasp the effect he strove for in the pendants:



The table-cloth, the end on the other side...makes a large mass of light. Almost all the other figures seem to be in mezzotint; here and there a little brightness to hinder it from looking heavy, all the banisters are mezzotint; between some of them, on the right side, is seen the light building to hinder the line of shadow, so as to make the picture look half shadow and half light. The sky blue, with white clouds.<sup>17</sup>

As in Veronese's *Wedding*, much of Reynolds's bifurcated bacchanalia "seem[s] to be in mezzotint," with "here and there a little brightness to hinder it from looking heavy." The "large mass of light" on the tablecloth, moreover, accentuates Reynolds's compositional borrowings, which are especially significant in the case of "Vases." Behind a long table covered with a white cloth sits a commanding figure who presides over a species of communion ritual. Reynolds evokes the miracle at Cana by juxtaposing an empty to a full wineglass and by including both an oinochoe and a pelike similar to those found in the right foreground of Veronese's *Wedding*. In addition, Sir William Hamilton turns toward John Smyth as Christ turns toward John in the *Feast*. By substituting vessels from an Attic symposium for those in sacred scripture, Reynolds has improved upon Knapp's ability to combine the antic and the antique, homage and sacrilege.

Reynolds's debts to Veronese are scarcely more important than the instances when he borrows from himself. By the time he started on the pendants in 1777, Reynolds had already painted a significant number of the Dilettanti, beginning with his parody of Raphael's *School of Athens* (1751), which caricatures Lord Charlemont and other milordi resident in Rome (Fig. 4.9). "The earliest known instance of a quotation in Reynolds is his burlesque



FIGURE 4.9

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *Parody of Raphael's "School of Athens,"* 1751. Dublin, The National Gallery of Ireland inv. 734. © The National Gallery of Ireland. Photograph courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland.





FIGURE 4.10  
Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792),  
*Four Learned Milordi*, 1751. Oil on  
canvas, 63 × 49 cm. Dublin, The  
National Gallery of Ireland inv.  
736. © The National Gallery of  
Ireland. Photograph courtesy of  
the National Gallery of Ireland.

of *The School of Athens*. The apostle of courtesy and grandeur in the use of classical epithets began as a master of derision.”<sup>18</sup> In this work Reynolds began his lifelong quarrying of Renaissance masterworks in order to create a variety of witty effects, which derive from a complex play between similarity and difference, the reverent and the irreverent. In this caricature, for example, the noble figure of Plato, pointing to the heavens and holding a copy of the *Timaios*, has dwindled into portly Joseph Leeson, performing connoisseurship through a quizzing glass. In both matter and manner, Raphael’s monumental fresco functions as an ironic point of reference, much as Veronese’s monumental canvases imbue the Dilettanti canvases with pungent parallels.

Reynolds derives not only a general strategy but also particular ideas from this ambitious parody. Related to the large work are several small caricatures, one of which contains compositional ideas that he adapted and expanded in “Vases” (Fig. 4.10; cf. fig. 4.2). For example, the slack-jawed milord who ponders an illustration of the Cloaca Maxima is a cretinous forebear of Sir William Hamilton. For those in the know, the parodic effect is enhanced by similarities between the intimate Dilettanti version of Sir William and the official full-length that Reynolds was painting at the

same time—a portrait designed to join the collection of worthies in the British Museum (see fig. 3.1). In multiple senses, then, the “Star and Garter” pendants reflect, inflect, and perfect “a reviving spirit.”

The pendants also tap into Reynolds’s earlier non-parodic portraiture. Six of the Dilettanti who appear in these pendants had already been painted by him, and when they sat for him a second time, Reynolds devised reminiscences of their earlier incarnations. For example, the fancy dress and the classical vase in the full-length portrait of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, painted to commemorate his return from the Grand Tour in 1769, reappear ten years later in the form of toga and pelike (see fig. 4.2).<sup>19</sup> In his full-length of Sir Watkin, Reynolds had quoted from Pompeo Batoni, and he does so again in his Dilettanti portrait of Thomas Dundas. In Batoni’s swagger portrait, Dundas gestures exuberantly toward the Vatican Ariadne, thought at the time to be a languishing Cleopatra (Fig. 4.11); in the pendant by Reynolds, Dundas directs attention to a sexualized gem by means of his exuberant ficus gesture (see fig. 4.3). The allusion may be even more intricate: in 1759 Reynolds had painted the notorious courtesan Kitty Fisher in the guise of a Cleopatra who lowers her pearl into a cup of vinegar with the same suggestive “O” (Fig. 4.12). “The portrait hinges upon a distinct,



and rather clever, double entendre: Kitty Fisher is in full possession of her own 'jewel', and may dispose of it exactly as she herself wishes."<sup>20</sup> This Cleopatra connection adds another allusive dimension to the Grand Tour nexus of antiquity and sexuality.

As he was painting the Dilettanti pendants, Reynolds was also fulfilling a commission from Henry and Hester Thrale—portraits of themselves and eleven close friends to adorn the new library at Streatham Park, the Thrales' country house outside of London. This project parallels the creation of the Society's headquarters at the "Star and Garter" in several intriguing ways. It also brings to a climax the genre—ensemble portraiture—whose development we traced in chapter 1: to juxtapose these two enterprises, is to deepen our response to Reynolds's work for the Dilettanti and to grasp the full potential of ensemble portraiture as part of an "associational world."

The Streatham portraits, like the Dilettanti pendants, originated in the building of a special room—a capacious private space that would form the center, both social and symbolic, of an inner circle.<sup>21</sup> Though the room was fitted out as a library, it was also used on occasion as a place for dining. The walls were lined with shelves that held some 2,500 volumes, many of them purchased under the direction of Samuel Johnson. Above the bookcases and the two doors hung twelve oil half-lengths, identical in size and frame, which Frances Burney, daughter of the Charles Burney discussed below (pp. 110–11), described as "the chain of Streatham worthies."<sup>22</sup>

FIGURE 4.11

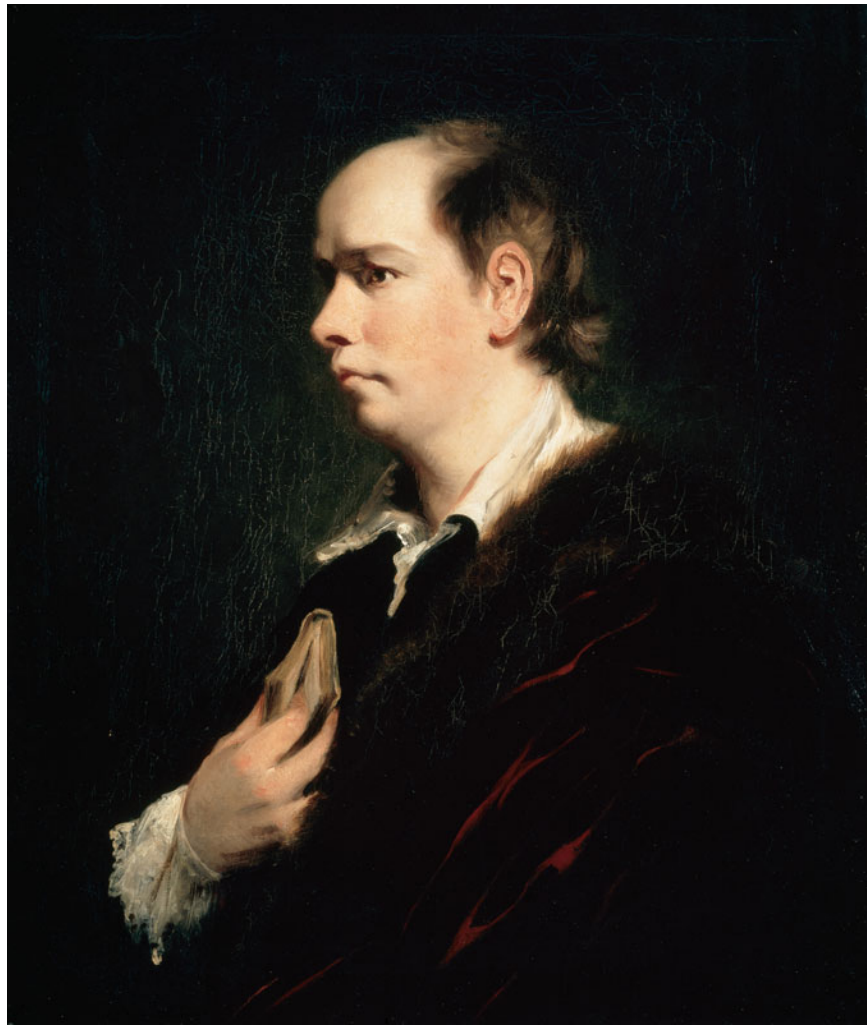
Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787),  
*Thomas Dundas*, 1764. The  
Marquess of Zetland.

FIGURE 4.12

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792),  
*Miss Kitty Fisher as Cleopatra*, 1759.  
Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.5 cm.  
Kenwood, The Iveagh Bequest.  
© English Heritage Photo  
Library.

FIGURE 4.13

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792),  
*Oliver Goldsmith*, ca. 1772. Dublin,  
 The National Gallery of Ireland  
 inv. 4600. © The National  
 Gallery of Ireland. Photograph  
 courtesy of the National Gallery  
 of Ireland. Photographer: Roy  
 Hewson.



The word “chain” signals the fact that the viewer was intended to experience the pictures in a prescribed sequence—beginning with the portrait of Edwin Sandys, who had been Henry Thrale’s friend at Oxford, and moving counterclockwise so as to end with Johnson. To accompany the portraits, Hester Thrale composed what she called “Characters in Verse.”<sup>23</sup> Some of these “characters” describe and even address the portrait in question, while others use it as a point of departure or even seek to subvert it. Since Thrale’s poetic commentary was too extensive to be attached to the frame, we are left wondering precisely how she intended viewing and reading to interrelate. But her ambition is clear: to intensify the “associational” power of the image by creating an equally “associational” gloss upon it. In this way she exceeded even the Dilettanti in her ability to incorporate the portraits into a sphere of private exchange.

Three links in “the chain of Streatham worthies” directly reflect Reynolds’s study of Knapton and his work on the “Star and Garter” pendants. The first of these is a portrait of Oliver Goldsmith, which Reynolds’s sister Frances called “a very great likeness...but the





FIGURE 4.14

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792),  
*Self-Portrait as a Deaf Man*, 1775.  
 Oil on canvas, 74.9 × 62.2 cm.  
 London, Tate Gallery. Photo:  
 Tate, London/Art Resource, NY.

most flattered picture she ever knew her brother to have painted" (Fig. 4.13). The flattery comes from Reynolds's decision to paint Goldsmith in the style of Van Dyck, as mediated by Knapton in his portrait of Sir James Gray (see fig. 1.27). Goldsmith's "open linen collar recalls the dress of the early seventeenth century and the way that the folds of the shirt are depicted at the wrist almost looks like a spiky vandyke lace cuff."<sup>24</sup> Similarities in costume are reinforced by the elegant pose, the abstracted gaze, and the book in Goldsmith's right hand—a volume that evokes the same associations as Gray's Cervantes (see pp. 39–40).

The original "worthies" arrangement would have supported this link, for Reynolds's *Goldsmith* hung next to a self-portrait that bears the unmistakable imprint of the Dilettanti (Fig. 4.14). This picture forms part of what might be called a "disability sub-group": just as Reynolds candidly documents his deafness, he unflinchingly records the severe myopia of Samuel Johnson and Giuseppe Baretti, the Italian man of letters who tutored the Thrales' eldest daughter (Figs. 4.15–16). Unlike Johnson and Baretti, however, Reynolds engages directly with a viewer, who is also an interlocutor. "Reynolds may be absorbed, but he is not



FIGURE 4.15  
Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792),  
*Doctor Samuel Johnson*, 1772?. Oil  
on canvas, 75.6 × 62.2 cm. Tate  
Gallery, London. Photo: Tate,  
London/Art Resource, NY.



FIGURE 4.16  
Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792),  
*Portrait of Giuseppe Marc'Antonio  
Baretta* (1719–1789), 1773. Oil on  
canvas, 73.7 × 61 cm. Private  
collection. Photo © The Ilchester  
Estate. Photo courtesy of the  
Royal Academy of Arts.

self-absorbed; unlike Johnson or Baretta (or Goldsmith, for that matter), Reynolds looks out into a sociable world.”<sup>25</sup> By showing the sitter doing his best to hear, this highly interactive picture creates a dialogue in the most candid and emphatic manner possible. Like most of the Knaptons, moreover, it has a satirical thrust, one that derives from Goldsmith’s comic epitaph for Reynolds in “Retaliation”:

To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,  
When they judged without skill he was still hard of hearing;  
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios and stuff,  
He shifted his trumpet and only took snuff.<sup>26</sup>

The portrait’s evocation of the poem intensifies its coterie atmosphere: Reynolds’s gesture signifies authentic engagement with such genuine cognoscenti as the members of the Streatham circle, but merely simulated responsiveness to those in the room who come and go, talking of Correggio.

It is Reynolds’s portrait of the composer and musicologist Charles Burney, however, that most fully exemplifies the lessons he had learned from the Dilettanti (Fig. 4.17). The last and best of the Streatham group, *Doctor Charles Burney* was completed at the beginning of 1781. Reynolds lavishes attention on Burney’s academic hood and gown, treating them as the equivalent of fancy dress or the robes of the Archmaster in “Vases,” to which they bear



FIGURE 4.17

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *Doctor Charles Burney*, 1781. Oil on canvas, 74.9 × 61 cm. London, National Portrait Gallery inv. 3884. By courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

a considerable resemblance (cf. fig. 4.2). Burney's activities and achievements are signaled not only by the Oxford doctor of music gown but also by the score in his right hand. Nicholas Penny helps us to understand the relationship between this detail and Reynolds's extraordinarily vibrant brushwork: "The flickering dashes of paint in the lips and eyebrows... convey, as does the improvised baton of a roll of sheet music, the act of listening to music as effectively as any portrait every painted."<sup>27</sup> Like Reynolds in his self-portrait, Burney is indeed listening intently. At the same time, he is shown as a music *maker*, a conductor—witness "the improvised baton." Reynolds thereby suggests that Burney is helping to make an harmonious whole out of the players in the Streatham group. The ensemble portrait can go no further nor do any more than this.

The more one investigates the "Star and Garter" pictures, the more they come to exemplify the primary dictum of Reynolds's *Discourse VI*:

The true and liberal ground of imitation is an open field; where, though he who precedes has had the advantage of starting before you, you may always propose to overtake him; it is enough however to pursue his course; you need not tread in his footsteps; and you certainly have a right to outstrip him if you can.... I can recommend nothing better, therefore, than that you endeavour to infuse into your works what you learn from the contemplation of the works of others.<sup>28</sup>



FIGURE 4.18

Sir Thomas Lawrence  
 (1769–1830), *Thomas, Lord Dundas*,  
 1817. Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.5  
 cm. Society of Dilettanti, Lon-  
 don. Photo: Courtauld Institute,  
 London, 204590P.



In both his work for the Dilettanti and in his related project for the Thrales, Reynolds continues and complicates tradition. Major changes do not occur until 1809, the year that the Society ceased collecting “Face Money.” In that year Sir Thomas Lawrence refused to paint group portraits of the Dilettanti, proposing as a substitute “an historical composition, appropriate in its subject to the first views of the Institution.”<sup>29</sup> Lawrence also failed to act upon an injunction “to obey the commands formerly issued to him as their Painter to paint his own Portrait for the Society.”<sup>30</sup> Perhaps his most emphatic departure from the practice of his predecessor Reynolds came in 1817, when he painted Lord Dundas—the Dilettante who gestures so suggestively in both Reynolds’s “Gems” and Batoni’s *Grand Tour* full-length (Fig. 4.18; see figs. 4.3, 4.11). The only traditional characteristic of the Lawrence is its size.<sup>31</sup> Otherwise Lawrence discards the conventions we have just been analyzing. He cuts off his sitter at mid-chest, thereby eliminating any suggestion of a gesture. He eliminates props and fancy dress. He accentuates the gravitas of the sitter by painting him with a restrained expression and an oblique gaze. Nothing about the portrait, in short, engages the viewer or the pictorial ensemble. The “spirit” of the Society’s motto—*seria ludo*—and of Reynolds’s antic enterprise has been replaced by sober self-containment. The “Star and Garter” days are over.<sup>32</sup>

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CHAPTER 5

RICHARD PAYNE KNIGHT'S  
*DISCOURSE ON THE  
WORSHIP OF PRIAPUS*

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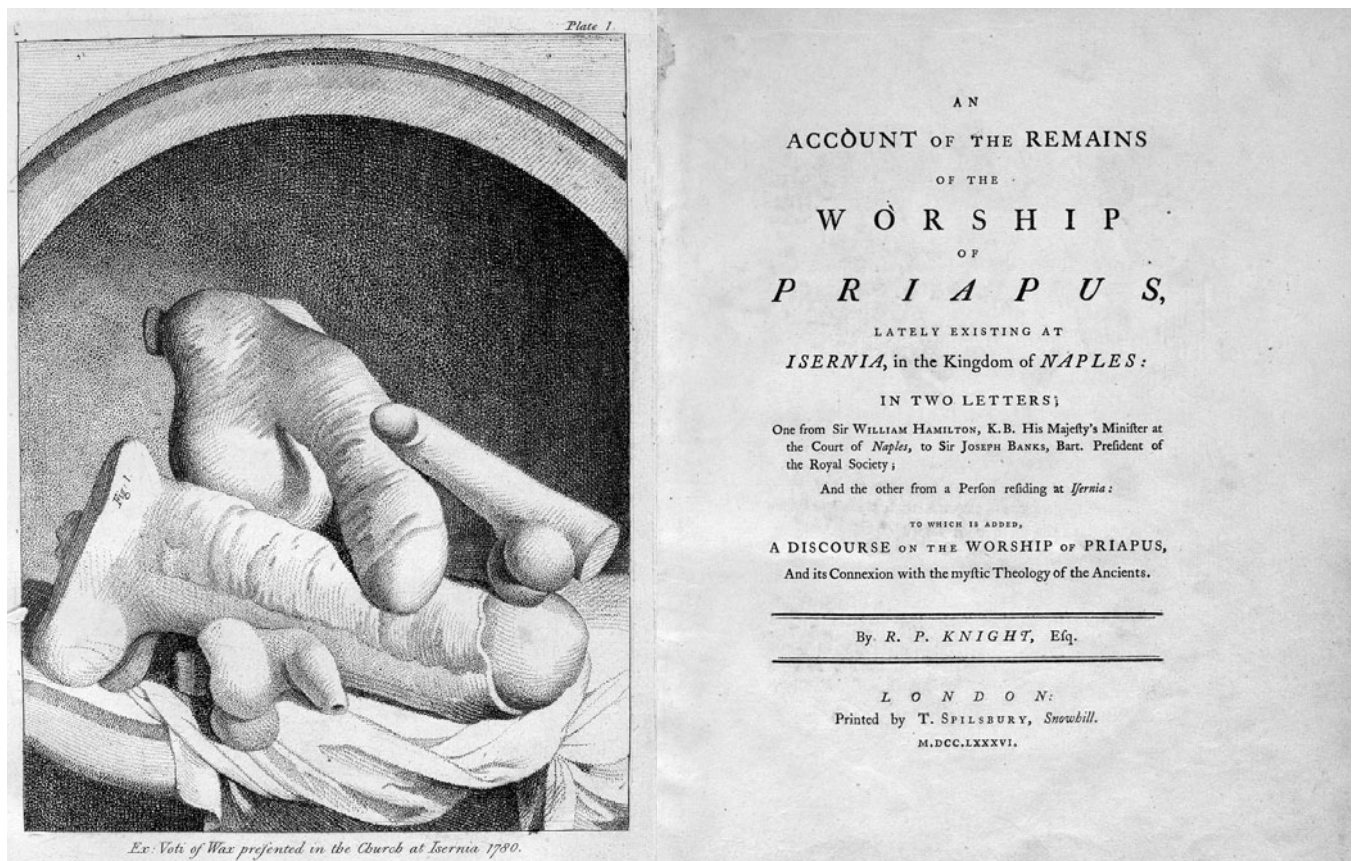
Like Reynolds's "Star and Garter" pictures, Knight's *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* (1786) returns to the antic origins of the Dilettanti while exemplifying and promoting the Society's ambition to be considered a serious cultural force. The circumstances surrounding the publication of the *Discourse*, the nature of the illustrations, and the rhetoric of the text—all bespeak an enterprise that combines the earnest and the ironic, the scholarly and the subversive, the exoteric and the esoteric, the punctilious and the pornographic, the outward-reaching and the inward-turning. In short, Knight's *Discourse* is a hybrid: on the one hand, a coterie product that speaks a private, libertine language; on the other, a learned exercise in comparative religion that aspires, through its encyclopedic range and syncretic method, to contribute to the intellectual community of the philosophes. Its models are both Petronius and Herodotus, an underground project like John Wilkes's *An Essay on Woman* (1769), and an ambitious "key to all mythologies" along the lines of Sir William Jones's *On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India*, published in 1784/85.<sup>1</sup>

Knight's *Discourse* originates in and responds to two texts, a letter from Sir William Hamilton to Sir Joseph Banks about pagan survivals in southern Italy, written in 1781 and published in the *Discourse*, and the Baron d'Hancarville's *Recherches sur l'Origine, l'Esprit et les Progrès des Arts de la Grèce* (1785). The first acts as prologue or springboard, the second as theoretical underpinning. Hamilton's letter announces his discovery of "the Cult of Priapus in as full vigour, as in the days of the Greeks and Romans, at Isernia in Abruzzo."<sup>2</sup> On the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian, Hamilton reports, peasant women who had failed to get pregnant offer up wax models of tumescent male genitalia, accompanying their gifts with such prayers as "Blessed St Cosmas, let it be like this." Hamilton's addressee, Banks, was both President of the Royal Society (1778–1820) and Secretary-Treasurer of the Dilettanti (1778–94). It is appropriate, therefore, that Hamilton's letter mingle detached empirical exactitude with sardonic anticlericalism: "The ceremony finishes," Hamilton observes, "by the Canons of the Church dividing the spoils, both money and wax, which must be to a very considerable amount, as the concourse at this Fete is said to be prodigiously numerous."<sup>3</sup> So too the frontispiece—which illustrates the ex-voti from Isernia that Hamilton collected and presented to the British Museum—contrives to unite documentation with provocation: the wax phalluses are arranged in such a way as to suggest both an anatomical illustration and an outré still life (Fig. 5.1).

In focusing his attention on “the worship of the generative powers” (*Discourse*, p. 187), Knight was paying homage to the theories of d’Hancarville, a brilliant but disreputable polymath who combined the learning of Diderot with the slipperiness of Casanova. Hamilton had entrusted the catalogue of his first vase collection to d’Hancarville, who produced dazzling results but who also embroiled himself with the law by publishing pornography and running up debts.<sup>4</sup> Despite such bad behavior, Hamilton never entirely despaired of d’Hancarville, and when the picaresque savant fetched up penniless in London, Hamilton introduced him to a fellow Dilettante, Charles Townley. Townley invited d’Hancarville to catalogue his collection of ancient sculpture and to stay in his house in London. While living with Townley, d’Hancarville wrote most of his *Recherches*—an ambitious, highly speculative treatise that converted both Townley and Knight to its central claim: all art is grounded in religion, and all religion is grounded in sexuality. Like d’Hancarville, Knight boldly deduces universal archetypes from the iconography of religions ancient and modern, eastern and western: “the BRAHMA of the Indians,” he confidently asserts, “is the same as the PAN of the Greeks” (*Discourse*, p. 103). However, Knight “was surely well aware of the excesses and idiosyncrasies of the *Recherches*.”<sup>5</sup> This critical distance helps to explain the fact that both the implied author and the implied reader of the *Discourse* are poised, detached, and ironic—a manner that contrasts markedly with d’Hancarville’s hectic, sprawling lucubrations.

FIGURE 5.1

“Ex:Voti of Wax presented in the Church at Isernia 1780.” From R. P. Knight, *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus...* (London, 1786), frontispiece and title page. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.





THE *DISCOURSE*:

## A CALCULATED BLEND OF SECRECY AND DISCLOSURE

The records of the Society help us to understand the context out of which the *Discourse* emerges and the audience to which it speaks. In the Minutes of 3 March 1787 William Windham “on the part of the Committee of publication reported that the Priapeia ordered by the Society to be printed is Finish’d and ready for Delivery.” At the same meeting the Dilettanti adopted a “motion made by Ld. Bessborough Father of the Society”—the very Bessborough who had been painted *alla turca* four decades earlier (see fig. 1.35). The tone as well as the substance of Bessborough’s motion reveal that this founding father sought to connect Knight’s *Discourse* to the playfully esoteric rituals he had helped to create:

That the Thanks of this Society be given to R. P. Knight Esqr. for the able and Elegant manner in which he has investigated the interesting & difficult subject of this valuable work & that they be deliver’d to him at the next meeting he shall attend by the arch Master or his deputy appointed by the Society dress’d in his Crimson Taffety Robe & other insignia of his office. That the Copies be lodg’d in the Custody of the Secretary & one of them deliver’d to each member of the Society & that except these he do not on any Pretence whatever part with any other copy without an order made at a regular meeting. (Minute Books, 3 March 1787)

These minutes cast the *Discourse* as a species of gnostic gospel—an esoteric work of scripture, a revelation of the mysteries, an initiate’s badge of belonging. Subsequent minutes, however, expanded the circle of those who were allowed to possess this secret and holy text. First came a proposal “that each member be allow’d once & no more to move the Society recommending by name a Friend to whom he wishes the Society to present a copy” (Minute Books, 3 March 1787). The next stage was for copies to be sent to such illustrious personages as the Prince of Wales and such august institutions as the British Museum. Finally, copies were dispatched across the Channel: from the Minutes on 5 June 1791, “it was mov’d and seconded that 25 Copies of the Priapeia be Presented to Sir William Hamilton with a desire that he will distribute them among such Foreigners as he may think worthy of them & likely to do honor to the Priapeic system.” Within four years of its publication, the *Discourse* had moved from being a strictly private to a semipublic text. At home and abroad, the Dilettanti sought to identify, cultivate, and consolidate devotees of the “system” that Knight had revealed.

Close study of the illustrations reveals a similar blend of secrecy and disclosure, retention and dissemination. The plates, nineteen in all, were prepared under Knight’s supervision over a three-year period. The principal engraver was James Newton (1748–1804), who was working at the same time on volume 2 of *The Antiquities of Athens* (1787); during the following decade, Newton also etched two-thirds of the plates for volume 2 of *Ionian Antiquities* (1797).<sup>6</sup> The illustrations in the *Discourse* included not only Greek and Roman amulets, coins, gems, and sculpture but also Celtic, Persian, Egyptian, and Hindu material. Two of the plates

FIGURE 5.2

Hindu temple sculpture from the island of Elephanta, near Bombay. Engraving. From R. P. Knight, *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus...* (London, 1786), pl. x. Courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, f\*EC8.K7472.786a.



made the *Discourse* especially inflammatory. The first of these was the opening Hamiltonian tableau: “Ex:Voti of Wax presented in the Church at Isernia 1780” (see fig. 5.1) The second reconstructed part of a Hindu temple sculpture from the island of Elephanta (Fig. 5.2). In the body of the *Discourse*, Knight refers to the sculpture both euphemistically and provocatively:

It contains several figures, in very high relief; the principal of which are a Man and Woman, in an attitude which I shall not venture to describe, but only observe, that the action, which I have supposed to be a symbol of refreshment and invigoration, is mutually applied by both to their respective Organs of Generation, the emblems of the active and passive powers of procreation, which mutually cherish and invigorate each other. (*Discourse*, p. 81)

Newton’s plate reconstructs the relief through the use of dotted lines, so that the acts and organs in question can be fully studied. The caption begins with the precise language of measurement that descends from *The Antiquities of Athens*: “This fragment in alto Relievo 2 feet 6 inches long and 1 foot 6 inches high, was detached from one of the ancient temples, which are excavated in the solid rock upon the island of Elephanta near Bombay, and was brought to England in the Year 1784.” The caption ends with a quotation adapted from the second epistle of Horace’s first book: *Et Quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non?* (l. 3). In this epistle Horace urges his young friend Lollius Maximus, who is studying rhetoric in Rome, to turn his attention to Homer’s epic poems, which offer a much more

instructive guide to life. Horace warns his addressee to “scorn pleasures” (*sperne voluptates*, l. 55) and to “bridle his passions” (*animum rege*, l. 62). Horace begins his praise of Homer by describing him as a poet “who tells us what is fair, what is foul, what is helpful, what not” (l. 3). However, by detaching this line from its original context (substituting in the process an “et” for the “qui” that refers to Homer) and ending the tag with a question mark, Knight turns didactic description into ironic interrogation—an earnest recommendation into a quizzical, perhaps even mocking, inquiry. In selecting and adapting Horace, he also evokes the maxim *naturalia non sunt turpia* (“what is natural is never disgraceful”) and the *seria ludo motto*.<sup>7</sup>

The Society’s records, as well as surviving copies, suggest that the Dilettanti chose to create three versions of the *Discourse*. The most decorous of these included neither the Isernian frontispiece nor the Elephantine folding plate; in a number of copies, an unnum-

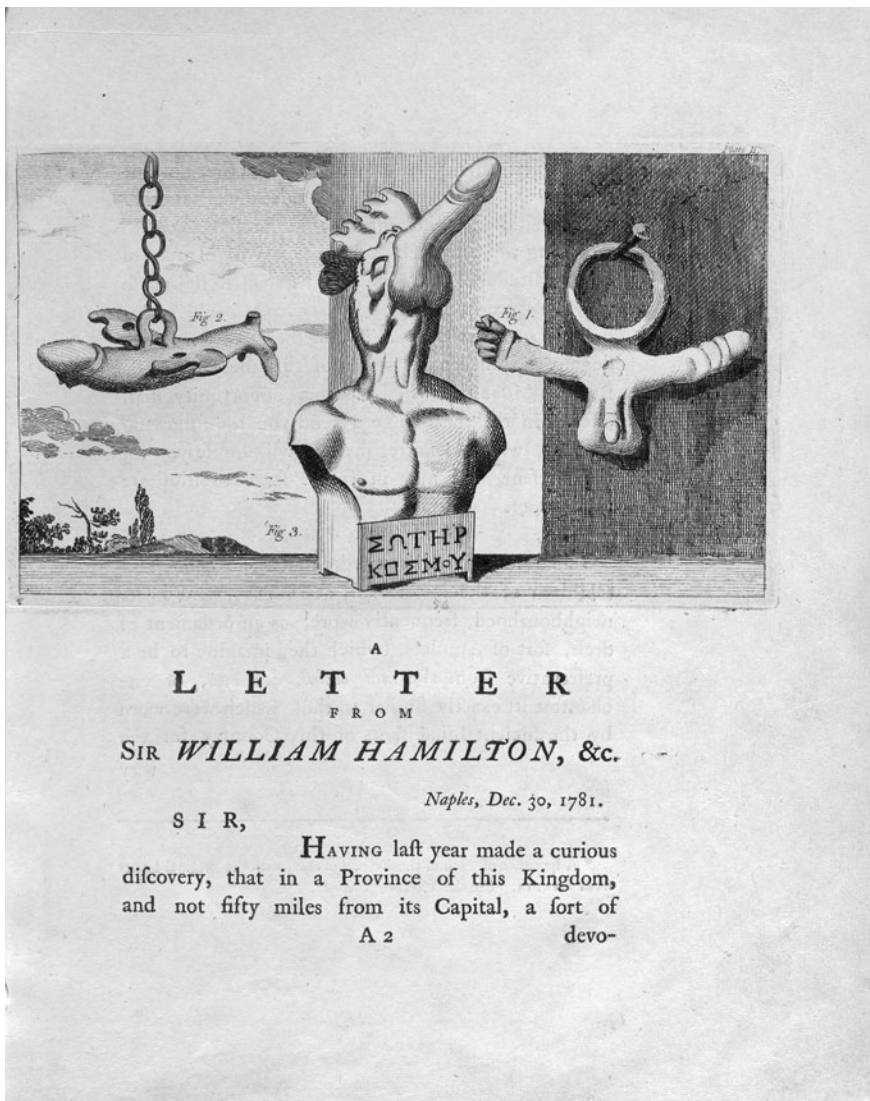


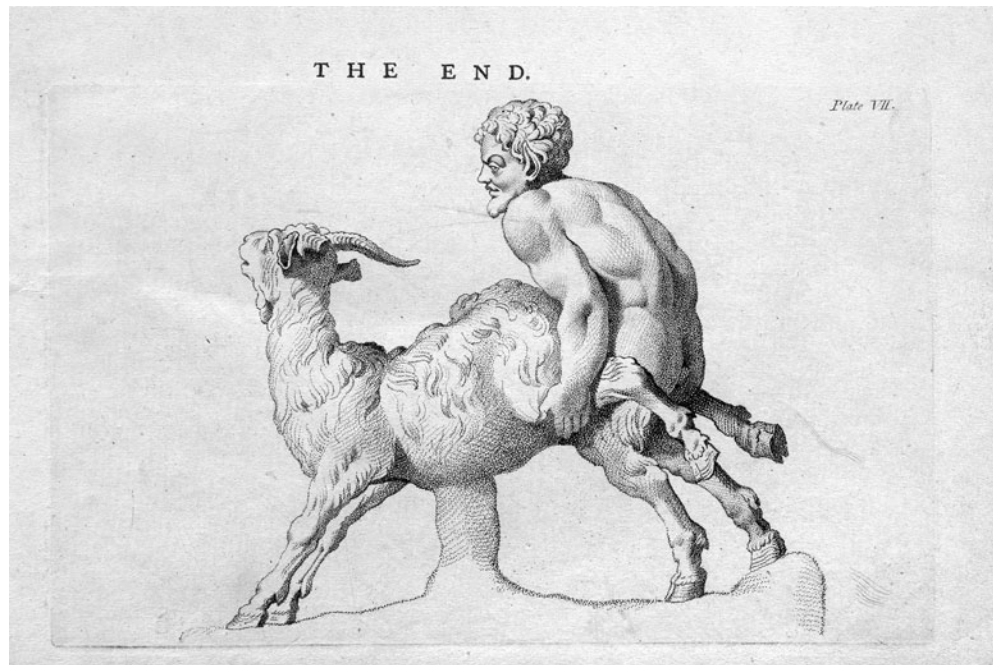
FIGURE 5.3

Phallic objects. Engraving. From R. P. Knight, *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus...* (London, 1786), pl. II. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.



FIGURE 5.4

Satyr copulating with a goat.  
Engraving. From R. P. Knight,  
*An Account of the Remains of the  
Worship of Priapus...* (London,  
1786), pl. VII. Los Angeles,  
Research Library, GRI.



bered plate replaced the wax phalluses. This substitute is captioned "An Ancient Ex Voto in Silver the Size of the Original"; the small, amuletlike appearance of this phallic ex-voto preserves a certain archaeological decorum. Next on the spectrum from exoteric to esoteric is the version that includes the still life but not the folding plate. The third version begins with the array of Isernian phalluses and ends with the reconstruction of the Hindu bas-relief. All copies, however, include material that Knight himself called "salacious." The first plate in the body of the text, the headpiece to Sir William's letter, brings together a phallic amulet and bracelet with "the celebrated bronze in the VATICAN" (Fig. 5.3). The artifact, continues Knight, "has the male organs of generation placed upon the head of a Cock, the emblem of the Sun, supported by the neck and shoulders of a Man. In his composition they represented the generative power of the Eros, the OSIRIS, MITHRAS, or BACCHUS, whose center is the sun, incarnate with man. By the inscription on the pedestal, the attribute, thus personified, is styled *The Saviour of the World*" (*Discourse*, p. 54). At the end of the *Discourse*, Knight offers what he punningly calls a "tail-piece"—the illustration of a satyr mounting a goat, with "The End" printed immediately above (Fig. 5.4). Knight explains learnedly that, "in copulation with the Goat," fawns and satyrs "represent the reciprocal incarnation of man with the Deity" (*Discourse*, p. 59). As he tells Sir Joseph Banks, however, "if [the *Discourse*] is to be in the smallest degree public, many other parts must be suppressed, particularly the plate of the Goat and Satyr with the observations upon it, and all that I have said upon Baptism, Regeneration, and Grace."<sup>8</sup> In short, the evidence both visual and verbal thoroughly undercuts the earnest claim of Lionel Cust: "It is evident that the Society in issuing this work had no intention of publishing anything calculated to give offence or to be considered a breach of morality. Its spirit is meant to be truly antiquarian."<sup>9</sup>

## LEARNED AND LICENTIOUS ALLUSION: DRYDEN, GOLDSMITH, AND WILKES

If the “spirit” of the *Discourse* is not “truly” or exclusively antiquarian, then how should its nature and purpose be evaluated? The answer lies in Knight’s coded use of allusion and in his versatile rhetoric of irony. When Knight informs Banks, “I meant my discourse only for the Society and a few real dilettanti,” he is telling an important albeit partial truth.<sup>10</sup> Like the Knapton portraits, the *Discourse* emerges from and speaks to a coterie of learned and licentious amateurs. Along the lines of Knapton’s visual quotations, adaptations, and parodies, Knight creates a web of references to satirical texts that lend themselves to anticlerical interpretation. These texts include John Dryden’s “Absalom and Achitophel” (1681), Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Vicar of Wakefield* (ca. 1761/62), and John Wilkes’s *An Essay on Woman* (ca. 1755).

The opening couplets of “Absalom and Achitophel” offer Knight a powerful model for launching the *Discourse*, whose polemic turns on a contrast between a constricting, shame-ridden present and a joyful, uninhibited past. “The [priapic] rite now under consideration,” Knight claims, “will be found to be a very natural symbol of a very natural and philosophical system of religion, if considered according to its original use and intention” (*Discourse*, p. 24). His introduction proceeds to ring the changes on “natural” and “naturally”:

There is *naturally* no impurity or licentiousness in the moderate and regular gratification of any natural appetite; the turpitude consisting wholly in the excess or perversion. Neither are the organs of one species of enjoyment *naturally* to be considered as subjects of shame and concealment more than those of another.... In an age, therefore, when no prejudices of artificial decency existed, what more just and *natural* image could [the pagan world] find, by which to express their idea of the beneficent power of the great Creator, than that organ which endowed them with the power of procreation, and made them partakers, not only of the felicity of the Deity, but of his great characteristic attribute, that of multiplying his own image, communicating his blessings, and extending them to generations yet unborn? (*Discourse*, pp. 28–29, my emphasis)

In this introductory passage Knight adapts from Dryden a mock-epic celebration of natural sexuality and a concomitant attack on a repressive religious hierarchy. Not only topic and tone but also specific verbal borrowings signal this act of imitation:

In pious times, e’r Priest-craft did begin,  
Before *Polygamy* was made a sin;  
When man, on many, multiply’d his kind,  
E’r one to one was, cursedly, confind:  
When Nature prompted, and no law deny’d

Promiscuous use of Concubine and Bride;  
 Then, *Israel's* Monarch, after Heaven's own heart,  
 His vigorous warmth did, variously, impart  
 To Wives and Slaves: And, wide as his Command,  
 Scatter'd his Maker's Image through the Land.<sup>11</sup>

Dryden's priapic David and Knight's priapic Greeks vigorously propagate their "Image" according to the promptings of Nature and Nature's God. "Multiplying," "Communicating," and "extending" in the *Discourse* rework "multiply'd," "impart," and "scatter'd" in "Absalom." These allusions cue the reader to understand "Priest-craft" as the referent for those who would brand a "species of enjoyment" a source of "shame and concealment"—a "Priest-craft" that will become Knight's explicit target toward the end of the *Discourse*, as he excoriates "a greedy and ambitious Clergy, whose object was to establish a Hierarchy for themselves, rather than to procure happiness for others" (*Discourse*, p. 192). Knight had already sounded this note of polemic in his commentary on the Roman Catholic church in Sicily (see pp. 94, 96).

In an even more subtle and subversive move, Knight imitates a passage from *The Vicar of Wakefield*, in which the narrator, Dr. Primrose, proudly describes the epitaph he has fashioned for his wife:

I even went a step beyond Whiston in displaying my principles: as he had engraven upon his wife's tomb that she was the *only* wife of William Whiston; so I wrote a similar epitaph for my wife, though still living, in which I extolled her prudence, oeconomy, and obedience till death; and having got it copied fair, with an elegant frame, it was placed over the chimney-piece, where it answered several very useful purposes. It admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her; it inspired her with a passion for fame, and constantly put her in mind of her end.<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Primrose, who vaunts himself on being "a strict monogamist," displays his principles and regulates his spouse by placing above the family hearth an inscription that functions simultaneously as memento mori, code of conduct, and clerical/patriarchal admonishment. To exhibit the epitaph in this way is to prescribe and proscribe behavior of various kinds: Goldsmith's final pun on "end" (meaning "death," "limit," "purpose," and "goal") drives home the multiple meanings of the Vicar's regulatory act. His "priest-craft" is to confine one to one, to make polygamy a sin.

In a subversive parody of this passage, Knight describes and illustrates domestic display-pieces that also put good wives constantly in mind of their proper ends:

The great characteristic attribute [of Priapus] was represented by the Organ of Generation in that state of tension and rigidity which is necessary to the due performance of its functions. Many small images of this kind have been found among the ruins of HERCULANEUM and POMPEII, attached to the bracelets, which the chaste and pious matrons of



antiquity wore round their necks and arms....So expressive a symbol, being constantly in her view, must keep her attention fixed on its natural object, and continually remind her of the gratitude she owed the Creator, for having taken her into his service, made her a partaker of his most valuable blessings, and employed her as the passive instrument in the exertion of his most beneficial power. (*Discourse*, pp. 46–47)

This passage reimagines epitaph as amulet, admonishment to duty as exhortation to sexuality. Knight takes delight in adapting Goldsmith's use of free indirect speech: in place of the Vicar's repressive voice, he gives us an implied quotation from a Pompeian priest of Priapus, who interprets the religious function of the amulet as he [a]rouses its wearers. In both passages the narrator is unreliable, but in different ways: Goldsmith invites us to distance ourselves from the Vicar's absurdity; Knight conceals something like a leer behind his solemn language of devotion.

The leering intensifies as Knight the prankster/parodist turns for inspiration to *An Essay on Woman*. Like the *Discourse*, Wilkes's *Essay* emerges from a small group of libertine freethinkers, who took special pleasure in mocking the solemnity of Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733/34) and the pomposity of his editor, the Rev. Dr. William Warburton (later Bishop of Gloucester).<sup>13</sup> The *Essay on Woman*, with notes that purported to be by Warburton, circulated in manuscript form until Wilkes decided in 1762 to print copies for a few friends. It seems likely that his printer was then bribed to steal a specimen for the government prosecutor, who wished to stop Wilkes's attacks on the ministry of Lord Bute. In the House of Lords Wilkes was prosecuted for "scandalous, obscene, and impious libel." In an outraged letter to Ralph Allen, Warburton fulminates against the *Essay*: "To give you a taste of some of the least of Wilks's horrid blasphemys.... The title page is a copper plate, and on it is engraved the *membrum virile*, with a motto in greek round it, which in English is, *the Saviour of the World*."<sup>14</sup> What Warburton cannot bring himself to quote is the mock-editor's description of this phallic emblem:

The reader will excuse my adding a word concerning the frontispiece. The original is the property of a great Prelate.... We see the *Pride* and *Glory* of Man well represented in that stately pillar.... But, alas! How short a time can we trust to *human Greatness*! We know *Pride will have a fall*, and that we must all suffer a terrible Reverse. Man is indeed in this respect aut Caesar aut nullus: yet, as good *Christians*, we should never be as *tho' we had no Hope*, but should fully rely on the blessed Resurrection of the Flesh, always taking care to apply properly the Talents Heaven has given us, diligently working out our Salvation by Day and Night, and never suffering the *true Garden of Man* to lie waste and uncultivated.<sup>15</sup>

This "Advertisement"—with its reverential tone, its obscene puns, and its parade of edifying quotations—helps to create a satiric tradition that the *Discourse* perpetuates and amplifies, beginning with a frontispiece that displays not one *membrum virile* but four. Mockery of Warburton, moreover, is one of this tradition's defining features, for the bishop's

combination of self-righteousness and pedantry provided an irresistible target for the erudite freethinker. Knight takes special pleasure in juxtaposing a quotation from Warburton's *The Divine Legation of Moses* to the religious rituals of ancient Egypt:

The Egyptians showed this incarnation of [Priapus] by a less permanent, though equally expressive symbol. At MENDES a living Goat was kept as the image of the generative power, to whom the Women presented themselves naked, and had the honour of being publicly enjoyed by him. . . . Bishop Warburton, whose authority it is not for me to dispute, says, *from the nature of any action morality cannot arise, nor from its effects*: therefore, for aught we can tell, this ceremony, however shocking it may appear to modern manners and opinions, might have been intrinsically meritorious at the time of its celebration, and afforded a truly edifying spectacle to the Saints of ancient EGYPT. (*Discourse*, pp. 54–55)

The pun on “edifying,” the use of theological terminology (“intrinsically meritorious”), and the description of participants in ritual bestiality as “Saints”: all these bear the hallmarks of libertine parody in the manner of Wilkes's *Essay*.

Knight moves even closer to Wilkes when he discusses the temple sculpture of Hierapolis. At the beginning of *An Essay on Woman*, Wilkes seizes upon “promiscuous” in the fourth couplet of Pope's *Essay on Man* (“A Wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot, / Or Garden, tempting with forbidden fruit”) and activates its sexual meaning: “A wild, where *Paphian Thorns* promiscuous shoot, / Where flow'rs the Monthly Rose but yields no fruit.” The note to this couplet by “Warburton” compares the disreputable Fanny Murray to the Virgin Mary: “Our Virgin Fanny in this ought to take the wall of our Virgin Mary; for the *first never had a Child*, nor I truly believe did she ever conceive.”<sup>16</sup> In similar fashion Knight applies trinitarian language to statues of Jupiter and Juno and then compares Diana to the Virgin Mary:

Between both [statues] was a third Figure, with a Dove on his head, which some thought to be BACCHUS. This was the Holy Spirit, the first-begotten Love, or plastic Nature, (of which the Dove was the image, when it really deigned to descend upon Man) proceeding from, and consubstantial with *Both*; for all *Three* were but personifications of *One*. The Dove, or some Fowl like it, appears on the medals of GORTYNA in CRETE, acting the same part with DICTYNNA, the Cretan DIANA, as the Swan is usually represented acting with LEDA. . . . It may seem extraordinary, that after this adventure with the Dove, she should still remain a Virgin; but mysteries of this kind are to be found in all religions. (*Discourse*, pp. 146–47)

In this passage Knight quotes first from Lucian, then from Matthew, and finally from Diodorus Siculus. The effect is to present the gospel text as an historical or even mythological source comparable to the other two, and thereby to demystify it—though demystification shades rapidly into subversion. The word “adventure,” moreover, complicates and even

undermines the concept of mystery, which is defined in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* as "something above human intelligence; something awfully obscure." Knight's commentary interrogates the awe and suggests that "above" should be replaced by "beyond" or even "below."

## EDWARD GIBBON'S INFLUENCE: "UNSETTLING PARALLELS, UNRUFFLED SUPERIORITY"

The most important key to a rhetorical assessment of the *Discourse*, however, lies not in its network of allusion but in its ironic registers. Francis Haskell comments perceptively that Knight gives "a witty, Voltairian, icy form to the more ponderous learning" of d'Hancarville.<sup>17</sup> But while Haskell is correct to affiliate the *Discourse* with the rhetoric of the philosophes, he mistakes the specific model, which is not Voltaire but Gibbon—the Gibbon of chapters 15 and 16 of *The Decline and Fall*. In this concluding section of his first volume (1776), the historian launches "a candid but rational inquiry into the progress and establishment of Christianity."<sup>18</sup> As a means of combining self-protection with surgical evisceration, Gibbon perfects an "irony of sceptical intellectual superiority"—an irony shaped by his "literary and personal experience of the French philosophes."<sup>19</sup> Gibbon's gifts to Knight include an array of rewarding targets, among them the absurdities of Bishop Warburton.<sup>20</sup> But it is Gibbon's pervasively, corrosively ironic voice that teaches Knight the most important lesson: how to emphasize unsettling parallels, expose pious evasions, and disturb shaky foundations while preserving a tone of unruffled superiority.

Knight's Gibbonian manner extends from the stiletto-like insertion of a single word or phrase to the shaping of stately rhythms across an entire paragraph. At the beginning of the *Discourse* he affects a gravitas that might be called "masking"—though masking that functions somewhat differently from "the element of camouflage in Gibbon's irony, its ability initially to present itself as something far more innocent than it turns out to be."<sup>21</sup> The attentive reader of Knight's *Discourse* can never for a moment believe in the innocence of its implied author. However, the detached, even Olympian manner of many provocative observations allows for a complex rhetorical game: a blending of instruction and titillation, a tipping of the wink to fellow cognoscenti, an out-facing of the reader who would meet patrician outrageousness with plebeian outrage.

Like Gibbon, the "philosophic historian" of the Roman Empire, Knight can provoke through matter and manner alike:

The Male Organs of Generation are sometimes found represented by signs of the same sort, which might properly be called the symbols. One of the most remarkable of these is a cross, in the form of the letter T, which thus served as the emblem of creation and generation, before the Church adopted it as the sign of salvation; a lucky coincidence of ideas, which, without doubt, facilitated the reception of it among the Faithful. (*Discourse*, p. 48)



The combination of the deadpan “remarkable” with the calm effrontery of “without doubt” (which can also be construed as a pun) reflects a careful study of Gibbon’s most controversial chapters.

Knight’s borrowings grow even more precise in the later stages of the *Discourse*, where Gibbon’s analysis of the early church in chapter 15 furnishes Knight with models for both polemical substance and ironic technique. In his account of “the Sentiments, Manners, Numbers, and Condition, of the primitive Christians,” Gibbon describes their “Abhorrence...for idolatry”:

[It] was the first but arduous duty of a Christian to preserve himself pure and undefiled by the practice of idolatry.... The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or of private life; and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them, without, at the same time, renouncing the commerce of mankind, and all the offices and amusements of society.... The Christian who with pious horror avoided the abomination of the circus or the theatre, found himself encompassed with infernal snares in every convivial entertainment, as often as his friends, invoking the hospitable deities, poured out libations to each other’s happiness.... On days of general festivity, it was the custom of the ancients to adorn their doors with lamps and with branches of laurel, and to crown their heads with a garland of flowers. This innocent and elegant practice might perhaps have been tolerated as a mere Civil institution. But it most unluckily happened that the doors were under the protection of the household gods, that the laurel was sacred to the lover of Daphne, and that garlands of flowers, though frequently worn as a symbol either of joy or mourning, had been dedicated in their first origin to the service of superstition. The trembling Christians, who were persuaded in this instance to comply with the fashion of their country, and the commands of the magistrate, laboured under the most gloomy apprehensions, from the reproaches of their own conscience, the censures of the church, and the denunciations of divine vengeance. (Gibbon, pp. 460–62)

Without compromising his stance of impartial omniscience, Gibbon deploys such tactics as free indirect speech to point a contrast between the gloomy, fearful, self-righteous Christians and the “elegant,” sociable, and joyful pagans. The same contrast, conveyed by the same rhetorical means, informs Knight’s account of “primitive” Christianity:

Not only the sacrifices to the Generative Deities, but in general all the religious rites of the Greeks, were of the festive kind. To imitate the Gods, was in their opinion to feast and rejoice, and to cultivate the useful and elegant arts, by which we are made partakers of their felicity. This was the case with almost all the nations of antiquity, except the Egyptians, and their reformed imitators the Jews, who being governed by a hierarchy, endeavoured to make it awful and venerable to the people, by an appearance of rigour and austerity.... The

Christian religion, being a reformation of the Jewish, rather increased than diminished the austerity of its original. (*Discourse*, pp. 182–83)

This passage begins an elaborate peroration that reworks Knight's initial distinction between the "natural" and the "artificial" in terms of a sustained contrast between pagan "felicity" and Judeo-Christian "austerity." Knight is inspired and guided by Gibbon's account of the natural impulses that persisted in disrupting early Christian asceticism:

It was with the utmost difficulty that ancient Rome could support the institution of six vestals; but the primitive church was filled with a great number of persons of either sex, who had devoted themselves to the profession of perpetual chastity. A few of these, among whom we may reckon the learned Origen, judged it the most prudent to disarm the tempter. Some were insensible and some were invincible against the assaults of the flesh. Disdaining an ignominious flight, the virgins of the warm climate of Africa encountered the enemy in the closest engagement; they permitted priests and deacons to share their bed, and gloried amidst the flames in their unsullied purity. But insulted Nature sometimes vindicated her rights, and this new species of martyrdom served only to introduce a new scandal into the church. (Gibbon, pp. 480–81)

With a stately Gibbonian calm that accentuates rather than conceals the narrator's underlying glee, Knight describes a similar combat between different kinds of desire:

The feasts of Gratulation and Love, the *agapai* and nocturnal vigils, gave too flattering opportunities to the passions and appetites of men, to continue long, what we are told they were at first, pure exercises of devotion. The spiritual raptures and divine ecstasies encouraged on these occasions, were often ecstasies of a very different kind, concealed under the garb of devotion; whence the greatest irregularities ensued; and it became necessary for the reputation of the Church, that they should be suppressed, as they afterwards were, by the decrees of several Councils. Their suppression may be considered as the final subversion of that part of the ancient religion, which I have here undertaken to examine. . . . The small remains of it preserved at ISERNIA, of which an account has here been given, can scarcely be deemed an exception. (*Discourse*, p. 185)

For Knight as for Gibbon, the Catholic Church is an essentially unnatural institution, whose history is that of repression. Both philosophes take special pleasure in recovering and recounting incidents in which human sexuality "vindicates her rights"; both simulate the vocabulary of clerical censorship in order to mock it. Unlike Gibbon, however, Knight ultimately breaks the fiction of detachment, ending the *Discourse* with an overtly and virulently anticlerical attack. As with the conclusion to his Sicilian diary, he shifts into an explicit diatribe that is also an implicit plea for tolerance. In this way Knight the official Dilettante completes the project he had begun a decade earlier, when he aspired to join the Society.

## REPUDIATION OF THE *DISCOURSE*

The minutes of the Dilettanti record the decision to send copies of “the Priapeia” to Gibbon and to Wilkes—neither of them members of the Society but both of them major sources of inspiration. No record of either man’s reaction to the *Discourse* has been recovered. But as Gibbon wrote to Lord Sheffield: “The primitive Church, which I have treated with some freedom [in *The Decline and Fall*], was itself at that time an innovation, and I was attached to the old Pagan establishment.”<sup>22</sup> Within five years, however, the intellectual climate that fostered an Enlightenment “rhetoric of superciliousness” had given way to counterrevolutionary rectitude.<sup>23</sup> Strict controls of various kinds transformed English culture during the 1790s, as drumbeating nationalism and a stress on conventional domesticity became the order of the day. In this ultraconservative atmosphere, the Dilettanti as a group and Knight’s *Discourse* in particular came to represent all that was offensive and even dangerous in the ideals of the cosmopolitan connoisseur.

One of the most sustained and vituperative attacks against the Dilettanti came from the satirist T. J. Mathias (1754–1835), who rose to become librarian of Buckingham Palace and a quasi-official upholder of King and Country. In successive installments of his *Pursuits of Literature*, 1794–1808, Mathias fulminated against the Society and the *Discourse*. The terms of his tirade testify to Mathias’s detailed acquaintance with the work and his interest in dismantling the traditions it exemplified. He begins by referring to “a long disquisition in quarto, *ON THE WORSHIP OF PRIAPUS*, (printed in 1786) with numerous and most disgusting plates. It has not been published, but distributed liberally, without any injunction of secrecy, to the *emeriti* in speculative Priapism, as one would think.” “Liberally” and “speculative” are here used pejoratively to suggest that the Society is suspect in both its principles and its practices. Mathias then adopts the mantle of a fiery preacher:

[A]ll the ordure and filth, all the antique pictures, and all the representations of the generative organs, in their most odious and degrading protrusion, have been raked together and copulated (for no other idea seems to be in the mind of the author) and copulated, I say, with a new species of blasphemy. Such are, what I would call, the records of the stews and bordellos of Grecian and Roman antiquity, exhibited for the recreation of Antiquaries, and the obscene revellings of Greek scholars in their private studies. Surely this is to dwell mentally in lust and darkness in the loathsome and polluted chamber at Capreae.<sup>24</sup>

This denunciation helps us to measure the cultural sea change that had taken place. With the hectoring pun on “copulative,” the dismissive reference to “the recreation of antiquaries,” and the association of classical scholarship with what is “private” and “obscene,” Mathias casts himself as a wholesome public servant, a purifier of the Augean Stables. He takes on as well the mantle of Suetonius, who had exposed the “goatish antics” of the corrupt Tiberius in his palace on Capri.<sup>25</sup>



A further classical reference tells us even more about Mathias as spokesperson for the spirit of the age. After referring to the phallic rituals of the Dilettanti, Mathias concocts a patchwork of quotations from Juvenal:

*Graece*

Discumbunt; nec velari PICTURA jubetur;

Forsitan expectes, ut Gaditana canoro

Incipiat prurire choro.

(*Satires* VI.190–91)

The first two words come from that section of Juvenal's sixth satire in which he attacks Roman women for aping Greek ways: so far gone are they in pretentious and lascivious Hellenism that they even "recline in Greek" (*discumbunt* meaning both "recline" in order to dine and "recline" in order to make love).<sup>26</sup> To this quotation Mathias joins part of Juvenal's description, later in *Satire* VI:

the ritual mysteries of the Good Goddess, when flute-music stirs the loins,

And frenzied women, devotees of Priapus,

Sweep along in procession, howling, tossing their hair,

Wine-flown, horn-crazy, burning with the desire

To get themselves laid.

(*Satires* VI.314–19)

The women of Rome, according to Juvenal, have so perverted the ancient cult that they have:

brought a tool as long as both anti-Catonian

Pamphlets by Caesar into the sanctuary where

All images of the other sex must be veiled.

(*Satires* VI.337–40)

To these lines from *Satire* VI, Mathias "copulates" part of Juvenal's contrast in *Satire* XI between plain-living, high-thinking Roman citizens of the golden days and their debauched descendants, who like to employ:

a troupe of Spanish dancers,

Gypsy girls with their wanton songs and routines.

(*Satires* XI.162–63)

Taken as a whole, this composite quotation suggests in no uncertain terms that the Dilettanti are not only objectionable but dangerous as well: they ape debauched foreign ways, they

are both effeminate and licentious, and they traduce the virile, the healthy, and the quintessentially British.

In the same year as Mathias's denunciation, *The British Critic* published an extended review of *Lieut. Edward Moor's Narrative of the Operations of Capt. Little's Detachment, and the Mahratta Army under Purseram Bhow* (1794). The anonymous reviewer seizes the opportunity provided by Moor's mention of the *Discourse* to lash out against it and the Abbé Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissemens et du commerce des européens dans les deux Indes* (1770). Whereas Mathias had concentrated on sex and sacrilege, *The British Critic* focuses on politics. According to the reviewer-turned-denouncer, the Society's "Eleusinian darkness" endangers the nation: "Much more could we say on this clandestine work, printed without publication, and concealed without suppression; but we consign it, with its impure decorations, to that mystery it courts, and which, we heartily wish may never be revealed."<sup>27</sup> The key word is "clandestine," which connotes both ethical and political subversion. After quoting with equal outrage from Raynal's defense of sacred prostitution, the reviewer brings his polemic to a Burkian close: "Such was the language of Philosophy in France! Such were the Philosophers who prepared the people for the destruction of Christianity, and the renunciation of God's supremacy! Let us say with Fabricius, Such be the opinions of the enemies of our country."<sup>28</sup> The final reference to the incorruptible censor Fabricius allows the reviewer to point a contrast between God-fearing patriots and "philosophical" patricians, those who defend Great Britain and those who undermine it.

It is visual rhetoric, however, that proves most effective as a means of interrogating the authority of the Dilettanti—witness those satirical prints and drawings by James Gillray that form the subject of the next chapter. This "Juvenal of caricature," as he was called, interprets the Society as the epitome of outmoded and irresponsible cosmopolitan values.<sup>29</sup> To be a dilettante, Gillray's caricatures suggest, is to risk undermining the health of a nation that glories in its insularity and seeks to inoculate itself against revolutionary infection from the continent.

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CHAPTER 6

# JAMES GILLRAY'S “COGNOSCENTI” CARICATURES: PLAYING THE COSMOPOLITAN AMATEUR, COLLECTOR, AND CONNOISSEUR

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The virtuoso, the dilettante, the connoisseur: these linked cultural categories—categories that were also ideals—came increasingly under siege during the 1790s, when England was pervaded by “the rhetoric of loyalist alarm.”<sup>1</sup> Such rhetoric raised the spectre of radical conspiracies and emphasized the need for unswerving devotion to King and Country. Satirists such as T. J. Mathias and religious groups such as the “Society for the Reformation of Principles” excoriated the *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* in particular and the Dilettanti in general: to collect “antique pictures” and to study “generative organs” was to engage in “obscene” activities that undermined morals and manners.<sup>2</sup> The most inventive attacks, however, took the form of linked caricatures by James Gillray (1757–1815). These corrosive images satirize not only individual Dilettanti and the Society as a whole but also the Enlightenment ideal of the amateur and the culture of the Grand Tour.

It is something of a paradox that, while contributing devastating ammunition to the government’s counterrevolutionary campaign, Gillray should train his sights on key features of England’s ancien régime. His caricatures of the Dilettanti suggest in no uncertain terms that England’s patriciate flagrantly traduces those virtues—piety, loyalty, domesticity—that were considered to be the nation’s chief bulwark against Jacobinism, the French disease. Gillray’s campaign began in 1794, the year of the Treason Trials (part of the government’s draconian counterrevolutionary program), and lasted until the flickering out of his powers in 1808. This campaign took as principal topic and target the latter-day cult of Priapus. The result is a sustained act of satirical redefinition: amateur dwindles into lecher, connoisseurship into concupiscence, the farsighted antiquary into the myopic voluptuary.

In the popular imagination, Richard Payne Knight had come by the mid-1790s to represent the Dilettanti and to exemplify the Society’s pursuits: Knight’s “cultural power was prodigious.”<sup>3</sup> *The Charm of Virtù*, Gillray’s drawing for an unexecuted print, interrogates that power by parodying

FIGURE 6.1

James Gillray (1757–1815),  
*The Charm of Virtù*, ca. 1794.  
Etching and engraving with  
roulette, hand colored. Print  
Collection, Miriam and Ira D.  
Wallach Division of Art, Prints  
and Photographs, The New York  
Public Library, Astor, Lenox  
and Tilden Foundations, 1010.





Lawrence's portrait of Knight, which had been exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1794 (Fig. 6.1; cf. fig. 3.2). As we observed in chapter 3, Lawrence based his portrait on Reynolds's imposing full-length painting of Sir William Hamilton (see fig. 3.1). This line of descent enhances Gillray's ability to mock both the Academic style of heroic portraiture and the elevated presentation of the connoisseur as seer (see pp. 83–84). Gillray's drawing functions as a *reductio ad absurdum* ("reduction to the absurd") via a *reductio ad libidinem* ("reduction to the libido"): stripped of their glamour, the *virtù* and virtue of the virtuoso are exposed as brazen licentiousness. The caricature also illustrates the core of Mathias's attack on Knight's *Discourse*, especially his reference to "the obscene revellings of Greek scholars in their private studies"—scholars who "dwell mentally in lust and darkness in the loathsome and polluted chamber at Caprea."<sup>4</sup>

FIGURE 6.2

James Gillray (1757–1815), *Dido, in Despair!* 1801. Hand-colored etching. Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, 528.

Gillray adopts Lawrence's basic compositional format: Knight is seated in an interior space that suggests a private study or *Kunstkammer*; the sitter's rapt expression testifies to the ardor of his engagement with the world of antiquity. Each element of the portrait, however, is subverted through inversion. Lawrence's Knight sits decorously upright, gazing in a visionary fashion as he marks his place in an imposing folio. Gillray's Knight, by con-



trast, lounges indecorously, his thighs splayed, as he peers through a magnifying glass at "an Antique Terminus" of the god Priapus. Gillray has converted aesthetic rapture into sexual arousal: Knight's dazed grin and bulging groin graphically convey his response to the statue's phallus, which is emphasized by the oversize thumb that supports it. The right arm of the chair likewise resembles an erection. Gillray turns the stately bronze vessel in Lawrence's portrait into a bulging sack labeled "Old Iron," a reference to the founder of the Knight family's foundries that insinuates a Hogarthian contrast between industry and idleness.

The volumes on the tabletop reinforce the connection to the Dilettanti and to Knight's activities as a connoisseur: they are titled "Ionian Antiques," "Essay on the Worship of [Priapus] by a Knight of Caprea," and *The Landscape*, Knight's "Didactic Poem" of 1794. Heavily influenced by Lucretius, the poem drew the fire of such conservative writers as Horace Walpole, who claimed that Knight "Jacobinically would level the purity of gardens, would as malignantly as Tom Paine or Priestley guillotine Mr Brown."<sup>5</sup> Walpole's polemic suggests that Knight is dangerous sexually and politically as well as aesthetically—that he harks back to seventeenth-century "levelers" as well as seeking to import revolution from France. Though its range of reference is more limited, *The Charm of Virtù* likewise focuses on individual and national "purity," which is jeopardized by the priapic collector.

The visual and the verbal aspects of this drawing evolved simultaneously. "It is easy to take Gillray's titles for granted, but in fact he devoted immense pains to them, drafting and redrafting words on the same sheets of paper where images were emerging."<sup>6</sup> As he blocked out the central figure, Gillray tried out multiple versions of the caption. These include "the Charm of Virtù or a Cognocenti discovering the Beauty of the God of Gardens," which gives way to "the Charm of Virtù or a Cognocenti discovering the Beauty of a Caprean Antique." Gillray's jottings also connect specimen to species: "for a clear explication the Public are referred to that learned Body of Dilettanti." In addition, Gillray experiments with a mock inscription: "Dedicated to the Dilettanti Society and other admirers of the Worship of the Garden God—by a Knight of the order of Caprea." This satiric gesture gathers in Sir William Hamilton, Knight of the Bath as well as Dilettante.

After several trial versions, Gillray settled on a caption that incorporates most of his preliminary ideas: "The Charm of Virtù—or a Cognocenti discovering the Beauties of an Antique Terminus—the Elucidation is left to the Dilettanti Society—and others encouraging of the worship of the Garden God." The suggestion of esoteric rituals in need of "elucidation" is reinforced by a pun on "Charm," which asks to be read, in the context of Knight's *Discourse*, not only as "fascination" but also as "amulet." Taken as a whole, Gillray's caricature implicates the viewer in Knight's voyeurism: we spy through the keyhole, as it were, while "a Knight of the order of Caprea" fondles his fetish.

Though *The Charm of Virtù* was never engraved, its themes and tactics helped to equip Gillray for his first public assault on the Dilettanti and their ilk: *Dido, in Despair!* and *A Cognocenti contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique* appeared within a week of each other in 1801—not long after Hamilton, Emma, and Nelson had returned *à trois* to England (Figs. 6.2–3). "The appetite of the public for scandal and calumny was insatiable, and Gillray's opportunity to



FIGURE 6.3  
James Gillray (1757–1815),  
*A Cognocenti contemplating ye Beauties  
of ye Antique*, 1801. Hand-colored  
etching. Photo: National Gallery  
of Art, Washington, D.C.





satisfy it was almost unlicensed."<sup>7</sup> Gillray's public ranged from royalty to tradesmen—an avid clientele that thronged the shop where his prints were sold or congregated before its display window to scrutinize newly published caricatures. These two caricatures insist upon being evaluated as a pair, which satirizes private sexual behavior in order to make public political points. As a former kept woman, a flamboyant adulteress, and an all-too-versatile performer of "Attitudes," Emma had betrayed the values of female modesty and domesticity that became, during the course of the 1790s, "a matter of national security."<sup>8</sup> As a complacent cuckold and improvident collector, Hamilton had come to epitomize a bankrupt cultural ideal. Literary sources echo and reinforce the visual evidence: in anti-Jacobin novels of this period, the standard villains are licentious women and cosmopolitan men.<sup>9</sup> Gillray's satires insinuate what these novels proclaim—that aesthetics and ethics are bound up with politics, and that England can resist the French disease only if it cultivates "undebauchedness, and simplicity of taste."<sup>10</sup>

As in other ambitious caricatures, Gillray based the composition of *Dido* on an "elevated" pictorial genre—in this case the history painting of Sir Joshua Reynolds. From the figure of Anna in Reynolds's *The Death of Dido* (1781), Gillray derives Emma's pose and

FIGURE 6.4

Joseph Grozer (1755–1799), after Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *The Death of Dido*, 1796. Mezzotint, 49.1 × 59 cm. London, The British Museum, P&D 1852,0705,289. © The Trustees of The British Museum.



FIGURE 6.5  
 Norman Hirst, after George  
 Romney (1734–1802), *Lady  
 Hamilton as a Bacchante*, 1797.  
 Mezzotint, 43.9 × 36 cm. London,  
 National Maritime Museum  
 PZ2889.



expression (Fig. 6.4). That this figure was based on Renaissance representations of Mary Magdalen, themselves adapted from classical maenad figures, further enriches Gillray's allusion.<sup>11</sup> Reynolds's subject picture also supplies the background detail of Aeneas's departing fleet.<sup>12</sup> These multilayered borrowings help to give the caricature a mock-epic quality that reflects ambivalence and imparts ambiguity. "In gesturing so frequently to the works of the Academy's most celebrated practitioners . . . Gillray was, on the one hand, ridiculing the insti-

tution's members and its products and asserting his independence of the artistic norms they promoted. On the other hand, however, this very process both confirmed his and graphic satire's dependence upon, and ultimate deference to, the Academy, and the kinds of art that it sponsored."<sup>13</sup> This highly charged combination of respect and ridicule yields a heroine who is both grotesque and affecting.

The Emma of *Dido, in Despair!* bulks large, both physically and emotionally. Her attitude of abandonment evokes not only the heroine of history painting but also her own celebrated posturing—a connection cemented by the volume on the sofa beneath the window, whose title page reads, "Studies of Academic Attitudes taken from the Life." The frontispiece of this volume depicts a fleshy female nude in a Danaëlike pose that suggests another kind of abandonment—and perhaps a certain venality as well, susceptible as Emma has been to showers of gold. The leopard-print bedspread that covers a sleeping Hamilton alludes to another celebrated "Attitude," that of a Bacchante, which may have caught Gillray's attention through the engraving after Romney's portrait (Fig. 6.5). In addition to Emma's obesity and theatricality, Gillray satirizes her bibulousness: the flasks on her dressing table are labeled "Maraschino" and "Composing Draught."

Emma's role as a love-stricken Dido forsaken by her martial Aeneas is reinforced by the garter coiled on the carpet; its inscription, "The Hero of the Nile," further conflates the private and the public, sexual ardor and heroic vigor. The text at the bottom develops the idea that Emma is both queen and quean, ruler and whore. This caption consists of a double parody, which borrows both from popular song (The Bluebells of Scotland) and from operatic lament:

Ah where, & ah where is my gallant Sailor gone?  
He's gone to fight the Frenchmen, for George upon the Throne  
He's gone to fight the Frenchmen, t'loose t'other Arm and eye  
And left me with the old Antique, to lay me down & Cry.

Just as Gillray's image mocks various forms of "high" visual art, so this text parodies a tradition of operatic lament that includes the final aria from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, settings by Paisiello and others of Metastasio's libretto, *Didone abbandonata*, and pastiches on the same theme by Handel and Vinci.<sup>14</sup> The jarring prominence of "lay" (as well as the substitution of "cry" for "die") suggests that Gillray may be remembering Purcell's setting of "When I am laid in earth," which breaks the line after "laid" in such a way as to invite a comparably reductive reading.

Emma has been left not only with "the old Antique" who slumbers in the background but with his antiquities—a collection that merges the acquisitions of Hamilton and Knight. These specimens include the lower half of a phallic lion, a medal adapted from one of the illustrations in Knight's *Discourse*, and a satyr who seems to have emerged from the Ovidian frontispiece of the volume on the floor, "Antiquities of Herculaneum, Naples, and Caprea."<sup>15</sup> This volume in turn doubles, visually and thematically, the titillating picture book





FIGURE 6.6

James Gillray (1757–1815),  
*A Cognocenti contemplating ye  
 Beauties of ye Antique*. Pen and  
 brown ink with some pink  
 and brown wash over graphite  
 sketch, 19.5 × 16.4 cm. London,  
 The British Museum, P&D  
 1992,0516.14. © The Trustees  
 of The British Museum.

on the window seat: “Attitudes” and “Antiquities” are promoted and permeated by lust.

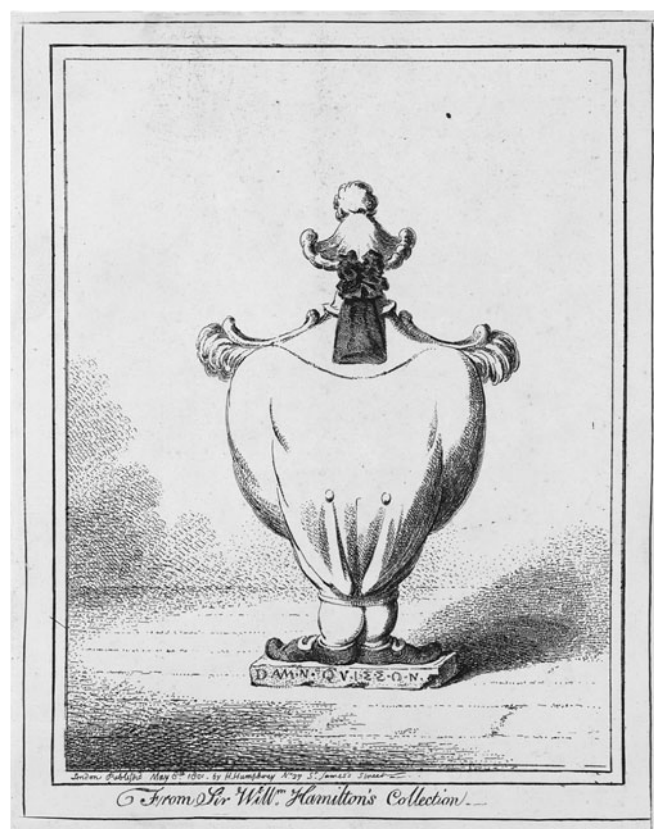
In the middle of this medley, a head of Messalina, her drapery suggesting a cowl, leers up at a statuette of the Venus de’ Medici. In this lascivious duo Gillray has created a sculptural reference to Knapton’s portrait of Dashwood: not only are the eyes of Messalina at the level of Venus’s groin, but Venus has been turned from *pudica* to *impudica* by the elimination of her left forearm (cf. fig. 1.23). Taken as a whole, therefore, Gillray’s caricature conjures up memories and mementos of the Dilettanti across three generations and shrinks their achievement to a squalid obsession with “Statues, dirty Gods, and Coins”—Pope’s dismissive reference to the collection of Thomas Herbert (1656–1733), eighth Earl of Pembroke.<sup>16</sup>

In Gillray’s campaign against the Dilettanti, *Dido, in Despair!* prepares for and corresponds to *A Cognocenti contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique*. A preliminary drawing at the British Museum allows us to reconstruct in some detail the evolution of Gillray’s ideas (Fig. 6.6). This drawing, which is much more advanced than *The Charm of Virtù*, combines graphite, pen and ink with watercolor washes. Gillray set

down his ideas “with great agitation and vehemence, the jagged pen lines scoring the paper.”<sup>17</sup> The figure of Sir William Hamilton and the bust he is scrutinizing dominate the composition; there are only sketchy indications of the array of antiquities that will crowd the finished composition. In the upper right-hand corner, Gillray has tried out various ideas for the title, among them “A Cognocenti examining a Chef d’oeuvre of Antiquity.” “Chef d’oeuvre” helps to register Gillray’s contempt for the Grand Tour’s linguistic as well as artistic imports—just as the misspelled plural (“A Cognocenti”) suggests a manly British intolerance for effete foreign terms, as well as a derisive gesture toward “Dilettanti.”

In the final version “the caricaturist expands on the possibilities of the bric-a-brac introduced into Dido’s bedchamber the previous week (see figs. 6.2–3).”<sup>18</sup> Gillray also develops the theme of *The Charm of Virtù*—the connoisseur as voyeur, whose gaze converts the work of art into a magical object. Sir William peers through a pair of reversed spectacles at a bust of the notorious courtesan Lais. Behind the bust stand a headless bacchante and a statue of the bull-god Apis, whose horns tie together two portraits on the wall behind the statue. One of these portraits depicts a blowsy, tippling Emma in the guise of Cleopatra, the other a battered Nelson as Mark Anthony.

The references to cuckolding that pervade the caricature include a portrait of Sir William as the hapless Emperor Claudius. The frame of this portrait is adorned with antlers, and on the floor beneath it stands a horned pseudo-Egyptian statue. Between the portraits



of Hamilton and Nelson, a view of an erupting volcano alludes not only to Hamilton's interest in volcanology but also to his sexual extinction, as contrasted with the Admiral's Vesuvian potency. The array of fanciful antiquities on table and floor, most of them suggestively and even grotesquely erotic, returns us to the *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus*. Just as Gillray includes in *Dido, in Despair!* a medal based upon a plate in the *Discourse*, so he turns to Knight's illustrations of phallic amulets and other figures to implicate the "Cognocenti."<sup>19</sup>

At the foot of the bust of Lais, Gillray places a cracked chamber pot decorated with vaguely classical figures; on the floor below reposes a cracked pitcher whose base consists of a leering dolphin. The tail of the dolphin reaches up toward the fissure. Gillray had already exploited the sexual meaning of a cracked vase in his surreal satire of the Duke of Clarence's affair with the actress Mrs. Jordan: *Lubber's Hole, alias The Crack'd Jordan* (1791) shows the prince, the trousers of his naval uniform unbuttoned, climbing into the aperture with a gleeful "Yeo! Yee! Yeo!" (Fig. 6.7). The pun on "jordan," meaning "chamber pot," also suggests a play on vessel—word games that Gillray plays again, three months after the publication of *A Cognocenti*. In *From Sir William Hamilton's Collection* (1801), he converts Admiral Nelson into a water jar—a version of the Meidias Hydria, the best-known item in Hamilton's first collection of Greek vases and an important prop in Reynolds's full-length portrait (Fig. 6.8; see also fig. 3.1).<sup>20</sup> "This figure of Nelson completes Gillray's satirical representation of the *Tria Juncta in Uno* (three in one—the motto of the Order of the Bath)"; both Nelson and Hamilton

FIGURE 6.7

James Gillray (1757–1815), *Lubber's Hole, alias The Crack'd Jordan*, 1791. Drawing. Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, 1005.

FIGURE 6.8

James Gillray (1757–1815), *From Sir William Hamilton's Collection*, 1801. Drawing. Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, 1004.



belonged to this Order.<sup>21</sup> As in *Dido* and *A Cognocenti*, the naval, the sexual, and the antiquarian intertwine, as Gillray anatomizes the connections between collector and adulterer. The title suggests, in no uncertain terms, that Nelson's vigor has been diluted by his involvement with the Hamiltons: the Admiral is on the shelf, a formidable hydra turned decorative hydra. The fact that Nelson had used one of his naval vessels to transport Hamilton's vases sharpens the caricature's bite.

The death of Hamilton in 1803 and the growing prominence of a group of aristocratic amateurs calling themselves the "Pic Nic Society" caused Gillray to redirect but not to diminish his campaign. *Dilettanti-Theatricals* (1803) invites the viewer to link priapic Dilettanti and attitudinizing Emma, both of them exemplars of a licentious cosmopolitan elite, to the dramatic activities of the Pic Nic Society (Fig. 6.9). The title begins the making of this allusive force field: *Dilettanti-Theatricals; or, a Peep at the Green Room. Vide Pic-Nic Orgies*. Gillray conjures up a peep show: we gaze into an improvised tiring-room to observe ("Vide") suggestive foreplay of various kinds if not "Orgies" themselves. Gillray activates memories of Hogarth's *Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn*, with its play on sex and spectacle, licensing and licentiousness, onstage queens and offstage queans.<sup>22</sup> He also exploits, a decade before Jane Austen's (1775–1817) *Mansfield Park*, the controversy surrounding amateur playacting. "The perils of aristocratic display were clearly on view in private theatricals.... In time they came to seem immoral as well as indecorous."<sup>23</sup> What broaden and deepen the caricature's satiric

FIGURE 6.9

James Gillray (1757–1815),  
*Dilettanti-Theatricals; or, a Peep at the  
Green Room*, 1803. Engraving. Print  
Collection, Miriam and Ira D.  
Wallach Division of Art, Prints  
and Photographs, The New York  
Public Library, Astor, Lenox and  
Tilden Foundations, 413.





range, however, are Gillray's allusions to the pendants we have just been discussing: *Dilettanti-Theatricals* insistently revisits and reworks both *Dido, in Depair!* and *A Cognocenti contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique*.

In all three caricatures, Gillray exposes a patriciate that, instead of leading by example, is wallowing in profligate self-indulgence. At the center of *Dilettanti-Theatricals*, a corpulent Lady Buckinghamshire (a co-founder of the Pic Nic Society in 1802) applies makeup for the role of Roxana, the mistress of Alexander in Nathaniel Lee's *Alexander the Great, or the Rival Queens* (1677). At the foot of her dressing table nestles a flask of spirits; this flask is virtually identical to that on the dressing table of another corpulent actress, Emma/Dido, who has captured the heart of her latter-day Alexander. The panels of the screen in the background are decorated with figures of Melpomene and Thalia, muses evoking Lady Hamilton's "Attitudes." That Gillray was deliberately creating and exploiting an allusive repertoire centered on Emma is confirmed by a contemporary critic's reaction to *L'Assemblée Nationale*, a caricature from the following year: "Immediately...above plump Mrs Fox, is a trio from the famous Pic Nic Society.... The two near angles of this triangular group are formed by Lady Hamilton and the Duchess of Devonshire.... Lady Hamilton does not wear the portrait of her late husband in her locket, but that of Admiral Nelson. Our *Didone abbandonata* will never be able to forget her Aeneas."<sup>24</sup> The compelling heroine of poetry, art, and music has dwindled into a corpulent widow, shamelessly flaunting her faithlessness.

The antic, diminutive figures to the far left and right of *Dilettanti-Theatricals* resemble the "antiquities" in Gillray's Hamiltonian prints. The hilt of the sword on the figure to the left, as well as the foot that appears to dangle from the groin of the figure to the right, intensify these phallic associations. "Every detail is riddled with *double entendre* that refers to the theme of unbounded sexual license."<sup>25</sup> The background figure sounding a triangle, for example, suggests not only the triangular relationship of the Prince of Wales and his two mistresses—hardly unnoticed by the public—but also the equally notorious *Tria Juncta in Uno*.

The massive figure of Lord Cholmondeley as Cupid (the chamberlain to the Prince of Wales)—equipped with an oversize phallic arrow and adorned with a sash reading *Amor Vincit Omnia*—functions as a presiding totem. Most of the company, in fact, appear to be doing him obeisance: yet again, those who ought to be value-givers have devoted themselves instead to "the Worship of Priapus." The correspondent for *London und Paris* signals his awareness of Knight's *Discourse* and its influence on the caricature by offering a parody of it:

Up to now we have regarded all this only as a green room, a dressing-room and lounge for conversation behind the scenes. How blind we were! For in fact it is a temple, and all those present are engaged in the most awe-inspiring of temple rites: the worship of the immanent God! Of course this kind of divine service would scarcely be expected nowadays in pious Christian Great Britain. It is more at home in ancient Babylon and the Orient more than 3,000 years ago, where both girls and married women gave themselves up to public embraces in the service of Venus Mylitta. But there it is before our eyes.<sup>26</sup>



FIGURE 6.10  
James Gillray (1757–1815),  
*Connoisseurs examining a collection  
of George Morland's*, 1807. Colored  
engraving. Print Collection,  
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach  
Division of Art, Prints and  
Photographs, The New York  
Public Library, Astor, Lenox  
and Tilden Foundations, 1003.

This parody is completed by a footnote padded with references to Herodotus and “the rites of the ancient oriental *lingam* cult.” The same parodic commentator also draws attention to the fact that the priapic Cholmondeley is wearing “the tricolour sash.” “Lord Cholmondeley,” he continues, “spent last winter in Paris.... This probably attracted the wrath of the anti-Gallican Gillray.”<sup>27</sup> It is even more probable that Gillray introduced the sash in order to link sexual with political license, orgiastic aristocrats with the damage done to the nation by “temple rites.”

The Dilettanti and their ilk continue to stimulate Gillray’s satirical imagination until the end of his career. In *Connoisseurs examining a collection of George Morland's* (1807), the most prominent observer, an emaciated elderly gentleman, strikes the same pose, exhibits the same features, and wears the same reversed spectacles as Sir William Hamilton in *A Cognocenti contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique* (Fig. 6.10; cf. fig. 6.3). The gaze of this Hamiltonian connoisseur is fixed not on a bust of *Lais* but on a scene of two pigs snout to snout in a sty. Above him hangs another vignette of rustic coupling: two disheveled rustics grapple in a stable,





observed through the door by a braying donkey. The caricature's participial title likewise emphasizes aesthetic engagement with "beauties" that distract and debase. Gillray has taken aim at both the painter, George Morland (1763–1804), and his clientele.<sup>28</sup>

In Gillray's world the ludicrous tribe of connoisseurs is marked by beaky noses, jutting chins, pipe-stem legs, and weak eyesight—a prime example being the second Marquis of Stafford in *An Amateur Going a Picture Hunting on a Frosty Morning*, a preparatory drawing for the caricature published as *Maecenas, in pursuit of the Fine Arts* (Fig. 6.11). Stafford (1758–1833) was well known for his generous patronage and his ambitious collecting, especially of Old Masters. Lord Stafford's pose, both strutting and precarious, accentuates his absurdity; his tinted spectacles signal not only myopic sight but myopic judgment. Gillray's experiments with a title make it clear that Stafford originally exemplified not a risible patron ("Maece-nas") but an obsessive amateur. The words in the lower left-hand corner ("business;—business—must be done") further emphasize the foolish zeal with which Stafford is pursuing the "capital pictures" on offer at Christie's.

FIGURE 6.11

James Gillray (1757–1815),  
*An Amateur Going a Picture Hunting  
on a Frosty Morning*, 1808. Pen  
and brown ink, 22.5 × 22.1 cm.  
London, The British Museum,  
P&D 1867,1012.605. © The  
Trustees of The British Museum.



An incisive passage from a contemporary analysis of *Connoisseurs examining a collection of George Morland's* illuminates not only the caricature but also the cultural shift that had taken place during the preceding decade and a half:

That indiscriminate admiration for works of art on the mere reputation of a name, which is so common among the dilettanti, is justly exposed by this satire on a certain junto of connoisseurs...the group here exposed were among those whose dicta maintained a certain reputation for their favourite genius [Morland], long after his faculties were on the wane.<sup>29</sup>

The role of discriminating connoisseur has now become that of “indiscriminate” enthusiast—an enthusiast who belongs, not to an enlightened Freemasonry, but to an unreliable and even deceptive “junto.” A dilettante is one who has sunk from collecting “dirty gods” to collecting daubs of dirty animals “on the mere reputation of a name.” Indeed the figure to the far right of Gillray’s caricature mirrors the very pig whose picture he is handling. To an informed observer of 1807, connoisseurial examination can readily be reduced to swinish expectoration.

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CHAPTER 7

*SPECIMENS OF ANTIENT  
SCULPTURE (1809)*

THE CLIMAX OF ANTIQUE DILETTANTISM

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Attacks both visual and verbal did nothing to deflect the Dilettanti from their core enterprise—collecting and interpreting the art of antiquity. In May 1799 the Society’s “New Committee of Publication” launched an ambitious venture: a lavishly illustrated folio devoted to sculptural rarities, most of them collected by the Dilettanti. The principal architects of this enterprise were Richard Payne Knight and Charles Townley, who set about hiring “proper Engravers” and employing “Draughtsmen to make additional Drawings from the different Collections of Antiquities” (Minute Books, 10 May 1799). The corpus of engravings, seventy-eight in all, was not complete until 1807.<sup>1</sup> Because Townley had died in 1805, Knight took charge of writing the introduction and the commentary, both of which are couched in a regal first-person plural. It is likely that Knight played a decisive role in choosing the title as well: *Specimens of Antient Sculpture, Aegyptian, Etruscan, Greek, and Roman: Selected from Different Collections in Great Britain, by the Society of Dilettanti*.

This title adumbrates both the volume’s purpose and its parentage. “Specimens” suggests rigorous collecting and analysis. The division of “Antient” into a sequence of periods, beginning with “Aegyptian” and ending with “Roman,” points toward a quasi-Linnaean interest in classification and testifies to the influence of Winckelmann’s *History of Ancient Art* (1764), which analyzes the development and degeneration of sculpture in terms of the same four cultures. “Great Britain” bespeaks national pride and rebuts those of Gillray’s persuasion who consider collecting and connoisseurship unpatriotic. Finally, “Selected...by the Society of Dilettanti” gives calm, collective, and even canonical weight to the “Specimens” on view. The air of authority is deepened by the Greek motto beneath the title: *T’archai hot’ oistha, kai ta kain’ eisei saphos* (“When you know ancient things, you will clearly know new things”). The Society thereby seeks to bridge the gap between ancients and moderns, taste and knowledge, looking backward and looking forward. This combined sense of aspiration and achievement helps to explain the judgment that “the first volume of *Specimens of Antient Sculpture* forms a brilliant conclusion to the century of antique dilettantism in England.”<sup>2</sup>

The title and the motto, moreover, direct us toward the most significant frame of reference: in format, organization, illustrations, and commentary, *Specimens* seeks to consummate the project begun with *The Antiquities of Athens*, the first of the Society’s proto-archaeological folios.<sup>3</sup> These volumes are characterized by three discourses: quasi-scientific, nationalistic, and anti-picturesque (see p. 44). Their commitment to accuracy, transparency, and exactitude both reflects and reinforces a “culture of measurement”—a culture

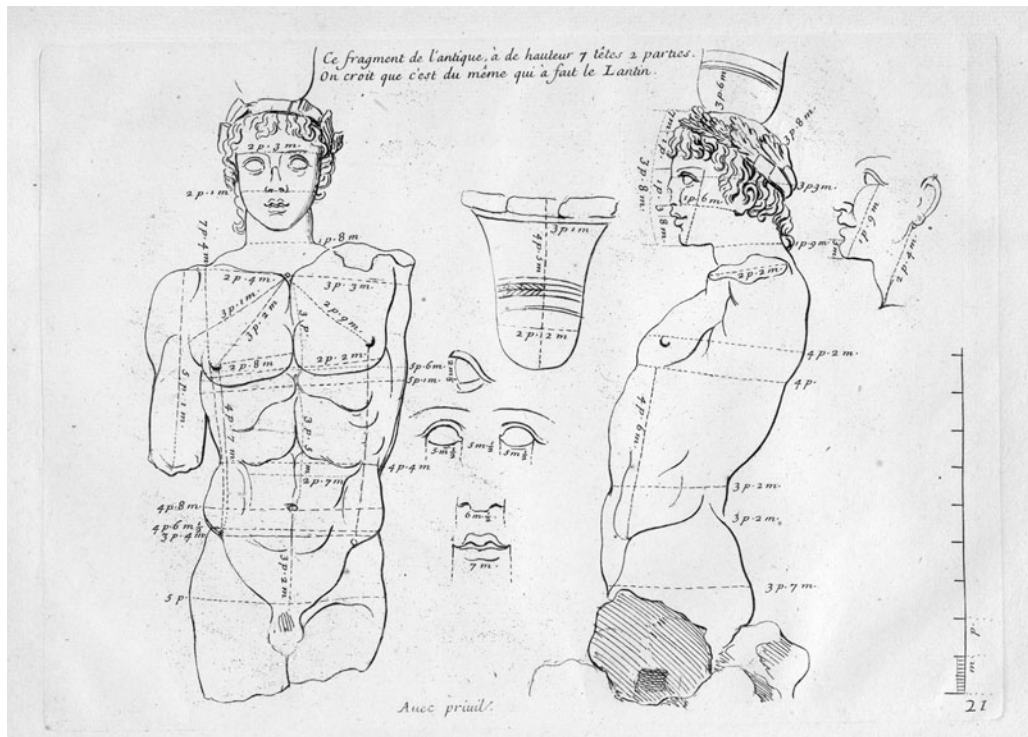
that draws strength from the empirical traditions of the Royal Society and the model of Desgodetz's *Les Edifices Antiques de Rome, Dessinés et Mesurés Très Exactement*.<sup>4</sup> For the Dilettanti of Knight's era, specimens of sculpture, like those of architecture, should be "dessinés et mesurés très exactement."

## THE DELINEATION OF SCULPTURE: PROTOCOLS

The scrupulous delineation of sculpture, however, requires its own protocols, which are supplied by Gérard Audran's *Les Proportions du corps humain, mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (1683). This treatise, which appeared the year after Desgodetz's *Edifices*, anatomizes its selection of "belles figures" through engravings that architect Robert Adam might well have branded "hard as Iron, & as false as hell"—his verdict on the plates of the Stuart and Revett *Antiquities* (see p. 64). Audran presents his sculptural specimens as specimens, to be exposed from multiple vantage points and dissected through painstaking measurement, without the slightest hint of stylistic grace or concession to aesthetic pleasure. Fragments are documented in frontal and profile views, while such canonical works as the Venus de' Medici warrant fuller exposure (Figs. 7.1–3). Each plate includes a caption that condenses the information supplied by individual lines and numbers. Audran thereby supplies a textbook for the artist-in-training and a guide for those connoisseurs who would ground their judgments in empirical, arithmetical data.

FIGURE 7.1

Anatomical drawing of a fragmentary ancient statue of a man with measurements. From Gérard Audran (1640–1703), *Les Proportions du corps humain, mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris, 1683), pl. 21. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.





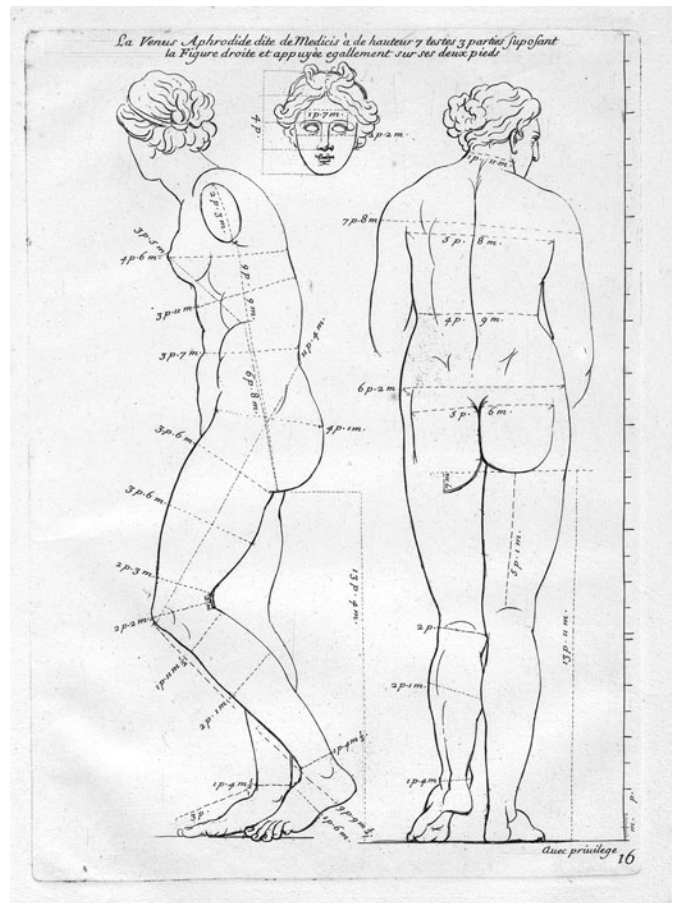
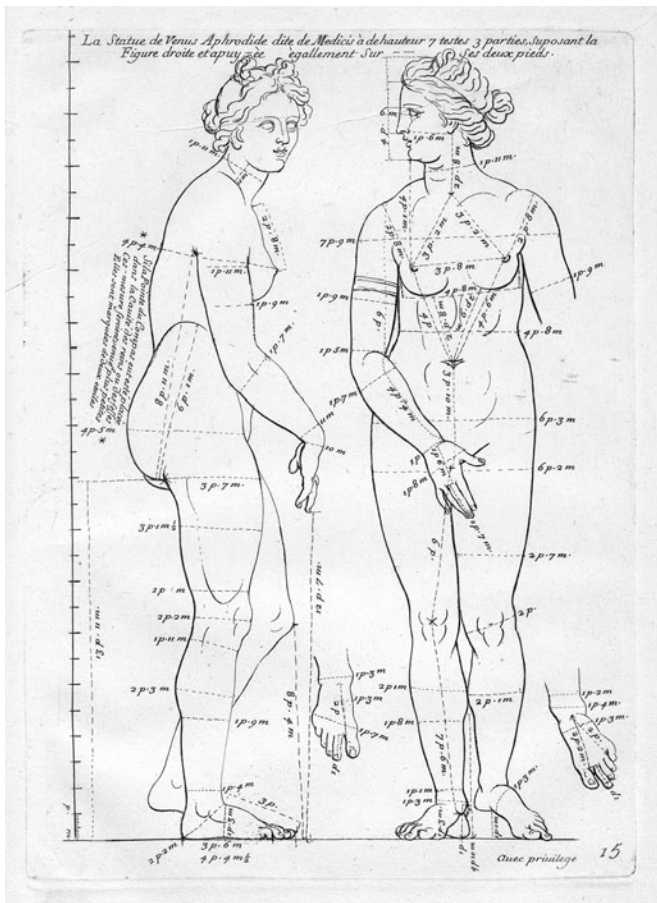


FIGURE 7.2

Anatomical drawing of the Venus de Medici with measurements. From Gérard Audran (1640–1703), *Les Proportions du corps humain, mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris, 1683), pl. 15. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

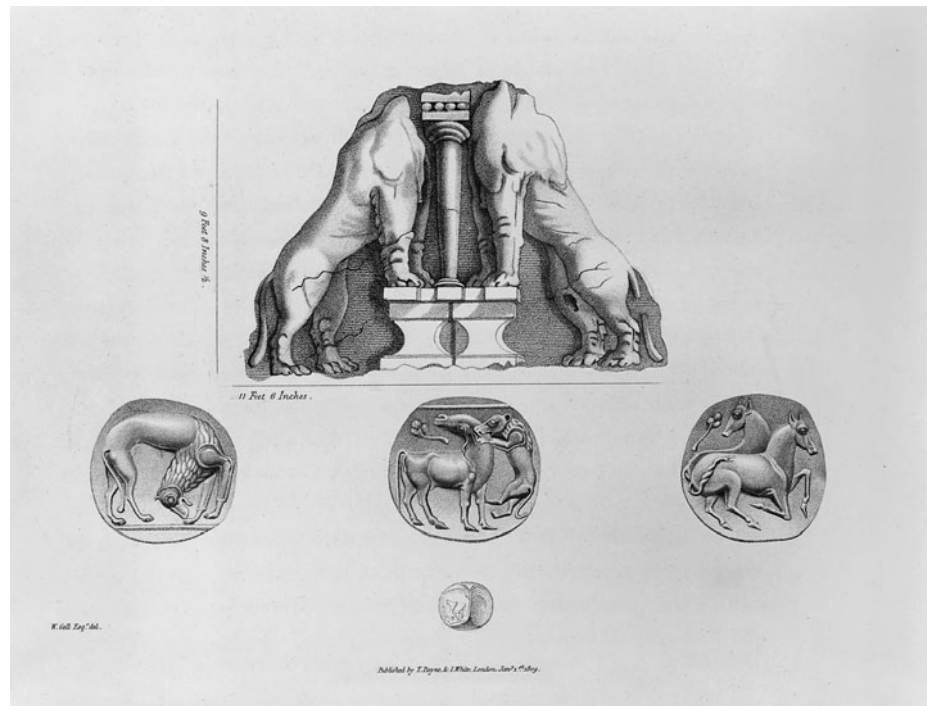
FIGURE 7.3

Anatomical drawing of the Venus de Medici with measurements. From Gérard Audran (1640–1703), *Les Proportions du corps humain, mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris, 1683), pl. 16. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

At the beginning of *Specimens* the debt to Audran's prototype announces itself: the list of errata, inserted immediately after a table of Dilettanti "An. Soc. LXXVII," proclaims in no uncertain terms the importance of accuracy in general and measurement in particular: "Plate. 1. Inscription, for two feet eleven inches, r. two feet." The tailpiece to the introduction (Fig. 7.4) reinforces this commitment. Lines and numbers frame the bas-relief, while Knight's text measures its significance:

The most antient monument of Grecian sculpture now extant is unquestionably the broken piece of natural relief in the ancient portal to the gates of Mycenae, which is probably the same that belonged to the capital of Agamemnon, and may therefore be at least as old as the age of Daedalus. It represents two lions rampant, sufficiently entire to afford a very tolerable idea of the style of the work. The plate of it given in the tail-piece to this discourse, is engraved from a sketch made upon the spot, and corrected by admeasurement, by William Gell, Esq. and though this does not afford any very accurate information as to the details of this work, the three compositions of the engraved gem given with it are

FIGURE 7.4  
After William Gell (1777–1837),  
Tailpiece with the Mycenaean  
Lion Gate and carved gems.  
Engraving. From *Specimens of  
Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London,  
1809). Los Angeles, Research  
Library, GRI.



perfectly competent to supply such information; they being in exactly the same style, and having been found in the same country by the same intelligent and industrious traveler.<sup>5</sup>

Chronology based upon stylistic analysis is itself based on firsthand “admeasurement” and comparison: these define an enterprise derived from Desgodetz and adapted from Audran. The attention to scale and proportion in both plates and commentary, as well as the documentation of sculpture from multiple vantage points, make this line of descent unmistakable.

#### KNIGHT’S ATTENTION TO RESTORATION, SURFACE, AND PROVENANCE

Neither Desgodetz’s *Edifices* nor Audran’s *Proportions*, however, can guide the Dilettanti in a related goal: to investigate technique, condition, restoration, and provenance. This ambition, like the concern with measurement, also manifests itself first in the errata: “The Drawing for Pl. LXIV. was made under the direction of the late Mr. Towneley, who having neglected to indicate or mention the repairs, we, relying on his usual accuracy, have stated the bust to be entire; whereas the nose, with part of the hair, both at the back and on the top of the head, have been restored.” In this and similar remarks, a commitment to authenticity trumps even friendship and close collaboration: at the outset, Knight, speaking ostensibly for the entire Society, makes it clear how strongly he opposes the standard practice of restoration. In line with the refusal to restore the bronzes in his own collection, Knight devotes much of *Speci-*

*mens* to recording and censuring the restorations sanctioned by others. In an even stronger criticism of his collaborator, for example, he describes Townley's *Discobolus* as "the best of the three antient copies extant," while denying that "the head originally belonged to it" (*Specimens*, 01r). This one example of misguided and misleading restoration occasions an important statement of principle:

Our duty to the public obliges us to acknowledge that the head appears to us to have belonged to a totally different figure, probably one of a group of pancratiastae, and to have been put upon this by a modern restorer, under the direction of Mr. Jenkins, the dealer, through whose hands it passed at Rome. Under all these disadvantages, however, it is a most valuable and curious monument, and of such importance in the history of the art, that we have given it a place in this collection, contrary to a rule, which we found expedient to adopt, of excluding all heterogeneous compositions of parts, not originally belonging to each other; which are abundant in all publications of this kind, to the no small perplexity and dismay of antiquaries. (*Specimens*, 01v)

In the manner of Desgodetz's prefatory indictments of his inaccurate predecessors, Knight enhances the authority of *Specimens*, both in text and image, by distancing the Dilettanti from unreliable collectors and misleading "publications of this kind." Harking back to Stuart's jibes at Le Roy, he singles out a prominent French amateur for his carelessness: "There is, indeed, a similar figure published by la Chausse, which would decide this [bronze] to be a Vulcan, were we assured that the symbols in the hands were antient; but as that antiquary is inexcusably negligent in not noticing restorations, his authority is not to be relied upon" (*Specimens*, x1r). The reports of Stuart and Revett, in gratifying contrast, provide "*competent information*" (*Specimens*, p. xlv, my italics).

Throughout *Specimens* such judicial criticism accompanies illustrations that mark restored elements through unobtrusive but unmistakable dotted lines. Knight consistently draws attention to this important viewer's guide: in a head of Minerva, for example, "All the upper part of the helmet, above the dotted line in the plate, has been restored, as likewise the tip of the nose" (*Specimens*, κ2r); a more enigmatic work, a "figure of a sacrificer with his offering," Knight pronounces "complete and entire, except the tip of the nose, the right hand and arm, with the legs of the pig, as marked by dotted lines in the print" (*Specimens*, 2G2r). On rare occasions, dotted lines not only indicate actual but also conjectural restorations, as in the plate illustrating a bronze Jupiter/J Zeus from Knight's collection (Fig. 7.5). Knight is even prepared to rescue the original—in this instance, one of Lord Egremont's marbles—by doctoring the engraving: "The head, of which two views are here given, appears to be that of some canonised hero of poetical mythology or fabulous history.... It is now mounted upon a cumbrous modern bust, from which we have delivered it in the print, and from which we could wish to see it delivered in the gallery" (*Specimens*, 02r).

Such scrupulous, emphatic, and even polemical documenting of restoration goes hand in hand with an equally insistent analyzing of technique and condition. A "curious and



FIGURE 7.5

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Statue of Zeus.” Engraving. From *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), pl. LII. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.



elaborate specimen of old Etruscan work,” Knight surmises, “appears...not to have been cast, but to have been carved out of a piece of hammered metal” (*Specimens*, c2r). In scrutinizing the hair of a “fine bust of Apollo,” he suggests that the “regular formality, with which [the ringlets] are curled, renders it probable that in the original they were made out of long thin plates or strips of metal, hammered out and twisted, and then soldered to the head” (*Specimens*, N2r). Attention to technique emerges out of or leads into assessment of condition, as in Knight’s commentary on a “a curious and elegant figure of the mystic cupid”: “It is quite entire except some bits of the foliage; which have been broken off, but remain in fragments.

The surface, which is black, is in perfect preservation, the antient polish remaining; and the eyes are of silver; with which the inside feathers of the wings have also been curiously inlaid" (*Specimens*, 72r). Far from being superficial, Knight's concern with surface forms part of his endeavor to reconstruct with archaeological exactitude the work's original appearance. Accordingly, he takes pleasure in the fact that "the preservation [of a Greek bronze] is equal to the finishing; the surface being entire, with its original polish as it came from the hands of the artist, without corrosion or adhesion" (*Specimens*, 12r). As the concluding chapter will make clear, this preoccupation will come back to haunt Knight when he testifies before the parliamentary committee charged with investigating the Elgin Marbles.

Like a modern archaeologist or art historian, moreover, Knight seeks to establish provenance as a means of authenticating, contextualizing, and interpreting a work. It is significant that an "antient herm of Bacchus... was found in some earth and rubbish that had slipped into the sea, on the coast near where antient Baiae stood; and was purchased upon the spot by the late Mr. Adair" (*Specimens*, 112r). A reliable assessment of a "fine statue of Minerva" must take into account the fact that "it was found in the year 1797 at Ostia, about thirty feet below the surface, lying prostrate at the foot of its own nich, among the ruins of a magnificent building on the mouth of the Tiber" (*Specimens*, 111r). The longest account of provenance in *Specimens* is designed to authenticate one of Knight's most prized possessions, a bronze statue of Mercury, whose story is recounted in the manner of an epic simile from Homer:

It was found... on the 19th of February in the year 1732, at a place called Pierre Luisit, near Huis, in the pays de Bugey, in the diocese of Lyons. Two labourers being driven from their work by a shower of rain, observed a small cave near a cascade, the mouth of which was stopped up by a large stone. This they immediately removed with their pick-axes; and within found this figure, which they forthwith carried to a bourgeois of Huis named Janin; in whose possession it remained till the year 1747; when it came to the knowledge of the Abbé Chalat, almoner of the chapter of Belleville, who purchased it of Janin, and had the circumstances of its discovery recorded in a procès verbal before a notary. In his possession it continued at Belleville in the Beaujolais till the year 1788, when he died, and left it to his friend the Abbé Tersant at Paris, who, upon the dangers which threatened all the French clergy in the year 1792, sold it to the present proprietor. (*Specimens*, Q1v–Q2r)

This seamless genealogy, with a certificate of authenticity embedded within it, helps to explain why the statue is "still in the state, in which it came from the hands of the artist." Perfect preservation of this kind allows the connoisseur in turn to deduce reliably "what Grecian art originally was" (*Specimens*, Q2r).

Such miniature biographies of the sculpture on display function like museum labels, combining information with interpretation. Any reader of *Specimens*, however, starts out as a viewer, who is arrested by the plates before turning to commentaries that in turn lead back to the plates. Unusual as the comparison might seem, Knight shares with his contemporary William Blake an interest in weaving word and image together: the descriptions in *Specimens*

FIGURE 7.6A

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Hercules taming the Hind,” 1805. Pen and ink wash on paper, 40.4 × 27 cm. Society of Dilettanti drawing for *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI, no. 840199, box 1, f. 14.



are designed not only to work in tandem with the illustrations, but ultimately to disappear into them—so that, as in Blake’s illuminated manuscripts, the experiences of looking and reading come close to being fused. This goal is made possible, in large measure, by the high quality of the illustrations—the most striking of which, by John Samuel Agar, have justly been called “the finest ever made of sculpture.”<sup>6</sup> Comparison of the original drawings to the plates based upon them only strengthens this assessment. Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1858) was a highly versatile artist, whose oeuvre includes drawings, watercolors, engravings, miniatures, and oils. His principal gift, however, was for reproductive printmaking, which he learned at



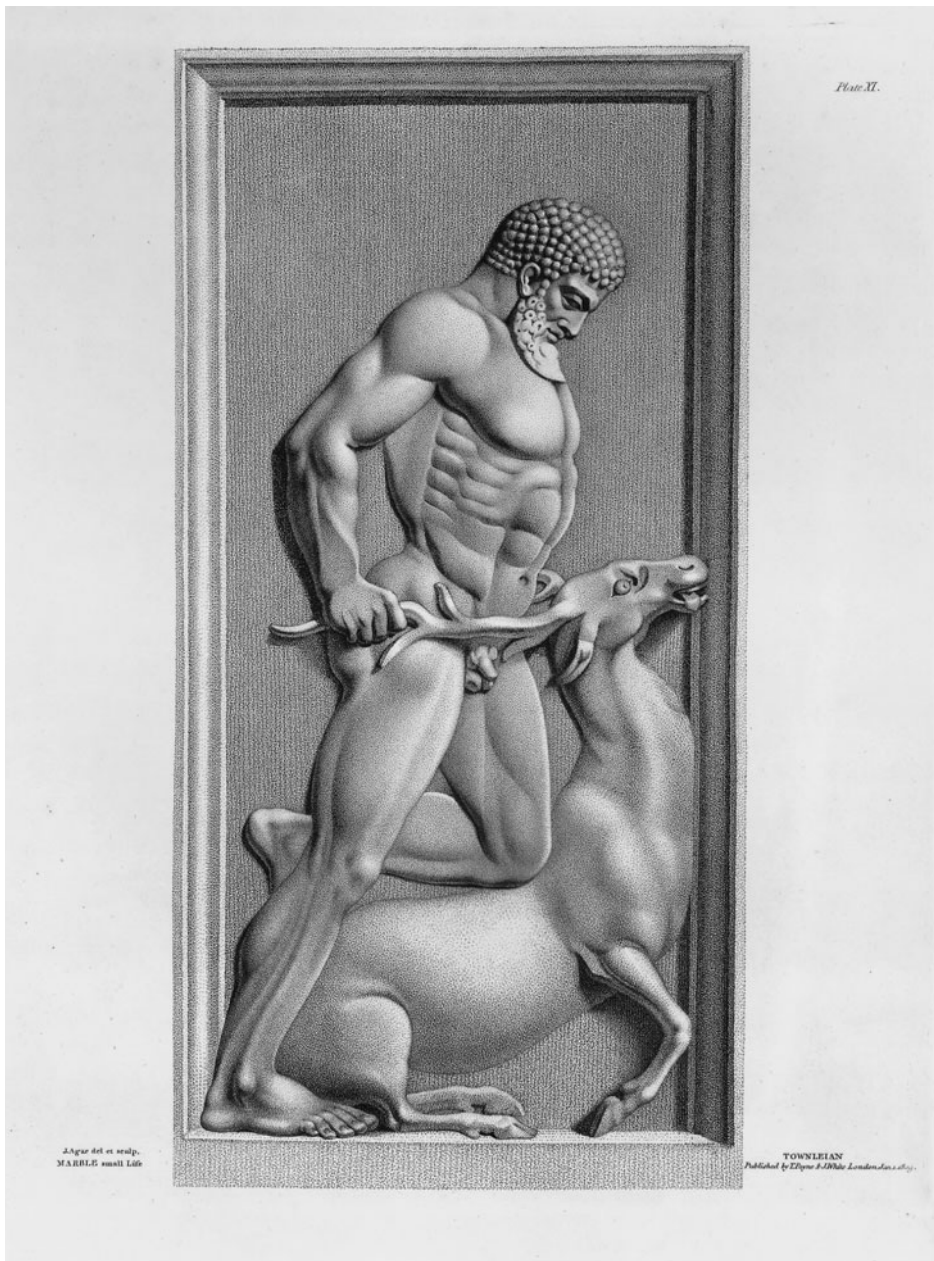


FIGURE 7.6B

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Hercules taming the Hind.” Engraving. From *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), pl. xi. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

the Royal Academy Schools. In the midst of fulfilling commissions from the Dilettanti, Agar became a governor of the Society of Engravers, going on to produce an accomplished array of stipple engravings after portraits by Van Dyck, Lely, Reynolds, and Cosway. By engaging him to produce the majority of the plates in *Specimens*, the Dilettanti found the ideal means of both documenting and exalting their sculptural canon.

Like James Basire before him, Agar exploits the potential of the burin to delineate shape, structure, and condition with absolute clarity. Plate xi, for example, perfectly captures the salient characteristics of a “very antient piece of sculpture in low relief, of Hercules

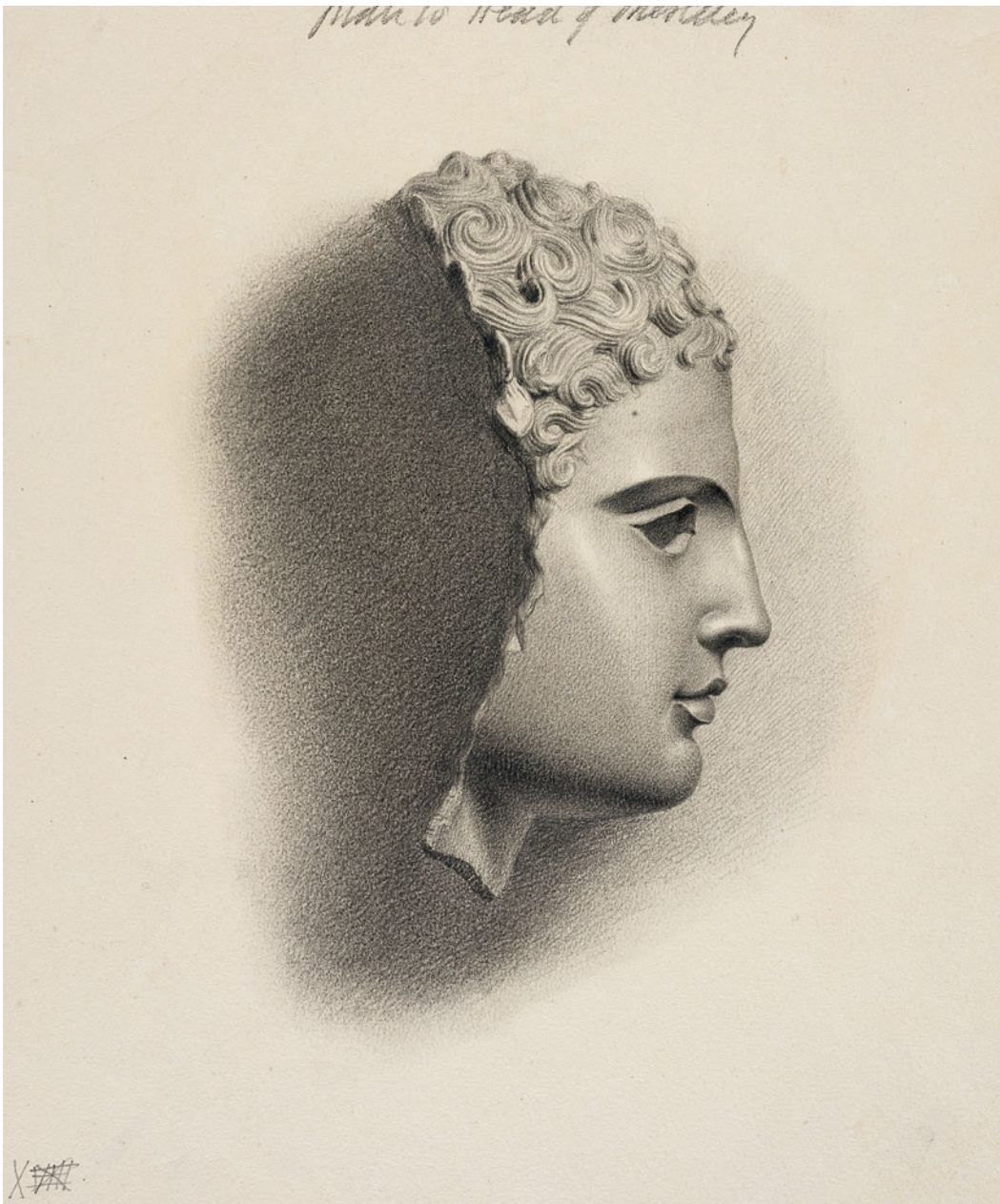


FIGURE 7.7A

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Head of Mercury.” Chalk with ink on paper, 30.2 × 25.7 cm. Society of Dilettanti drawing for *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI, no. 840199, box 2, f. 4.

taming the hind.... It has been broken to pieces, and joined by parts in the middle” (*Specimens*, Fir; Figs. 7.6A–B). In this plate all is transparent yet nothing is “hard” or “dry”—those pejorative adjectives favored by antiquaries of a picturesque persuasion. Quite the contrary: while representing the piece of sculpture faithfully, Agar contrives to create a work of graphic art that gives pleasure in its own right. The same is even truer of those plates that, again following Basire, blend etching with engraving. This combination captures the effect created by “original polish” (Figs. 7.7A–B). It also does justice to the subtle contours of such works as the androgynous Apollo that for Knight was the *ne plus ultra* of antient sculpture: “for taste









FIGURE 7.8

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Apollo Didymaeus.” Engraving. From *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), pl. XLIII. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.



FIGURE 7.9

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Apollo Didymaeus.” Engraving. From *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), pl. XLIV. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

FIGURE 7.10

Marble statue of Herakles with  
putto (or Telephos). Vatican  
Museums, Galleria Chiaramonti.  
Photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY.



intimate elegance: an arresting gaze replaces the blank eyes of the original, while a commanding stance relaxes into sinuous contrapposto (Figs. 7.10–11). Combining burin and needle with similar ends in view, Agar responds astutely to Knight’s encomium: “from whatever point the figure [of Apollo] be viewed, its attitude and posture are as easy and natural, as they are graceful, elegant, and beautiful” (*Specimens*, uiv). The result is a Pygmalion figure, halfway to flesh.



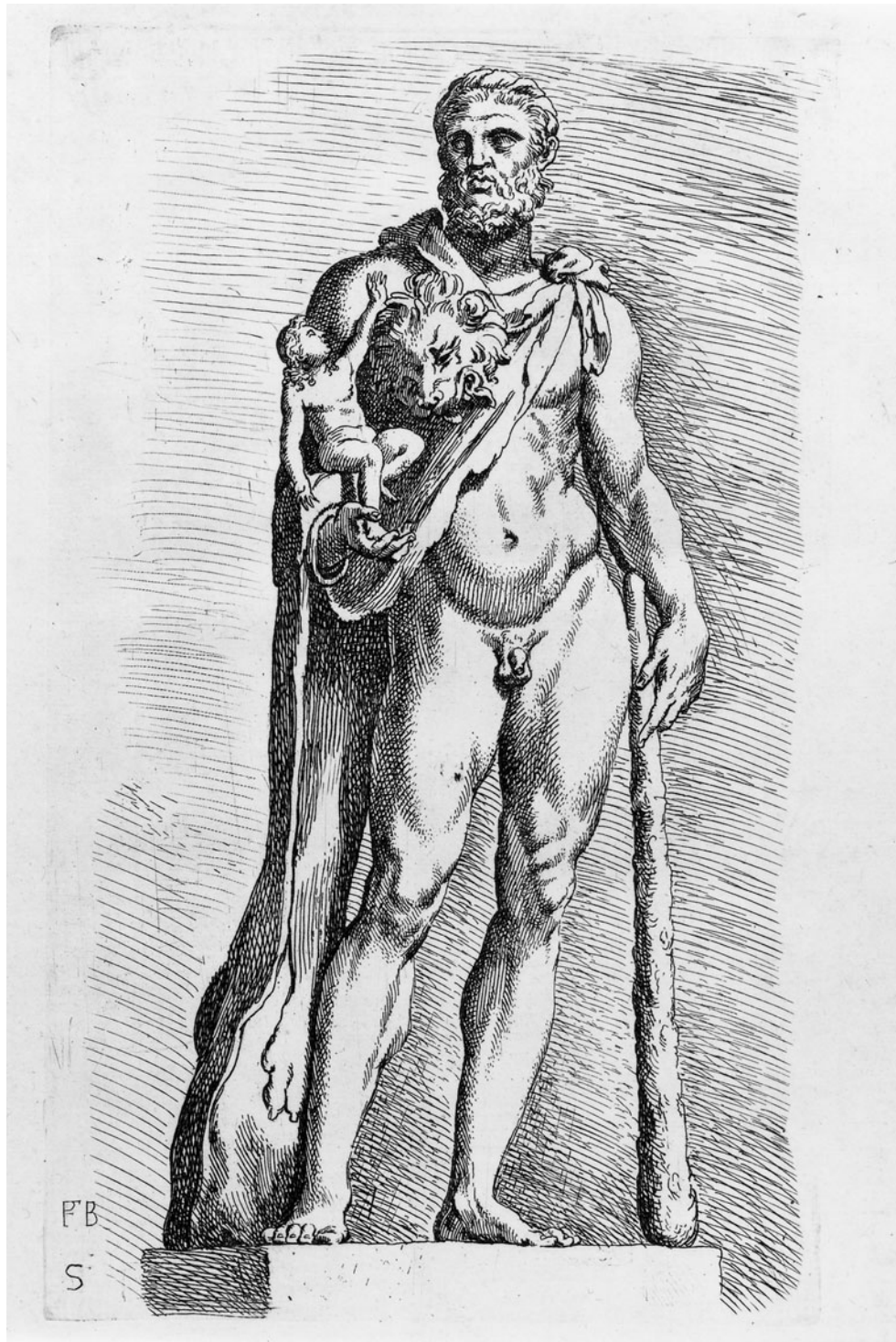


FIGURE 7.11

Marble statue of Herakles with putto. Engraving of fig. 7.10. From François Perrier (1590?–1656?), *Segmenta nobilium signorum et statuarum* (Rome, 1638), pl. 15. Photo: Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEXT AND IMAGE IN *SPECIMENS*

On most occasions, Knight's commentary exalts Agar's work through a trope that might be called the "superfluity topos." This topos forms part of a set of self-authenticating maneuvers that *Specimens* inherits from the mid-eighteenth-century folios. As we have observed, these folios incorporate meta-documentation—for example, Stuart recording himself recording the Erechtheion—as part of their glorification of exactitude and their performance of reliability (see figs. 2.11 and 2.27). Though Knight supervised many of the plates in *Specimens*, he did not create them; therefore his relationship to visual documentation must take a specifically rhetorical form. The "superfluity topos" fills the need for a textual seal of approval, which ultimately obviates itself by declaring words redundant. This earnest yet ironic procedure appears most emphatically in Knight's description of a marble Hercules in the Lansdowne Collection: "the artist [Agar] who drew and engraved it, [has been enabled] to produce a print so accurate and complete as to render all description superfluous. We know of no very fine statue, of which so faithful and adequate a representation has been given to the public" (*Specimens*, s2r; see fig. 7.18). Knight thereby returns the folio, a composite enterprise uniting the sister arts of language and line, to its origins as an album of self-sufficient prints.

At rare moments, however, Knight inverts the "superfluity topos" by turning commentary into corrective: "the delineator," Henry Howard (1769–1847), "has failed in his representation both of the character and proportions; which have nothing of the dignity, grandeur, or lightness of the original" (*Specimens*, z2r). The most emphatic criticism of this kind, which goes so far as to subvert the image, is leveled at the illustration of a marble Apollo in the Earl of Egremont's collection (Fig. 7.12):

Our duty to the public obliges us to acknowledge that justice has not been done in the print either to the truth of the proportions, the elegance of the limbs, or the grace of the action in this fine figure of Apollo. The head is too small, the legs too large, and the posture too erect. The statue has every appearance of being an original work of a very considerable artist; the spirit and delicacy of the execution being equal to the taste and beauty of the design; and the character of intelligence in the countenance far superior to what is conveyed in the print. (*Specimens*, 2D2r)

This passage begins by echoing Knight's attack on the restoration of Townley's *Discobolus*: "Our duty to the public obliges us to acknowledge that the head appears to us to have belonged to a totally different figure" (*Specimens*, 01v). The echo helps to connect representation to restoration: in both instances, a superior work of art has been compromised by an inferior work—sculptural on the one hand, graphic on the other. Given Knight's passionate devotion to authenticity, the potential to mislead is so great that it must be exposed as something approaching a fraud.

With the same concerns in mind, Knight also repudiates the picturesque aesthetic that, in his view, distorts two of the plates—both of them a collaboration between John

FIGURE 7.12

Henry Howard (1769–1847),  
"Apollo." Engraving. From  
*Specimens of Antient Sculpture*,  
vol. 1 (London, 1809), pl. LXII.  
Los Angeles, Research Library,  
GRI.







FIGURE 7.13  
John Brown, “Laughing Faun.”  
Engraving. From *Specimens of  
Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London,  
1809), pl. LIX. Los Angeles,  
Research Library, GRI.

Brown (“delin.”) and William Evans (“sc.”). Just as the sculptor must never invade the province of the painter, so illustrators of sculpture must avoid confusing “sculpsit” with “pinxit.” To summarize Knight’s position: “if the artist started to let pictorial beauties (rather than sculptural beauties) become evident in the illustration, then that overstepped the mark and was grounds for criticism”; Knight had provided the theoretical underpinnings for these strictures in his *Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (1805).<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, he criticizes plate LIX, seen in Figure 7.13, which shows the “perfectly preserved...head of a laughing Faun,” for conveying the figure’s animated countenance through *sfumato*: “The artist, who made the drawing, though he had in general a very just feeling for antient sculpture, was rather too



fond of introducing effects of light and shade, properly belonging to painting, into his imitations of it; and this fault of refinement is retained in the print, which is otherwise perfectly accurate" (*Specimens*, 2C11). In its transgressive mingling of the painterly with the graphic, the Brown-Evans partnership likewise produces a flawed illustration of an Apollo from the Townley Collection (Fig. 7.14):

This head... is very accurately represented in the print; though the artist has introduced too much of the painter's beauties of play of light and shadow, and glitter of effect; which, how fascinating soever in the sister art, sculpture does not admit of; and which therefore ought

FIGURE 7.14  
John Brown. "Apollo Didymaeus."  
Engraving. From *Specimens of  
Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London,  
1809), pl. LXIV. Los Angeles,  
Research Library, GRI.

not to be employed in the imitations of it; since fidelity of representation, and not beauty of effect, is the excellence required in such secondary productions of art. (*Specimens*, 2E2r)

In this passage Knight affirms the fundamental goal of *Specimens*, “fidelity of representation,” while drawing a fine line between accomplished printmaking that stays within its reproductive boundaries and printmaking that pushes beyond them.

All the goals, procedures, and relationships that we have been discussing are distilled in the commentary on plate xvii, “J. Agar sculp,” which illustrates a bronze head in Knight’s collection (Fig. 7.15):

This curious and original fragment of Etruscan art, is at present mounted upon a neck and shoulders made at Rome; but as the restoration is not very happily conceived or executed, we have chosen to give it in the state in which it was found; and the print is so accurate as to render all description unnecessary. The hair is finished with an engraving tool in the early Greek manner; and the beard, which is represented shaven, is indicated by dots and short lines on the cheeks and chin. All the Etruscan portraits that we have seen, and there are several extant upon marble sarcophagi, have the beard shaven, which seems to have been a very antient custom in Etruria, and to have been adopted from thence by the Romans. Whether, however, this head be so antient, as the hardness and rigor of its style seem to infer, we much doubt; the Etruscans having followed the improvements of the Greeks slowly, and at a respectful distance; and having no pretensions to that venerable antiquity in art, which some of their later countrymen have been disposed to give them; as the Abbe Lanzi has clearly shown. It was found in the year 1771, in one of the islands of the Lake of Bolsena; so that it probably represents one of the magistrates of the antient city of Vulturnum; one of the most considerable of the federate states of Tuscany. (*Specimens*, 11r)

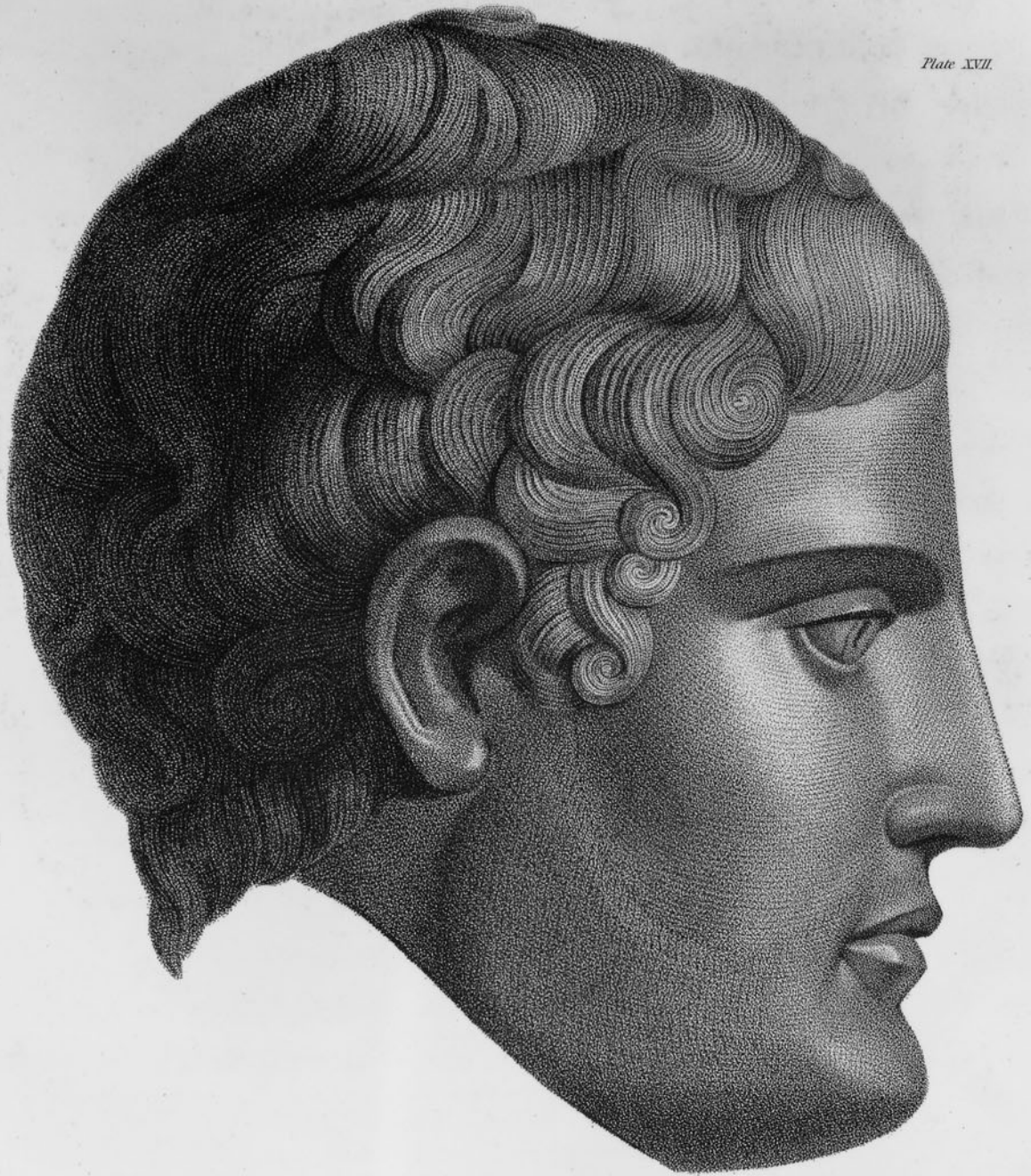
The commentary begins by opening and then closing a gap between object and image. What is “curious and original” has been impaired by a restoration that the illustrator excises. Consequently the plate is false to the unfaithful bronze but faithful to its true state. Knight next introduces the “superfluous topos,” only to expose it as a rhetorical ploy by providing the kind of description that has just been declared “unnecessary.” This description, which focuses on technique, invites us to consider an act of double mimesis: an engraving tool, wielded by the masterful Agar, captures the effects of an engraving tool that documents Etruscan grooming practices. In both works of art, three-dimensional and two-dimensional, “the beard...is indicated by dots and short lines on the cheeks and chin.” Knight then proceeds to create a cultural context for his analysis of the bronze, bolstering his judgments by referring to a reliable Italian antiquary and concluding with a cautious identification of the sitter.

Not only does this passage illustrate Knight’s analytical methods, it also exemplifies his prose throughout the commentary section of *Specimens*. Just as Stuart, Revett, and Chandler adopt a plain style as the vehicle for accurate documentation, so Knight discards the

FIGURE 7.15  
Tende, “Etruscan Portrait.”  
Engraving. From *Specimens of  
Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London,  
1809), pl. xvii. Los Angeles,  
Research Library, GRI.



Plate XVII.



Tonde del.

BRASS same size ... REKNIGHT Esq.  
Published by T. Payne, & J. White London. Juss. 1809.

J. Agar sculp.

Gibbonian voice of the *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* in favor of a restrained, semi-scientific manner (see pp. 60–63, 72–74). At times, indeed, he seems to be imitating the notations in a field or laboratory notebook:

It is entire, except a cut in the forehead immediately over the nose, which appears to have been made by a blow of a mattock or stocking axe, when it was found; but the surface has been a little corroded; the effect of which however is to render it more soft and fleshy than it appears to have been originally. It is of a dark green tint, except the lips; which are black, and have probably been enameled, or plated with gold. The eyes, which were also of some more splendid material, have been restored in glass stuck in with wax. (*Specimens*, κ1r)

The language of this passage—clipped, precise, denotative—invites us to approach the bronze head as if it were a medical specimen, even an exhumed corpse. On occasion, however, Knight takes the opposite approach, bringing the dead to life through vivid rhapsodies teeming with personification:

Though every lock of hair is accurately composed, it seems moveable with every breeze; and though the lines of the lips, brows, and eye-lids are perfectly sharp, no magnifier can discover any trace of a tool in any part of the surface, either of the features, limbs, or body. *L'arte che tutta fa nulla si scopra* [“the art that accomplishes everything exposes nothing”]. Every muscle appears elastic, and the countenance absolutely speaking, with a beauty and sweetness of character more than human. (*Specimens*, Q1v)

Here Knight turns for inspiration not to his Dilettanti predecessors but to the works of Winckelmann (1717–1768).<sup>8</sup> Knight’s homoerotic tribute to this bronze Mercury strongly resembles Winckelmann’s odes to the Apollo Belvedere and the Belvedere Antinous—prose poems that comprise, in their mingling of “fact and fantasy, a lover’s discourse.”<sup>9</sup>

## WINCKELMANN’S INFLUENCE

Knight’s debt to Winckelmann, moreover, extends beyond eulogistic manner to include analytical method and principal theme. “Interest in close observation and the comparison of the actual remains of antiquity is what makes Winckelmann’s *History of Ancient Art* important as the foundation stone of modern empirical archaeology.”<sup>10</sup> Given this empirical bent, an orientation shared by the Dilettanti, it is ironic that Winckelmann should have dismissed *The Antiquities of Athens* by applying to it Virgil’s description of Polyphemus: *monstrum horrendum ingens, cui lumen ademptum* (“a monster awful, huge, bereft of light”).<sup>11</sup> Significantly, Winckelmann omits the adjective *informe* (“shapeless”) from the quotation: though he can denigrate the monuments selected by Stuart and Revett as *Kleinigkeiten* (“trivialities”), he cannot ignore the impressive coherence—the shapeliness—of the folio itself.<sup>12</sup> In their turn the Dilet-

tanti, who may well have been ignorant of Winckelmann's dismissive verdict, assimilate his approach to sculpture into their architecture-based enterprise. Not only are the categories and criteria of *Specimens* influenced by *History of Ancient Art*, but its principal claim—that Greek liberty made Greek art possible—informs Knight's "Preliminary Dissertation on the Rise, Progress, and Decline of Antient Sculpture."

In both substance and style, this "Dissertation" recapitulates the genealogy and achievements of the Society across three generations. While advancing his claims for "Collections in Great Britain," Knight exalts the cosmopolitan attitudes that had characterized the Dilettanti from the outset: the ideas of German, French, British, and Italian authors are woven together in the eclectic manner pervading their rituals, regalia, portraits, and patronage. "Grecian taste and Roman spirit" remain a central concern, though Knight glorifies the former at the expense of the latter:

The statues of deities, heroes, etc. which adorned their temples, theatres, baths, palaces and villas, were either from the plunder of the Greek cities, or copies made from the masterpieces which still continued, or which had once enriched them: but that kind of employment, which calls forth inventive genius, and which by joining the efforts of the hand to those of the mind, produces works of taste and feeling, as well as of technical skill and dexterity, seems to have ceased with the Greek republics and Macedonian kings. A tame, minute, and elaborate style ensued, in which the want of bold expression, original character, and striking effect in the whole, was feebly compensated by accurate detail, faithful imitation, and neat finishing in all the parts. (*Specimens*, p. lxxvi)

Here a Winckelmannian argument linking style to politics is joined to a prose style harking back to Robert Wood's prefaces and introductions—in particular his "Enquiry into the Antient State of Palmyra" and his preface to *Ionian Antiquities* (see pp. 1–2, 49, 51). That style, which might justly be called "neo-Ciceronian," is marked by its magisterial tone, its complex structure, its balanced clauses, its preference for enforcing contrast through parallelism, and its frequent use of doublets and triplets. Knight's final sentence above, for example, drives home the key differences between Greek and Roman sculpture in a sequence of three triplets, the first adjectival ("tame, minute, and elaborate"), the second and third both adjectival and nominal ("bold expression, original character, and striking effect . . . accurate detail, faithful imitation, and neat finishing"). What Knight adds to Wood's example is an implicit guide to connoisseurship: the descriptive terms he employs can easily be converted into analytical tools, which he proceeds to wield in the commentary section of *Specimens*.

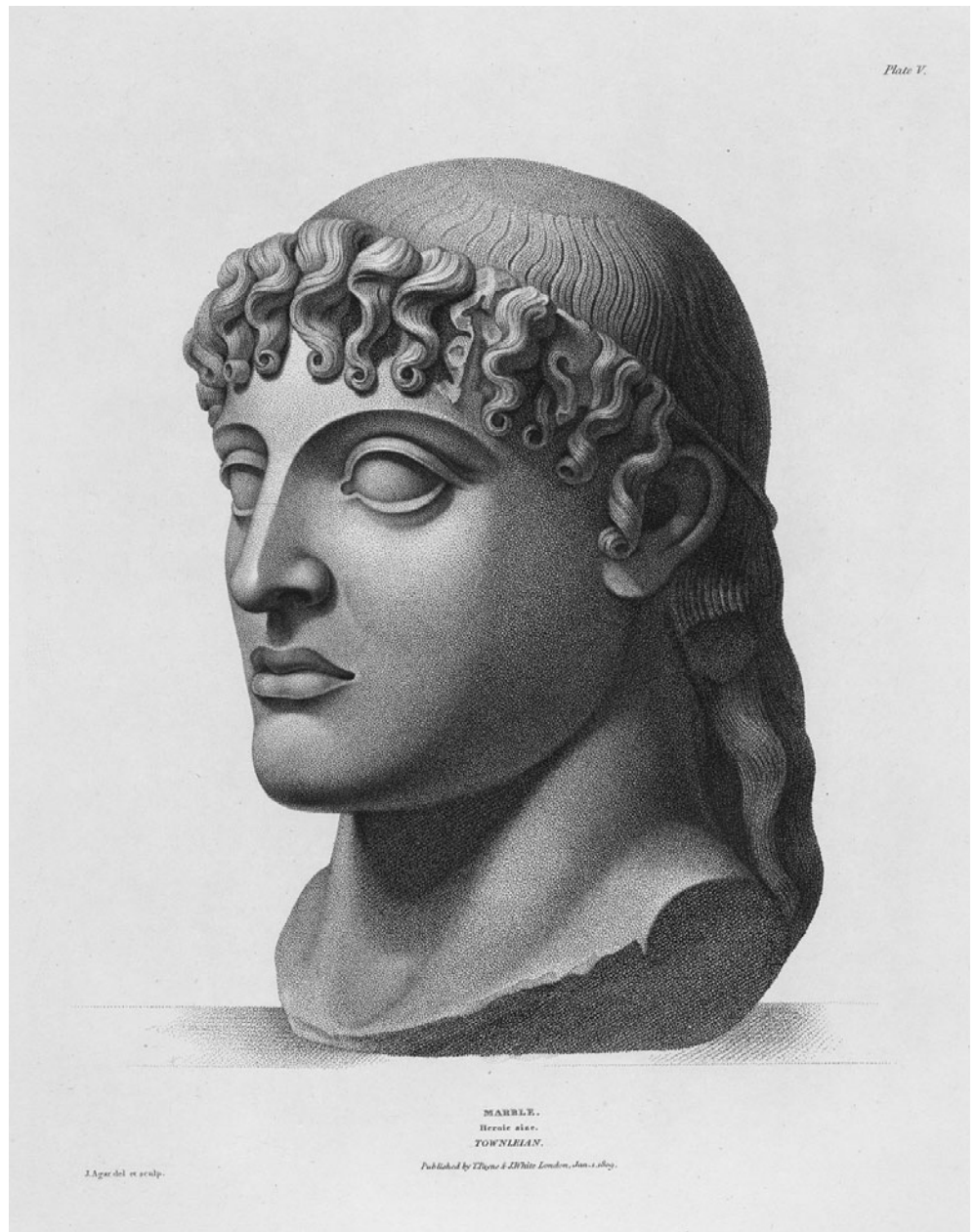
## SPECIMENS: A PAPER GALLERY

To order the art of sculpture as it had ordered that of architecture: this is the Society's fundamental goal. In the service of this goal, its imposing folio offers trustworthy representations,



FIGURE 7.16

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Heroic marble head.” Engraving. From *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), pl. v. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.



penetrating assessments, and enabling frameworks of interpretation. These features create an implied reader-viewer, who is sent back into the world to practice, either as an artist or as a connoisseur, what he has learned from scrutinizing *Specimens*. At the same time, the volume is strikingly self-contained, even autonomous. While returning us, newly enlightened, to the galleries, it constructs a virtual gallery of its own. It does so by practicing a composite art that turns documentation into a form of creation.

This declaration of independence does not mean that *Specimens* ever loses sight of its mimetic, evidentiary allegiances. These are most insistent in illustrations that descend



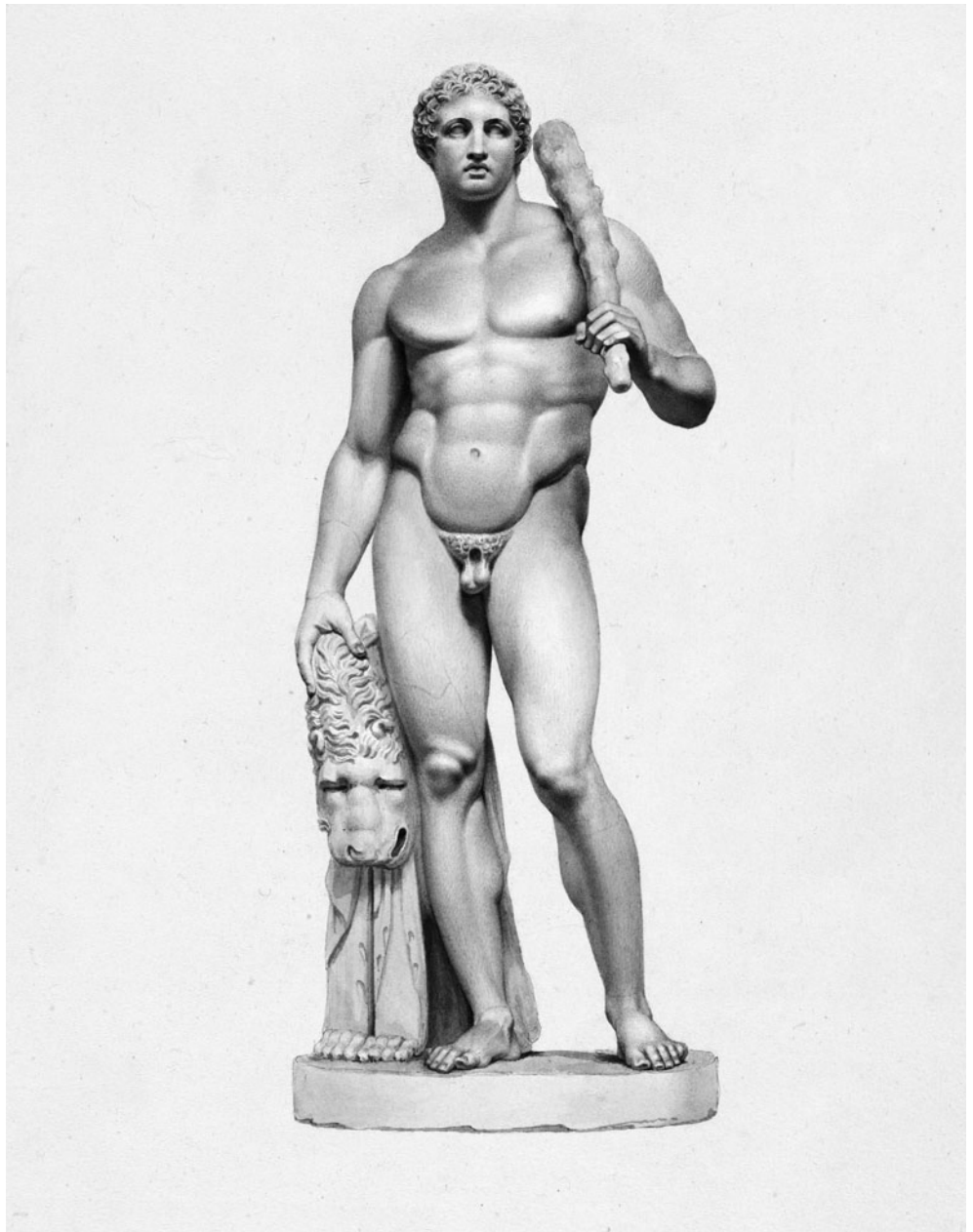
FIGURE 7.17

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), Two views of “Heroic marble head.” Engraving. From *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), pl. vi. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

directly from Audran’s *Proportions*. A head of Apollo, for example, “Marble, Heroic Size,” is presented as an “exhibit” in “three views” (Figs. 7.16–17). Two of the views require a caveat if they are to fulfill their didactic function: “In the second plate [fig. 7.17] the artist has been guilty of a fault, which we have found it difficult to prevent, that of indulging his own taste for the elegant and beautiful at the expense of fidelity of imitation” (*Specimens*, DIR). However, as Figure 7.18 and the text below illustrate, the same attention to “fidelity of imitation” can be made to reinforce the parallel implicit in “sculp.” and thereby to make a collection out of a guide to collections:

FIGURE 7.18A

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Marble statue of Hercules” [The Lansdowne Herakles], 1799–1807. Ink wash on paper, 39.5 × 30 cm. Society of Dilettanti drawing for *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI, no. 840199, box 3, f. 5.



It [the Lansdowne Hercules] has also the great advantage of being quite entire, except some splinters of the club, and the part of the right leg between the transverse dotted lines in the print....Parts of the surface of the body are indeed corroded, but not so as to injure in any degree the effect of the whole, which is peculiarly impressive and imposing; it being placed in a gallery worthy of it, and in the most advantageous light possible; which has enabled the artist, who drew and engraved it, to produce a print so accurate and complete as to render all description superfluous. We know of no very fine statue, of which so faithful and adequate a representation has been given to the public. (*Specimens*, s2r)





FIGURE 7.18B

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Marble statue of Hercules” [The Lansdowne Herakles]. Engraving. From *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), pl. XL. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

Knight’s praise of Agar, “who drew and engraved” the plate, invites us to understand that “a gallery worthy of it” refers both to Lansdowne House and to *Specimens*, whose display of the Hercules is both “adequate” and “complete.”<sup>13</sup> Here and elsewhere, the terms of praise elide the distinction between original and image, museum and paper museum: “the execution is as perfect as the design is beautiful,” writes Knight of another Lansdowne marble, framing his judgment so that it applies equally to the plate signed “J. Agar del et sc.” (*Specimens*, 211).

In an illuminating analysis of the market for prints after ancient sculpture, Sarah

Cree discerns “two distinct categories,” the first “found in manuals designed for artists’ use,” the second adorning “luxury volumes or portfolios intended for the connoisseurial and antiquarian market.”<sup>14</sup> *Specimens*, however, complicates this distinction to the point of erasing it. It does so in both commentary and plates. The commentary aspires to impart knowledge and to form taste. Knight tends to teach by strewing his text with factual nuggets: “This is the only figure of Ammon extant, with the Ram’s head on a human body, as described by Herodotus and others, that we know of” (*Specimens*, B1r); “In a muddy pool or swamp, which had probably been a reservoir, or Piscina, belonging to the villa [of Hadrian], were found many cart loads of marble fragments of heads, legs, arms, bodies &c. which appeared to have been purposely broken to pieces and thrown in” (*Specimens*, E2r). Equally as important, however, are lessons in stylistic appreciation:

It has all the breadth, truth, and fleshy softness in the parts, that the most consummate finishing of the most skilful hand could give it; so that the stiffness of its general effect was probably intentional. The eyes, indeed, are very prominent, almost even with the brows, according to the more antient practice: but the mouth is finished in a manner, that unites the precision and accuracy of this early period, with the delicacy and softness of succeeding ages. (*Specimens*, p. xxxvi)

Such intermingling of data and description models a response to sculpture that makes artists into connoisseurs and connoisseurs into artists. Learning to look means learning to judge; judgment gives rapture a rational foundation. The same balancing act holds true for the plates, which exalt the ideal by attending to the real. The collective result is the apotheosis of amateurism, the climax of “antique dilettantism.”

#### A DIFFERENT TAILPIECE: DECOROUS AND INSTRUCTIVE

*Specimens* ends with a tailpiece, “Drawn & Engraved by J. S. Agar,” that subtly evokes the title page of *Antiquities of Athens* (Fig. 7.19; see fig. 2.14). Both have a numismatic theme; indeed Agar brings back the very coin that dominates Basire’s vignette. Both combine earnest documentation with witty simulation: the lettering and the raised dots at the beginning of *Antiquities* imitate the style of ancient inscriptions, while the slab at the end of *Specimens* evokes a topographical setting. However, the tailpiece offers a more ambitious arrangement, which reflects the achievement of five decades and tells in condensed form the developmental narrative spelled out by *Specimens* as a whole.

The progress from “stern vigour” to “grace and elegance” begins with a silver tetradrachm, whose profile of Athena Knight describes as “being far the most archaic of the three variations of the head of that goddess observable on the Athenian coins” (*Specimens*, pp. xlv, xviii). This coin inaugurates a sequence that “may afford a competent idea of the progress of the art, employed upon the image of its guardian goddess in its favourite seat, through



FIGURE 7.19

John Samuel Agar (ca. 1770–ca. 1835), “Tailpiece.” Engraving. From *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), p. 120. Los Angeles, Research Library, GRI.

its four great stages of improvement, from the age of Daedalus to that of Phidias” (*Specimens*, p. xli). Not only does the arrangement of four coins recapitulate these stages, it also functions as a visual colophon and advertisement: “The two last coins are very common: but the first we believe to be unique, the second extremely rare, and both unpublished. They are from the cabinet of Mr. Payne Knight” (*Specimens*, p. xli). *Specimens* thereby concludes with a gesture that is at once collective and personal, loftily didactic and unabashedly egocentric.

However, it is the numismatic display on the title page of *The Antiquities of Athens* (see fig. 2.14) that does more to suggest a collector’s cabinet than the tailpiece of *Specimens*, which arrays its coins in *plein air* fashion on an etched surface of pitted stone. This artful touch animates the past in the manner of Pars’s head- and tailpieces for *Ionian Antiquities* and the etchings in *Segmenta nobilium signorum et statuarum*. Perrier’s Borghese Gladiator of 1638, for example, has left pedestal and prop behind to bound through a rocky landscape in Figure 7.20; so too the Athenian coins in Agar’s tailpiece are liberated from their museum case. For one last time, *Specimens* salutes its forebears while speaking an eclectic language of its own devising—a language that imbues the austere style championed by the Dilettanti of the 1760s with a full measure of *diletto*.



FIGURE 7.20

The Borghese Gladiator. Engraving. From François Perrier (1590?–1656?), *Segmenta nobilium signorum et statuarum* (Rome, 1638), pl. 5. Photo: Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.



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## CONCLUSION

# THE AMATEUR DETHRONED

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On 6 March 1816 Joseph Farington dined with fourteen other members of the Royal Academy, two of whom had just finished testifying before the parliamentary committee appointed “to inquire whether it be expedient that the Collection mentioned in the Earl of Elgin’s Petition...should be purchased on behalf of The Public, and if so, what Price it may be reasonable to allow for the same.”<sup>1</sup> After dinner he recorded in his diary, “Much conversation was had respecting the examinations of Artists & Amateurs respecting the *Elgin Marbles* by the Committee of Members of the House of Commons.”<sup>2</sup> Farington’s division of witnesses into “Artists & Amateurs” helps us to recover a contemporary assessment of the dispute, which has been interpreted retrospectively as a battle between Neoclassical traditionalists and romantic radicals—a battle won by the advocates of the natural, the particular, and the fragmentary. The impassioned responses of such partisans as essayist William Hazlitt (1778–1830) and artist Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846) support this interpretation.<sup>3</sup> However, “Far from being overthrown by the Elgin Marbles, as Haydon had hoped, the beau-idealist tradition took new life from their arrival and, with some necessary adjustment, ensured survival by attaching itself to new gods.”<sup>4</sup> What does not survive the controversy is the prestige of the Dilettanti, the “Amateurs” to whom Farington refers. Thanks to a careless and condescending performance before the investigating Committee, their unofficial leader Richard Payne Knight destroyed his credit as judge of ancient art. When measured against the other “examinations,” moreover, Knight’s testimony exposed deep divisions within the Dilettanti. As a consequence, the publication of the *Report...on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection of Sculptured Marbles* marks the end of their cultural hegemony: the heirs of Robert Wood and James Stuart emerge from its pages as fractious, fallible, and—in the newly pejorative sense—amateurish. “During the debate over the Elgin marbles all the issues of the previous century or more...were aired in that most public of forums, the British parliament. And their resolution, in that most portentous of nineteenth-century documents, a Select Committee Report, decisively conferred on the academic artist the title of arbiter of public taste.”<sup>5</sup>

Without compromising its fact-finding mission, the Report stages the conflict it records. It does so by selecting and disposing the evidence so that multiple perspectives are brought into play. This artfully constructed document divides into three parts: “The Report,” “Appendix No. 1: Minutes of Evidence,” and “Appendix Nos. 2–11,” which consists of such supporting documents as a translation of the firman issued to Elgin. The first part,

which distills the Committee's findings and conclusions, ends with a confident vision of Great Britain as a second Athens:

...no country can be better adapted than our own to afford an honourable asylum to these monuments of the school of *Phidias*, and of the administration of *Pericles*; where secure from further injury and degradation, they may receive that admiration and homage to which they are entitled, and serve in return as models and examples to those, who by knowing how to revere and appreciate them, may learn first to imitate, and ultimately to rival them. (*Report*, p. 27)

This fervent endorsement exalts the new in the language of the old: Lord Elgin's Marbles may not conform to the ideals of Winckelmann, but their value derives from Reynolds's doctrine of imitation, as promulgated in his canonical *Discourses* and summarized in the *Report's* reference to "models and examples." In the second part of the *Report*, collective wisdom gives way to an array of competing, intensely individual voices. The "Minutes of Evidence" begins with Lord Elgin's testimony. A full day is devoted to deposing five prominent sculptors, a second to examining three prominent Dilettanti. The third part gathers together a variety of supporting documents, including memoranda, letters, and a catalogue of the Marbles. The resulting miscellany invites and rewards the kind of reading we more readily accord a theatrical dialogue like Plato's *Symposium* or a set of intersecting monologues like Browning's *The Ring and the Book*. This polyphonic quality also activates the visual imagination: it is impossible to imagine that Gillray, who had died the previous year, would not have responded with at least one coruscating caricature.

## THE DAY OF THE SCULPTORS

The dramatic heart of the *Report* consists of two days' worth of testimony. On 4 March 1816, five well-known sculptors, all but one Academicians, give evidence before the Committee. It is clear that these five had been chosen to represent every generation (from the aged Joseph Nollekens to the youthful Francis Chantry) and every specialization (from private portrait busts to public war memorials). Out of deference to his years and standing, Nollekens (1737–1823) is invited to testify first. The questions put to him set the pattern for all subsequent interviews. The Committee begins by raising aesthetic and technical issues: "in what class" do the Parthenon sculptures belong, how do they compare to such celebrated works as the Apollo Belvedere and the Townley Marbles, and how does their damaged condition affect judgments of their artistic merit (*Report*, pp. 67–68). The questioners then turn to the financial value of the Marbles. Nollekens' answers reflect his age, training, and experience of Italy. He replies briefly, repetitively, but ardently to questions about artistic value, while declining emphatically to address the issue of price. In his estimation the Marbles "are very fine...the finest things that ever came to this country" (*Report*, pp. 67, 70). They compare



favorably to the Apollo Belvedere and rank “very much higher than the Townley Marbles for beauty” (*Report*, p. 68). In addition, they combine both abstraction and precision, “ideal beauty and closeness of study from nature” (*Report*, p. 68). The picture that emerges from Nollekens’ testimony is both impressive and poignant: the nearly octogenarian sculptor does his best to make a case that will remain true to his precepts and practice, while responding flexibly to “the shock of the new.”<sup>6</sup>

The next witness is John Flaxman (1755–1826), the most important sculptor of the generation after Nollekens. Flaxman, the first professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy, speaks with *ex cathedra* authority and fluency. In their vigor, range, and detail, his responses contrast markedly with those of Nollekens, who had set the tone for his interview by replying to the first question (“Are you well acquainted with the collection of Marbles brought to England by Lord Elgin?”) with a laconic “I am” (*Report*, p. 67). Flaxman’s reply to the same question takes the form of a periodic sentence: “Yes, I have seen them frequently, and I have drawn from them; and I have made such enquiries as I thought necessary concerning them respecting my art” (*Report*, p. 70). Like Nollekens, Flaxman ranks Elgin’s Marbles higher than Townley’s, but he does so for reasons that are carefully set forth: “I should value them more, as being the ascertained works of the first artists of that celebrated age; the greater part of Mr. Townley’s Marbles, with some few exceptions, are perhaps copies or only acknowledged inferior works” (*Report*, p. 78). What Flaxman adds to Nollekens’ testimony is the firm conviction that the Elgin Marbles “were executed by Phidias, and those employed under him, or the general design of them given by him at the time the Temple was built” (*Report*, p. 71). He thereby lays claim to a solid grasp of the historical sources as well as the stylistic evidence.

A third generation is represented by Francis Chantry (1781–1841) and by Richard Westmacott (1775–1856), one of the witnesses who attended the Academy dinner that Farington describes (see p. 173). Both sculptors speak with particular confidence about the power of the Marbles to inspire their contemporaries. Westmacott considers them “well-calculated for forming a school of artists”: “from the great progress which has been made in art in this country for the last fifty years, we have every reason to think, that even the present men, as well as young men rising up, having these things to look to, are less likely to be mannered” (*Report*, p. 83). In his testimony, Chantry extends the notion of progress from artists to the general public: “I think it [Lord Elgin’s collection] of the greatest importance in a national point of view” (*Report*, p. 87). The final witness of the day, Charles Rossi (1762–1839), clinches these assessments: Rossi testifies briskly that he considers the Marbles “superior” to the Apollo Belvedere and the Laocoön and that his friend [Antonio] Canova, “when he saw them... was satisfied they were as fine things as he had ever seen” (*Report*, pp. 87–88).

## THE DAY OF THE DILETTANTI

The day of the sculptors is followed by the day of the Dilettanti. The Committee devises a sequence that begins with Sir Thomas Lawrence, goes on to Knight, and ends with William

Wilkins. The effect of this grouping is to highlight key differences between “the arbiter of fashionable virtù” and two accomplished professionals, one of them an architect and the other the Society’s official painter. By placing his opinions at the volume’s structural center, moreover, the author of the Report emphasizes Knight’s willful eccentricity.

The “Limner” who had portrayed Knight as an inspired connoisseur and heir to Sir William Hamilton now turns decisively against him (see fig. 3.2). From the very beginning of his testimony, Lawrence dispels whatever fiction of unanimity may have been created by the quasi-official commentary in *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*. His encomia to the Elgin Marbles and his depreciation of the Townley collection amount to a wholesale repudiation of Knight’s judgments, as expressed over the course of a decade in person and in print. Not only does Lawrence take pains to make his views explicit, but he supports them with reminders of his special expertise as a practicing artist. This advantage allows him to illustrate and exalt an aesthetic that seeks to harmonize “grand form” and “great truth and imitation of nature”:

There is in them that variety that is produced in the human form, by the alternate action and repose of the muscles, that strikes one particularly. I have myself a very good collection of the best casts from the antique statues, and was struck with that difference in them, in returning from the Elgin Marbles to my own house.... I should say that the [Belvedere] Torso is the nearest, in point of excellence, to the Theseus. It would be difficult to decide in favour of the Theseus; but there are parts of the Torso in which the muscles are not true to the action, and they invariably are in what remains of the Theseus. (*Report*, p. 91)

Not only does this passage apply new criteria to the judgment of sculpture, but it also suggests, in no uncertain terms, that only those who have undergone a thorough artistic training are trustworthy guides.

Did Lawrence on the way out pass Knight on his way in? Certainly the next interview, the longest of all after Lord Elgin’s, gets off to a bad start. The supercilious way in which Knight responds to the opening questions suggests that he was already feeling provoked:

Are you acquainted with the Elgin Collection?—Yes: I have looked them over, not only formerly, but I have looked them over on this occasion, with reference to their value. In what class of art do you place the finest works in this Collection?—I think of things extant, I should put them in the second rank—some of them; they are very unequal; the finest I should put in the second rank. (*Report*, p. 92)

Knight’s first words, “Yes: I have looked them over,” reflect his haughty attitude: cursory examination is all the Marbles deserve, and Knight is so expert an authority that a few glances suffice to render a verdict. Then, in contrast, to every other witness, he places the Marbles firmly “in the second rank,” diminishing even this faint praise by adding “some of them.” Both the matter and the manner of these opening replies alienate the Committee, which begins to cross-examine him in adversarial fashion: “Do you think that none of them

rank in the first class of art?" (*Report*, p. 92). Knight's response marks him as superficial in more senses than one: "Not with the Laocoon and the Apollo, and these which have been placed in the first class of art; at the same time I must observe, that their state of preservation is such I cannot form a very accurate notion; their surface is gone mostly" (*Report*, p. 92). As we have noted in chapter 7, for Knight surface trumps depth, preservation, execution: when asked about the Parthenon sculpture called "Theseus," he replies, "I have doubts whether it was in that [Periclean] age or added by Hadrian; there is very little surface about it, therefore I cannot tell" (*Report*, p. 93). In his view, the primary value of classical sculpture derives from its role as "furniture," in the sense of decoration or ornament. This criterion emerges most clearly from a question about the relative merits of the Elgin and the Townley marbles:

How would you class the bas-relief of Bacchus and Icarus in Mr. Townley's collection, relatively to the frieze of the Temple of Minerva?—Inferior in sculpture, but so much better in preservation, that I think to an individual it is of as much value as any one of the pieces of the frieze. (*Report*, p. 99)

Applying the same standards to the Phigaleian Marbles, Knight declares them to be "worth more than the [Parthenon] metopes; because they are in a state of preservation to be used as furniture, which the metopes are not" (*Report*, pp. 99–100). Sculpture by sculpture, the Committee invites him to revise or set aside this criterion; sculpture by sculpture, Knight declines, lapsing finally into fussy self-parody: "It [the Belvedere Torso] has no furniture value?—No; a corroded, dirty surface people do not like" (*Report*, p. 102). Such petulance could not be further removed from the Olympian pronouncements of the *Specimens*—a contrast that the entire assembly would have grasped.

The most telling and damaging moment, however, occurs when the Committee begins to examine Knight as if they were attorneys for the prosecution and he a hostile witness:

Upon what authority do you state, that a great part of these marbles belong to the time of Hadrian?—From no other authority than Spon and Wheler having thought one of the heads to be of that Emporor [sic], and later travellers having found no symbols of any deity upon it; also from the draped trunks, which seem to be of that complicated and stringy kind of work which was then in fashion; that is mere matter of opinion; there is no authority as to the time when particular articles were made. Upon which of the figures is it that you understand Spon and Wheler to have recognized the head of Hadrian?—I can give no opinion on this point, having misunderstood Lord Aberdeen, from whose conversation I had formed an opinion.

...

Do not you recollect that Spon and Wheler's observations were exceedingly loose, and in some cases wholly inaccurate?—Very loose, certainly. And in some cases wholly inaccurate?—It is a long while ago since I have adverted to them. Do you recollect that



Spon and Wheler mistook the subjects of the Eastern for the Western pediment, and vice versa?—Mr. Visconti says so, but I have never examined it. Do you not know that Stuart proves that fact?—I do not recollect it at all. (*Report*, pp. 97–98)<sup>7</sup>

Step by step the Committee demolishes Knight's credibility. First, they establish that his "authority" is no authority at all, but rather Spon's and Wheler's fallible seventeenth-century travel narrative that had been completely discredited by the Dilettanti's own *Antiquities of Athens*. Second, they convict Knight of inattentive reading, evasive special pleading, and sloppy connoisseurship. As with "looked over" at the beginning of the session, Knight's choice of "adverted to" emphasizes how pretentious and evasive he could be. By the end of this exchange, he is revealed to be a thoroughly unworthy heir to the mantle of Wood, Stuart, Revett, and Chandler. The Society's most celebrated publication had proved the undoing of its most prominent member.

As this cross-examination makes abundantly clear, "the Committee put questions that bore upon Him [Knight] & did not treat him as one who was to give the law in Art."<sup>8</sup> But what might account for Knight's obdurate attempts to do so? A thorough sifting of the evidence supports Jacob Rothenberg's hypothesis: "By attempting to disparage the Parthenon pediment sculptures as Roman and not Greek, Knight hoped to destroy or forestall any basis for an invidious comparison between Periclean and Greco-Roman style and thereby to protect the English collections from a disastrous devaluation."<sup>9</sup> The slipshod, tone-deaf performance before the Committee is more difficult to explain. It is true that Knight had already proved his own worst enemy. At a ducal dinner party a decade earlier, he aggressively accosted Lord Elgin:

You have lost your labour, my lord Elgin; your marbles are overrated—they are not Greek, they are Roman, of the time of Hadrian, when he restored the Parthenon, and even if Greek, they are by Ictinus and Callicrates, and not by Phidias, who never worked in marble at all; they are perhaps executed by their workmen, hardly higher than journeymen, and throw no light on the details and construction of the body.<sup>10</sup>

This salvo suggests that Knight was armored in conceit or sufficiently insecure to sabotage the display of his preeminence. Certainly his testimony before the Committee, taken as a whole, points toward a wish both to provoke and appease. The session ends on a dying fall: when asked whether he could not "conceive that the purchase of my Lord Elgin's collection by the Nation...would contribute very much eventually to the improvement of the arts in this Country," Knight replies, "A general Museum of Art is very desirable, certainly. I dare say it will contribute to the improvement of the Arts; and I think it will be a valuable addition to the Museum" (*Report*, p. 104). Such mealy-mouthed statements allow the Committee to downplay the differences between Knight and all the other witnesses in its opening summary. However, contemporary readers who scrutinized the entire *Report* were not

deceived. Farington speaks for many when he reports: "It was gratifying to us to see that Mr. Payne Knight had so fully and publicly committed Himself in the opinion He gave of the Elgin Marbles.... Thus will the judgment & ignorance of this presumptuous Connoisseur be recorded."<sup>11</sup>

The third Dilettante of the day, the architect William Wilkins, begins his testimony by strongly endorsing the Elgin Marbles: he believes them "to be of the very highest order" and he "consider[s] it of very great importance" that they should be acquired for the nation (*Report*, p. 105). On the basis of his own firsthand studies of Athenian architecture, moreover, Wilkins is convinced that "Lord Elgin has certainly preserved that which would otherwise have been lost" (*Report*, p. 109). In stark contrast to Knight, he grasps, upholds, and perpetuates the achievement of *The Antiquities of Athens*: "I went with Stuart's book in my hand, and some drawings of my own, and examined the buildings from them, and I was amazingly struck with the great precision and accuracy of that work" (*Report*, p. 107). This commitment to the legacy of Stuart and Revett is reflected in Wilkins' own *The Antiquities of Magna Graecia* (1807) and in his editorship of the Society publications. Nonetheless, Wilkins is not prepared to let architectural and archaeological concerns blur his aesthetic judgment: "The sculpture of the Parthenon had very many degrees of merit; some are extremely fine, while others are very middling" (*Report*, p. 110). On the issue of attribution, Wilkins takes an unequivocal stand: "I think a very mistaken notion prevails, that they are the works of Phidias... if you divest them of that recommendation, I think that they lose the greater part of their charm" (*Report*, pp. 110–11). Though he backs away from this judgment under cross-questioning, he ends by exalting the Townley collection at the expense of the Marbles. Taken as a whole, Wilkins's testimony falls between Lawrence's encomia and Knight's detractions. Its uncertain tone and inconsistent judgments suggest a vain desire to find a *via media*.

This central two-day phase of the Committee's deliberations ends with the complete isolation of Knight and the exposure of considerable disarray within the ranks of the Dilettanti. Such a public fracturing of consensus is only exacerbated by the testimony three days later of two more Dilettanti, the fourth Earl of Aberdeen (George Hamilton-Gordon, 1784–1860) and John Bacon Sawrey Morritt (1771–1843), both of whom had traveled and collected in Greece. On his return from the eastern Mediterranean, Lord Aberdeen founded the Athenian Club, a society composed of "rich young men who had visited Athens, almost an offshoot of the Dilettanti" and a collateral descendent of the Divan Club created by lords Sandwich and Bessborough.<sup>12</sup> Despite the fact that Aberdeen was a close friend and collaborator of Wilkins, he did not hesitate to declare that the Elgin Marbles had been "executed under his [Phidias'] immediate direction" (*Report*, p. 125).<sup>13</sup> Unlike every other Dilettante, moreover, Aberdeen was willing to set an exact price on the Marbles, suggesting a valuation of £35,000. Aberdeen's high opinion of the Marbles is seconded by Morritt, who argues at the same time, in a version of Knight's assessment, that "the state of mutilation in which it [the Collection] is left, and above all, the corrosion of much of the surface by the weather, must greatly reduce its value" (*Report*, p. 132). Though he does not use the term "furniture,"

Morritt nevertheless stresses the importance of condition, which determines a sculpture's decorative value.

The staging of witnesses continues beyond the actual reports of interviews. The Committee chooses to end the first part of the appendix with the views of Benjamin West, president of the Royal Academy and the most august and authoritative spokesman for the "Artists," as Knight had been for the "Amateurs." Because West was too ill to testify in person, his responses take the form of written answers to a questionnaire. Nonetheless, they have the force of viva voce testimony, which echoes and reinforces the statement with which the "Report" itself had ended: "I think them of the highest importance in art that ever presented itself in this Country, not only for instruction in professional studies, but also to inform the public mind in what is dignified in art" (*Report*, p. 151). West's ringing endorsement not only justifies the Committee's ardor, it also provides a bridge to the final part of the *Report*, which is dominated by documents in support of Lord Elgin's case. These documents include the "Translation of a Letter from Chevalier Canova to the Earl of Elgin," in which the celebrated sculptor sings the praises of the Marbles, and a "Memorandum as to the delay in transferring Lord Elgin's Collection to the Public." Without naming names in one damning document, Elgin reports that, shortly after he was released from imprisonment in France, "a gentleman of the very greatest weight in this country on all matters of taste and ancient art, publicly declared in Lord Elgin's presence, and supported his opinion by allusions to classical authority: 'That...the sculptures which decorated the pediments of the Parthenon ...could not rank otherwise than as Roman work'" (*Report*, p. v). Once again the voice of Knight is registered, this time in free indirect speech, and placed in a context that robs it of "weight." After Elgin's memorandum the Committee inserts an equally tactful and equally damning letter—a document that allows the knowledgeable reader to infer the Society of Dilettanti's cold neglect of Elgin's enterprise. The cumulative force of these documents is to cast doubt on those hitherto considered "of the very greatest weight...on all matters of taste and ancient art."

In the context of a sustained inquiry into the Parthenon sculptures, the Committee puts under the microscope a phenomenon that was beginning to redefine English culture: a struggle for authority between amateur and professional. Its *Report* both documents and defines an arena within which highly charged criteria of value are scrutinized, criticized, and reordered. Versions of this confrontation unsettle the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries during the same period.<sup>14</sup> It is the conduct of the Society of Dilettanti, however, that most sharply focuses a conflict involving aesthetic, social, and even political tensions.

The *Report* creates by design a drama of ideas, eras, institutions, and personalities. The ironic cast of this drama derives in large part from contrasting clusters of testimony and from the interrelationship of the three parts. Parts 1 and 2 conclude with oblique but powerful ripostes to *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, the culmination of the Society's role as classical arbiter. Part 3 ends with a translation of the firman that served as the basis for Lord Elgin's legal claims. This document (an English version of the Italian version of the missing Ottoman text) refers in a complimentary vein to the "accomplished *Dilettanti* of the Court of Eng-



land" (*Report*, p. xxv).<sup>15</sup> Such contrasts allow the univocal to emerge from the dialectical: for all its kaleidoscopic patterning, which allows the reader to participate in the judicial process, the final effect of the *Report* is to interrogate and even cancel the adjective "accomplished."

Official publication brought widespread vilification, thanks in part to generously ungenerous coverage in the press.<sup>16</sup> Two reviews stand out for their attacks on the Dilettanti in general and Knight in particular. *The Quarterly Review* refers in acid tones to "a gentleman, who—on what pretensions we will not now inquire—holds the chief place amongst our *dilettanti*, and is recognized as the arbiter of *fashionable virtù*. He early distinguished himself, it seems, as a decrier of the Elgin Marbles; he saw that they would eclipse his collection of small bronzes, and shake the supremacy with which he reigned over *drawing-room literature* and *saloon taste*."<sup>17</sup> The use of italics in this passage inflects the criticism with particular scorn and damns "our *dilettanti*" by associating them with the frivolously "*fashionable*." The condemnation is reinforced by a footnote quoting James Barry's (1741–1806) dismissive remarks on those who collect "*intaglios, cameos, bronzes, manuscripts, and other antiquities*"; such collectors, according to Barry, are "*filled with the vanity, self-importance, and rarity of their own acquisitions*."<sup>18</sup> *The Examiner* echoes and intensifies these criticisms: "The great cause of all the animosity against Lord Elgin arose chiefly from the mean passions of Collectors.... Their vanity was deeply wounded at the prospect of a new era being effected in Art, by works too dirty for their drawing-rooms, too pure for their propensities, and too elevated for their comprehensions."<sup>19</sup> This scornful passage not only alludes to Knight's testimony ("a corroded, dirty surface people do not like") but also revives the terms in which the tribe of Dilettanti had been attacked. As in Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature* and Gillray's *The Charm of Virtù*, the activities of connoisseurs and collectors turn out on close examination to be "mean" and vain. What is "too dirty" for the Dilettante's drawing room is avidly cultivated in private, where debased "propensities" can have free rein. Stringently examined, the quest for *virtù* dissolves into "the obscene revellings of Greek scholars in their studies." For all these reasons, the upholders of what is "pure" maintain, Grecian *seria* must be rescued from Roman *ludi*, the antique studied in a newly earnest manner.

That manner explains the ambiguity surrounding George Eliot's Ladislav: on the one hand, a blithe spirit who wins the hand of the heroine; on the other, a drifter whose lack of professional dedication makes him "dilettantish and amateurish." As if she had decided to comment on the cultural stakes of the Elgin controversy, Eliot places the dispute between Naumann the artist and Ladislav the sketcher in the sculpture galleries of the Vatican. "Your painting and Plastik are poor stuff after all," declares Ladislav (whose first name, "Will," comments ironically on his lack of purpose). "Yes, for those who can't paint," retorts Naumann (whose family name suggests "Neumann" or "new man").<sup>20</sup> Both men are arrested by the surrounding masterpieces of antiquity, but one dwells on surface, the other on substance; one merely gazes while the other goes on to make.

Eliot's scene dramatizes the displacement of the amateur hour by a new kind of "associational world," in which "associational" refers to professional organizations. Though they were scorned by that world, the Dilettanti helped to usher it in. After all, authentic

disciplinary practices emerge from and return to the blend of loving and learning that the Society consistently exemplified; enlightened patronage and refined connoisseurship are essential to the vitality of the liberal arts. It is no quaint nostalgia, therefore, to resurrect *seria ludo* and to remember that “when you know ancient things, you will clearly know new things.”

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# NOTES

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Eliot 1999, 212 (n.xix). Originally published 1871. In this respect as in many others, Eliot scrupulously re-creates the period of the first Reform Bill. She is indebted to Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters* (1866), set in provincial England during the late 1820s and early 1830s. One of its principal characters, a Frenchified young squire, is described by the narrator as "almost effeminate...the languid, careless, dilettante Osborne" (Gaskell 2001, 167, 350).
2. Robertson 1975, 22 (introduction by Jan Morris, my emphasis).
3. Sloan 2003, 13.
4. Robert Wood, preface to *Ionian Antiquities*, vol. 1, i–ii. *Virtù*: "a love of, or taste for, works of art or curios; a knowledge of, or interest in, the fine arts; the fine arts as a subject of study or interest" (*Oxford English Dictionary*).
5. "Rules to be Observ'd in the Society of the Dilettanti: Begun the first Sunday in December, 1734," p. 1 (Rule No. 5). Part of the Dilettanti papers (Minute Books and Correspondence) on deposit at the Library of the Society of Antiquaries, London. All future references to these papers are included in the text.
6. Macky 1724, vol. 1, 269.
7. Clark 2000, 471.
8. Lewis et al. 1937–83, vol. 18, 211 (to Horace Mann, 14 April 1743).
9. Virgil 1999, 68–69.
10. Horace 1936, 6–7.
11. Clark 2000, 63.
12. <<http://www.npg.org.uk>>
13. Evans 1956, 2.
14. See in particular the Italian letter quoted by Evans 1956, 45.
15. Barrell 1992, 71.
16. "Dilettanti: Customs. Methods. Forms. And Ceremonies," pp. 7–9, Library of the Society of Antiquaries, London.
17. Desgodetz 1682, 73, pl. v. I owe this reference to a privately printed pamphlet by Sir Brinsley Ford, "The Society of Dilettanti" (1977).
18. "Dilettanti: Customs. Methods. Forms. And Ceremonies," p. 3 (see n. 16 above).
19. Clark 2000, 309.
20. The initiates whose names we know were Sewallis Shirley and Henry Harris. The likelihood is that a significant number of others also became Masons. See Spence 1975, 5–6.
21. McCormick 1958, 23.
22. Quoted in Chancellor 1925, vol. 4, 5–6. The edict is dated 1721.
23. As Liliana Barroero and Stefano Susinno observe, the Accademia dell'Arcadia was "a literary institution founded to promote a reform in taste in accordance with classical precepts" (Barroero and Susinno 2000, 47).



24. Pottle 1963, 391.
25. According to E. Portal, as quoted by Frederick Pottle, the register of membership for the period 1728–43, precisely the time when members of the *Dilettanti* would have been elected, has not been recovered (Pottle 1963, 392 n. 6).
26. Bowron and Rishel 2000, 296.
27. Taylor 1987, 15.
28. Allen 1987, 4.
29. Harcourt-Smith 1932, 8.
30. Brewer 1997, 256.
31. Ballantyne 1997, 6.
32. Laslett 1965.
33. Cust 1898.
34. Jenkins 2003, 173.
35. Pope 1960–63, vol. 1, 434 (6 May 1815).
36. Sontag 1992, 71.
37. Pomian 1990, 58–59.

## CHAPTER 1

1. Ingamells 1997, 580.
2. Lippincott 1983, 76–77.
3. See Introduction, 6–7.
4. Volume 1 of *Minute Books* (2 May 1736–6 January 1745), on deposit at the Society of Antiquaries, London.
5. Cust 1898; Harcourt-Smith 1932; West 1992; Wahrman 2004, 179–81.
6. I take this term from Clark 2000 but define it more precisely than he does.
7. See Riegl 1999, 84–94.
8. Woodall 1989, 156.
9. “The Duchess of York wished to have a gallery of the fairest persons at Court; Lely painted them for her. In this commission he expended all his art” (Hamilton 1930, 190).
10. As Julia Marciari Alexander suggests in Macleod and Alexander 2001, 92.
11. Latham and Mathews 1970–83, vol. 7, 102 (18 April 1666).
12. This account is based on three sources: Piper 1963; Stewart 1983; and Solkin 1993.
13. Simon 1996, 124–25.
14. Solkin 1993, 37.
15. The *Kit-Cat* portraits were readily accessible to Knappton via the engravings by John Faber, published in book form in 1735.
16. My thanks to Richard Ford, Frame Conservator, National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.) for confirming this identification.
17. Clark 1985, 30.
18. Vertue 1933–34, 22: 109–10; Martineau and Robison 1994, 57.
19. Castle 1986, 21.
20. Ribeiro 1984, 36.
21. Castle 1986, 5.
22. By contrast, the scarlet and gold suit worn by William Fauquier (1708–1788), a collector and financier who was elected to the *Society of Dilettanti* in 1736, qualifies as fancy dress thanks to the extravagant bow around his neck.
23. Watson 1949. The term “*Cavalieri Inglesi*” appears in Tassi 1793.
24. Bennett 1939, 330–33.
25. Clark 1985, 303 (cat. no. 298).

26. Wethey 1975, vol. 3, 43–47, 235–40. Because Sadeler's engravings do not reverse the composition of the portraits, one cannot rule out either Sadeler or Campi as a model for Knapton.
27. Lewis et al. 1937–83, vol. 17, 216 and n. 14 (from Horace Mann, 10 December 1741).
28. The Latin reads "SUB PERSONA CONSULIS ROMANI." It is relevant to note that the primary meaning of "persona" is "mask."
29. Sani 1988, 313.
30. See Redford 1996, 96–99.
31. Gould 1975, 280–83. See also Wethey 1975, vol. 2, 103–104.
32. See Titian's *Augustus* and *Galba* (Wethey 1975, vol. 3, figs. 35, 41).
33. See Titian's *Claudius* (Wethey 1975, vol. 3, fig. 38).
34. Maier-Eichhorn 1989, 75–76, 138–39.
35. Richter 1965, vol. 2, 238, fig. 1647; Zanker 1995, 136–45.
36. *Dilettanti Correspondence*, vol. 1 (1736–1800), f. 90r, Library of the Society of Antiquaries, London.
37. Letter, Aileen Ribiero to the author, 24 October 2000. Villiers's dress has been incorrectly described as a gondolier's costume by Harcourt-Smith 1932, 57, and by West 1992, 84.
38. Compare the example of a Venetian covered goblet illustrated in Honey 1946, fig. 25c.
39. *Dilettanti Correspondence*, vol. 1 (1736–1800), Library of the Society of Antiquaries MR 40d. The letter is dated 24 December 1738 (n.s.).
40. The compositional and thematic links between these two portraits are so close that they invite speculation about personal ties. It is possible that the friendship between Villiers and Shirley began at Eton (information supplied by David Womersley).
41. Howell 1651, 1. See Redford 1996, 51–55.
42. *Dilettanti Correspondence*, vol. 1 (1736–1800), Library of the Society of Antiquaries MR 40d. The letter is dated 12 February 1745.
43. Savage is not wearing a lady's domino; therefore West's (1992, 85) suggestion that Savage "has indulged in cross-dressing" seems implausible.
44. As in the portraits of Dashwood and Galway, this detail may be a daring conflation of the sexual and the sacred: the scallop is associated in ancient and Renaissance art with Venus; it is also the badge of pilgrims to the shrine of St. James at Compostela, who carried scrips to which shells were attached.
45. This picture influenced Hogarth: in Scene 4 of *Marriage à la Mode* (1743), the Countess's lover, the lawyer Silvertongue, invites her to a masquerade; their costumes are those of a monk and a nun. Furthermore, in a picture painted during the 1750s for Lord Boyne, Dashwood, dressed as a monk, kneels in devotion before a crucifix upon which is splayed the body of a young naked woman. The halo around his head contains the profile of a devil or satyr who resembles Lord Sandwich; behind the crucifix rests a carnival mask, and at his feet is a succulent still life. See Paulson 1991–93, vol. 3, 271.
46. Lionel Cust states that "Dashwood is represented as one of the sham Franciscan friars of Medmenham Abbey" (Cust 1898, 217). Shearer West suggests that "Dashwood's role as founder of the allegedly atheistical Medmenham Abbey may account for his presentation in such a guise" (West 1992, 86–87).
47. As part of a political attack on Lord Bute and his allies Dashwood and Sandwich, Wilkes published an exposé of the Monks in the *Public Advertiser*, 2 June 1763; this was followed in May 1764 by Charles Churchill's *The Candidate*. These two unreliable publications constitute the sole testimony to the Abbey's pornographic decoration and the Monks' sacrilegious rituals. See Kemp 1967, 131–35.
48. I quote from the translation of Sir Thomas Urquhart, which Dashwood owned (Urquhart 1653, chaps. 52–57).
49. Cecil Harcourt-Smith's suggestion that *Galway* is modeled on Raphael's portrait of Cardinal Bibbiena (Florence, Pitti Palace) is unpersuasive (Harcourt-Smith 1932, 59).
50. de Broses 1931, vol. 2, 513.
51. *Ibid.*, 489.

52. Paulson 1991–93, vol. 3, 270–71.
53. Spence 1975, 245, 257.
54. Haskell and Penny 1981, 316–18.
55. *Ibid.*, 316.
56. Ribeiro 1984, 187.
57. Hind 1915; Wendorf 1990, 98–107.
58. Piper 1968, 59.
59. For a thought-provoking exploration of this pose, see Spicer 1991, 84–128.
60. Ingamells 1997, 115–16.
61. Butt 1963, 721 (*The Dunciad*, 1728, vol. 1, 21–22).
62. Quoted in Burton 1968, 6.
63. Cervantes 1972, 9.
64. Spence 1975, 273.
65. de Brosse 1931, vol. 2, 339.
66. McCormick 1958, 21, 30. The commemorative aspect of the Sandwich portrait is reinforced by a Latin inscription that refers to the journey to Constantinople.
67. Ribeiro 1984, 219. The Highmore portrait is in the National Portrait Gallery, London (inv. NPG 1977); the Liotard in the Bessborough Collection.
68. See de Herdt 1992, 12–14. Knapton's portrait in turn influenced Adriaen Carpentiers' portrait (ca. 1745, West Wycombe Park) of Sir Francis Dashwood, a fellow Divan Club member, in Ottoman dress. See Finnegan 2006, 43.
69. Berger 2000. Subsequent references appear parenthetically in the text.
70. For parody as a “conservative” instrument, see Roque 2000, 177–98.
71. Solkin 1993, 32, 36.

## CHAPTER 2

1. Lipking 1970.
2. Johnson 1755, A2r. Subsequent references appear parenthetically in the text.
3. See Lipking 1970, 155.
4. Walpole 1762, vol. 1, xiii.
5. Wood 1753, B1r. Subsequent references appear parenthetically in the text.
6. Wiebenson 1969, 75–76; Middleton et al. 1998, 345.
7. Harris with Savage 1990, 492.
8. Desgodetz 1682, c.
9. Wiebenson and Baines 1993, 149–52; Wiebenson 1969, 52–53.
10. Stuart and Revett 1969, 77. Henceforward cited parenthetically in the text.
11. Peter Parshall, “John Evelyn’s *Sculptura*,” unpublished lecture manuscript (quoted by permission of the author).
12. Watelet and Levesque 1792, vol. 2, 493, 496–97.
13. Wiebenson 1969, 7, 82.
14. “All lovers of that art [architecture] must be sensible that the measures of the antient buildings of Rome, by Monsieur Desgodetz, have been of the greatest use” (Wood 1753, B1r–B1v; cf. A1v).
15. Harris with Savage 1990, 493.
16. Stuart and Revett 1762–94, vol. 3, 37.
17. The terms in which an anonymous commentator on Le Roy’s prospectus in the *Journal de Trévoux* salutes his enterprise support this interpretation of the title: “l’on prendra pour modeles ces beaux restes de la Grèce; ces ruines éloquentes qui parlent plus haut, pour la gloire des Anciens, que tous les panégyriques qu’on en a pû faire” (one will take as models these beautiful Grecian remains, these



- eloquent ruins that speak more powerfully, on behalf of the glory of the Ancients, than all the panegyrics that have been devised; April 1756, 1137). I owe this reference to Kristel Smentek.
18. Middleton et al. 1998, 11. These narratives include Richard de Saint-Non's *Voyage pittoresque; ou, description des royaumes de Naples et de Sicile* (1781–86) and the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier's *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce* (1782).
  19. As Robin Middleton and David Watkin point out, Le Roy “was in no way interested in the minutiae of measurements. He did not wish to provide models for imitation. He was intent to conjure up only the effects and the qualities of architecture” (Middleton and Watkin 1980, 69; see also Le Roy 2004).
  20. Stuart and Revett 1762–94, vol. 1 (1762), vi. Henceforth cited parenthetically in the text.
  21. Le Roy 2004, vii.
  22. Stafford 1984, 28.
  23. For a discussion of “Mottos suggested for the Royal Society,” see Hunter 1989, 41–42.
  24. Sprat 1667, 61–62, 111–14.
  25. Wiebenson 1969, 19–20.
  26. Stuart and Revett 1762–94, vol. 3 (1794), 3 n. a.
  27. Quoted by Robin Middleton in Middleton et al. 1998, 348.
  28. For a contrasting assessment, see Salmon 2006, 103–45.
  29. Stuart's gouache views challenge comparison with the oil sketches of Thomas Jones and his contemporaries (see Conisbee 1979; also Sumner and Smith 2003).
  30. Stuart and Revett 1762–94, vol. 2 (1790), chap. 2, pl. 2.
  31. Stuart and Revett 1762–94, vol. 1 (1762), chap. 3, pl. 1.
  32. Hogarth's etching appeared in November of 1761, a year before the publication of the *Antiquities*. It is clear, however, that Hogarth had read Stuart's and Revett's “Proposals” and had seen their specimen plates (Harris with Savage 1990, 441–43).
  33. This portrait “‘was so like, that Hogarth was forced to cut off the nose’, as if it were a damaged antique bust (Walpole to George Montagu, to whom he sent the print, November 7, 1761). Stuart himself is said to have kept the print on a fire screen in his parlor to show visitors” (Paulson 1989, 174).
  34. *Ionian Antiquities* 1769, vol. 1, ii.
  35. Chandler 1775, viii. All quotations are taken from this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.
  36. Wilton 1977, 28.
  37. For an acute study of Pars, see Wilton 1971; also Stainton 1996, 154.
  38. Wilton 1971, xxv.
  39. Harris with Savage 1990, 435.
  40. Connors and Rice 1991, xxvi.
  41. Adam hoped that Piranesi would execute the frontispiece (see Harris with Savage 1990, 78, 90 n. 63; also Brown 1992).
  42. Fleming 1962, 311.
  43. Gibbon 1994, vol. 1, 397.
  44. Kruse 1825–27, vol. 1, 102–103. Author's translation.

## CHAPTER 3

1. Knight 1986, 26. All subsequent quotations come from this edited edition; citations appear parenthetically in the text.
2. Jenkins and Sloan 1996, 219.
3. Hamilton 1776, vol. 2, 5. All subsequent references appear parenthetically in the text.
4. Knight 1984, 195.
5. Hamilton to Greville, 6 June 1775, quoted in Knight 1984, 194.
6. Chandler 1825, xx.

7. Goethe 1982, 197. Thomas Jones records the same priorities, not from the point of view of an admiring student, but from that of a would-be rival. In his *Memoirs*, Jones describes a visit from Hackert in December 1782, during the course of which the German painter “was pleased to pay many Compliments on my progressive Improvement in paying due attention to the *Detail*—that is to say, minute finishing, which by the bye, was more congenial to his own taste, who like most German Artists, study more the *Minutiae* than the grand principles of the Art” (Jones 1951, 117).
8. Hackert drew three volcanic *montagnuoli*, but the engravings based on these drawings were never published (Jenkins and Sloan 1996, 167–68).
9. Momigliano 1950.
10. Claudia Stumpf has suggested that “the foreground [of Gore’s drawing] may have been left unfinished deliberately to allow Hearne to introduce figures or other picturesque motifs” (Clarke and Penny 1982, 154). Gore and Hearne did not collaborate directly: five years after the expedition had ended, Knight employed Hearne to prepare certain watercolors for publication by completing them in a style suitable for engraving (Clarke and Penny 1982, 30).
11. Hamilton 1779, 6.
12. *Ibid.*, 5.

#### CHAPTER 4

1. I follow David Mannings, who describes Reynolds as having “one hand on a portfolio” (Mannings 2000, 47). In his thoughtful analysis of this self-portrait, Richard Wendorf says that Reynolds “cups his right hand over the top edge of a large book” (Wendorf 1996, 42).
2. Ingamells 1997, 816–17; Black and Penny 1987, 734 n. 37.
3. Ingamells and Edgcumbe 2000, 70 (no. 65, 1 October 1777).
4. Wahrman 2004, xiii. All subsequent quotations appear parenthetically in the text. His mistakes and omissions make it clear that Wahrman has not seen the pictures and that he depends completely upon Shearer West’s essay (West 1992).
5. For the sake of convenience, I will henceforth refer to the pictures as “Vases” and “Gems.”
6. Black and Penny 1987, 734 n. 37.
7. Simon 2001, 74–75.
8. d’Hancarville 1766–67, vol. 2, 164.
9. *Ibid.*, pl. 37.
10. Shearer West suggests that the pendants may contain references to Hamilton’s discovery of phallic worship (West 1992, 95–96). This cannot be the case: the pictures were begun in 1777 and completed in 1779, whereas Hamilton did not learn of the cult at Isernia until 1781. See below, chap. 5.
11. Malone 1798, vol. 1, lxxiii, n. Both Penny 1986, 38, 42 n. 181, and Mannings 2000, 166, mention the influence of Veronese, but neither points to specific connections.
12. Wark 1997, 35.
13. *Ibid.*, 63.
14. For Veronese’s *Feast in the House of Levi*, see Rosand 1982, 162; for the interaction of picture and setting in the *Wedding*, see Cocke 1980, 14.
15. Wark 1997, 108.
16. The knowingness of *Mr Peter Ludlow* comes from its imitation not only of Veronese but also of Van Dyck’s *Lord Strafford* (and through Van Dyck of another Venetian master, Titian).
17. Wark 1997, 157 n.
18. Wind 1986, 78; see also Redford 1998, 13–31.
19. The sitters whom Reynolds painted twice are Sir Watkin Williams Wynn (Mannings 2000, cat. no. 1947), Sir Joseph Banks (cat. no. 106), Lord Carmarthen (cat. no. 1367), Sir William Hamilton (cat. no. 822), Charles Greville (cat. no. 768), and Lord Mulgrave (cat. no. 1446).
20. Simon 2001, 74.

21. My account is based on the information collected and analyzed by Mary Hyde (Hyde 1979, 10–24).
22. d'Arblay 1832, vol. 2, 81.
23. Balderston 1942, vol. 1, 49 (28 May 1777).
24. Aileen Ribeiro in Penny 1986, 248.
25. Wendorf 1990, 44.
26. Lonsdale 1969, 757 ("Retaliation," ll. 143–46).
27. Penny 1986, 296.
28. Wark 1997, 101, 111.
29. Sir Thomas Lawrence to Sir Henry Englefield (Dilettanti Minute Books and Correspondence, 5 March 1809).
30. Cust 1898, 231.
31. See Garlick 1989, 181 (no. 258).
32. The Dilettanti resolved to leave the "Star and Garter" in 1800; in 1802 they moved to Parslow's Tavern, St. James's Street (Dilettanti Minute Books, 2 March 1800, 2 November 1801).

## CHAPTER 5

1. See Mitter 1992, especially chap. 2 ("Eighteenth Century Antiquarians and Erotic Gods"). It is likely that Knight knew the first volumes of Pierre Sylvain Maréchal's *Antiquités d'Herculanum*. A parallel enterprise is Charles Dupuis's *Origine de tous les cultes ou religion universelle*.
2. Hamilton to Banks, 17 July 1781 (British Library, Add. ms 34,048, ff. 12–14); quoted in Jenkins and Sloan 1996, 239.
3. Knight 1786, 12. Henceforth the *Discourse* is cited parenthetically in the text.
4. See Haskell 1987.
5. Peter Funnell, "The Symbolic Language of Antiquity," in Clarke and Penny 1982, 57.
6. Middleton et al. 1998, 298, 302.
7. Mitter 1992, 75, 299.
8. Knight to Banks, 18 June 1785 (Dawson Turner Collection, vol. 4, 144 [unpublished]).
9. Cust 1898, 123–24.
10. See note 8, above.
11. Dryden 1962, 190 ("Absalom and Achitophel," ll. 1–10).
12. Goldsmith 1981, 13.
13. I accept the attribution to Wilkes in Thomas 1996, 4; this attribution is confirmed and strengthened by Arthur H. Cash in Wilkes 2000.
14. William Warburton to Ralph Allen, 17 November 1763 (holograph ms, Department of Special Collections, The University of Chicago Library).
15. Wilkes 2000, 89–91.
16. Ibid., 96.
17. Haskell 1987, 43.
18. Gibbon 1994, vol. 1, 446. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text.
19. Rawson 1997, 180.
20. "The right reverend author of the Divine Legation of Moses assigns a very curious reason for the omission, and most ingeniously retorts it on the unbelievers" (Gibbon 1994, vol. 1, 465 n. 57).
21. Womersley 1988, 117.
22. Norton 1956, vol. 3, 216 (2 May 1791).
23. Rawson 1997, 179.
24. Mathias 1808, 68–69. This passage appeared originally in *Dialogue* 1, 1794.
25. See Suetonius 1973, 131 (par. 43).



26. Juvenal 1974, 190–91. Modern editions read “concumbunt,” which is straightforwardly sexual (so Peter Green translates, “they even / Make love Greek-style”; see Juvenal 1974, 134).
27. *The British Critic* 1794, October, 388–90. The review begins in the September issue.
28. *Ibid.*, 391.
29. John Landseer in *The Athenaeum* (15 October 1831, 667); quoted in Godfrey 2001, 11.

## CHAPTER 6

1. De Bruyn 2003, 493–95.
2. See chap. 7 and Peter Funnell, “The Symbolic Language of Antiquity,” in Clarke and Penny 1982, 61–63.
3. Brewer 1997, 265.
4. See p. 126.
5. Walpole to William Mason, 22 March 1796, in Lewis et al. 1937–83, vol. 29, 339. See also Ballantyne 1997, 111–29. Walpole associates landscape architecture with political ideology by suggesting that Knight the radical wishes to overthrow the venerable figure of Capability Brown.
6. Godfrey 2001, 16.
7. *Ibid.*, 15–16.
8. Johnson 1995, 18.
9. See Butler 1987, especially chap. 5, 88–123 (“The Anti-Jacobins”).
10. Charles Lloyd, *Edmund Oliver*, 1798, ii.104 (quoted in Butler 1987, 111).
11. For the derivation of Reynolds’s Anna, see Mannings 2000, 526.
12. An engraving by Francesco Bartolozzi of Cipriani’s *Dido* (1783) appears to have influenced the composition as well (Jenkins and Sloan 1996, 300).
13. Mark Hallett, “James Gillray and the Language of Graphic Satire,” in Godfrey 2001, 33.
14. Keyboard works by such composers as Muzio Clementi (1752–1832) and Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770) further enriched the musical associations available to Gillray. Henry Purcell (1658/59–1695); Giovanni Paisiello (1740–1816); Piero Metastasio (1698–1782); George Frederic Handel (1685–1759); Leonardo Vinci (ca. 1696–1730).
15. For the medal in question, see Knight’s *Discourse*, 12 (pl. 3, fig. 3).
16. “He buys for Topham, Drawings and Designs, / For Pembroke Statues, dirty Gods, and Coins” (*Epistle to Burlington*, ll. 7–8). See Bateson 1951, vol. 3.2, 130–31.
17. Godfrey 2001, 16.
18. Hill 1976, 121.
19. According to Michael Clarke and Nicholas Penny, “Around him are the sorts of erotic, exotic, archaic and grotesque curiosities with which Hamilton in the previous decade had supplied Knight” (Clarke and Penny 1982, 150). However, the connection is even closer: Gillray draws directly upon plates II and VII of the *Discourse*.
20. Jenkins and Sloan 1996, 177, 180–81, 302.
21. *Ibid.*, 302.
22. Gillray’s debt to Hogarth is analyzed in some detail by the correspondent for *London und Paris*: see Banerji and Donald 1999, 138–39. See also Donald 1996, 108.
23. Langford 1991, 553, 555.
24. Banerji and Donald 1999, 196–97.
25. Donald 1996, 108.
26. Banerji and Donald 1999, 150–51.
27. *Ibid.*, 151.
28. George Morland specialized in formulaic, cloying views of life in the country.
29. Wright 1873, 352.

## CHAPTER 7

1. This figure includes the headpiece and tailpiece to Knight's introduction and the tailpiece to his commentary.
2. Michaelis 1882, 123.
3. Andrew Ballantyne recognizes the relationship but underestimates its strength and scope when he observes of *Specimens* and *Antiquities* that "they make an apparent continuation of the same series" (see Ballantyne 2003, 130).
4. See pp. 46ff.
5. Knight and Townley 1809, xvii–xviii. All subsequent references to *Specimens* will be incorporated within the text. Because of the volume's sporadic pagination, these will be to signatures (with the exception of references to the introduction).
6. Nicholas Penny, in Clarke and Penny 1982, 149.
7. Ballantyne 1997, 142.
8. Early in *Specimens* the influence of Winckelmann is made clear through references to his *History*, which Knight had read in French translation.
9. Potts 1994, 47.
10. Jenkins 1992, 20–21.
11. Winckelmann 1956, vol. 3, 57 (to Henry Fuseli, 22 September 1764).
12. *Ibid.*, 57.
13. For discussion and illustration of the Lansdowne Marbles in situ, see Scott 2003, 160–68.
14. Cree 2005, 87.

## CONCLUSION

1. *Report* 1816, 1. All further references appear parenthetically in the text.
2. Garlick et al. 1978–84, vol. 14, 4793.
3. See Rothenberg 1977, especially chap. 6 ("Apostles and Opponents of the Elgin Marbles"); Potts 1998, 101–22.
4. Jenkins 1992, 26.
5. Brewer 1997, 282.
6. It is Ian Jenkins who applies the title of Robert Hughes's study of modern art (*The Shock of the New*, 1981) to the Elgin Marbles (see Jenkins 1992, 24–26).
7. Jacob Spon and George Wheler visited Athens in 1675 and persuaded the Ottoman governor to grant them access to the Acropolis. Wheler recorded their observations in *A Journey into Greece in the Company of Dr Spon of Lyons* (1682).
8. Garlick et al. 1978–84, vol. 14, 4808 (3 April 1816).
9. Rothenberg 1977, 214–15.
10. Haydon 1844, vol. 2, 216.
11. Garlick et al. 1978–84, vol. 14, 4812 (10 April 1816).
12. St. Clair 1998, 189.
13. Aberdeen 1813–17. *The Civil Architecture of Vitruvius*. This translation of *De architectura*, books 3–6, is prefaced by Aberdeen's essay, "An Historical View of the Rise and Progress of Architecture amongst the Greeks."
14. See Gascoigne 1994; Sweet 2004.
15. The Italian text of the firman is available in Appendix 1 of St. Clair 1998, 338. The passage in question reads: *li abili diletianti della Corte d'Inghilterra essendo desiderosi di vedere l'antiche fabbriche e le curiose pitture della Città d'Athene* ("the accomplished dilettanti of the Court of England, wishing to see the ancient buildings and the intriguing pictures of the city of Athens").

16. See St. Clair 1998, 253, 377 n. 20.

17. *The Quarterly Review* 1816, 533.

18. *Ibid.*, 533n.

19. *The Examiner* 1816, 317.

20. Eliot 1999, 213 (II.xix).



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## BIOGRAPHIC GLOSSARY

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### ADAM, ROBERT

(1728–1792), Scots architect

After working for his family's architectural firm in Edinburgh, Adam spent two-and-a-half years (1755–57) in Italy, where he studied with the French architect and artist Charles-Louis Clérisseau and fell under the influence of Giovanni Battista Piranesi. In order to enhance his professional credentials, Adam began to prepare a revised edition of Desgodetz's *Les Edifices Antiques de Rome*. However, he abandoned this project in favor of a more ambitious enterprise—a lavish folio devoted to the palace of the emperor Diocletian at Split. This volume, which appeared in 1764, helped to launch Adam's English career. His masterworks include Syon House (London) and Kedleston Hall (Derbyshire).

### AGAR, JOHN SAMUEL

(ca. 1770–ca. 1835), English artist

Agar's career centered on reproductive engraving of portraits, but he was also a superb draftsman, as his drawings for *Specimens of Antient Sculpture* and his self-portrait (National Portrait Gallery, London) attest. (See figs. 7.6A, 7.7A, 7.18A)

### AUDRAN, GÉRARD

(1640–1703), French etcher and engraver

Audran was the most accomplished and successful printmaker of the reign of Louis XIV. After studies with the painter Charles LeBrun, Audran worked in Rome during the 1660s. He returned to Paris at the behest of J. B. Colbert, who arranged for Audran to be made engraver to the King. Audran's principal achievements include prints after LeBrun's *Triumphs of Alexander* and *Les Proportions du Corps Humain* (1683). (See figs. 7.1–3)

### BARETTI, GIUSEPPE MARC'ANTONIO

(1719–1789), Italian lexicographer, dramatist, and man of letters

A native of Piedmont, Baretti came to England in 1751. His work as a teacher of Italian brought him into contact with Samuel Johnson and his circle. Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) was the inspiration for Baretti's *Dictionary of the English and Italian Languages* (1760). From 1773 to 1776 Baretti tutored the eldest daughter of Johnson's close friends, Hester and Henry Thrale. (See fig. 4.16)

### BARRY, JAMES

(1741–1806), Irish painter and printmaker

Barry began his career as a protégé of Edmund Burke, who found him employment in London, where Barry worked as James "Athenian" Stuart's assistant (1764–65). Thanks to Burke's generosity, Barry then traveled in France and Italy, returning to England in 1771. His attempts to forge a career as a

painter of historical, religious, and mythological subjects were largely unsuccessful. In his *Letter to the Dilettanti Society* (1798), Barry appealed to the Society to compensate for the Royal Academy's failure to promote the arts.

#### BASIRE, JAMES

(ca. 1730–1802), English engraver

The eldest son of the celebrated printmaker Isaac Basire (1704–1768), James Basire studied and worked in Rome for several years, beginning in 1749. His circle of acquaintances in Italy included James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, who later entrusted Basire with many of the most significant plates in *The Antiquities of Athens*. By 1760 Basire had established his reputation as one of England's foremost printmakers. He specialized in exact documentary engraving and worked for the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Society as well as the Dilettanti. During the 1770s his apprentices included William Blake.

#### BATONI, POMPEO

(1708–1787), Italian painter

Though he worked in a variety of genres, including religious and history painting, Batoni was best-known in Great Britain for his drawings after the antique and for his portraits of travelers on the Grand Tour. By the 1750s he had perfected a formula that included poses derived from classical sculpture and Renaissance portraiture, as well as the emblematic use of antiquities. Batoni painted scores of British patricians, including such Dilettanti as William Gordon and Thomas Dundas. (See figs. 1.10, 4.11)

BESSBOROUGH, LORD. See Ponsonby, William.

#### BORRA, GIOVANNI BATTISTA

(1712–1786), Italian artist

Borra served as Robert Wood's draftsman in the Levant (1750–51). Borra's drawings in pen and ink and wash served as the basis for the engravings in Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) and *Ruins of Balbec* (1757). (See fig. 2.26)

#### BRUCE, THOMAS

(1766–1841), seventh Earl of Elgin

Serving as ambassador to Constantinople from 1799 to 1803, Elgin approached his diplomatic appointment as an opportunity "to improve the arts in Great Britain." Accordingly, he employed a group of artists to document the art and architecture of classical Athens. With the permission of the Ottoman government, Elgin's team removed and exported a significant number of sculptures from the Parthenon. On his return to England, Elgin sought to sell these marbles to the nation. After a parliamentary inquiry in 1816, the sculptures were purchased and installed in the British Museum.

#### BYRNE, WILLIAM

(1743–1805), English engraver

Specializing in landscapes, Byrne reproduced the work of such Old Masters as Claude Lorrain and such contemporary artists as Thomas Hearne. The Society of Dilettanti commissioned him to supply plates for *Ionian Antiquities* after drawings by William Pars.

## CARRIERA, ROSALBA

(1675–1757), Venetian artist specializing in pastel portraits

For Grand Tourists she created a distinctive Venetian look, which emphasized grace and refinement through soft modeling and sensuous textures. (See fig. 1.13)

## CASALI, ANDREA

(1705–1784), Roman painter

His work for British travelers on the Grand Tour led to an extended period of residence in England (1741–66). Casali's repertoire included portraiture, history and religious painting, and architectural decoration. His principal commissions came from Alderman William Beckford and Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester.

## CHANTRY, FRANCIS

(1781–1841), English sculptor specializing in portrait busts

An associate of the Royal Academy when he testified before the parliamentary committee investigating Lord Elgin's marbles, Chantry became a member of the Academy in 1818. He was knighted in 1835.

## CLÉRISSEAU, CHARLES-LOUIS

(1721–1820), French artist and architect

Like his associate Piranesi, Clérisseau combined the documentary and the imaginary in his views of classical architecture. He tutored Robert Adam in Rome and collaborated with him on *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro* (1764).

## COZENS, JOHN ROBERT

(1752–1797), English artist specializing in landscape watercolors

Cozens accompanied Richard Payne Knight to Italy in 1776 but parted company with him before the Sicilian expedition of 1777. Nonetheless, Knight employed Cozens to turn into finished watercolors several of the on-site drawings by Hackert and Gore. On returning to England, Cozens began to work for William Beckford, who took him back to Italy in 1782. During their time in Naples, Cozens entered the circle of Sir William Hamilton, for whom he produced a number of views.

## DASHWOOD, SIR FRANCIS

(1708–1781), English politician and libertine

As one of the founders of the Society of Dilettanti, Dashwood played an active role for several decades. His sexual and sacrilegious antics during two Grand Tours (1730–31, 1739–40) helped to make him notorious; this notoriety was not diminished by the rumors swirling around the Monks of Medmenham Abbey, Dashwood's Rabelaisian "brotherhood." For all his debauchery, however, Dashwood was a serious connoisseur and antiquarian. He commissioned Nicholas Revett to assist with the remodeling of his country seat (West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire) and he was elected a fellow of both the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries. Dashwood also played a prominent role in politics, serving as a Tory MP and as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1762–64) during the government of Lord Bute. In 1763 Dashwood entered the peerage as the eleventh Baron LeDespenser. (See fig. 1.23)



## DESGODETZ, ANTOINE

(1653–1728), French architect

Desgodetz was sent to Rome by Louis XIV's minister Colbert on a mission of measurement designed to produce accurate information about the proportions of classical buildings. Over the course of three years (1674–77), Desgodetz measured close to fifty buildings. Twenty-five of these, including the Pantheon and the Temple of Vesta, appeared in *Les Édifices Antiques de Rome* (Paris, 1682). This work had the desired effect: it influenced the practice of such architects as Perrault and remained the standard authority for a century and a half. (See figs. 2.2–4)

## EVELYN, JOHN

(1620–1706), English diarist and scholar

One of the founders of the Royal Society, he was a vivid chronicler of his age. Evelyn's range of interests is reflected in the variety of his publications, which include treatises on pollution (*Fumifugium*, 1661), engraving (*Sculptura*, 1662), tree cultivation (*Sylva*, 1664), soils (*A Philosophical Discourse of Earth*, 1676), and coins (*Numismata*, 1697).

## FARINGTON, JOSEPH

(1747–1821), English artist and diarist

A pupil of Richard Wilson (1713–1782), who like him specialized in landscapes. Farington's principal achievement is not his topographical painting but rather his detailed chronicle of the art world in London, beginning in 1793 and continuing until his death.

## FLAXMAN, JOHN

(1755–1826), English sculptor

Flaxman began his career as a designer for Josiah Wedgwood. In 1788 he settled in Rome where he made a considerable reputation not only as a versatile sculptor but also as an inspired illustrator of Homer, Aeschylus, and Dante. In 1794 Flaxman returned to England, where his career centered on the production of funerary monuments. In 1810 he was elected the first professor of sculpture at the Royal Academy.

## GORE, CHARLES

(1729–1807), English artist

A member of the landed gentry of Lincolnshire, Gore moved to Italy in 1773 because of his wife's precarious health. In Rome he became the friend and pupil of Jakob Philipp Hackert; together they accompanied Richard Payne Knight on the expedition to Sicily in 1777. After his wife's death in 1785, Gore entered the circle around Sir William Hamilton, painting detailed topographical views of Naples before retiring to Weimar in 1792. (See figs. 3.6, 3.8)

## HACKERT, JAKOB PHILIPP

(1737–1807), German artist

Hackert moved to Rome in 1768 and by 1770 had traveled to Naples, where Sir William Hamilton commissioned from him landscapes in gouache and watercolor. On returning to Rome, Hackert went into business as a printmaker; he also tutored Grand Tourists in drawing. For Richard Payne Knight he produced, in tandem with Charles Gore, a series of Sicilian views designed to illustrate Knight's account of his travels. Beginning in the 1780s, Hackert painted for Ferdinand IV of Naples a series of oil and gouache views of the King's palace at Caserta. (See figs. 3.5, 3.7, 3.10)

## HAMILTON, EMMA

(1765–1815), second wife of Sir William Hamilton

Born Emy Lyon, the daughter of a provincial blacksmith, as “Emma Hart” she became the mistress of Charles Greville, Sir William’s nephew. In 1786 Greville passed her on to his uncle. Five years later she and Sir William were married. Lady Hamilton acquired an international reputation for her *tableaux vivants*, or “Attitudes,” which made dramatic capital of her classic beauty. Her fame was spread as well by numerous portraits—those by George Romney and Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun in particular. Lady Hamilton acquired indirect influence on European politics through her friendship with Queen Maria Carolina and her affair with Admiral Nelson, by whom she had a daughter, Horatia. (See fig. 6.5)

## HAMILTON, SIR WILLIAM

(1730–1803), English diplomat, collector, and geologist

After serving as equerry and groom of the bedchamber to George III, Hamilton was appointed British envoy to the Bourbon court at Naples in 1764. He avidly pursued his interests in Greek vases and in volcanology, sending geological specimens to the Royal Society and amassing antiquities from all over southern Italy. By 1771 Hamilton’s collection included 730 vases, 600 bronzes, and 6,000 coins. The four volumes of *Antiquités Etrusques, Grecques et Romaines*, catalogued by Baron d’Hancarville, and his treatises on Vesuvius spread his fame throughout Europe, as did his role as patron of the arts and host to such travelers as Richard Payne Knight and Goethe. Hamilton was knighted in 1772 and elected to the Society of Dilettanti in 1776. In 1791 he married Emma Hart, his nephew Charles Greville’s ex-mistress. The second Lady Hamilton became famous for her “Attitudes” (*tableaux vivants*) and then notorious for her liaison with Horatio Nelson. In 1800, after the Neapolitan revolution had ended in treachery and savage counterrevolutionary reprisals, Hamilton was recalled to England. He sold the remainder of his collections in order to pay for the upkeep of Emma and her child by Nelson. (See fig. 3.1)

## HANCARVILLE, BARON D’

(1719–1805), French polymath, pornographer, and con man

Pierre François Hugues (his real name) is best-known for cataloguing the vase collection of Sir William Hamilton in four volumes and for his *Recherches sur l’Origine, l’Esprit et les Progrès des Arts de la Grèce* (1785), a pioneering work of comparative mythology. The *Recherches* paved the way for Richard Payne Knight’s *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* and influenced the collecting practices of both Knight and Charles Townley.

## HAYDON, BENJAMIN ROBERT

(1786–1846), English painter and diarist

Haydon, who attended the Devonshire grammar school at which Joshua Reynolds had studied, took Reynolds’s *Discourses*—with their emphasis on imitation and their exaltation of history painting—as his lifelong model. Haydon’s interest in anatomy and in antiquity helps to explain his passionate absorption in the Elgin Marbles, which he drew for days on end. During the height of the Elgin controversy in 1816 he testified before the parliamentary committee in terms hostile to Richard Payne Knight and then published his polemical *On the Judgement of Connoisseurs being preferred to that of Professional Men*. Unable to make a living as a history painter, he was repeatedly imprisoned for debt. Shunned by the Royal Academy and disappointed of a commission to create murals for the new Houses of Parliament, Haydon committed suicide.

## HAYMAN, FRANCIS

(1707/8–1776), English painter and engraver

Hayman began his career as a scene painter and broadened his scope in the 1740s to include portraiture. A close friend of William Hogarth, he worked in a variety of forms and genres, including the conversation piece and decorative painting. In 1765 he became president of the Society of Artists.

## HEARNE, THOMAS

(1744–1817), English watercolor painter and topographical draftsman

Hearne is best known for his collaboration with the engraver William Byrne on *The Antiquities of Great Britain* (published in parts, 1778–1806, and collected in two volumes, 1807). In the 1780s Hearne was employed by Richard Payne Knight to copy the Sicilian watercolors of Gore and Hackert, modifying them with a view to publication as engravings. Hearne also drew and painted the landscape surrounding Knight's country seat, Downton Castle. (See fig. 3.9)

## HIGHMORE, JOSEPH

(1692–1780), English artist

First trained as a lawyer, Highmore turned to portrait painting in 1715, drawing his sitters principally from the gentry and the “middling orders.” A close friend of the novelist Samuel Richardson, Highmore painted twelve scenes from Richardson's novel *Pamela*; in engraved form these became his best-known work.

## HOGARTH, WILLIAM

(1697–1764), English painter and engraver

Hogarth made his reputation as a painter of conversation pieces and what he called “modern moral subjects”—satirical narratives such as *A Harlot's Progress* (1732), *A Rake's Progress* (1734), and *Marriage-à-la-Mode* (1743). The novelist Henry Fielding aptly called him a “Comic History Painter”—one whose multi-faceted oeuvre forms a vivid chronicle of both high and low life in mid-eighteenth-century England.

## HOWARD, HENRY

(1769–1847), English artist

Howard studied at the Royal Academy and then traveled in Italy (1791–94), where he made a special study of sculpture in the company of John Flaxman. On his return to London, he combined work as an illustrator and decorator of Wedgwood pottery with portraiture and history painting. In 1799 he began to prepare drawings for the Society of Dilettanti's *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*.

## HUDSON, THOMAS

(1701–1779), English painter

A student of Jonathan Richardson, Hudson developed in the 1740s a successful career centered on portraiture. He painted over four hundred portraits, many of them influenced by Van Dyck. In the late 1750s Hudson was eclipsed by his former pupil Joshua Reynolds.

## JONES, SIR WILLIAM

(1746–1794), Welsh jurist and scholar

A brilliant linguist, Jones embarked on his study of Arabic and Persian as an undergraduate at Oxford, where he was known as “Selim Jones.” In 1770 he began to study law, while completing his *Grammar of the Persian Language* (1771). In 1774 he was called to the bar and in 1783 appointed to the



supreme court in Bengal. As judge and first president of the Asiatick Society, Jones set out to codify Muslim and Hindu law and to investigate Indian linguistics, archaeology, and religion. His many contributions to orientalist scholarship include *On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India* (1784).

#### KNAPTON, GEORGE

(1698–1778), English painter

Knapton studied with Jonathan Richardson and then traveled for seven years in Italy (1725–32), where he observed the excavations at Herculaneum and met the milordi who founded the Dilettanti. In 1736 Knapton became the Society's first "Limner"; he also drew pastel portraits for Frederick, Prince of Wales. In 1765 he was appointed Keeper of the King's Pictures. (See chap. 1)

#### KNELLER, SIR GODFREY

(1646/49–1723), German painter

Kneller settled in England in 1676. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Kneller was appointed Principal Painter to the Crown. His many portraits include the series for the Kit-Cat Club that influenced Knapton's Dilettanti ensemble. (See figs. 1.5–6)

#### KNIGHT, RICHARD PAYNE

(1751–1824), English collector and scholar

Knight, who came from the landed gentry of Shropshire, made his Grand Tour in 1772–73, returning to Italy for the Sicilian expedition of 1777. By the time he turned thirty, Knight had built a major country house (Downton Castle, Shropshire), entered Parliament, and become a member of the Society of Dilettanti. His *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* was published by the Society in 1786/87. Other important publications include *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (1805), the first volume of *Specimens of Antient Sculpture* (1809), *An Inquiry into the Symbolical Language of ancient Art and Mythology* (1818), and two "didactic" poems—*The Progress of Civil Society* (1796) and *The Landscape* (1804). During the course of several decades, Knight formed important collections of bronzes, gems, coins, and Old Master drawings. All of these were bequeathed to the British Museum, of which he became a trustee in 1814. (See fig. 3.2)

#### LAWRENCE, SIR THOMAS

(1769–1830), English artist

Lawrence was the most gifted and successful portrait painter of the Regency period. He assumed the mantle of Reynolds but excelled him in technical virtuosity and psychological penetration. Lawrence also succeeded Reynolds as official painter to the Dilettanti. Knighted by the Prince Regent in 1815, Lawrence was an influential public figure, frequently consulted on such important cultural questions as the acquisition of the Elgin Marbles. In 1820 he was elected president of the Royal Academy; later that decade he played an important role in the formation of the National Gallery. (See figs. 3.2, 4.18)

#### LELY, SIR PETER

(1618–1680), Dutch painter

Lely moved from allegorical landscapes to portraiture soon after his move to England in approximately 1643. In 1661 he was appointed Principal Painter to Charles II and thereafter dominated court portraiture for two decades, modeling his style on that of Van Dyck. In addition to painting the King and his mistresses, Lely created two memorable examples of ensemble portraiture for the King's brother and sister-in-law: "The Windsor Beauties" and "The Flagmen." (See figs. 1.3–4)

## LE ROY, JULIEN DAVID

(1724?–1803), French architect

Le Roy's trip to Greece in 1755 yielded *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* (1758), which combined genial narrative with atmospheric illustration to make the case for the superiority of Greek architecture. Le Roy's volume elicited a hostile response from James Stuart (on the grounds of its many inaccuracies) and from Giovanni Battista Piranesi (on the grounds of its depreciation of Roman architecture). (See figs. 2.10, 2.15–16, 2.18, 2.24)

## LIOTARD, JEAN-ÉTIENNE

(1702–1789), Swiss artist specializing in pastel portraiture

Liotard accompanied Lord Sandwich to Constantinople in 1738 and remained there for four years, “going native” and supporting himself with commissions from the expatriate community. Returning to Europe, he became an itinerant artist, living and working in Austria, France, England, and the Netherlands. In 1776 he returned to his native Geneva.

## MONTAGU, JOHN

(1718–1792), fourth Earl of Sandwich

Sandwich made an especially extensive and ambitious Grand Tour. After time in Turin, Florence, Rome, and Naples he sailed in 1738 from Leghorn to Constantinople with his tutor, his friend William Ponsonby (later Lord Bessborough), and the artist Jean-Étienne Liotard. The following year he traveled to Egypt. After encountering Sandwich in Turin and listening to tales of his travels in the East, Joseph Spence reported: “A man that has been all over Greece, at Constantinople, Troy, the pyramids of Egypt, and the deserts of Arabia, talks and looks with a greater air than we little people can do that only crawled about France and Italy.” After returning to England in 1740, he was elected to the Dilettanti. In 1744 Sandwich founded the Divan Club and served as its first “Vizir.” He later participated in Sir Francis Dashwood's Monks of Medmenham Abbey. (See fig. 1.35)

## NEWTON, JAMES

(1748–1804), English printmaker

Newton specialized in architectural etching and engraving. He prepared many of the plates for his brother William's translation of Vitruvius's *De architectura* (1771) and for the second volume of both *The Antiquities of Athens* and *Ionian Antiquities*. His work for the Dilettanti also included illustrations for the *Dis-course on the Worship of Priapus* and for the volume that appeared in 1817 as *The Unedited Antiquities of Attica*.

## NOLLEKENS, JOSEPH

(1737–1823), English sculptor

After initial studies in London, Nollekens moved to Rome in 1762, where he worked in the studio of Bartolomeo Cavaceppi restoring and copying antique statuary. His circle of friends and patrons included James “Athenian” Stuart and Cardinal Albani. Soon after returning to London in 1770, Nollekens set up a successful studio practice: over the course of four decades he created over a hundred funeral monuments and more than 170 portraits busts. His professional eminence, as well as his reputation as an expert in antique sculpture, helps to explain his part in the parliamentary evaluation of the Elgin Marbles.

## PARS, WILLIAM

(1742–1782), English artist

Though he began as a portrait painter, Pars devoted most of his career to landscape drawing. As official artist on the Society's Ionian mission (1764–66), he documented not only architecture and topography but also sculpture, including the Parthenon Marbles. In 1769 Pars accompanied Lord Palmerston, one of the Dilettanti, on an extended trip to Switzerland; the resulting views of Alpine landscapes rank with the best of the Levantine watercolors. In 1775 Pars settled in Rome, where he was supported by a pension from the Dilettanti.

## PONSONBY, WILLIAM

(1704–1793), second Earl of Bessborough

Styled “Lord Duncannon” until he succeeded his father as second Earl in 1758, Ponsonby stretched his Grand Tour (1736–38) to include a voyage to Constantinople with Lord Sandwich. Together with Sandwich and Sir Francis Dashwood, he formed the Divan Club in 1744, while continuing to participate in the Society of Dilettanti. Bessborough, an important politician, was also an ambitious collector of antiquities and a trustee of the British Museum. (See fig. 1.34)

## RICHARDSON, JONATHAN, THE ELDER

(1667–1745), English artist, writer, and collector

After studying with the portrait painter John Riley, Richardson set up his own practice in the 1690s; by 1705 he had become successful enough to rival Sir Godfrey Kneller. Richardson's sitters included such aristocrats as Lord Oxford and such writers as Alexander Pope. His students included Thomas Hudson and George Knapton. He was also an influential writer on art, publishing such works as *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715), and he had an important collection of Old Master drawings. These achievements helped to raise the social status of the artist in England and to lay the foundations for the career of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

## ROMNEY, GEORGE

(1734–1802), English painter

During the 1760s Romney set aside his ambition to become an important history painter and began to concentrate on portraiture. By 1770 he had begun to compete successfully with Sir Joshua Reynolds. During two years in Italy (1773–75) he made a special study of High Renaissance art in Rome and perfected his ability to paint quickly, loosely, and richly. Soon after his return Romney became the most fashionable portrait painter in London. For nine years (1782–91) he obsessively painted Emma Hart (the future Lady Hamilton) in a variety of poses and guises. These portraits, which include *Emma as Circe* and *Emma as Nature*, helped to inspire the celebrated “Attitudes.” (See fig. 6.5)

## ROSSI, JOHN CHARLES FELIX

(1762–1839), English sculptor

Rossi studied first at the Royal Academy Schools and then in Rome (1785–88). In 1797 he was appointed sculptor to the Prince of Wales and received the first of several commissions for military memorials in St. Paul's Cathedral. He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1802.

## SACKVILLE, CHARLES

(1711–1769), second Duke of Dorset

Styled “Lord Middlesex” until succeeding to the dukedom in 1765, Sackville made a Grand Tour (1731–33) that was unusually eventful: he became the Master of a Masonic lodge in Florence and



involved himself with both Italian women and Italian opera. Together with his fellow libertine Sir Francis Dashwood, Sackville was instrumental in founding the Society of Dilettanti. In 1739 he launched a career as an impresario, which proved to be an artistic success but a financial disaster. His political career included service as one of the lords of the Treasury (1743–47). (See figs. 1.11, 1.13)

#### SADELER, AEGIDIUS

(ca. 1570–1629), Flemish printmaker

After training with his uncles in Antwerp, Sadeler traveled to Italy and then settled in Prague, where he was appointed Imperial Engraver by the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II. Sadeler specialized in reproductive engravings after such Renaissance masters as Titian and Dürer. His virtuosity earned him an international reputation as “a phoenix among engravers.” (See fig. 1.12)

SANDWICH, LORD. See Montagu, John.

#### SCOREL, JAN VAN

(1495–1562), Dutch painter

Traveling to Venice in 1518/19, van Scorel then made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (1520–21). Soon after his return to Italy, he was put in charge of the Vatican sculpture collection by Pope Adrian VI. In 1523, after the death of Adrian, van Scorel returned to the Netherlands, settling ultimately in Utrecht. Over a three-year period (1527–30) he painted the members of the Jerusalem Brotherhood in a style that reflects his study of both Giorgione and Raphael. (See fig. 1.1)

#### SPENCE, JOSEPH

(1699–1768), English clergyman and scholar

While holding the professorship of poetry at Oxford, Spence acted as tutor or bear leader for Charles Sackville, Lord Middlesex. Spence drew upon his Italian experiences in *Polymetis* (1747), an inquiry into the relationship between classical sculpture and poetry. His notebooks and letters shed significant light on the culture of the Grand Tour.

#### STUART, JAMES “ATHENIAN”

(1713–1788), English artist and architect

Trained in London as a fan painter, Stuart moved in the early 1740s to Rome, where he made a living as painter and tour guide. After the expedition to Greece with Nicholas Revett, Stuart returned to London, where he began to practice as an architect and designer while preparing the first volume of *Antiquities of Athens* for publication. For over two decades the Dilettanti were Stuart’s most important patrons—subsidizing his publications, appointing him their official “Limner,” and procuring him such important commissions as Spencer House, London; Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire; and Shugborough, Staffordshire.

#### TOWNLEY, CHARLES

(1737–1805), English collector

One of the most prominent collectors in late eighteenth-century England, Townley acquired a passion for antiquities during his first trip to Italy (1767–68). In only a few months Townley laid the foundation for his celebrated collection of ancient sculpture by acquiring works from Hadrian’s Villa and the Giustiniani family. During the 1770s he became friendly with Sir William Hamilton, who enriched his collection with works from southern Italy and also connected him to the Baron d’Hancarville. Townley was elected to the Society of Dilettanti in 1786. In 1799 he and Knight began

work on the first volume of *Specimens of Antient Sculpture*, which Knight brought to completion after Townley's death. Knight was also a moving force behind the purchase of the Townley collection by the nation and its installation in the British Museum.

### TREVISANI, FRANCESCO

(1656–1746), Italian artist

Trevisani studied in Venice and then moved in his early twenties to Rome, where he established a major career as a painter of altarpieces and intimate mythological pictures. Trevisani was also an accomplished portrait painter; his sitters included Roman prelates, British grand tourists, and members of the Stuart court-in-exile. (See fig. 1.7)

### WALPOLE, HORACE

(1717–1797), fourth Earl of Orford, English connoisseur, politician, and man of letters

After making the Grand Tour (1739–41), Walpole, the son of the prime minister Sir Robert, began his literary and aesthetic career by cataloguing his father's art collection. Walpole went on to write histories of the reigns of George II and George III, a pioneering Gothic novel (*The Castle of Otranto*, 1764), and an important work of art history (*Anecdotes of Painting in England*, 3 vols., 1762–64). His most significant achievements were his "little Gothic castle" at Strawberry Hill and his voluminous, multifaceted, and caustic letters, which comprise an epistolary chronicle of his age.

### WESTMACOTT, SIR RICHARD

(1775–1856), English sculptor

Westmacott studied in Rome with Canova (1793–96) and then launched his career in London as a specialist in monuments and memorials. Elected to the Royal Academy in 1811 and to the Society of Dilettanti in 1817, he succeeded Flaxman as professor of sculpture at the Royal Academy in 1827.

### WILKES, JOHN

(1725–1797), English libertine and politician

Wilkes made his Grand Tour (1763–65) by necessity rather than choice: his attack on the ministry of George Grenville in *North Briton* no. 45 and the publication of his parodic *Essay on Woman* led to his expulsion from the House of Commons and a decree of outlawry—the charge being "seditious and obscene libel." Wilkes returned to England in 1768; while serving a prison term he was repeatedly elected MP for Middlesex but repeatedly denied his seat. In 1774 he reentered Parliament and was elected Mayor of London. Late in his career Wilkes abjured radical politics, supporting the government of William Pitt and denouncing the French Revolution.

### WILKINS, WILLIAM

(1778–1839), English architect and scholar

Wilkins' travels in Sicily and Greece (1801–03) laid the foundations for his career as both student and practitioner of classical architecture. With his friend Lord Aberdeen he collaborated on *The Civil Architecture of Vitruvius* (1817). For the Society of Dilettanti, which he served as secretary (1822–30), he prepared *The Unedited Antiquities of Attica* (1817) and a revised edition of *Antiquities of Ionia* (1821). His principal achievements as an architect include Downing College, Cambridge; University College, London; and the National Gallery of Art.

## WINCKELMANN, JOHANN JOACHIM

(1717–1768), German scholar and connoisseur

In the words of an admiring contemporary, Winckelmann “lit the flame of the rational study of the works of Antiquity.” Winckelmann worked as a librarian at the Court of Saxony until moving in 1755 to Rome, where he became secretary to Cardinal Alessandro Albani and Papal antiquary in charge of the Vatican collections. His *History of Ancient Art* (1764), which appeared first in German and then in French and Italian, represents a pioneering attempt to analyze the sculpture of four ancient civilizations—Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek, and Roman—in developmental terms. Winckelmann drew upon both textual and visual sources, dividing ancient art into periods and exalting the classical Greek achievement. Winckelmann’s admirers among the Dilettanti included Sir William Hamilton and Charles Townley.

## WOOD, ROBERT

(1717?–1771), Irish scholar and traveler

Wood is the single most important figure in the history of British Hellenism. While employed as a tutor and secretary in Rome, he was invited by two wealthy collectors, John Bouverie and James Dawkins, to accompany them on an expedition to the eastern Mediterranean. The three men set sail in May 1750, having engaged Giovanni Battista Borra to act as draftsman. After travels in Asia Minor, where Bouverie died, they visited Palmyra and Balbec, meticulously measuring and recording both sites. On their return journey they met with Stuart and Revett in Athens.

Modeling his enterprise on Desgodetz, Wood published *The Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) to great acclaim. Its sequel, *The Ruins of Balbec* (1757), proved even more influential. Wood was elected to the Society of Dilettanti in 1763; he was the moving force behind the Society’s expedition to Ionia and the publication of *Ionian Antiquities*. Wood also made a pioneering contribution to literary studies in his *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (privately printed, 1767), which emphasized the historical roots and the oral style of the epic poems. (See figs. 2.5–8, 2.26)

## WREY, SIR BOURCHIER

(1714–1784), English traveler and politician

Sir Bouchier succeeded his father as sixth baronet in 1726. He embarked on his Grand Tour in 1737 and followed the standard itinerary, beginning in Paris and going on to Genoa, Florence, Rome, and Venice. He returned to England in the autumn of 1740, was elected to the Dilettanti in 1742, and entered Parliament in 1748. Horace Walpole’s description of Wrey as “that foolish knight” tallies with the Horatian motto of Knapton’s portrait. (See fig. 1.8)



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# BIBLIOGRAPHIC ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Antiquities</i>	Stuart and Revett 1762–94, <i>The Antiquities of Athens</i>
<i>Campi Phlegraei</i>	Hamilton 1776, <i>Campi Phlegraei, Observations on the Volcanos of the Two Sicilies</i>
Chandler, 1775	<i>Travels In Asia Minor</i>
<i>Discourse</i>	Knight 1786/87, <i>A Discourse on the Worship of Priapus</i>
<i>Edifices</i>	Desgodetz 1682, <i>Les Edifices antiques de Rome</i>
“Enquiry”	Wood 1753, “An Enquiry into the Antient State of Palmyra,” in <i>The Ruins of Palmyra</i>
<i>Expedition</i>	Knight 1986, <i>Expedition into Sicily</i>
Minute Books	Minute Books of the Society of Dilettanti, on deposit at the Library of the Society of Antiquaries, London
Minutes and Reports	Minutes and Reports of the Society of Dilettanti, on deposit at the Library of the Society of Antiquaries, London
“Proposals”	Stuart and Revett 1969, “Proposals for publishing a new and accurate Description of the Antiquities, etc., in the Province of Attica”
<i>Report</i>	(1816) <i>Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection of Sculptured Marbles; &amp;c.</i>
<i>Ruines</i>	Le Roy 2004. <i>The Ruins of the Most Beautiful Monuments of Greece</i>
<i>Ruins of Palmyra</i>	Wood 1753, <i>The Ruins of Palmyra</i>
<i>Satires</i>	Juvenal, trans. Peter Green, 1974
<i>Specimens</i>	Knight and Townley 1809. <i>Specimens of Antient Sculpture</i>

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# INDEX

*Note:* Page references in italics denote illustrations.

Aberdeen, 4th Earl of (1784–1860)

*Civil Architecture of Vitruvius, The*, 191 n. 13, 203

see also Hamilton-Gordon, George

Academy of Painting, 3

Academy of the Arts, 9

Accademia dell'Arcadia, 7, 8, 183 n. 23, 184 n. 25

accuracy as *sine qua non*, 45, 51, 58–59, 72–73, 81,

143–44, 145

Desgodetz on, 46–47

Hamilton on, 85

Stuart on, 58–59, 200

see also measurement, culture of

Adair, Mr. (collector), 149

Adam, Robert (1728–1792), 44, 64, 144, 193, 195

biography of, 193

*Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro*,

82, 187 n. 41, 193, 195

Addison, Joseph (1672–1719)

*Letter from Italy*, 22

portrait of, by Kneller, 17, 17, 42

Adrian VI, Pope (r. 1522–23), 202

Adye, Thomas (act. 1st half 18th cent.)

*Balloting box*, 6

*"The Tomb of Bacchus"*, 6–7, 6

Aeneas, 134, 135

Aeschylus, 196

aesthetics, consideration of, and the Elgin

Marbles, 174, 175, 176, 179, 180

Agar, John Samuel (1770–1858), 150–56, 168–69,

193

works:

"Apollo Didymaeus," 152–53, 154–55

"Head of Mercury" (chalk), 152, 152

"Head of Mercury" (engraving), 153

"Hercules taming the Hind" (engraving),

151–52, 151

"Hercules taming the Hind" (pen and ink

wash), 150

"Heroic marble head," 166, 167

"Marble statue of Hercules" [The

Lansdowne Herakles] (ink wash), 168

"Marble statue of Hercules" [The  
Lansdowne Herakles] (engraving), vi,

169

"Statue of Zeus," 148

"Tailpiece," 170–71, 171

Agrigento, Sicily, ruins of, 87, 90–91, 90–93

Albani, Cardinal Alessandro (1692–1779), 201,

204

Alexander the Great, 139

Allen, Ralph (1693–1764), 121

amateur

culture of, and the Society of Dilettanti, 10, 12,

142, 170

defined, 1

disparagement of, 129, 173, 180, 181

Knight as, 96

Ammon, 170

amulet, phallic, 117, 118, 137

anthropology, cultural, 10

anticlericalism, and blasphemy, 8, 33, 94, 96, 113,

119–23, 125

Antinous. See Belvedere Antinous

*Antiquities of Athens, The*. See Stuart, James, and

Nicholas Revett

*Antiquities of Ionia*. See Society of Dilettanti

antiquity, interpretations of, 44, 53–59

as picturesque, 53–59, 82, 143, 152, 186 n. 17, 187

n. 18, 19

as quasi-scientific, 44–45, 56, 60–64, 72–74, 87,

143, 164

*Voyages pittoresques* and, 44, 56, 186 n. 17, 187

nn. 18, 19

Apollo

"heroic head," 166–67, 167

sculpture of (Egremont coll.), 158, 159

Apollo Belvedere, 164, 174–77 *passim*

Apollo Didymaeus

figure, 152–53, 154–55

head (Townley coll.), 161–62, 161

Temple of, 75, 76, 79

archaeology, precursors to modern, 11, 13, 44,

82, 87

see also folio, proto-archaeological

architecture, treatises on antique, 46, 81, 82

see also landscape architecture

Ariadne (Vatican), 106, 107

artist, academic, as authoritative, 173, 176, 180

arts, ordering of. See classification

Asiatick Society, 199

association

ascendance of professionalism and, 175, 176, 181

as coterie, 2–4, 17, 110s

allusion as coded discourse for, 119

ensemble portraiture, as confirmation of, 17,

43, 108

publications as exhibition of, 113

Athena, on tetradrachm, 170–71, 171

Athenian Club, 179

Audran, Gérard (1640–1703), 193

*Les Proportions du corps humain, mesurées sur les plus*

*belles figures de l'antiquité*, 144–46, 144, 145,

146, 153, 167, 193

illustrations in

Anatomical drawing of . . . statue . . . with

measurements, 144

Anatomical drawing of Venus de

Medici . . . with measurements, 145

Augustus, Temple of, at Pola, 57, 57

Austen, Jane (1775–1817), *Mansfield Park*, 138

Bacchus, Theater of [actually, the Odeion],

Athens, 54, 55

Bacon, Sir Francis (1561–1626), 72

Banks, Sir Joseph (1734–1820)

portraits of, by Reynolds, 99, 104, 188 n. 19

Royal Society and, 10, 83, 113

Society of Dilettanti and, 10, 83, 99, 100, 101,

113, 118

Baretti, Giuseppe (1719–1789), 193

*Dictionary of the English and Italian Languages*, 193

portrait of, by Reynolds, 109, 110, 110, 193

Barrell, John, 4

Barrington, Lord (1717–1793), portrait of, by

Knappton, 26, 27

Barry, James (1741–1806), 181, 194

*Letter to the Dilettanti Society*, 194

- Bartolozzi, Francesco (1727–1815), *Dido*, after Cipriani, 190 n. 12
- Basire, Isaac (1704–1768), 194
- Basire, James (ca. 1730–1802), 63–64, 151, 152, 194  
vignette by, on title page of *The Antiquities of Athens*, 55, 170
- Batoni, Pompeo (1708–1787), 18, 106, 194  
*Colonel William Gordon of Fyvie*, 22–23, 23, 194  
*Thomas Dundas*, 106, 107, 112, 194
- bear leaders, 37, 40, 202
- Beaumont, Sir George, 101
- Beckford, William (1709–1770), 195
- Bedford, Countess of. *See* Carr, Lady Anne
- Bedford Head (tavern), Covent Garden, London, 2
- Belvedere Antinous, 164
- Berger, Harry, *Fictions of the Pose: Rembrandt Against the Italian Renaissance*, 42
- Bernini, Gian Lorenzo (1598–1680), 104
- Bessborough, Lord. *See* Ponsonby, William
- Bibbiena, Cardinal (1470–1520), portrait of, by Raphael, 185 n. 49
- bibulousness, connoisseurship and, 2, 8, 21, 22, 30–31, 101, 105
- Biscari, Prince of, 83, 94
- Blake, William (1757–1827), 149–50, 194
- blasphemy, Society of Dilettanti as practitioners of, 8, 33–37, 185 n. 44  
*see also* anticlericalism
- Blessington, Lord (1709–1769), portrait of, by Knapton, 38, 40, 40
- Borghese Gladiator, 171, 172
- Borra, Giovanni Battista (1712–1786), 51, 66, 194, 204  
“View of the hexagonal court...” (det.), 66, 67
- Boswell, James (1740–1795), 8
- Bouverie, John (ca. 1722–1750), 204
- box, balloting, 6, 6, 13
- Boyne, Viscount. *See* Hamilton, Gustavus
- Braganza, Catherine of (1638–1705), 16
- Brand, Thomas (ca. 1717–1770), portrait of, by Knapton, 38, 40, 40, 97
- Breugel, Ioannes, portrait of, by Van Dyck, 40  
*British Critic, The* (periodical), 128
- British Museum, 115, 201  
acquisitions by, 113, 194, 199, 202
- Brosses, Charles (1709–1777), *Lettres familières sur l'Italie*, 36
- Brown, John, 158, 160  
“Apollo Didymaeus,” 161–62, 161  
“Laughing Faun,” 160, 160
- Browning, Robert (1812–1889), *Ring and the Book, The*, 174
- Bruce, Thomas, 7th Earl of Elgin (1766–1841), 96, 174  
biography of, 194  
*see also* Elgin Marbles
- Buckinghamshire, Lady (died 1816), 138, 139
- Burke, Edmund (1729–1797), 194
- Burney, Charles (1726–1814), 107  
portrait of, by Reynolds, 110–11, 111
- Burney, Frances (1752–1840), 107
- Bute, Lord, 121, 185 n. 47, 196
- Byrne, William (1743–1805), 195  
and Thomas Hearne (1744–1817), *Antiquities of Great Britain, The*, 198
- Caesar, Julius, portrait of, by Titian, 23, 25
- Callicrates, 178
- Callipygian Venus*, 37, 37, 101
- Campi, Bernardino (1522–ca. 1590), 23, 185 n. 26
- Canova, Antonio (1757–1822), 175, 180, 203
- Capability Brown (1716–1783), 190 n. 5
- captions  
Gillray’s, 131, 135  
Hogarth’s, 70, 71  
prose style of, 69, 76–77, 116–17
- caricature  
of Knapton, 13  
Society of Dilettanti skewered by, 11, 106, 106, 129–38  
*see also* Gillray, James
- Carlisle, Lord (ca. 1669–1738), portrait of, by Nazari, 21, 22
- Carmarthen, Lord (1751–1799), 100  
portraits of, by Reynolds, 99, 188 n. 19
- Carpentiers, Adriaen (1739–1778), portrait of Sir Francis Dashwood by, 186 n. 68
- Carr, Lady Anne (1615–1684), portrait of, by Van Dyck, 15, 15
- Carriera, Rosalba (1675–1757), 18, 21, 25, 31, 42, 195  
*Charles Sackville, 2nd Duke of Dorset*, 25, 26
- Casali, Andrea (1705–1784), 18, 195
- Catania, Sicily, 94, 96
- Cavaceppi, Bartolomeo (1716–1799), 200
- censorship, and Society of Dilettanti publications, 118, 119
- Cervantes, Miguel (1547–1616)  
*Don Quixote*, 39, 109  
*Novelas Ejemplares*, 39–40
- Chalat, Abbé, 149
- Chandler, Richard (1738–1810), 72, 76, 87, 178  
prose style of, 73, 76, 79, 162
- Chantry, Francis (1781–1841), 174, 175, 195
- Charlemont, Lord (1728–1799), 97, 105, 105
- Charles I, king of England (r. 1625–49), 23
- Charles II, king of England (r. 1660–85), 16, 200
- chiaroscuro, 104–105
- Choiseul-Gouffier, Comte de (1752–1817), 187 n. 18
- Cholmondeley, Lord (1749–1827), 138, 139, 140
- Christianity  
early, 124–25, 126  
Gibbon on, 123, 124  
Knight on, 124–25  
*see also* religion
- Christie’s, 141
- Churchill, Charles (1731–1764), *Candidate, The*, 33, 185 n. 47
- Cicero, 165
- Cipriani, Giovanni Battista (1727–1785), *Dido*, 190 n. 12
- Clarence, Duke of (1765–1837), 137
- Clark, Peter, 2, 3
- classification, Dilettanti publications as enterprises in, 44–45, 82, 143, 165–66
- Claude Lorraine (1600–1682), 57, 93, 195
- Claudius, emperor, 136, 185 n. 33
- Clement XII, pope (r. 1730–40), 36
- Clementi, Muzio (1752–1832), 190 n. 14
- Cleopatra, as emblematic, 106–107, 138
- Clérissieu, Charles-Louis (1721–1820), 57, 64, 82, 193  
biography of, 195
- clubs, establishment of, in 18th-century London, 2
- coins, antique, 55, 56, 170, 171, 197
- Coke, Thomas, Earl of Leicester (1754–1842), 195
- Colbert, Jean-Baptiste (1619–1683), 46, 193, 196
- Colvin, Sidney, 10
- Compostela, Spain, pilgrimage to, 185 n. 44
- conclave, papal, as parodied, 35–36
- condition, of the Elgin Marbles, 149, 174, 179–80
- connoisseurship  
antiquarian, Reynolds’s “Star and Garter” pictures and, 100–101  
as conflation of the bacchic, sexual, classical, and sacrilegious, 37, 40–42, 100, 101, 105–107, 113, 115, 116, 117, 118, 122, 123–25, 128, 195  
courtly, 39  
demonstration of, 94, 97, 165, 170  
empiricism and, 144  
Gillray’s mockery of, 129–38, 140–42  
as performance, 106  
private, 82  
sexual, 40–42, 101, 106–107, 115
- Correggio (1494–1534), 40, 110
- Coster, Adam de (1586–1643), portrait of, by Van Dyck, 39, 39
- costume. *See* fancy dress
- Cosway, Richard (1742–1821), engravings after, 151
- coterie. *See* association
- counterrevolution, and culture, 11, 126, 129, 203
- Cozens, John Robert (1752–1797), 83, 195
- Cree, Sarah, 169–70
- Crowle, John (1738–1811), 99, 100, 101

- Cust, Lionel, 10, 118
- Daedalus, 171
- Dante (1265–1321), 196
- Dashwood, Sir Francis, Lord LeDespencer (1708–1781), 41, 201, 202  
 biography of, 195–96  
 licentiousness and, 7, 36, 185 nn. 45–47, 200  
 portraits of  
   by Carpentiers, 186 n. 68  
   by Knapton, 10, 33–35, 34, 39, 136, 185 n. 44  
   by Nazari, 21, 22
- Dawkins, James (1722–1757), 48–49, 52, 66, 204
- Démosthène, La Lanterne de, 57–58, 59
- Denny, William (1709–1765), portrait of, by Knapton, 26, 27
- Desgodetz, Antoine (1653–1728), 51, 81, 144, 196, 204  
*Edifices antiques de Rome*, 6, 45–49, 46, 144, 146, 193  
 drawings of the Temple of Vesta in, 46, 47
- Devonshire, Duchess of, 139
- Digby, Sir Kenelm (1603–1665), portrait of, by Van Dyck, 39, 39
- dilettante  
 as accomplished, 181–82, 191 n. 15  
 definitions of, 1, 12, 142, 170, 183 n. 3  
 model for, 94
- Diocletian, emperor, 45, 193
- Diodorus Siculus, 122
- Discobolus*, 147, 158
- Divan Club, 41, 179, 186 n. 68, 200, 201
- documentation  
 as creative, 166–70  
 figuration and. *See* figures  
 graphic style and, 77, 79  
 meta-. *See* figures
- Dorset, 2nd Duke of. *See* Sackville, Charles
- Downing College, Cambridge University, 203
- Downton Castle, Shropshire, 85, 198, 199
- drawings  
 measured  
   of antiquities, 46, 47, 48, 52, 62, 63, 144, 145, 196  
   of Palmyra, 50, 51, 52  
   of sculpture, 144, 145  
 Old Masters', Reynolds on, 102–103  
 original, for engravings, 150, 150, 194, 195, 198  
*see also* Stuart, James
- dress. *See* fancy dress; masquerade
- drinking. *See* bibulousness
- Dryden, John (1631–1700), "Absalom and Archithophel," 119–20
- Duncannon, Lord. *See* Ponsonby, William, 2nd Earl of Bessborough
- Dundas, Thomas (1741–1820), 99, 100, 106  
 portraits of  
   by Batoni, 106, 107, 194  
   by Lawrence, 112, 112
- Dupuis, Charles (1742–1809), *Origine de tous le cultes ou religion universelle*, 189 n. 1
- Dürer, Albrecht (1471–1528), 79, 202
- Dyck, Anthony Van (1599–1641), 14–15, 23, 38, 198, 200  
 engravings after, 39, 39, 151  
*Iconography*, 38, 39, 39  
 Reynolds's imitation of, 109, 188 n. 16  
 works:  
   *Anne Carr, Lady Russell, later Countess of Bedford*, 15  
   *Inigo Jones*, 40  
   *Ioannes Breugel*, 40  
   *Lord Strafford*, 188 n. 16  
   portrait of Justus Lipsius by, 40  
 —after  
   *Adam de Coster*, by de Jode, 39, 39  
   *Peter Paul Rubens*, by Pontius, 39, 39  
   *Sir Kenelm Digby*, by van Voerst, 39, 39
- Egremont, Lord (1751–1837), 147, 158
- Egypt, Knight on ritual in, 122
- Elgin, Earl of. *See* Bruce, Thomas
- Elgin Marbles, 194, 197  
 attribution and, 175, 178, 179  
 documentation in favor of, 180–81  
 Knight's testimony about, 149, 176–79  
 parliamentary enquiry on the purchase of, 11, 173–81, 194, 201
- Eliot, George (1819–1880), *Middlemarch* (1871), 1, 181, 183 n. 1
- empiricism  
 as antidote to clericalism, 94, 96  
 connoisseurship and, 144, 164  
 investigation and, 53, 60, 87  
 Society of Dilettanti and, 47, 72, 143
- engraving  
 after Reynolds, 103, 151  
 etching with, 152, 153–56, 153  
 for illustration of antiquities, 46, 48, 52, 63–64, 79, 115, 143, 148, 150–56, 153–55, 194  
 stipple, 151
- ensemble portraiture, 10, 13–17, 200  
 influences on, 23  
 Knapton's types of, 19  
   "Graeco-Roman," 19, 22–29  
   "libertine," 19, 33–37  
   "Turkish," 19, 40–42  
   "Van Dyck," 19, 38–40, 97  
   "Venetian," 19, 30–32  
 Reynolds's portraiture as, 97–111
- Ephesus, gymnasium at, 76, 76, 79, 80
- epigraph, *Hae Nugae, in Seria ducant* (May these trifles lead to serious matters), 3
- equipment, scientific, 60
- Erechtheion (Temple of Minerva Polias), 54, 54, 64, 65, 68, 177
- errata, inclusion of, as commitment to accuracy, 145, 146
- etching, uses of, for antiquarian illustration, 48, 51, 58, 63–64, 79, 85, 115, 153, 156, 157
- Eteocles, 101
- ethnography, 61
- Etruria, specimen of sculpture from (Knight coll.), 162, 163
- Evans, William, 160
- Evelyn, John (1620–1706), 196  
*Sculptura*, 48, 196
- exactitude. *See* measurement, culture of
- Examiner, The* (periodical), 181
- excavations, importance of, 60–61
- ex-voti, 113, 114, 116, 118
- Faber, John (ca. 1684–1756), engravings by, after Kneller, 184 n. 15
- Fabricius, 128 (died 250 B.C.)
- Fabris, Peter (Pietro) (1740–1792), 83, 87  
 drawings by  
   frontispiece of *Campi Phlegraei*, 94, 95  
   "Pietro Fabris drawing under the inspection of Sir William Hamilton," 86  
   "Sir William Hamilton and Pietro Fabris inspecting volcanic phenomena," 86
- Face Money, 13, 97, 112
- fancy dress, for portraiture, 10, 19, 30, 37, 104, 184 n. 22  
 clerical, 33, 35–36  
 masquerade, 19, 31, 185 nn. 37, 43  
 oriental masquerade (Ottoman), 41, 186 n. 68  
 Reynolds's depictions of, 104, 110–11  
 "Van Dyck" costume, 38–40, 109
- Farington, Joseph (1747–1821), 173, 175, 179, 196
- Fauquier, William (1708–1788), portrait of, by Knapton, 184 n. 22
- Ferdinand IV, king of Naples (r. 1759–1806 and 1815–25), 197
- Fielding, Henry (1707–1754), 198
- figures, uses of, in antiquarian illustration  
 as documenting the documentation, 53, 54, 76–77, 85, 86, 88, 91, 158  
 as report of present condition, 61, 66–67, 69, 74, 74, 76, 76, 88
- finer, as levied by the Society of Dilettanti, 13, 97, 112
- firman (Ottoman document), Elgin Marble and, 180–81, 191 n. 15
- Fisher, Kitty (died 1767), portrait of, by Reynolds, 106–107, 107



- "Flaggmen of Lowestoft" (ensemble portraits), 16, 200
- Flaxman, John (1755–1826), 175, 196, 198, 203
- Fleming, John, 82
- Florence, Italy, Freemasonry in, 7, 23, 202
- folio
- proto-archaeological
  - publications of the Society of Dilettanti as, 44, 81, 82, 143, 165–66
  - style of graphics in, 48, 54–56, 63–64, 74–76, 77–79, 81
  - as sculpture gallery, 143
- frames, for ensemble portraiture, 17, 100
- Freemasonry
- lodge in Florence, Italy, 7, 23, 202
  - Society of Dilettanti and, 7–8, 23, 43, 183 n. 17
- freethinkers, as libertines, 121
- French Revolution, reaction to, in Great Britain, 11, 203
- Fuhrlogh, Christopher (1740–after 1787), "The Tomb of Bacchus," 6–7, 6
- furniture, sculpture as, 177, 179–80
- Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), 96
- Galway, Viscount (1695–1751), 43
- portrait of, by Knapton, 35–36, 35, 185 n. 44, 49
- Gascoigne, Sir Edward (1697–1750), portrait of, by Trevisani, 18, 18
- Gaskell, Elizabeth (1810–1865), *Wives and Daughters*, 183 n. 1
- Gell, William (1777–1837), 145
- Tailpiece with the Mycenaean Lion Gate and carved gems, 146
- gems, carved, 146
- "Gems." See Reynolds, Sir Joshua, *Members of the Society of Dilettanti* ("Gems")
- George II, king of England (r. 1727–60), 203
- George III, king of England (r. 1760–1820), 197, 203
- gesture, *figus*, 101, 106, 107
- Ghezzi, Pier Leone (1674–1755), 13
- Gibbon, Edward (1737–1794), 11, 82, 126, 164
- History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, *The*, 123
  - irony of, as model for Knight's *Discourse*, 123–25, 189 n. 20
- Gillray, James (1757–1815)
- as caricaturist of the Society of Dilettanti, 11, 85, 128, 129–38, 140–42, 174, 190 n. 22
  - Amateur Going a Picture Hunting on a Frosty Morning*, *An*, 141, 141
  - Charm of Virtù*, *The*, 129–31, 129, 136, 181
  - Cognoscenti contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique*, *A* (etching), 131, 132, 136–38, 139, 140
- Cognoscenti contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique*, *A* (ink and wash), 136
- Connoisseurs examining a collection of George Morland's*, 140–41, 140, 142
- Dido*, in *Despair!*, 130, 131, 133–36, 137, 139, 190 n. 12
- Dilettanti-Theatricals; or, a Peep at the Green Room*, 138–40, 138
- From Sir William Hamilton's Collection*, 137, 137
- L'Assemblée Nationale*, 139
- Lubber's Hole, alias The Crack'd Jordan*, 137, 137
- Maecenas, in pursuit of the Fine Arts*, 141
- Giorgione (ca. 1477–1511), 202
- Giustiniani family, Italy, 202
- Glorious Revolution (1688), 2, 199
- Gloucester, bishop of. See Warburton, Rev. Dr. William
- goblet, Venetian, as prop in portraiture, 20, 21, 30, 30, 31, 42
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1749–1832), 88, 96, 197
- Goldsmith, Oliver (1730–1774)
- portrait of, by Reynolds, 108–109, 108
  - "Retaliation," 110
  - Vicar of Wakefield*, *The*, 119, 120–21
- Gonzaga, Federico, Duke of Mantua (1500–1540), 23
- Gordon, Colonel William (1745–1816), portrait of, by Batoni, 22–23, 23, 194
- Gore, Charles (1729–1807), 83, 88, 91, 188 n. 10, 195, 196, 197, 198
- Temple of Ceres*, *Segesta*, 89
  - Temple of Juno Lacina*, *Agrigentum*, 91
- gouache, and documentary graphics, 64, 66–69, 66, 67, 68, 70, 74, 85, 87, 88, 94, 187 n. 29, 196, 197
- see also watercolor
- Gramont, Countess of. See Hamilton, Elizabeth
- Grand Tour, 39, 83, 200
- caricature of, 129
  - goals of, and dilettantism, 12, 22
  - licentiousness and, 30, 33, 195
  - portraiture as souvenir of, 18, 42, 194, 195
  - as requirement for membership in Society of Dilettanti, 2
  - see also *Levant*, the
- Grantham, Lord (1738–1786), 97, 100
- Gray, Colonel George (died 1773), 48
- Gray, Sir James (ca. 1708–1773), 31, 39, 48
- portrait of, by Knapton, 38, 38, 39, 109
- Grenville, George (1712–1770), 203
- Greville, Charles (1749–1809), 87, 100, 101, 197
- portrait of, by Reynolds, 99, 188 n. 19
- Grozer, Joseph (1755–1799), *Death of Dido* *The*, after Reynolds, 133
- Hackert, Jakob Philipp (1737–1807), 83, 88, 91, 188 nn. 7, 8, 195, 196–97, 198
- Ruins of the Temple of Hercules at Agrigento*, 92, 93
  - Ruins of the Temple of Juno Lacina at Agrigentum*, 90
  - View of the temple at Segesta*, 89
- Hadrian, 170, 177, 178
- Hadrian's Villa, Italy, 202
- Hamilton, Elizabeth, Countess of Gramont (1641–1708), portrait of, 15–16, 16
- Hamilton, Emma (1765–1815), 131, 133, 197, 201
- caricature of, by Gillray, 130, 131–33, 136, 139
  - portraits of, by Romney, 134, 135, 201
- Hamilton, Gawen (1697?–1737), *A Conversation of Virtuosi of St. Luke at . . . the King's Arms*, 3, 4
- Hamilton, Gustavus, 2nd Viscount Boyne (1710–1746), portrait of, 21–22, 21, 36, 185 n. 45
- Hamilton, Sir William (1730–1803)
- as accomplished amateur, 83–84, 176
  - anticlericism of, 113
  - as antiquarian, 81, 204
  - biography of, 197
  - caricatured, 106, 106, 131, 136–38, 136, 140
  - collections of, 84, 100, 113, 135, 137, 190 n. 19, 197, 202
  - catalogues. See Hancarville, Baron d'
  - commissions from, 195, 196
  - as member of the Royal Society, 10, 83
  - as member of the Society of Dilettanti, 10, 11, 83, 197
  - portraits of, by Reynolds, 83, 106, 130, 137, 188 n. 19
  - in "Vases," 97, 98, 100, 101, 105
  - publications by:
    - Campi Phlegraei, Observations on the Volcanos of the Two Sicilies*, . . . , 85, 93–94
    - Observations on Mount Vesuvius, Mount Etna and other volcanos*, 88
  - report of, on phallic rituals, 83, 113, 188 n. 10
  - Susan Sontag on, 12
- Hamilton-Gordon, George, 4th Earl of Aberdeen (1784–1860), 177, 179, 191 n. 13
- Hancarville, Baron d' (1719–1805), 101, 114, 123, 197, 202
- Antiquités Etrusques, Grecques et Romaines*, 98, 100, 113, 114, 197
  - Recherches sur l'Origine, l'Esprit et les Progrès des Arts de la Grèce*, 113, 114, 197
- Handel, George Frederic (1685–1759), 135, 190 n. 14
- Harris, Eileen, 81
- Harris, Henry (died 1764), 183 n. 20
- portrait of, by Knapton, 9, 9
- Hart, Emma. See Hamilton, Emma
- Haskell, Francis, 123
- Haydon, Benjamin (1786–1846), 12, 173, 197

- On the Judgement of Connoisseurs being preferred to that of Professional Men*, 11, 197–98
- Hayman, Francis (1707/8–1776), 9, 198
- Hazlitt, William (1778–1839), 173
- Hearne, Thomas (1744–1817), 83, 91, 195, 198  
*“Tomb of Theron” at Agrigentum*, 91, 92, 188 n. 10  
 —and William Byrne, *Antiquities of Great Britain*, *The*, 198
- Heidigger, “Count,” 19
- Hell Fire Clubs, 7, 8, 33
- Herakles  
 Lansdowne, 158, 167–69, 168, 169  
 with putto (or Telephos) (Vatican), 156  
*see also* Hercules
- Herbert, Thomas, 8th Earl of Pembroke (1656–1733), 136, 190 n. 16
- Herculeum, 13, 199
- Hercules  
 sculpture of (Lansdowne coll.). *See* Herakles, Lansdowne  
 Temple of, at Agrigento, Sicily, 92, 93  
*see also* Herakles
- Herodotus, 113, 140, 170
- Hierapolis, Knight’s discussion of sculpture at, 122
- Highmore, Joseph (1692–1780), 198  
 portrait of Lord Sandwich attr. to, 41, 186 n. 67
- Hindu temple sculpture, illustration of, for Knight’s *Discourse*, 116
- Hirst, James, *Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante*, after Romney, 134, 135
- Hogarth, William (1697–1764), 190 n. 22, 198  
*Charity in the Cellar*, 36  
*Five Orders of Perriwigs*, *The*, 70–72, 71, 187 nn. 32, 33  
*Harlot’s Progress*, *A*, 198  
*Marriage à la Mode*, 185 n. 45, 198  
*Rake’s Progress*, *A*, 198  
*Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn*, 138
- Hohberg, Baron, portrait of, by Knapton, 38, 40, 40
- Holderness, Lord (1718–1778), 43  
 portrait of, by Knapton, 31, 31
- Homer, 116–17, 196, 204
- Horace, 3, 18, 22, 116–17
- Houses of Parliament, London, 198
- Howard, Henry (1769–1847), 158, 198  
*“Apollo,”* 158, 159
- Howe, John (1707–1769), portrait of, by Knapton, 43, 43
- Howell, James (1594?–1666), *S.P.V.Q.*, 31
- Hudson, Thomas (1701–1779), 38, 198, 201
- Hughes, Robert, *Shock of the New*, *The*, 191 n. 6
- Hugues, Pierre François. *See* Hancarville, Baron d’
- Hyde, 1st Baron. *See* Villiers, Thomas
- Ictinus, 178
- idolatry, Gibbon on Christian abhorrence of, 124
- Illysus, temple on the, 74, 75
- imagery, in portraiture. *See* props, allusive
- inscription, 23, 30, 30, 31, 33, 34, 40, 73–74, 131, 185 n. 28, 186 n. 66
- Ionian Antiquities. *See* Society of Dilettanti
- irony, as characteristic of Knight’s *Discourse*, 123–25
- Isernia, Italy, 133, 188 n. 10
- Italy, culture of, as influence on the Society of Dilettanti, 8–9
- Jacobinism, 129, 131, 133
- Jenkins, Ian, 191 n. 6
- Jenkins, Mr. (dealer in antiquities), 147
- Jerusalem Brotherhood, Utrecht, 14, 15, 202
- Jode, Pieter de (1570–1634), *Adam de Coster*, after Van Dyck, 39
- Johnson, Samuel (1709–1784), 107, 193  
*Dictionary of the English Language*, 44, 82, 123, 193  
 portrait of, by Reynolds, 108, 109, 110
- Jones, Inigo (1573–1652), portrait of, by Van Dyck, 40
- Jones, Thomas (1742–1803), 187 n. 29, 188 n. 7
- Jones, Sir William (1746–1794), 199  
*Grammar of the Persian Language*, 199  
*On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India*, 113, 199
- Jordan, Mrs. Dorothy (1761–1816), 137
- Juno Lacina, Temple of, Agrigentum, Sicily, 90, 91, 91
- Jupiter, Temple of, Selinunte, Sicily, 88
- Juvenal, *Satires*, 127, 190 n. 26
- Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire, 193
- Kit-Kat Club, 4  
 ensemble portraits of members of, 16–17, 17, 42, 184 n. 15, 199
- Knapton, George (1698–1778), 201  
 biography of, 199  
 as influence, 97, 100, 108, 109, 186 n. 68  
 influences on, 23, 25, 26, 29, 31, 38, 39, 41–42, 185 n. 26, 199  
 as official painter of the Society of Dilettanti, 10, 13, 18–43, 199  
 as portrait painter, 18–19, 23, 97  
 works:  
*Baron Hobberg*, 38, 40, 40  
*Charles Sackville, 2nd Duke of Dorset*, 10, 23, 24, 25, 26  
*Francis Dashwood, Lord LeDespencer*, 10, 33, 34, 35, 136, 185 nn. 37, 44  
*Henry Harris*, 9, 9  
*John Howe*, 43, 43  
*Lord Barrington*, 26, 27  
*Lord Bessborough*, 41, 41, 115
- Lord Blessington, 38, 40, 40
- Lord Galway, 35–36, 35, 185 n. 44, 49
- Lord Holderness, 31, 31
- Lord Moyra, 36, 37, 101
- Lord Sandwich, 41, 41, 101, 186 n. 66
- Samuel Savage, 31–32, 32, 185 nn. 43, 44
- Seawallis Shirley, 30, 31, 41
- Sir Bourchier Wrey, 19, 20, 21, 33
- Sir Brownlow Sherrard, 26, 28
- Sir James Gray, 38, 38, 39, 109
- Thomas Brand, 38, 40, 40, 97
- Thomas Villiers, Lord Hyde, 30–31, 30, 40, 41, 42
- William Denny, 26, 27
- Kneller, Sir Godfrey (1646/49–1723), 42, 199, 201  
 portraits by, of members of the Kit-Kat Club, 16–17, 17, 184 n. 17  
*Joseph Addison*, 17, 17, 42  
*Sir John Vanbrugh*, 17, 17, 42
- Knight, Charles (1743–1827?), portrait medallion by, of James Stuart, 68
- Knight, Richard Payne (1751–1824), 199  
 anticlericalism, 94, 96, 119–23, 125  
 caricature of, 129–31, 129  
 collections of, 83–84, 96, 135, 147, 149, 171, 171, 190 n. 19, 199  
 commission from, 84  
 as connoisseur of sculpture, 146–50, 156–58, 160–62, 173, 176–79, 180, 181  
 criticized as politically radical, 131, 190 n. 5  
 Elgin Marbles and, 11, 96, 173, 175, 176–79, 180  
 influences on, 164–65  
 journal (unpublished), “Expedition into Sicily,” 11, 83, 87–94, 96, 120  
 prose style of, 87, 88, 90, 91, 93  
 as member of the Society of Dilettanti, 10, 11, 82, 83  
 portrait of, by Lawrence, 84–85, 84, 130, 176  
 precedents for, 83, 87  
 publications by:  
*Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus, An*, 114, 117, 118  
*Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste, An*, 160, 199  
*Discourse on the Worship of Priapus*, 11, 82, 96, 113–25, 199  
 caricatured, 135, 137, 139–40, 190 n. 19  
 as conflation of the scholarly and the subversive, 113, 118, 119–25  
 distribution of, 115, 126  
 frontispiece of, 113, 114, 116  
 illustrations for, 113, 114, 115–18, 200  
*“An Ancient Ex Voto in Silver,”* 118  
 Elephanta [India], temple sculpture from, 116, 116  
*“Ex:Voti of Wax presented in the Church at Isernia 1780,”* 113, 114, 116

- phallic objects, 117  
 Satyr copulating a goat, 118, 118  
 models for, 113, 116, 119–25, 140, 189 n. 1, 197  
 prose style of, 116, 119–25, 164  
 repudiation of, 126–28, 129, 181  
 Sir William Hamilton and, 83, 113–14, 115, 197  
 tailpiece in, 118, 118  
 title page, 114  
 versions of, 117–18  
*Inquiry into the Symbolical Language of ancient Art and Mythology*, An, 199  
*Landscape, The*, 131, 199  
*Progress of Civil Society, The*, 199  
*Specimens of Antient Sculpture . . . selected from Different Collections in Great Britain*, 11, 82, 96, 143–71, 199, 202  
 disparagement of, 180  
 illustrations for, 143, 145, 146, 147, 150–56, 166–69, 193, 198  
   *see also* Agar, John Samuel  
 prose style of, 145–46, 158–64, 191 n. 8  
 text of, in relation to illustrations, 149–50, 158–64  
 restoration of antiquities deplored by, 146–47  
 Sicily, expedition to, 11, 83, 87–94, 96, 195, 196, 197, 199  
 Kruse, Friedrich (1790–1866), *Hellas*, 82  
 La Chausse, Michel-Ange de (1660–1738), 147  
 Ladislav, Will (fictional character), 1, 181  
 Lais (courtesan), 136, 137  
 landscape architecture, and political ideology, 190 n. 5  
 Lansdowne, William Petty, Lord (1737–1805),  
   collection of, 158, 160  
   *see also* Herakles, Lansdowne  
 Lanzi, Abbé Luigi (1732–1810), 162  
 Laocoön, 175, 177  
 Lawrence, Sir Thomas (1769–1830)  
   biography of, 199  
   as official painter to the Society of Dilettanti, 13, 85, 112, 199  
   testimony by, on the Elgin Marbles, 175, 176, 199  
   works:  
     *Richard Payne Knight*, 84–85, 84, 130, 176  
     *Thomas, Lord Dundas*, 112, 112  
 Le Brun, Charles (1619–1690), 193  
   —after, *Triumphs of Alexander*, 193  
 LeDespenser, 11th Baron. *See* Dashwood, Sir Francis  
 Lee, Nathaniel (1653–1692), *Alexander the Great, or the Rival Queens*, 139  
 Leeson, Joseph (1711–1783), 106  
 Leicester, Earl of. *See* Coke, Thomas  
 Lely, Sir Peter (1618–1680)  
   biography of, 200  
   commissions for  
     “Flagmen of Lowestoft,” 16, 200  
     “Windsor Beauties,” 15–16, 184 n. 9, 200  
   engravings after, 151  
   works:  
     *Elizabeth Hamilton, Countess of Gramont*, 15–16, 16  
     *Flagmen of Lowestoft: George Monck* (1608–1670),  
       *First Duke of Albermarle*, 16, 16  
 Le Pautre, Jean (1618–1682) and Pierre (died 1715), 46  
 Le Roy, Julien David (1724?–1803), 200  
   *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce*, 53–59, 82, 186 n. 17, 187 n. 19, 200  
   criticism of, as inaccurate, 58–59, 147, 200  
   illustrations from, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59, 65  
   prose style of, 59  
   title page of, 54–56, 55  
 Levant, the  
   as part of the Grand Tour, 12, 40–41, 186 n. 66, 200, 201  
   Robert Wood’s expedition to, 45, 48  
 lexicography, 44–45  
 libertine  
   freethinkers as, 121  
   portraiture and, 19, 33–37  
 licentiousness  
   caricatured, 130, 136–40  
   as connoisseurship, 101, 118, 119–23, 188 n. 10  
   of the Society of Dilettanti, 30, 31, 33–37, 183, 185 n. 44, 188, 195  
   *see also* libertine  
 Lieut. Edward Moore’s *Narrative of the Operations . . .*, 128  
 limner, 13  
 Liotard, Jean-Étienne (1702–1789), 40, 41, 200  
   portrait of Lord Bessborough by, 41, 186 n. 67  
 Lipking, Lawrence, 44  
 Lipsius, Justus (1547–1606), portrait of, by Van Dyck, 40  
 Locke, John (1632–1704), *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, An, 47  
 Lollius Maximus, 116  
*London und Paris* (periodical), 139  
 Louis XIV, king of France (r. 1643–1715), 193, 196  
 Lowestoft, Battle of (1665), 16  
 Lucian of Samosata, 122  
 Lucretius, 131  
 Ludlow, Peter (1730–1803), portrait of, by Reynolds, 104, 104, 188 n. 16  
 Lyon, Emy. *See* Hamilton, Emma  
 Lysicrates, choragic monument of, 57–58, 58  
 Mantua, Duke of. *See* Gonzaga, Federico  
 Maréchal, Pierre Sylvain (1750–1803), *Antiquités d’Herculanum*, 189 n. 1  
 Maria Carolina, queen of Naples (1752–1814), 197  
 Marigny, Marquis de (1727–1781), 56  
 Mary Magdalen, representations of, and caricatures of Emma Hamilton, 134  
 masquerade  
   Knapton’s portraiture and, 19, 23, 25–26, 30–32, 31, 32, 38, 41, 43  
   Reynolds’s portraiture and, 104, 104  
   *see also* fancy dress  
 Mathias, T. J. (1754–1835), 129, 130  
   *Pursuits of Literature*, 126–27, 129, 181  
 Matthew, gospel according to, 122  
 measurement, culture of, 45–49, 51, 72–73, 81, 87, 116, 143–44, 145  
   *see also* accuracy  
 media, for antiquarian illustration, 77  
   *see also* gouache; watercolor  
 Medmenham Abbey. *See* Monks of  
 Meidias hydria, 83, 137, 137  
 Melpomene, 139  
 Mercury (bronze), 149, 152, 153, 164  
 Messalina, 136  
 Metastasio, Piero (1698–1792), *Didone abbandonata*, 135, 190 n. 14  
 Middlesex, Earl of. *See* Sackville, Charles  
 Miletus, theater at, 74  
 Minerva, sculptures of, 147, 149, 177  
 Minerva Polias, Temple of. *See* Erechtheion  
 Monck, George, 1st Duke of Albermarle (1608–1670), portrait of, 16, 16  
 Monks of Medmenham Abbey, 33, 185 nn. 46, 47, 195, 200  
 Montagu, George (1713–1780), 187 n. 33  
 Montagu, John, 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718–1792), 36, 41, 179, 185 nn. 45, 47, 200, 201  
   portraits of  
     attr. Joseph Highmore, 41, 186 n. 67  
     by Knapton, 41, 41, 186 n. 66  
 Morland, George (1763–1804), 140–41, 140, 142, 190 n. 28  
 Morris, Jan, 1  
 Morritt, John Bacon Sawrey (1771–1843), 179–80  
 motto, 5  
   *Auctoritate Reipublice*, 4, 30  
   “Grecian Taste and Roman Spirit,” 3, 8, 101, 165  
   *Non Extinguetur*, 3  
   *Nullius in Verba* (On No One’s Authority), 60, 85  
   *nunc est bibendum* (now is the time for drinking), 2, 21  
   *Res est severa Voluptas*, 30  
   *seria ludo*, 3, 12  
   demise of, 112



- ensemble portraiture and, 13–14, 18, 22, 40, 43, 100, 101  
 publications as exemplars of, 117  
 reconsideration of, 181  
*T'archai bot' oistha, kai ta kain' eisei saphos* (When you know ancient things, you will clearly know new things), 143, 182  
*Tria Juncta in Uno* (three in one), 137, 139  
*Viva la Virtù*, 3  
 Moyra, 1st Earl. *See* Rawdon, Sir John  
 Mulgrave, Lord (1755–1831), 100, 101  
   portraits of, by Reynolds, 99, 188 n. 19  
 Murray, Fanny, 122  
 music, as setting in Knapton's portraits, 40  
 Mycenae, lion gate, 145, 146  
 Mylasa  
   arch at, 76, 77  
   monument at, 77, 78, 79, 80  
 Napoleon. *See* war(s), Napoleonic  
 National Gallery of Art, London, 199, 203  
 nationalism, and literary discourse, 44–45, 143  
 Naumann, Adolf (fictional character), 1, 181  
 Nazari, Bartolommeo (1699–1758), *Gustavus Hamilton, Second Viscount Boyne, and Friends in a Ship's Cabin*, 21–22, 21  
 Nelson, Horatia (1801–1881), 197  
 Nelson, Admiral Horatio (1758–1805), 131, 197  
   caricatured, 136–38, 136, 137, 139  
 Neoclassicism, and the aesthetic of the Society of Dilettanti, 82  
 Netherlands, painting of, as influence, 14–15  
 Newton, James (1748–1804), 115, 200  
 Newton, William (1735–1790), 200  
 Nike, 101  
 Nollekens, Joseph (1737–1823), 174, 200–201  
*North Briton* (periodical), 203  
 Northumberland, Earl of (1602–1668),  
   commission from, for “Petworth Beauties,” 14–15  
 Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, 202  
 oinoche (wine jug), 98, 101, 105  
 opera, 8–9, 19, 135, 202  
 order, chivalric, of the Bath, 101, 131, 137  
 Orford, Earl of. *See* Walpole, Horace  
 Oxford, Robert Harley, Lord (1661–1724), 201  
 Paisello, Giovanni (1740–1816), 135, 190 n. 14  
 Palladio, Andrea (1508–1580), 46  
 Palmerston, Lord (1739–1802), 201  
 Palmyra, measured drawings of, 50, 51, 51  
   *see also* Wood, Robert  
 Pantheon, Rome, 196  
 parody  
   of Knight's *Discourse*, 139–40  
   portraiture and, 42–43, 101  
   of religion, 105  
 Reynolds's, 105–106, 105  
 Society of Dilettanti's indulgence of, 33, 35–36, 101, 120–22  
   uses of, 42  
 Pars, William (1742–1782), 72, 87, 171, 195, 201  
   drawings by  
     “Arch at Mylasa, An,” 76, 77  
     “Capital of a Pilaster from the Temple of Apollo Didymaeus,” 78, 79  
     “Gymnasium at Ephesus, The,” 76, 76, 79  
     “Ruins of the Temple of Apollo Didymaeus,” 74, 75, 76, 79  
     “Sepulchral Monument at Mylasa,” 77, 78, 79, 80  
     “Theatre at Miletus, The,” 74, 74  
   *Grotto at Posilippo*, 81, 81  
   style of, 77, 79, 81, 88  
 Parslow's Tavern, St. James's Street, London, 189 n. 32  
 Parthenon Marbles, 201  
 pastels (“crayon painting”), 18, 25, 26  
 patronage, state vs. private, 45, 56  
 Payne-Gallway, Stephen (b. 1750), 97, 98, 101  
 pelike (storage jar), 98, 101, 105  
 Penny, Nicholas, 111  
 Pepys, Samuel (1633–1703), 16  
 Pericles, 45, 174, 177, 178  
 Perrault, Claude (1613–1688)  
 Perrier, François (1590?–1656?), *Segmenta nobilium signorum et statuarum*, 153, 171  
   Borghese Gladiator, 171, 172  
   Heraclides with putto (engraving), 157  
 Petronius, 113  
 “Petworth Beauties,” 14–15, 15  
 Phidias, 171, 174, 175, 178, 179  
 Phigaleian Marbles, 177  
 Philopappus, monument of, 52–53, 52, 53–54, 53  
 philosophes, discourse of, as model for Society of Dilettanti, 113, 123  
 Pic Nic Society, as target for caricature, 138–40, 138  
 picturesque  
   interpretation of antiquities as, 53–59, 82, 143, 152, 186 n. 17, 187 nn. 18, 19  
   repudiation of aesthetic of, 143, 158, 160–62, 167  
 Piranesi, Giambattista (1720–1778), 44, 64, 82, 187 n. 41, 193, 195, 200  
   *Vedute di Roma*, 51  
 Pitt, William (1759–1806), 203  
 plans  
   site, of Palmyra, 50, 51  
   Tower of the Winds, Athens, 62  
 Plato, 106, 174  
 politics, Society of Dilettanti and, 3, 4, 30, 31, 126, 128, 131, 143, 165, 190 n. 5  
 Pollio, Trebellius, 49  
 Polyneices, 101  
 Polyphemus, 164  
 Ponsonby, William, 2nd Earl of Bessborough (1704–1793), 40, 115, 179, 194, 200, 201  
   portraits of  
     by Knapton, 41, 41, 115  
     by Liotard, 41, 186 n. 67  
 Pontius, Paulus (1603–1658), *Peter Paul Rubens*, after Van Dyck, 39  
 Pope, Alexander (1688–1744), 39, 136, 201  
   *Dunciad*, 33  
   *Epistle to Burlington*, 136, 190 n. 16  
   *Essay on Man*, 121, 122  
 portraiture  
   conversation piece, 14, 21, 21, 97–100  
   formats for, 39, 41, 97, 107–11, 112, 129, 130–31  
   group, 14  
     as iconic, 84–85  
     and parody, 42–43  
     as performance, 42–43  
     satirized, 130, 134–35  
     settings, allusive, 17, 18, 21, 31, 104  
     souvenir, 18, 42, 194, 195  
     status of, 42  
     *see also* ensemble portraiture  
 Poseidippos, 26, 29  
 Poussin, Nicolas (1594–1665), 57  
 Priapus, cult of, and perception of the Dilettanti as latter-day adherents, 129–31  
 Primrose, Dr. (fictional character), 120  
 Prince Regent, (later King George IV [r. 1820–30]), 199. *see also* Wales, Prince of  
 Pringle, Sir John (1707–1782), 85  
 prints  
   quasi-scientific, 48  
   reproductive, 150–51, 162, 170, 193, 195, 202  
 professionalism, ascendancy of, 175, 176, 180  
 props, allusive, for portraiture, 14, 15–16, 19, 23, 26, 30, 31, 39  
 prose style  
   aesthetic of the austere and, 45, 59, 60–61  
   of captions, 76–77, 116–17, 6969  
   of the “New Science,” 73  
   ornamented *touriste*, 59  
   for proto-archaeological folios, 48, 73–74, 76–77, 79, 165  
   *see also* Chandler; Revett; Stuart; Wood  
 provenance, antique sculpture and, 149, 162  
 puns  
   Gillray's, 131, 137, 137  
   Goldsmith's, 120  
   Hogarth's, 70  
   in portraiture, 22, 101

- in Society of Dilettanti publications, 118, 124
- Purcell, Henry (1658/59–1695), *Dido and Aeneas*, 135, 190 n. 14
- Quarterly Review, The* (periodical), 181
- Rabelais, François (ca. 1483–1553), *Gargantua* (1534), 33, 39, 185 n. 48
- Ranelagh, London, 19
- Raphael (1483–1520), 110, 202
- portrait of Cardinal Bibbiena by, 185 n. 49
- School of Athens*, as parodied by Reynolds, 105, 105
- Rawdon, Sir John (1720–1793), later 1st Earl Moyra, portrait of, by Knapton, 36, 37
- Raynal, Abbé (1713–1796), *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des européens dans les deux Indes*, 128
- religion
- comparative
    - Knight's *Discourse* as investigation of, 113
    - Society of Dilettanti and, 11, 114
  - contemporary
    - defense of, against the Dilettanti, 129
    - mockery of, 105, 120–23
    - see also anticlericalism
  - early Christian, 124–25, 126
  - Hindu, 116, 116
  - pagan, 122
  - see also ritual, phallic; Roman Catholicism
- Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), 42
- Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Earl of Elgin's Collection of Sculptured Marbles, etc.* (1816), 11, 173–81
- reviews of, 181
- restoration
- denigration of, 146–47
  - documentation of, in Knight's *Specimens*, 147
- Revett, Nicholas (1720–1804), 10, 52, 75, 76, 162, 195
- expeditions of, to Greece, 9, 45, 52, 72, 87, 204
  - production by, of plates in Society of Dilettanti's publications, 79, 194
  - prose style of, 162
  - see also Stuart, James, and
- Reynolds, Frances (1729–1807), 108
- Reynolds, Sir Joshua (1723–1792), 197, 198, 201
- as caricaturist, 106, 106
  - Discourses*, 102–103, 105, 111, 174, 197
  - Knapton as influence on, 97, 100, 108
  - as member of the Society of Dilettanti, 97, 106–10
  - as official painter to the Society of Dilettanti, 11, 13, 22, 43, 97, 188 n. 19, 199
  - “Star and Garter” pictures. See Reynolds, Sir Joshua, *Members of the Society of Dilettanti*
- “Streatham worthies” by, 107–11
- works:
- Death of Dido, The*, 133–34
  - Doctor Charles Burney*, 110–11, 111
  - Dr. Samuel Johnson*, 108, 109, 110, 110
  - Four Learned Milordi*, 106, 106
  - Members of the Society of Dilettanti* (“Gems”), ii (det.), 97, 99, 100–107, 112
  - Members of the Society of Dilettanti* (“Vases”), 97, 98, 100–107
  - Miss Kitty Fisher as Cleopatra*, 106–107, 107
  - Oliver Goldsmith*, 108–109, 108
  - Parody of Raphael's “School of Athens,”* 105, 105
  - Peter Ludlow of Ardsallagh and Great Stoughton*, 104, 104, 188 n. 16
  - Portrait of Giuseppe Marc'Antonio Baretti*, 109, 110, 110
  - Self-Portrait*, 97, 97, 188 n. 1
  - Self-Portrait as a Deaf Man*, 109–10, 109, 111
  - Sir William Hamilton*, 83, 106, 130, 137
- after
- Death of Dido, The*, by Grozer, 133
  - Members of the Society of Dilettanti* (“Gems”), by Turner, 103, 104
  - Members of the Society of Dilettanti* (“Vases”), by Say, 103, 104
- Richardson, Jonathan, the Elder (1667–1745), 13, 14, 198, 199, 201
- Essay on the Theory of Painting, An*, 201
- Richardson, Samuel (1689–1761), *Pamela*, 198
- Riley, John (1646–1691), 201
- ritual
- phallic, 83, 113, 122, 140, 188 n. 10
  - Society of Dilettanti and, 5–7, 8, 125
- Robert, Hubert (1733–1808), 57
- Roman Catholicism, 94, 96, 120, 124–25
- Romney, George (1734–1802), 197, 201
- Emma as Circe*, 201
  - Emma as Nature*, 201
- after, *Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante*, by Hirst, 134, 135
- Rossi, Charles (1762–1839), 175, 201
- Rothenberg, Jacob, 178
- Roxana, 139
- Royal Academy, 173, 180, 194, 196, 199
- as authoritative, 174, 175, 180
  - caricatured, 130, 134–35
  - members of, 195, 201, 203
  - portraits exhibited at, 85, 130
- Royal Academy Schools, 151, 198, 201
- Royal Society, 60, 180, 194
- influence of, on Society of Dilettanti, 44, 48, 60–61, 144
  - Joseph Banks and, 10, 83, 113
  - members of, 10, 83, 196, 197
  - Philosophical Transactions*, 13, 61
- Rubens, Peter Paul (1577–1640), portrait of, by Van Dyck, 39, 39
- Rudolph II, Holy Roman Emperor (r. 1576–1612), 202
- Sackville, Charles, Earl of Middlesex and, later, 2nd Duke of Dorset (1711–1769), 7, 8, 23, 40, 202
- portraits of
- by Carriera, 25, 26
  - by Knapton, 10, 23, 24, 25
- sacrilege
- parody and, 101
  - Society of Dilettanti and, 33, 35–36, 105, 113, 116, 117, 118, 122, 123–25, 128, 185 n. 45
- Sadeler, Aegidius (ca. 1570–1629), 202
- engravings by, after Titian, 23, 25, 185 n. 26
- Saint-Non, Abbé Richard (1727–1791), 83, 187 n. 18
- Sandwich, Lord. See Montagu, John
- Sandys, Edwin (1726–1797), 108
- satire
- Knight's *Discourse* as, 121–22
  - Reynolds and, 110
  - see also Mathias, T. J.
- Saturnalia, masquerading as, 23
- Savage, Nicholas, 81
- Savage, Samuel, 43
- portrait of, by Knapton, 31–32, 32, 185 nn. 43, 44
- Say, William (1768–1834), *Members of the Society of the Dilettanti*, after Reynolds, 103, 104
- Scorel, Jan van (1495–1562), 14, 202
- Portraits of the Five Members of the Utrecht Jerusalem Brotherhood*, 14, 15
- sculptors, testimony by, on purchase of the Elgin Marbles, 174–75
- sculpture
- condition of, as addressed in Knight's *Specimens*, 146, 148–49
  - criteria for judging, 146, 176
  - Hindu temple, 116, 116
  - measured drawings of, 144, 145
  - nude, as devotional image, 34, 100, 136
  - protocols for delineating, 144–46
  - provenance and, 146, 149
  - restoration of, 146–47
  - technique and, 146, 147–49
- Seaforth, Lord (1744–1781), 99, 100, 104
- Segesta, Sicily, ruins of, 87–88, 89
- selfhood, 100
- self-presentation, and portraiture, 10, 39, 42, 104, 130
- Selinunte, Sicily, ruins of, 87, 88, 90
- Serlio, Sebastiano (1475–1554), 46

- sfumato*, as unsuitable for illustration of antiquities, 160–61
- Shakespeare, William (1564–1616), *Tempest*, *The*, 47
- Sheffield, John Baker Holroyd, Lord (1735–1821), 126
- Sherard, Sir Brownlow (died 1748), portrait of, by Knapton, 26, 28
- Shirley, Seawallis (1709–1765), 43, 183 n. 20, 185 n. 40  
 portrait of, by Knapton, 30, 31, 41
- Shugborough, Staffordshire, 202
- Sicily, journal of Richard Payne Knight's expedition to, 83–96
- Sigeum, temple of, 73–74
- Smith, Mr. *See* Smyth, John Lewin
- Smyth, John Lewin (1748–1811), 97, 98, 101, 105
- Society of Antiquaries, 3, 10, 180, 194, 196
- Society of Artists, 198
- Society of Dilettanti  
 aesthetic, 81, 171  
 caricature of, 129–40  
 collection of casts formed by, 9  
 commissions from, 13, 195  
 connoisseurship and, 9–10  
 core purpose of, 143, 165  
 and credentials for membership, 83  
 as cultural authority, 11, 180–81  
 Elgin Marbles and, 173, 175–81  
 ensemble portraiture and, 10, 13–17, 97–107, 199  
 excoriation of, 126–28, 129  
 expeditions sponsored by, 44  
 finances of, 7  
 as influential, 10, 82  
 initiation ceremony of, 5–6  
 members of, 10, 21, 48, 83, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204  
 as Freemasons, 7–8  
 Minute Books of, 3, 7  
 excerpts from, 5–6, 8–9, 13, 17, 19, 31, 115, 143  
 models for, 7–8  
 official “limners” of. *See* Knapton; Lawrence; Reynolds; Stuart  
 origins of, 1–2  
 as patrons of the arts, 8–9, 19, 38, 77, 202  
 politics and, 3, 4, 30, 31, 126, 128, 131, 143, 165, 190 n. 5  
 publications of, 10–11, 44, 45, 48, 165, 194  
*see also* Knight, *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus*, *A*; Knight, *Specimens of Antient Sculpture . . .*; Society of Dilettanti, *Ionian Antiquities*; Stuart, James, and Nicolas Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*, *The*  
 regalia of, 4, 5, 19, 98, 99, 101, 104, 115  
 rituals of, 5–7, 8  
 seal of, 4, 5  
 as sponsors of an antiquarian expedition to Ionia, 72–73, 87, 201, 204  
 theatricality, disposition toward, 18  
 —, *Antiquities of Ionia* (2nd edn. of *Ionian Antiquities*), 203  
 illustrations in, 79  
*Gymnasium at Ephesus*, 79, 80  
*Sepulchral monument at Mylasa*, 79, 80  
 —, *Ionian Antiquities* (1769), 1, 11  
 graphic style of, 74–76, 77–79, 81  
 illustrations for, 115, 195, 200  
 investigation and reportage for, 72–74  
 as precedent for Knight, 87  
 prose style of, 73–74, 76–77, 79, 165  
 Robert Wood and, 72, 165, 204  
 tailpiece in, 78, 79, 171  
 Society of Engravers, 151  
 Society for the Reformation of Principles, 129  
 Sontag, Susan, *Volcano Lover*, *The*, 12  
 Spain, the Grand Tour and, 39  
 Spence, Joseph (1699–1768), 37, 40, 200, 202  
*Polymetis*, 202  
 Spencer House, London, 202  
 Spencer-Stanhope, Walter (1749–1821), 98, 101  
 Spon, Jacob (1647–1685), 177, 191 n. 7  
 Sprat, Thomas (1635–1713), 61  
 Stadium, Athens, 56, 57  
 Stafford, 2nd Marquis of (1758–1833), 141, 141  
 Star and Garter (tavern), Pall Mall, London, 2, 43, 97, 101, 189 n. 32  
 St. Augustine, 35  
 St. Catherine of Alexandria, attributes of, 16, 16  
 St. Paul's Cathedral, London, 201  
 Stafford, Thomas Wentworth, Lord (1593–1641),  
 portrait of, by Van Dyck, 188 n. 16  
 Strawberry Hill, Richmond, London, 203  
 “Streatham worthies,” 107–11  
 Stuart, James “Athenian” (1713–1788), 10, 52, 54, 68, 71, 173, 194, 201  
 biography of, 202  
 as critic, 58–59, 147, 200  
 drawings by, 64, 66–70, 74, 187 n. 29  
 “Gate of Athene Archegetis,” 66–67, 66  
 “Ionic Temple on the Illysius, An” (1713–1788), 74, 75  
 “The Tower of the Winds,” 69, 70, 77  
 “View of the West end of the Temple of Minerva Polias, and of the Pandrosium,” 67, 68, 69, 158  
 expedition of, to Greece, 9, 45, 52, 202, 204  
 and Nicholas Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*, *The*, 9, 11, 52–69, 116, 143, 202  
 as authoritative, 147, 178, 179  
 criticism of, 64, 144, 164  
 frontispiece, 68  
 graphic style of, 54–56, 63–64  
 Hogarth's satire on, 70–72, 187 nn. 32, 33  
 illustrations for, 47–48, 115, 194, 200  
 Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, 57–58, 58  
 Monument of Philopappus, 52–53, 52  
 Temple of Minerva Polias (the Erechtheion), 54, 54, 64  
 Tower of the Winds, 60, 62, 63  
 View of the West end of the Temple of Minerva Polias, and of the Pandrosium, 68, 158  
 as model for Knight, 87  
 proposal for, 47–49  
 Robert Wood and, 45  
 title page, 54–56, 55, 170, 171  
 as painter to the Society of Dilettanti, 97, 202  
 portrait medallion of, by Charles Knight, 68  
 prose style of, 52–53, 60–61, 162, 170  
 sublime, the, 103  
 Suetonius, 126  
 superfluity topos, 158, 162  
 surface, condition of, as criterion for aesthetic value, 146, 147–48, 177, 179  
 Syon House, London, 193  
 tailpiece  
 for *Ionian Antiquities*, 78, 79, 171  
 for Knight's *Discourse*, 118, 118  
 for Knight's *Specimens*, 145, 146, 170–71, 171  
 Tartini, Giuseppe (1692–1770), 190 n. 14  
 Taylor, Sir John (1745–1786), 7, 97, 98, 101  
 technique, sculptural, as addressed in Knight's *Specimens*, 147–49  
 Telephos. *See* Herakles  
 Tende, “Etruscan Portrait,” 162, 163  
 Tersant, Abbé, 149  
 Thalia, 139  
 theatricals, amateur, as controversial, 138–39  
 theatrics, the Society of Dilettanti's penchant for, 22–23, 42–43, 104  
 Thélème, abbey of (fictional), 33  
 Theseus, sculpture representing, 176, 177  
 Thompson, Richard (1745–1820), 97, 98, 101  
 Thrale, Henry (1728–1781), 108, 193  
 Reynolds's ensemble portraiture and, 107–11  
 Thrale, Hester (1741–1821), 107, 193  
 “Characters in Verse,” 108  
 Tiberius, emperor, 126  
 Tintoretto (ca. 1518–1594), Reynolds on, 102–103  
 Titian (1488/90–1576)  
 engravings after, 23, 25, 202  
 Reynolds on, 102  
 Reynolds's imitation of, 188 n. 16  
 works:  
*Man with a Quilted Sleeve*, *A*, 25, 26  
*Roman Emperors* series, 23, 26



- Augustus*, 185 n. 32  
*Claudius*, 185 n. 33  
*Galba*, 185 n. 32  
*Julius Caesar*, 23, 25  
 "Tomb of Bacchus," 6–7, 6, 13  
 Tonson (tavern keeper), 17  
 topography, illustration of, 85–87  
 Tower of the Winds, Athens, 60, 61–64, 62, 69, 70, 77  
 Townley, Charles (1737–1805), 113, 174, 197, 202, 204  
     collection of, 202  
     *Discobolus* in collection of, 147, 158  
     see also Townley Marbles  
     *Specimens of Antient Sculpture* and, 143, 146, 202  
 Townley Marbles, Elgin Marbles compared with, 174, 175, 176, 177, 179  
 Treason Trials, in England, 129  
 Trevisani, Francesco (1656–1746), 18, 42, 203  
     *Sir Edward Gascoigne, Sixth Baronet*, 18, 18  
 Turner, Charles (1774–1857), *Members of the Society of the Dilettanti*, after Reynolds, 103, 104  
  
 University College, London, 203  
 Urquhart, Sir Thomas (1611–ca. 1660), 185 n. 48  
  
 valuation, monetary, of the Elgin Marbles, 174, 179  
 Vanbrugh, Sir John (1664–1726), portrait of, by Kneller, 17, 17, 42  
 vase(s)  
     cracked, as sexual innuendo, 137  
     Sir William Hamilton's collection of, 81, 100–101, 137, 197  
 "Vases." See Reynolds, Sir Joshua, *Members of the Society of Dilettanti* ("Vases")  
 Vauxhall, London, 19  
*vedute*, 13, 64, 87  
 Venice, influence of, on Society of Dilettanti, 19, 25, 26, 30–32, 31, 102  
 Venus de Medici, 33, 34, 41, 136, 144, 145  
 Vernon, Francis (1637–1677), 61  
 Veronese, Paul (1528–1588)  
     Reynolds on, 102–103  
     Reynolds's imitation of, in "Star and Garter" pictures, 101–105, 188 nn. 11, 16  
 works:  
     *Feast in the House of Levi, The*, 101, 102, 102, 188 n. 14  
     *Wedding at Cana, The*, 101, 102, 102, 104–105, 188 n. 14  
 verse, quoted, in portraits, 20, 22  
 Vesta, Temple of (Tivoli), measured drawings of, 46, 47, 196  
 Vigée-Lebrun, Elizabeth (1755–1842), 197  
  
 Villiers, Thomas, Lord Hyde (1709–1786), 43, 185 n. 40  
     portrait of, by Knapton, 30–31, 30, 40, 41, 42, 185 nn. 37, 40  
 Vinci, Leonardo da (ca. 1469–1519), 135, 190 n. 14  
 Virgil, 3, 22, 164  
*virtù*, defined, 183 n. 4  
 Virtuosi of St. Luke, 3, 4  
 Visconti, Ennio (1751–1818), 178  
 Vitruvius, *De architectura*, 191 n. 13, 200  
 Voerst, Robert van (1597–ca. 1636), *Sir Kenelm Digby*, after Van Dyck, 39  
 volcano, 86, 93–94, 137  
 Voltaire (1694–1778), 123  
  
 Wahrman, Dror, *Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England, The*, 100, 188 n. 4  
 Wales, Frederick, Prince of (1707–1751), 199  
 Wales, Prince of (later King George IV [r. 1820–30]), 115, 201  
 Walpole, Horace, 4th Earl of Orford (1717–1797), 2, 49, 131, 187 n. 33, 190 n. 5, 203, 204  
     *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, 45, 82, 203  
     *Castle of Otranto, The*, 203  
 Walpole, Sir Robert (1676–1745), 203  
 war(s)  
     Napoleonic, 1, 11  
     Second Dutch, 16  
 Warburton, Rev. Dr. William (1698–1779), 121, 123  
     *Divine Legation of Moses, The*, 122, 189 n. 20  
 Watelet, Claude-Henri (1718–1786), and P. Charles Levesque (1736–1812), *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure*, 48, 57  
 watercolor, use of, for original drawings to be engraved, 18, 77, 79, 92, 93, 188 n. 10, 195  
     see also gouache  
 Wedgwood, Josiah (1730–1795), 196, 198  
 West, Benjamin (1738–1820), 180  
 Westmacott, Richard (1775–1856), 175, 203  
 West Wycomb Park, Buckinghamshire, 195  
 Wharton, Duke of (1698–1731), 8  
 Wheler, George (1650–1723), *A Journey into Greece in the Company of Dr. Spon of Lyons*, 177–78, 191 n. 7  
 Wilkes, John (1725–1797), 33, 126, 185 n. 47, 203  
     *Essay on Woman, An*, 113, 119, 121–22, 203  
 Wilkins, William (1778–1839), 175–76, 179, 203  
     *Antiquities of Magna Graecia, The*, 179  
     *Unedited Antiquities of Attica, The*, 200, 203  
 Wilson, Richard (1713–1782), 196  
 Winckelmann, Johann Joachim (1717–1768), 174, 204  
  
 criticism of Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens* by, 164  
     *History of Ancient Art*, 143, 164, 165, 204  
     as influence, 164–65, 191 n. 8  
 Windham, William (1750–1810), 115  
 "Windsor Beauties," 15–16, 16, 184 n. 9, 200  
 Wood, Robert (1717?–1771), 52, 173, 179, 194  
     biography of, 204  
     classification of antiquities by, 45  
     expedition of, to the Levant, 48–49, 52, 66  
     on the founding of the Society of Dilettanti, 1–2  
 James Stuart and, 52  
 Nicholas Revett and, 52  
 prose style of, 49, 51, 165  
 and the publication of the Dilettanti's folios  
     *Antiquities of Athens, The*, 45  
     *Ionian Antiquities*, 72, 165, 204  
 publications by:  
     *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer*, 204  
     *Ruins of Balbec, The*, 45, 67, 194, 204  
     *Ruins of Palmyra, The*, 45, 49–51, 50, 51, 52, 82, 194, 204  
 Wrey, Sir Bouchier (1714–1784), 43, 204  
     portrait of, by Knapton, 19, 20, 21, 33, 204  
 Wynn, Sir Watkin Williams (1748–1789), 101, 106  
     portraits of, by Reynolds, 97, 98, 188 n. 19  
  
 York, Anne Hyde, Duchess of (1637–1671), commission from, 15, 16, 184 n. 9  
 York, James, Duke of (later King James II of England [r. 1685–88], died 1701), 16  
  
 Zenobia, 49  
 Zeus, 148













Earl of Sandwich



M<sup>r</sup> Harris



Sam<sup>l</sup> Savage  
Esq<sup>r</sup>



Baron Hobergh



Earl of Holderness



S<sup>t</sup> Brownlow Sherard



L<sup>d</sup> Barrington



S<sup>t</sup> James  
Gray



Duke of  
Dorset





Bruce Redford re-creates the vibrant culture of connoisseurship in Enlightenment England by investigating the multifaceted activities and achievements of the Society of Dilettanti. Elegantly and wittily he dissects the British connoisseurs whose expeditions, collections, and publications laid the groundwork for the Neoclassical revival and for the scholarly study of Graeco-Roman antiquity.

After the foundation of the society in 1732, the Dilettanti commissioned portraits of the members. Including a striking group of mock-classical and mock-religious representations, these portraits were painted by George Knapton, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Sir Thomas Lawrence.

During the second half of the century, the society's expeditions to the Levant yielded a series of pioneering architectural and archaeological folios, beginning with the first volume of *The Antiquities of Athens* in 1762. These monumental volumes aspired to empirical exactitude in text and image alike. They prepared the way for *Specimens of Antient Sculpture* (1809), which combines the didactic (detailed investigations into technique, condition, restoration, and provenance) with the connoisseurial (plates that bring the illustration of ancient sculpture to new artistic heights).

The Society of Dilettanti's projects and publications exemplify the Enlightenment ideal of the gentleman amateur, which is linked in turn to a culture of wide-ranging curiosity.

Bruce Redford is University Professor and Professor of Art History and of English at Boston University. His books include *Designing the Life of Johnson: The Lyell Lectures*, 2001–2 (Oxford, 2002); the Hyde edition of *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, 5 vols. (Princeton 1992–94); *Venice and the Grand Tour* (Yale, 1996).

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